



# The Catholic Virginian

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Bishop Barry C. Knestout delivers his homily during the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 9, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. From left are Father Sean Prince, the bishop's priest secretary, Daniel Señez, director of music and liturgy, Deacon Charles Williams, Mark Kwolek, videographer, and Father Anthony Marques, rector of the cathedral. All of the liturgies from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday were livestreamed. (Photo/Office of Communications)

## New ways of celebrating Technology aids in marking Holy Week, Easter

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

**H**oly Week, the Triduum and Easter didn't change.

How Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond and throughout the world celebrated them did.

Due to COVID-19 and restrictions on gatherings due to concern about its spread, public Masses have been suspended in the diocese since March 22. As a result, members of the faithful depended upon computer technology to be their link to the celebration of Mass and other Holy Week services.

From Palm Sunday, April 5, through Easter Sunday, April 12, Bishop Barry C. Knestout celebrated four Masses and led the commemoration of the Passion of the Lord at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. No more than 10 people, including the bish-

op and the video production crew, were present at the liturgies, each of which was livestreamed via the diocesan website.

On Holy Thursday, the bishop told viewers that celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper "will be the most difficult celebration of the Triduum."

He continued, "We celebrate this gift of the Eucharist on a day, the first time in living memory, when very few can share in this Eucharist. This is distressing and traumatic for all of us. May God grant us a swift victory over the coronavirus, over this angel of death, which passes over this land, like over Egypt of old, threatening to take from us those we love."

In his Good Friday homily, he noted how in his Gospel, St. John speaks of Jesus' prophetic power, priestly sacrifice, kingship and majesty.

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## 'God spoke, I listened'

Glen Allen woman promotes rosary as COVID-19 response

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

**L**ike millions of other people, Katrina Phillips is concerned about the spread and impact of the coronavirus. As she talked with friends who were also concerned, she got an idea.

"When you don't have control and there's fear, you try to see the person who's in control," she said. "So, let's pray. That's the only way we're going to get out of this."

Having spoken with a friend in New York on March 21 who was impacted by the virus, Phillips, vice president of the St. Vincent de Paul conference at her parish, St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen, said she wanted to begin praying immediately.



Katrina Phillips

"I reached out to Dan (Kearns, president of the conference and president of the Diocese of Richmond's St. Vincent de Paul Council) and asked, 'Would it be OK if I just sent an email to the women?' Then I thought, why limit it? Let's send it to everybody (in our conference)," she said. "It was one of those things where God spoke and I listened."

Phillips invited Vincentians to pray the rosary every Sunday night at 7, beginning March 22.

"As a Vincentian, spirituality is huge; it's the cornerstone of what we do," she said. "There's something powerful with the rosary and there's something special as I know I'm saying the rosary at my house and other Vincentians are saying it."

They are saying it in 13 other states as Kearns let the SVDP's regional and national offices know about the endeavor and they spread the word.

"We've heard from people in South

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The Catholic Virginian  
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# God will continue to be with us



**CHRIST OUR HOPE**  
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

While we are well into the Easter season, for many of us it might seem like a continuation of Lent — days filled with sacrifice and penance rather than celebration. As the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects impact the world around us, we turn our attention to our Risen Lord and his sacred, merciful heart.

On March 29, I consecrated our diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the patron of our cathedral. In that consecration, I prayed, that we would “give and consecrate to the Sacred Heart our diocese, parishes, communities and families, lives and actions, our pains and suffering so that we may be delivered from the current pestilence to live always to honor, love and glorify the Sacred Heart.”

We were reminded during Lent and Holy Week, as we are whenever we celebrate Mass, that God’s mercy was most manifested at the moment of Christ’s crucifixion. Our sins were nailed to the cross where mercy was fully realized. That was God’s redeeming act for us, his full immersion in our human condition, even to death.

In the prayer of consecration, I asked the Sacred Heart to turn away the contagion that surrounds us, and to turn us toward him and our brothers and sisters who are suffering. I

continued, “We hope for all things from your mercy and generosity.”

That mercy we seek — that mercy we need! — was poured from the heart of Jesus and is always available to us — especially in our times of need, like the time in which we are living.

This past Sunday we observed Divine Mercy Sunday. The Divine Mercy Chaplet is an extension of our devotion to the Sacred Heart. The conclusion of the chaplet beautifully summarizes the impact God’s mercy can have on our lives when we open our hearts to the Sacred Heart:

“Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.”

At a time of disruption to our families, routines, homes, work and peace of mind, and as our worries about what the future holds may seem to multiply, we are encouraged to turn to and rely upon the mercy of God.

Pope Francis has emphasized the importance of divine assistance and why the message of mercy is comforting to us. This is consistent with his episcopacy and papacy as the words of his motto, taken from Matthew 9:9-13, refer to Jesus’ merciful gaze as he called Matthew to follow him.

As we may be overwhelmed by statistics about the spread of and deaths caused by

COVID-19, as we continue to ask “What if...,” as we contemplate the future, we know, as people of faith, that we will move beyond this. We have no idea what post-coronavirus life will be like, but of one thing we can be certain: God will continue to be with us.

Let us take to heart advice Pope Francis tweeted nearly five years ago for it is spiritually sound during this tenuous time: “Amid so many problems, even grave, may we not lose our hope in the infinite mercy of God.”

## CLERGY ASSIGNMENT

The Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout, bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, has announced the following appointment, effective Monday, April 13, 2020:

### OFFICIAL

**Father Mark White**, from pastor of St. Joseph, Martinsville, and St. Francis of Assisi, Rocky Mount, to chaplain to the various prisons, state and federal, within the diocesan bounds. A new pastor will be named to both parishes in the foreseeable future.

During this time of transition, **Father Kevin Segerblom**, episcopal vicar for the Western Vicariate, will oversee the pastoral care and administrative duties of the two parishes, in addition to remaining pastor of St. Andrew, Roanoke.

# BISHOP ANDREW J. BRENNAN



1820

TIME CAPSULE

2020

## SOLDIERING FOR CHRIST

Throughout the Catholic Diocese of Richmond’s bicentennial year, a time capsule recalling a particular time in diocesan history is scheduled to be published in each issue of *The Catholic Virginian*. The bicentennial time capsules have been researched and compiled by Father Anthony E. Marques, chair of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond’s Bicentennial Task Force.

Easter could be called a “season of sacraments” because many of them are typically received, or more frequently celebrated, during the 50-day celebration of Christ’s resurrection: the baptism of adults and children, first holy Communion (Eucharist), confirmation, ordination (holy orders), and weddings (matrimony).

Each sacrament renews the Paschal Mystery — Christ’s passion, death, resurrection, ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit — and applies the power of that saving event, in a specific way, to the recipient. In short, the sacraments “flow” from the pierced side of Christ (see Jn 19:34) into the liturgical rites of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1115).

The understanding of confirmation for much of the history of the Diocese of Richmond was based on the Baltimore Catechism (1885), which, in turn, was based on the Catechism of the Council of Trent (1566), better known as the Roman Catechism.



**Bishop Andrew J. Brennan with confirmands at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia in 1932. The confirmands are likely the adolescents in the back row; the other children are probably first communicants.** (Photo/Diocese of Richmond Archives)

According to the Baltimore Catechism, “Confirmation is a Sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ” (Question 670).

Here, soldiering meant resisting worldly pressures in order to bear witness to Christ, strengthened by that sacrament (Roman Catechism, II, 3, 2 and 18). The Baltimore Catechism stated, “One may and should add a new name to his own at Confirmation, especially when the name of a saint has not been given in Baptism” (74).

Confirmation, like baptism and holy orders, impresses a “character” or mark on the recipient, meaning that these sacraments can never be erased or repeated (II, 1, 26). The age for con-

firmation, according to the Roman Catechism, was about 12, with the minimum being 7, the age of reason.

(The Roman Catechism stated that confirmation “may indeed be administered to all” regardless of age. However, it was “inexpedient” to confirm those below the age of reason, and so the sacrament was “deferred” or “postponed” until the prescribed age — an implicit acknowledgment that confirmation was originally conferred on infants [II, 3, 15].)

The Roman Catechism explained that the term “confirmation,” and the age at which the sacrament was usually received, should not be misinterpreted as somehow “confirming” one’s

See *Time Capsule*, Page 7

# Where prayer, work make ordinary life extraordinary

## Visitation Sisters immersed in ‘profound humility toward God’

ROSE MORRISSETTE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Just northwest of Richmond in Rockville, a group of nine religious sisters live a cloistered, contemplative life at the Monte Maria Monastery – praying, working and caring for one another – in a supportive, self-sustaining community where a deep love for God animates all that they do.

The monastery’s eight professed sisters and one novice are members of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, a worldwide monastic order of approximately 2,500, founded in 1610 in Annecy, France, by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal. The order has been in the U.S. since 1799 and in the Richmond area since 1866 — first in Church Hill and in Rockville since 1987.

Life at Monte Maria reflects the order’s motto, “Live+Jesus,” where the sisters “let Jesus live in us and work through us,” according to Sister Marie Hélène.

She described the spirit of the Visitation as “profound humility toward God and great gentleness with our neighbor,” adding, “St. Francis de Sales modeled our order on our Lord’s words, ‘Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.’”

### Desire for contemplative life

A strong desire for a closer union with God for silence and a more meaningful life inspired the sisters at Monte Maria to become contemplatives.

Sister Frances Marie and Sister Mary Emmanuel, for example, are former Sisters of Mercy who left teaching for the monastery.

As Visitandine contemplatives, the sisters are focused on an “inward life,” not on external mortifications as is the case in other cloistered orders. According to Sister Marie Hélène, “Our mortifications are mostly interior. Only God sees the sacrifices we make.”

Historically, the Visitations have accepted women who cannot follow strict routines, including older women and those with disabilities, so its way of life is less austere.

Sister Frances Marie described it as “an ordinary type of life without a lot of austerities,” but, she observed, “It is unlike convent life.” The prayer-centered community is markedly different from religious communities where sisters are outwardly engaged in professions such as teaching.

For Sister Mary Emmanuel, it’s the right fit.

“Having been called from the active life of a teaching sister to the contemplative life, I have found what my heart desired,” she said.

### Centered on prayer, work

Because they are a cloistered, or “enclosed,” community living and working in the monastery, everyone has an assigned job. No matter what their age and stage in life, all sisters participate.

Prayer is their main ministry, and they consider their work prayerful.

“Work is a part of our life of prayer and sacrifice. Our main goal is to unite ourselves as closely as possible to our Lord so that our prayers will be more effective



Sister Marie Hélène, right, checks sheets of large hosts while Sister Marie Augustine, left, bakes and Sister Olivia washes a bucket in the kitchen of the Visitation Sisters’ Monte Maria Monastery in Rockville. The nine-member cloistered community bakes altar breads for parishes in Virginia, as well as in other states. (Photo/Rose Morrisette)

for others,” explained Sister Marie Hélène.

Their daily schedule of prayer and work forms the framework within which the sisters serve God and interact with one another as one unit, a family.

Mother Maria Theresa and Sisters Frances Marie, Mary Emmanuel, Mary Joseph, Marie Hélène, Miriam Corazon, Marianne du Sacre Coeur, Marie Augustine and Olivia spend their days praying; attending Mass; maintaining the facility, grounds and household; supporting one another with the tasks/business of daily living – including preparing and eating meals; baking and supplying altar breads to Catholic communities in the Richmond area and elsewhere; and enjoying each other’s company in recreation.

The linchpin of the sisters’ daily schedule is the Liturgy of the Hours which they pray five times a day. Their schedule also includes time for private prayer.

Mother Maria Theresa, the monastery’s superior, said, “I pray for the health and well-being of my sisters; for the priests of our diocese; for vocations, especially for our community; and for our benefactors.”

### Everyone contributes

Mother Maria Theresa, who became mother superior in the late fall of 2019, said she never has a “normal” day at Monte Maria. She relies on the other sisters’ help to keep things running smoothly.

Though few in number, the sisters are able to meet the needs and challenges of community life with the experiences, talents and skills they share. This ranges from sewing habits to working in their infirmary, doing maintenance or baking altar breads.

For Sister Mary Joseph, who said “you must use the skills God has given you,” this means serving as sacristan, playing the organ, taking Mother Maria Theresa shopping, cleaning, proofreading and taking care of the sisters’ two dogs and two cats.

Sister Mary Emmanuel, at 89 the oldest of the sisters, works as Mother Maria Theresa’s secretary, serving as portress – the sister who greets visitors at the door and answers the phone – and taking care of the sisters’ medicines.

The teamwork that is the hallmark of this community’s life is most evident in its altar bread baking apostolate. Some sisters are involved directly from taking orders to baking, cutting, sorting, packaging, shipping and managing billing and payments; others have a supportive role.

Most of their nearly 100 customers are in the Diocese of Richmond, but some are from northern Virginia, West Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. Realistically, it would be difficult to take on more work because of the shortage in the number of sisters.

They produce both small hosts for communicants and 3- and 5-inch priest hosts. The income this activity generates supplements the financial support that comes mostly from benefactors and friends.

Typically, the actual bread baking, which is done two to three times a week, involves three sisters. The work is an all-day endeavor, since the sisters must also follow their daily schedule.

Sister Marie Hélène and Sister Marie Augustine bake, while Sister Olivia helps with making extra batter and cleaning up. They work silently

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## Special days at Monte Maria

The Vatican has granted the Visitation Order a Jubilee Year in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the canonization of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Anyone who passes through the doors of the Monte Maria Monastery Chapel during the Jubilee Year on the following days will receive a plenary indulgence if he or she is in a state of grace, goes to confession and receives holy Communion within 20 days before or after the visit, and prays for the intentions of the Holy Father.

However, due to restrictions in place due to COVID-19, those wishing to visit the chapel on the following days should contact the monastery ahead of time at 804-749-4885.

### Wednesday, May 13

100th anniversary of the canonization of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

### Sunday, May 31

Pentecost and Solemnity of the Visitation

### Friday, June 19

Solemnity of the Sacred Heart

### Wednesday, Aug. 12

Solemnity of St. Jane de Chantal

### Friday, Oct. 16

Feast of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

### The First Friday of Each Month

# Childhood dream leads to youth-centered ministry

## Denise Menamin transformed parish's altar serving

KRISTEN L. BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

In the basement of her Philadelphia home, young Denise McMenemy let her imagination run wild. She pretended to be a rodeo star, a caped crusader and a pixie. But she also had higher aspirations. In addition to normal childhood fantasies, McMenemy also pretended to be . . . an altar server.

In the 1950s and '60s, being a female altar server was as out of reach as being a superhero. The only way she could serve was in her imagination. At Mass, she would watch the altar boys and memorize their movements, jealous of the holy gestures they were performing. She fell in love with the ceremony and precision, which she tried to reenact at home.

It wasn't until the 1980s that girls were finally permitted to serve. McMenemy never got her chance, but she made sure hundreds of other girls – and boys – did.

### Growing a ministry

For the past 22 years, McMenemy has served as the Altar Server Ministry head at St. Bridget Catholic Church, Richmond. Under her guidance, the ministry has grown exponentially.

Before McMenemy became involved, youth involvement in the ministry was dwindling. Not many students were volunteering, and there was talk of having adults start filling

the open positions.

As altar serving was McMenemy's dream as a child, she saw this ministry as uniquely youth-centered. When she offered to help and eventually took over the ministry on a volunteer basis, seemingly small changes were the beginning of a greater transformation.

From the existing one-page altar serving guide sheet grew a manual of detailed instructions and graphics. Children are required to attend at least three two-hour training sessions as well as pass a written test and take part in a commissioning ceremony.

McMenemy also worked to have the servers be trusted with more duties and responsibilities, something her pastor, Msgr. William Carr, endorsed. Her goal was simple: "I wanted altar serving to be a ministry they could be proud to be a part of. 'Any job worth doing is worth doing well,' and this job was for the Lord," she said.

As a result of her changes, there are now nearly 150 altar servers on the church's roster.

"One of Denise's most important gifts is her passionate faith in the Lord and his body, the Church," said Msgr. Carr. "I think that Denise's example, not so much the actual training and monitoring, is the lasting gift of her ministry. Through her, people have been touched by the Lord."



Denise Menamin, in blue, explains responsibilities to altar servers at St. Bridget, Richmond. After 22 years of educating servers about and training them in their ministry, she is stepping down from her commitment in order to spend more time with family. (Photo/Kristen L. Byrd)

### Passion for teaching

McMenemy made it her mission to teach children to not only know the mechanics of the Mass, but the meaning.

"Not long ago, my husband asked me what I liked most about being Catholic. Without hesitation I said the Mass," recalled McMenemy. "I love all the good works our Church does. It is central to our faith, but many faiths or even people with no faith do good works. The Mass is uniquely Catholic. For me, it is a place of comfort, strength and gratitude. I hope the kids feel that."

Aiden Stengel, who was an altar server for seven years and is now a freshman at CNU, does.

"Altar serving is what shaped my faith and made me so proud to be Catholic. I have her to thank for that," Stengel said. "I have loved every minute I got to spend with her, and I am so thankful for all the years I have been able to work by her side and see the true love she has for Christ."

McMenemy is a self-professed perfectionist, which some students found intimidating at first – not because of her personality but because of her level of precision. Soon, however, they understood that her desire for perfection was just the reflection of her respect for the sacredness of the sacrament.

Megan Pellei, a 20-year-old UVA student, said she appreciated the training McMenemy provided.

"This precision in teaching altar servers shows her love and utmost respect for the celebration of the Eucharist. Now, I am no longer intimidated but recognize how much love and devotion she has for the parish and what a great job she continues to do with training all the new altar servers," Pellei said.

Megan's brother, Danny, an 18-year-old student at Freeman High School, also noted the emphasis on devotion.

"She patiently instructs for hours

on end and ensures the trainees fully understand their roles. She is flexible with her schedule and often takes time out of her personal hours to teach new servers and give refresher sessions to the older altar servers," he said.

The siblings' parents, Miho and Steve, have five children, four of whom have been or are currently altar servers. The youngest will be trained next year.

"We love Denise because she takes her Catholic faith seriously yet can also be fun," said Miho. "She sets the bar very high and firmly yet gently nudges the servers to ensure their full commitment and best personal performance."

### Grateful for opportunity

McMenemy has decided to step down so she can spend more time with her family who live out of state. A committee of six women, some of whom currently assist her in the ministry, will fill her place.

"I will be miserable and regret this decision for a while, but I also feel it's time for others to have the enormous blessing I have been given," she said.

McMenemy credits the staff at St. Bridget for the program's success. They have helped her with navigating computer issues, printing various paperwork, looking up records, indulging special music requests and completing a myriad of other tasks.

She is also grateful to Msgr. Carr, who is the fourth pastor at the parish's helm since McMenemy started working in the ministry and who has been especially supportive of her mission.

"I have been privileged and blessed and am so incredibly grateful that this is the work that was given to me," said McMenemy. "There was never enough time to do the job 100%, but I tried my best and hope it gave the children a start in realizing the importance of what they do. I hope it makes them eager to find out more about the Mass, about their faith and what their place is in that faith."

## Volunteers Change Lives

Commonwealth Catholic Charities is grateful for each and every caring volunteer who shares their unique talents and skills. Your care and commitment are priceless!



April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

Looking to help during COVID-19?  
Visit [www.ccofva.org](http://www.ccofva.org) for ways to support!



Commonwealth Catholic Charities  
We  The Power of Hope Every Day

**Photo brought back memories**

In the Time Capsule (Catholic Virginian, March 9), I was overjoyed to see a photo of St. Katharine Drexel during a graduation at St. Emma.

The photo brought back memories of my own graduation from St. Emma in June 1966, when priests, nuns, lay teachers and classmates said “goodbye.”

Thanks to St. Katharine Drexel and her half-sister, Louise Morrell, African Americans such as myself were able to experience a first-class Catholic education.

When I entered St. Emma in 1962, St. Emma Industrial and Agricultural College for Boys had become St. Emma Military Academy as far back as 1934 when my dad graduated. The academy offered a secondary education along with military science studies and training in an industrial trade such as carpentry, plumbing, electricity, tailoring, shoe repair, auto mechanics, woodworking and agriculture. There were catechism classes and daily Masses.

My memories also go back to the Lenten seasons, when socials and dances between St. Emma cadets and St. Francis de Sales’ girls were delayed until Easter.

I also recall the military parades on Easter Sundays, when my parents, relatives and large crowds gathered to gaze at the marvelous formations and socialized afterward.

Even though St. Emma closed in 1970, my aging classmates and I, and those classes before me, can hold on to the special memories for years. These experiences were all possible because St. Katharine Drexel and the wonderful Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament touched so many lives, especially African Americans and Native Americans.

The photo of St. Katharine Drexel will be a keepsake.

– **Matthew Thomas Jr. Bedford**

**Clericalism hinders Church’s divine mission**

Though I appreciate his intentions, I’m afraid Father Pat Apuzzo has muddied the waters somewhat in his treatment of “clericalism” (Catholic Virginian, April 6). The phenomenon he ascribes to “some laypersons” and to “some clerics” is better

termed a “general sense of moral superiority.”

It can be common to all Catholic Christians and, in fact, to all human beings. Witness the New Testament parable of the pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:9-14).

Bishop Robert Barron, in his “Word on Fire” series on notable Catholics, has a treatise on the author Flannery O’Connor. The latter clearly demonstrates the evils of moral superiority in her short story, “Revelations.” “Clericalism,” however, is a specific type of moral superiority attributable only to clerics.

The author Stephen Boehrer, a laicized priest, perfectly illustrates the reality of clericalism in his book “Purple Culture.” Despite the fact that “there are a lot of deacons, priests and bishops who do not fall into clericalism,” according to Father Apuzzo, there are too many who have and, sadly, many who still do.

Much of the cover-up for the ugly abuse scandal in the Church can be attributed directly to clericalism. Pope Francis himself has identified clericalism as a major impediment standing in the way of the Church’s divine mission. We Catholics cannot afford to muddy that reality.

– **Francis M. Glynn Yorktown**

**Letter was insult to African American Catholics**

This letter is a response to Jack Rowett’s letter (Catholic Virginian, March 23). He states that the disproportionately high number of African Americans in our prison system is caused by their culture of pregnant teenagers, absent fathers and rampant crime.

Is he suggesting that single parenting, abandonment, and illegal behaviors are exclusively African American characteristics? Is he suggesting that the white population of the prisons don’t share many of the same problems?

This higher rate of incarceration of African Americans has been with us throughout history. Virginia, much to our shame, has a history of enslaving multiple generations of African Americans to the most brutal form of incarceration. And then “separate, but equal” and Jim Crow laws led to persistent institutional, systemic racism. Our legacy of mistreatment of African Americans has ensured that they remain disadvantaged as

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we remain advantaged.

African Americans have been in this country since the very beginning. Their communities, neighborhoods and schools should look like all the other affluent neighborhoods and schools that we white people feel entitled to enjoy. But indeed, they do not. The sad fact is that prejudice, discrimination and racism continue to plague many African American communities.

It is an insult to the faithful and loving African American Catholics who read this newspaper to have “their culture” maligned by superficial, mean-spirited and inaccurate sociological theory. Their deep commitment to our faith and the abiding belief in “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” are lived on a daily basis by our African American friends.

– **Helen Henrich New Kent**

**Focus on salvation of souls**

Jack Rowett’s letter (Catholic Virginian, March 23) seems to have touched several nerves. However, the statistical fallacies abound.

First on the bonfire of vanities is that correlation implies causation. Statistical studies always mention controls when demonstrating causation — a lack of causation must be demonstrably absurd statistically. Most of the statistics cited are meaningless correlations in the absence of controls. Second, case studies lack generality specifically since there are no controls.

Studies controlling for the effects of race, income, and education show a culture of fatherlessness and teen pregnancy likely partially causes problematic behavior. This defends Rowett’s final statement, but little else.

Similarly, controlled studies show that lack of access to good legal services (where lawyer’s income quasi-substitutes for quality) leads to more incarceration as noted by Rachel Condon. Our final log on the bonfire — peer review of flawed studies does not catch all errors.

However, Catholics, ought to focus on the salvation of souls. Indeed, social justice degenerates into “the soft bigotry of low expectations” without first giving the gift of faith. Social sci-

ence atheistically recognizes churches as social levelers.

Without faith firmly proclaiming our equality before God, there is no leveling. Without welcoming all into our family of faith, there is no leveling. Using language to place certain groups in their own “separate but equal” Mass or offer the Mass preferring one vernacular against another inhibits leveling. Hence, universal Latin equalizes and gathers — as Vatican II promoted.

Equal before God, we implore him in the Lord’s Prayer to address our spiritual needs first in the Eucharist, our daily bread, and then our temporal daily bread. People universally need Christ!

– **Timothy Olmsted Farmville**

**Positive development**

During this distressing time of global pestilence with its accompanying sickness, death, economic hardships, and disruption of normal life, including the loss of public Masses, at least one positive development has occurred.

In the Diocese of Richmond, our Lord, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament in tabernacles, has emerged from distantly placed adoration chapels to appear front and center in the main bodies of our churches which is his proper place.

The ways of the Lord are mysterious indeed. Let us pray that after this trying period has passed our Lord will remain front and center so that the faithful may more readily behold and adore their king.

– **Mary Jo Anger Chester**

**Pandemic a ‘sacred, holy time’**

With all of our advances in the past 50 or so years in science, medicine and technology, many of us and society in general seem to be so self-satisfied and absorbed in our accomplishments that we have felt no time nor need for God, much less the need to acknowledge him!

But in the midst of our recently completed Lent and creation’s joyous hallelujahs to spring’s renewal, God has not forgotten nor forsaken us!

In his perfect timing, and especially in our diocese’s bicentennial, a time of jubilee, he has ordered our lives, in a very concrete way, to come back to him and to experience our own spiritual renewal and his deep and everlasting love.

Literally, God’s very important announcement and command to us and to the world is: “Be still and know that I am God!”

Is he using tough love to accomplish this? Most definitely! But often, as we know, when a child has been headstrong, hostile and estranged through sin, even a most loving parent needs to use tough love to gain that child’s attention and to let the child know the situation is serious.

Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic can be life-threatening, but what a sacred, holy time this truly is in so many ways! So, with this grace-filled, God-given holy season in our history, may we implore his forgiveness and accept love’s invitation to return to him and receive the peace that only God can give.

– **Sharon Lucas Henrico**

**CV letters policy**

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## COURAGEOUS CHARITY:

### VIRGINIA'S CATHOLIC HEROES IN TIMES OF PESTILENCE

*Editor's note: Throughout the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's bicentennial year, The Catholic Virginian will publish the history of the diocese in the Shine Like Stars in the World section that will appear in the last issue of each month. The content of this section is provided by the Bicentennial Task Force.*

**FATHER ANTHONY E. MARQUES**  
Chair, Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
Bicentennial Task Force

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a calamity. It has caused suffering and death throughout the world, produced economic turbulence and upended ordinary life for millions of people. This contagion has also forced the Church to adapt to new circumstances in order to continue providing spiritual and charitable assistance at a time when such care has become more urgent.

In the Diocese of Richmond, as in other places, this is not the first experience of pestilence. Several waves of yellow fever battered Norfolk and Portsmouth (1821, 1826, 1855), and the Spanish flu (1918–1920) cut a path of destruction across Virginia. Countless persons worked to alleviate the sufferings of others during those outbreaks.

Among those whose deeds are known are several Catholics who acted out of faith. Their heroism contributed to the common good and provided hope. It also helped to lessen anti-Catholic bigotry in Virginia.

Patrick Kelly (1779–1829) had a brief but arduous tenure as the first bishop of Richmond (1821–1822). He had come from Ireland to lead the newly formed diocese that was rent by schism, meaning a formal division among believers (ca. 1794–1821).

Owing to a lack of financial resources, the Richmond Diocese was placed under the administration of the archbishop of Baltimore (1822–1850), and Kelly was transferred to the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore in Ireland (1822).

In the fall of 1821, Bishop Kelly ministered to victims of a yellow fever epidemic in Norfolk. A fellow bishop, John England of Charleston (1786–1842), wrote that Kelly, “was constant in his attendance upon the sick, and during months, was every day



Father Matthew O'Keefe

amongst the infected, solacing, cheering, instructing, and administering sacraments to the diseased.”

This ministry included receiving numerous non-Catholics into the Church. Kelly himself recounted that, “All the Protestant ministers fled,” whereas he, by carrying out his pastoral duties, had gained “the admiration and veneration of the Americans.”

Five years later, yellow fever struck Norfolk once more (1826). The priest stationed there and in Portsmouth, Father Christopher Delaney (ordained ca. 1821), likewise ministered to victims. Delaney had come with Bishop Kelly from Ireland as a newly ordained priest; after Kelly's departure (1822), he remained in the Norfolk and Portsmouth area, and made occasional pastoral visits to Richmond.

The recurrence of yellow fever devastated Norfolk and Portsmouth in 1855, claiming 3,000 lives. At the time, the cause of “yellow jack” was unknown. It was not until 1900 that an Army doctor, Walter Reed (1851–1902), who was born in Belroi (Gloucester County), and was a graduate

of the University of Virginia, confirmed the theory that a type of mosquito transmitted the disease.

Two priests and a laywoman acted bravely during the 1855 epidemic. Father Matthew O'Keefe (1828–1906), pastor of St. Patrick Church (later rebuilt as St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception) in Norfolk, was twice infected in the course of ministering to Catholic and Protestant victims, and survived.

In what was an unusual friendship and ecumenical partnership, O'Keefe and the Reverend George Armstrong (1813–1899), a local Presbyterian minister, pledged that if either should die from the pestilence, the other would conduct his funeral. Both men survived. Four decades later, O'Keefe officiated at the funeral of his friend.

Across the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth, Father Francis Devlin (1813–1855), pastor of St. Paul Church, contracted yellow fever three times while ministering during the outbreak and eventually died from the infection. The people of Portsmouth erected a monument to commemorate this “humble Priest, the faithful Pastor, who sacrificed his life, in the cause of Charity, during the plague of 1855.”

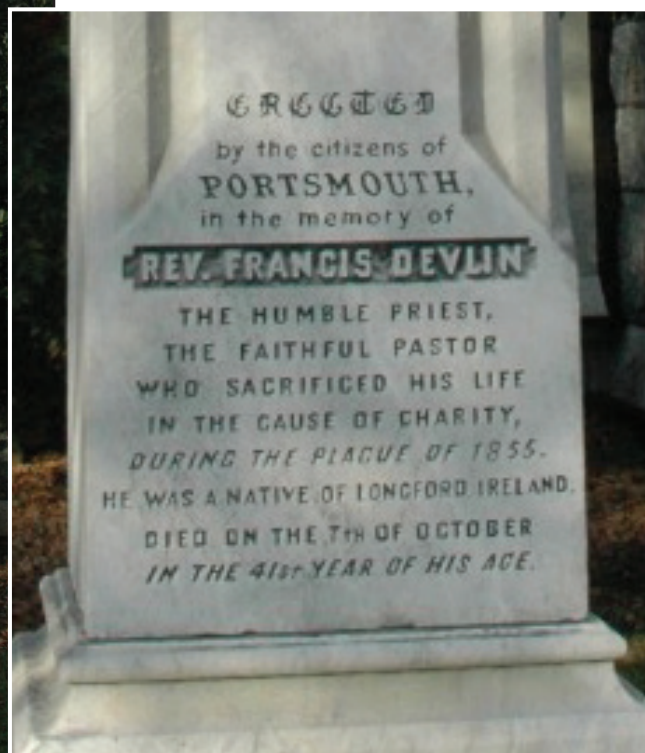
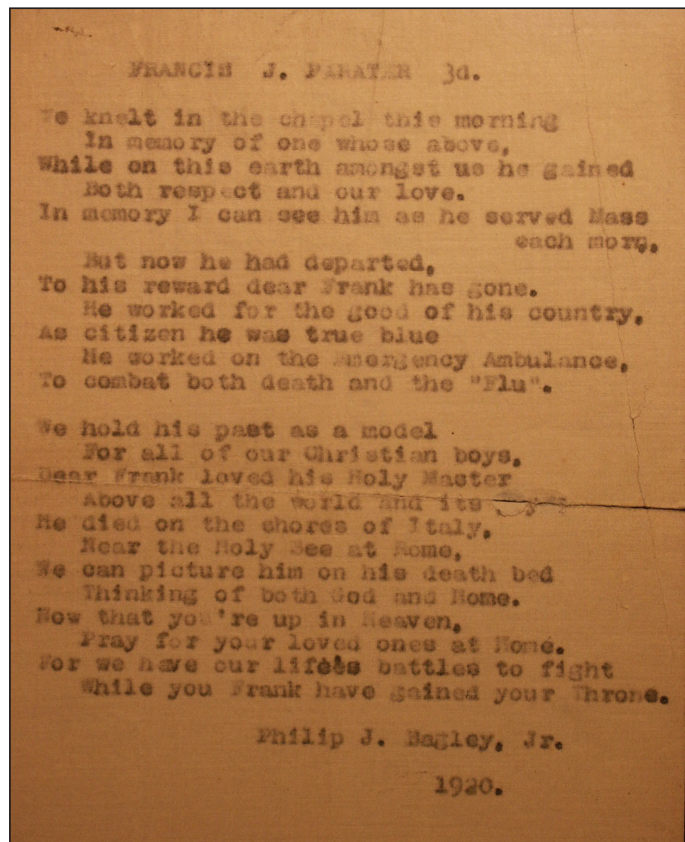
In Norfolk, Ann Behan Plume Herron (1802–1855), a benefactor of the Church, transformed her home into a hospital where the Daughters of Charity cared for victims of yellow fever. Herron nursed her infected slaves and, before dying, donated her mansion to the religious sisters. This was the first Catholic hospital in Virginia, which was later named the Hospital of St. Vincent de Paul, today DePaul Medical Center (1856).

The influenza pandemic of 1918–1920 was called the “Spanish flu” because early news reports focused on cases in Spain, which, as a neutral country during World War I (1914–1918), did not censor negative information the way belligerent countries did. The virus spread as the Great War came to end and accelerated because of troop movements. The Spanish flu killed 50 million people worldwide, including 675,000 in the United States and 15,000 in Virginia.

In Richmond, an Eagle Scout and devout Catholic named Francis (Frank) J. Parater III (1897–1920), together with other scouts, helped begin an ambulance service to transport victims to hospitals. Parater then went to Rome for theological studies as a seminarian for the Diocese of Richmond. There he contracted rheumatic fever and died at the age of 22, having offered his life and sufferings “for the spread and success of the Catholic Church in Virginia.”

Philip J. Bagley Jr. (1904–1996), a fellow Catholic and later mayor of Richmond (1968–1970), extolled Parater’s charitable actions in a 1920 poem: “But now he has departed, / To his reward dear Frank has gone. / He worked for the good of his country, As a citizen he was true blue / He worked on the Emergency Ambulance / To combat both death and the ‘Flu.’”

The annals of the Diocese of Richmond demonstrate that the Church strives to accomplish its mission even in harrowing circumstances. During times of pestilence, outstanding Catholic men and women in Virginia have served their communities by acts of charity that give witness to their faith. The Church’s work continues during the current pandemic.



**Father Francis Devlin monument.**  
(Photo/ Maggie McAllister  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/62430661/francis-devlin>)



**TIME CAPSULE**

*Continued from Page 2*

personal faith that had been involuntarily professed at infant baptism, which would reduce confirmation to the mere act of reaffirming one’s faith at a mature age (II, 3, 18). Still, this misunderstanding of confirmation lingered, even as it does today.

The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop (II, 3, 11). Like his predecessors and successors, Andrew J. Brennan (1877–1956), the eighth bishop of Richmond (1926–1945), administered confirmation across a vast territory.

At that time, the Richmond Diocese included the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. When the western counties of Virginia seceded during the Civil War and formed West Virginia (1863), the Diocese of Wheeling covered most of the new state as well as southwest Virginia, while the Diocese of Richmond covered the remainder of Virginia and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.

The boundaries of the Richmond and Wheeling dioceses were finally reconfigured to coincide with state lines in 1974. At the same time the territory of northern Virginia became the newly formed Diocese of Arlington.

During his tenure, Bishop Brennan began a diocesan newspaper, the Catholic Virginian (1931), and opened two homes for children in need: St. Joseph’s Villa in Richmond (1931) and

the Barry-Robinson School for Boys in Norfolk (1934). Brennan also led the diocese during the Great Depression (1929–1939).

He experienced a stroke in 1934 that left him unable to function as bishop. Peter L. Ireton of Baltimore was appointed coadjutor (meaning that he would automatically succeed Brennan as bishop) and administrator of the diocese (1935), although Brennan did not formally resign his position until 1945.

*Editor’s note: Given the restrictions on public gatherings brought on by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the celebration of confirmation has been suspended. Once public Masses resume, local pastors will confer the sacrament in their parishes.*

# Jesus can forgive, heal based on person's intention



**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**  
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

**Q.** I am a recent (fervent) convert to the Catholic Church. I am also a registered nurse and have held many patients as they passed into eternity. I am concerned over the issue of priests being “barred” from hospitals during the coronavirus pandemic; I have heard many Catholics bemoan the fact that, as a result, the sick and dying are being denied the sacrament of the sick.

Can this sacrament be done by intention? Could we somehow comfort people — those who are denied the sacrament through the inaccessibility of priests — that Jesus can heal simply through his grace and the person's faith? (Tallahassee, Florida)

**A.** Your perspective is right on target: Jesus can forgive and heal based on a person's intention. In fact, in late March 2020, the chair of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Divine Worship made that same point.

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, explained that what the Vatican had said the previous week about the sacrament of penance can be applied analogously to the anointing of the sick. The Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary said:

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present unable to express) and accompanied by ‘votum confessionis,’ that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones.”

Archbishop Blair issued his statement to clarify and correct a “solution” that had been proposed earlier by Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Massachusetts. In an email to priests of his diocese, he had said, “I am allowing the assigned Catholic hospital chaplains, standing outside a patient's room or away from their bedside, to dab a cotton swab with holy oil and then allow a nurse to enter the patient's room and administer the oil.”

Speaking to the U.S. bishops, after conferring with the Vatican, Archbishop Blair said, “With regard to the anointing of the sick, it is not possible for the anointing with oil to be delegated to someone else, such as a nurse or doctor.” Bishop Rozanski immediately rescinded the permission he had granted earlier.

Which brings us back to your valuable insight: In a circumstance

where a physical anointing is impossible, God can read a person's soul.

**Q.** My family have been dedicated Catholics for generations. Recently, a nephew of mine announced that he is planning to get married in a civil ceremony. (Neither he nor his fiancée is dedicated to a religion. He is a “fallen-away Catholic.”)

As the eldest in the family, I am saddened by this turn of events and have researched the stand of my religion relative to my participation in this union. The guidance I'm finding is not very direct as to the Church's stance. Can you provide me some clarity? (City of origin withheld)

**A.** I am not surprised that you are finding varying guidance in your dilemma. It is a “strategy question” with no hard and fast “rule.” You are trying to strike a balance between fidelity to the Church's teaching and your legitimate desire to maintain family harmony, and different people will have different ideas as to how to do that.

My suggestion: Go to the wedding, but first sit down and talk with your nephew. Tell him that you feel a certain awkwardness in attending, since he is not being married in a religious ceremony. Explain to him what the Catholic faith has meant to you, how it has sustained you over the years, offering comfort and guidance.

Tell him how much he means to you and that your deepest hope and prayer is that, one day, he might return to the practice of the faith he grew up with and seek the Church's blessing on his marriage.

If you do that, he will not see your attendance as an “endorsement” by the Church, you will not risk a family rupture that could be permanent, and you keep open the possibility of his return to Catholic practice through your prayer and gentle example.

**Q.** I have read that Joe Biden, when he was vice president, presided over a same-sex wedding. He professes to be a Roman Catholic. I would think that his officiating at this ceremony would have resulted in his excommunication. Has he been excommunicated? And if not, what is the reasoning behind that? (Little Rock, Arkansas)

**A.** It is true that in 2016, Biden presided at a same-sex wedding for two men who were longtime White House aides. The ceremony took place at the vice presidential residence at the Naval Observatory.

Reaction from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was swift. Within a matter of days, three officials of the conference — without mentioning Biden by name,

*See Doyle, Page 10*

(Questions may be sent to [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)

OUR FAITH AND  
MISSION WILL  
ALWAYS CONTINUE

BUILDING OUR  
FAMILY OF  
FAITH

2020 ANNUAL  
DIOCESAN APPEAL

Catholic  
Community  
Foundation  
of the Diocese of Richmond



This is certainly an unprecedented time in our world. It's important to remember that, no matter what, our faith and mission will always continue. Because of sacrifice and generosity to the Annual Diocesan Appeal, we can bring Christ to those most in need in many ways such as by addressing the larger issues of poverty and homelessness which can only be accomplished by combining our resources. The Appeal also helps support vocations, youth and young adult ministries, prison ministry and formation of lay leaders which is so critical for us in these sad days. These are just a few of the ways the Appeal makes a difference. We sincerely hope and pray that all of you are staying healthy and safe during this time.

[richmondcatholicfoundation.org/giving/annual-appeal](http://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/giving/annual-appeal)

## What is a plenary indulgence?

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On Friday, March 27, Pope Francis extended an extraordinary blessing “urbi et orbi” (to Rome and the world) in the face of the pandemic coronavirus. With the blessing, the Holy Father bestowed a plenary, i.e., full indulgence to the faithful who watched or listened to the extraordinary blessing, or who could not do either.

Also, a full indulgence goes to those who are in the hospital or in quarantine with the coronavirus. The same indulgence goes to the family members of those who have tested positive and to health care workers and others who assist those who are sick with the virus.

As the pope grants indulgences, he provides the opportunity to recognize indulgences as a testimony to how much the Church trusts in Christ's mercy.

St. Pope John Paul II once pointed out that an indulgence is not a quick ticket to heaven. Instead, with the gift of an indulgence, the Church opens its eyes to the full damage of our sinfulness. Catholics must receive an indulgence with a resolve for ongoing conversion. That conversion works

to heal the results of sin, repairs the damage from those sins, draws one farther away from sin and closer to the fullness of life in Christ.

To avoid approaching indulgences in a glib way, the Church establishes duties required for receiving indulgences. These obligations consist of spiritual activities to help set and stay the course, as well as sustain the pursuit of ongoing conversion.

Among the conditions for receiving the indulgences granted expressly during the coronavirus pandemic are:

- A spirit of attachment from sin
- Sacramental confession and eucharistic Communion as soon as possible
- Join in prayer with the intentions of the Holy Father
- Through the media, unite spiritually in celebrations of Mass
- Scripture reading, recitation of the rosary, Stations of the Cross and other devotions
- Prayer and contemplation before the reserved sacrament and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.



# God will supply what we need to remain faithful



“I keep expecting him to walk through the door. Or, I’m ready to share an idea, ask a question or make a comment and then I realize he’s gone.”

Betsy’s husband died unexpectedly, and the shock of his death was still fresh when she made that comment. Anyone who’s lost a loved one can relate.

It makes me wonder what it was like for the apostles when three days after Jesus died, he began appearing to them, walking through walls, breaking bread and cooking breakfast. The events of the past few days must have seemed like a nightmare from which they had just awakened, and yet confusion and disbelief led to more question than answers.

What did Jesus’ resurrection mean? What would their life be like now? Did his rising from the dead mean that he would finally establish the kingdom they had all expected? For the apostles who were experiencing the dying and rising of Jesus in real time, nothing made sense.

Unlike the apostles, we know the end of the story and have answers to their questions, yet we still live in times of uncertainty, and unknowns continue to challenge us and test our faith. Like the apostle Thomas who found it hard to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, reassurance comes most often when we touch the wounds of Christ by touching the wounds of his people.

When discipleship takes us to Calvary, the resurrection of Jesus is more than just another Gospel story, the Paschal Mystery is a lived reality, not simply a profession of faith. Without the cross the resurrection loses its significance, and like it or not, the cross is the only way we can experience the resurrection.

To believe God loves us when life places us at the foot of the cross requires faith, but faith cannot be a standalone virtue. Unless faith leads to hope, and hope inspires charity, we are what St. Paul referred to as “a noisy gong and clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). The apostle James used even stronger language: “Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (Jas 2:18).

In recent years a spirit of isolationism has plagued our country and has become a rallying cry among developed nations, much to our detriment. Perhaps one lesson we can take from the spread of the coronavirus is that one person’s behavior affects the lives of many. Our connectedness to one another crosses boundaries, oceans and airspace

We are created in God’s image, which means we are a community. The oneness of being that is manifested in the love relationship between the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit calls us to live in communion with people around the globe.

As one in the Body of Christ, when one person hurts, we all hurt, and the entire world suffers. The coronavirus, which has been dubbed the invisible enemy, is not the only enemy we are having to confront. During times of crisis, we are called to examine the enemy within.

The element of surprise is an effective way to get people’s attention, arouse curiosity and investigate options. Jesus certainly got the attention of the apostles when he rose from the

dead, and COVID-19 has certainly captured ours.

Like the apostles, we are being called to look beyond the cross, embrace our limitations and trust that God will supply what is needed to remain faithful. Had the apostles known in the beginning that discipleship would lead to martyrdom, they would not have answered Jesus’ call to “Follow me,” which is the reason God meets us where we are on the journey. As Jesus said, those who have more will be given more, and he wasn’t talking about monetary wealth.

Hopefully, the resurrection story enkindles in us a new way of seeing, prompting us to set aside self-serving aspirations and to re-order values and priorities. God still uses the cross to transform disciples from sayers to believers to doers. God didn’t cause the coronavirus, but he can use it if we take to heart the lessons it has to teach.

One day we’ll remember these sad times: the daily count of the dead, lines at the hospitals, the frantic search for personal protective equipment and respirators. We will regard health care workers, grocery clerks and good Samaritans as life-saving heroes.

However, as people of faith, we are all called to do our part by sharing the gifts God has given us. Our act is to pray for an end to the pandemic, pray for those on the front lines, pray for family and friends and pray for the Church.

As an army of believers, we fight the invisible enemy with the invisible power of faith, made visible through the power of love.

*Barbara Hughes is an author, retreat facilitator and spiritual guide. She lives in Virginia Beach and can be reached at brhughes16@gmail.com.*

# Let Spirit provide courage on journey through darkness



For the seven Sundays of Easter, accounts from the Acts of the Apostles replace the Old Testament stories in the first reading at Mass. This gets a bit confusing, since these episodes in Acts happen after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Gospel readings in the season of Easter spend seven weeks catching up, recounting the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the slow dawn of Easter faith experienced by his disciples.

The verses of Psalm 16, selected for this Third Sunday of Easter, make an obvious connection to the first reading. In preaching to the vast crowd immediately after the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, Peter quotes Psalm 16 as a kind of proof text.

The author of Luke-Acts places the Greek version of the psalm on his lips, bringing forth “you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption” as a prophetic reference to the resurrection of Jesus.

Rendered in the original Hebrew, this text speaks to the life situation of the psalmist threat-

ened by illness or calamity. Another translation, “For you will not abandon me to Sheol, not let your servant see the pit,” comes closer to the Hebrew original and expresses an expectation of rescue from death, not necessarily life after it.

At the time of Jesus, resurrection from the dead was a controversial concept: The Pharisees accepted it; the Sadducees did not. At the time of the psalm’s composition, centuries before, the ideas of resurrection and afterlife had not dawned on Jewish religious sensibility.

Sheol, and its parallel noun, pit, simply meant the place of the dead, where the breath of God no longer animated the bodies placed there.

Luke-Acts, written in Greek by a fluent and artful speaker of the language, naturally rests on the Greek translation of the Hebrew Testament (called the Septuagint for the 70 scholars who completed it). In the case of Psalm 16, this later rendering of the text in translation shows subtle evidence of a shift in the understanding of resurrection.

In the familiar tale of the road to Emmaus, we recognize the Eucharistic pattern embedded in the story — the gathering of persons, breaking open of Scripture, blessing and breaking of bread, real presence revealed — and most often, our sense of its meaning comes to rest right there.

In this time, however, amid our extended fast from the full experience of eucharistic liturgy, other aspects of the story resonate more profoundly.

The Emmaus-bound runaways leave Jerusalem, seeking the security of their home, sev-

en miles distant from the hotspot. They have already heard about the empty tomb and the testimony of angelic messengers, but they cannot take it in.

Dashed hopes, overwhelming grief and fear for their own lives have rendered them deaf to the good news of resurrection. Then, something happens; the Risen One joins them on their journey.

Jesus meets them, amid their fear and flight from danger. He listens; he speaks. Wanting to hear more, they invite him into their hiding place. He accepts their hospitality and returns it, playing host at their table, even as the lights of evening are kindled against the growing darkness outside. Finally, they recognize him, and he vanishes.

Now they realize that he has been with them all along. They remember the warmth they felt in their hearts as he spoke to them and opened the Scriptures. Immediately, they set off — in the dark — headed back to the community of his disciples. Fear and grief are overcome by the loving, forgiving, consoling presence of the Risen Christ.

In the language of Psalm 16, Christ has counseled them, spoken to their hearts, shown them the path of life and set them on the return journey with abounding joy in his presence.

Christ’s presence abides with us, right here, right now. May his Spirit give us courage on this journey through the dark.

*Melanie holds a master’s in pastoral studies from Loyola University, New Orleans.*

## Third Sunday of Easter

**Acts 2:14, 22-33**

**Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11**

**1 Pt 1:17-21**

**Lk 24:13-35**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Benedictine Sister Mary Leo Wirt**

Having celebrated her 95th birthday seven days earlier, Benedictine Sister Mary Leo Wirt died on Thursday, April 9, 2020. Born Shirley Bethleen in Richmond, to Emmett and Agnes (O'Connor) Wirt, she entered Saint Benedict Monastery in Bristow, 75 years ago. Shortly after profession, she began her teaching career at Linton Hall Military School in Bristow, where she would eventually serve for 38 years. In Richmond she taught at St. Benedict, St. Paul, Sacred Heart and Saint Gertrude High School.

Sister Mary Leo retired from teaching in 1996, becoming the community procurator until 2003. From 2003 until her death, she worked tirelessly for the benefit of the monastery through the annual Holydays Holidays Sale.

A public celebration of Sister Mary Leo's life will take place at Saint Benedict Monastery at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia.

**Restocking the pantry**



Doc Kildare, a member of the Knights of Columbus Council at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen, unloads food donated by a parishioner on Friday, April 3. Parishioners were invited to contribute items to a food pantry when they came to pick up palms at the parish. More than 800 bags of food were collected. (Photo/Brian T. Olszewski)

**Sisters**

*Continued from Page 3*

praying, concentrating.

Six machines are used in the operation. Five of them are from the original monastery in Church Hill; one was purchased 10 years ago. The sisters hope to buy two more machines in November in anticipation of older machines breaking down.

**More vocations needed**

Bringing more women on board is the monastery's deep desire. Like Pope Francis, who has stated, "The abandonment of consecrated life worries us," the sisters are worried about the declining number of vocations.

Those entering religious life report that vocational programs and experiences, including retreats, figure prominently in the discernment process. Accordingly, Monte Maria offers individual discernment retreats, and it will have a Discernment Day on Saturday, June 20.

Attending a retreat was part of the discernment process for 24-year-old Sister Olivia, the youngest member of the community and the monastery's second-year and only novice. Her next steps are making temporary vows and then, after five years of temporary profession, final vows.

She wanted to be a sister

from the time she was a little girl in an orphanage in Poland where she and her brothers experienced the kindness of sisters. She wanted to be like them when she grew up. Mutual friends introduced her to the sisters at Monte Maria.

"I have been able to persevere so far with God's help and with the help of the prayers of the priests I know," she said.

The sisters are hopeful that a Jubilee Year currently underway for them in celebration of the 100th anniversary of St. Margaret Mary's canonization will help them increase their novitiate, perhaps bringing them another young woman who will want to explore the cloistered life by making a discernment retreat.

Sister Marie Hélène, who is the formator for Monte Maria, stressed the importance of praying for those in new vocations as well.

"The formation period is long since it takes time to make the changes that are needed in order to become a good religious," she said. "Prayers are definitely needed for new vocations that God will give them the grace of perseverance."

*Editor's note: For information regarding the jubilee and/or Visitandine vocations, contact the Monte Maria Monastery. Phone 804-749-4885, or email info@visitmontemaria.com*

**Doyle**

*Continued from Page 6*

but clearly referencing his action — said this: "When a prominent Catholic politician publicly and voluntarily officiates at a ceremony to solemnize the relationship of people of the same sex, confusion arises regarding Catholic teaching on marriage and the corresponding moral obligations of Catholics." Such an action, the bishops wrote, "is a counterwitness, instead of a faithful one founded in the truth."

Their statement continued, "Pope Francis has been very clear in affirming the truth and constant teaching of the Church that same-sex relationships cannot be considered 'in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and the family.'"

As to the question of excommunication, Edward Peters, professor of canon law at Detroit's major seminary, explained at the time in his blog that there is no specific canon that excommunicates a Catholic for officiating at a same-sex wedding and that Biden would have to demonstrate a pattern of behavior that violates Church law in order to trigger formal disciplinary action.

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With a view toward their history and a desire to strengthen Catholic education, Benedictine College Preparatory and Saint Gertrude High School unified under a single new corporation, The Benedictine Schools of Richmond, in January 2020.

# Easter means 'Passage'

JOSÉ ANTONIO PAGOLA

*And they were filled with joy*

**E**aster is a Semitic word that comes from the Aramaic "pasha" (in Hebrew "pesah"). Its original meaning is disputed. It probably means "passage," "transition" and in this sense it is used in various Jewish writings.

In any case, the first Christians have understood Easter as "the passage" of Christ from death to life, which also invites us to "pass" from an old and worn out life to a renewed one.

So, Easter is not just a feast that is celebrated liturgically. The resurrection of Christ is celebrated, above all, in raising us to a new life. For the first Christians, the resurrection of Christ contains an energy capable of transforming existence, filling it with new vitality.

The Gospels insist precisely on this transformation that occurs when meeting the Risen One. Those men locked up in their houses after the Master's death, go from anguish to peace, from fear to joy, from cowardice to the courageous proclamation of the Gospel.

Where do we have to change? What is the "step" we must take? In what direction should "the Easter change" operate in our lives?

Some of us are perhaps asked to move from a superficial and dispersed life to a more authentic and unified existence; from a passive or conventional attitude to a more creative and spontaneous disposition.

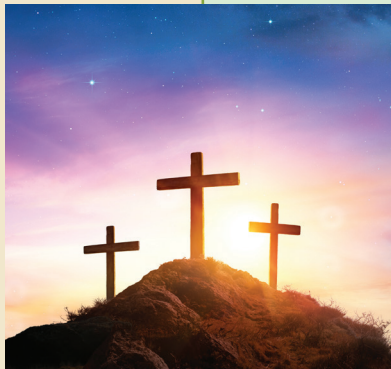
Perhaps Easter is the passage from aggressiveness and resentment to one of welcome and love; from the intransigent and conflictive to one of tolerance and peace.

For some, Easter may be a call to take a step from suspicious and lonely to trusting and friendly; from hoarder and individualist to generous and supportive; from invasive and unfriendly to respectful and friendly.

For others, Easter will perhaps be an invitation to renew their life, going from the apathetic and boring to the sensitive and festive; from the sad and nervous to the serene and happy; from the pessimistic and bitter to the hopeful.

All of us are probably asked to renew our attitude before God. Go from fear to trust, from flight to surrender, from arrogance to humility, from forgetfulness to prayer, from unbelief to faith.

Easter means "passing" from death to life. Celebrating Easter is living in us a process of personal renewal.



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# Pascua significa «Paso»

*Se llenaron de alegría*

**P**ascua es una palabra de origen semita que proviene del arameo «pasha» (en hebreo «pesah»). Su significado original es discutido. Probablemente significa «paso», «tránsito» y con este sentido es empleada en diversos escritos judíos.

En cualquier caso, las primeras generaciones cristianas han entendido la Pascua como «el paso» de Cristo de la muerte a la vida, que nos invita también a nosotros a «pasar» de una vida vieja y gastada a una vida renovada.

Por eso, Pascua no es sólo una fiesta que se celebra de manera litúrgica. La resurrección de Cristo se celebra, sobre todo, en nosotros mismos, resucitando a una vida nueva. Para los primeros cristianos, la resurrección de Cristo encierra una energía capaz de transformar la existencia llenándola de nueva vitalidad.

Los relatos evangélicos insisten precisamente en esa transformación que se produce al encontrarse con el Resucitado. Esos hombres encerrados en su casa después de la muerte del Maestro, pasan de la angustia a la paz, del miedo a la alegría, de la cobardía al anuncio valiente del evangelio.

¿Hacia dónde hemos de cambiar nosotros? ¿Cuál es el «paso» que hemos de dar? ¿En qué dirección se ha de operar «el cambio pascual» en nuestras vidas?

A algunos se nos pide, tal vez, pasar de una vida superficial y dispersa a una existencia más auténtica y unificada; de una actitud pasiva o convencional a una postura más creativa y espontánea.

Quizás Pascua ha de ser para otros el paso de ese hombre agresivo y resentido que hay en nosotros a otro más acogedor y amoroso; de ese hombre intransigente y conflictivo a otro más tolerante y pacificador.

Para alguno, Pascua puede ser una llamada a dar un paso en esta dirección: de receloso y solitario a confiado y amistoso; de acaparador e individualista a generoso y solidario; de invasor y antipático a respetuoso y amable.

Para otro, Pascua será tal vez una invitación a renovar su vida pasando del hombre apático y aburrido al ser sensible y festivo; del triste y crispado al sereno y alegre; del pesimista y amargado al esperanzado.

Probablemente, a todos se nos pide renovar nuestra actitud ante Dios. Pasar del miedo a la confianza, de la huida a la entrega, de la arrogancia a la humildad, del olvido a la oración, de la incredulidad a la fe.

Pascua significa «pasar» de la muerte a la vida. Celebrar la Pascua es vivir en nosotros un proceso de renovación personal.



## Unidos en la Fe

Formación Virtual para Líderes Parroquiales

- April 21 – Liderazgo: La Pascua y la unión en comunión
- April 28 – Los primeros cristianos y los tiempos de crisis
- May 5 – Liderazgo: La Virgen María y el acompañamiento maternal
- May 12 – La Virgen María: Esposa del Espíritu Santo
- May 19 – El liderazgo de Jesucristo y la Virgen María
- May 26 – El Espíritu Santo: Sanación de cuerpo, alma y espíritu
- June 2 – El liderazgo de San Andrés y San Pedro
- June 9 – Corpus Christi y la Santísima Trinidad
- June 16 – El liderazgo de los primeros cristianos
- June 23 – El Sagrado Corazón de Jesús
- June 30 – La Iglesia católica y el liderazgo del futuro.

Inscribase en: <https://richmonddiocese.org/office/office-of-hispanic-ministry/>

## Palm Sunday and Easter



Fr. Alexander Muddu, pastor of Saint Mary of the Annunciation, Ladsy Smith, blesses a parishioner picking up palms on Saturday, April 4. More than 60 members of the community took advantage of the opportunity. (Courtesy photo)



Following his private, livestreamed Mass on Easter Sunday, April 12, at Star of the Sea, Virginia Beach, Father Steve De Leon, pastor of the parish, came to the curb to bless people in their cars. (Photo/Joy Palm)

## Celebrating

Continued from Page 1

"In a world that values and draws our attention to stature and dignity and clever words and great deeds, God's power and dignity, his stature and truth are revealed in a cataclysm of passion, suffering and death," he said, adding that all of that was revealed as Christ's light was "obscured and his life sacrificed."

Bishop Knestout continued, "Therefore, we are invited to listen to God's word with attention and obedience, to sacrifice our lives with reverence and piety, and to accept his reign over our hearts and lives with courage and devotion."

At the Easter Vigil, the bishop spoke about darkness, death, confusion and "uncertainty of a pestilence on the land." But he said that can be overcome.

"Our faith and the truth of what we celebrate tonight should give us courage and strength. Christ brings light out of darkness. He suffers, dies and rises from the dead!" he said.

Noting the resurrection, ascension and Pentecost, the bishop said, "We know about the power and courage that comes with it. We can peer through the clouds of uncertainty and sorrow and see a cause of joy and hope."

Bishop Knestout concluded, "God has conquered death! It is true — he has risen, and we share that resurrected life here and now! Even if the world is filled with reminders of chaos, darkness death and sorrow, he is risen and we can confront the terrors of the night, and the arrows of plague that fly by day, with the armor of our faith, the confidence in Christ who has conquered sin and death, and gives us light and life, today and every day."

More than 16,000 people viewed the liturgies via YouTube, while more than 10,000 viewed them on Facebook.

## Rosary

Continued from Page 1

Dakota, Washington, New Jersey — all over the country," he said, noting more than 200 people had participated as of Palm Sunday night.

Participants are asked to pray for safety of health care professionals, recovery of those suffering with the virus, wisdom for Church and government leaders, those suffering from the economic impact of the virus and God's infinite wisdom to provide a cure.

"As Vincentians, our mission is the spiritual growth of our members through service to those in need. Katrina's idea of this rosary was the true embodiment of what St. Vincent de Paul is about," Kearns said, adding, "It is one of the most meaningful experiences I've had."

Phillips said the idea for the Sunday night rosary has less to do with her and more to do with the environment created by COVID-19.

"We can be fearful or we can find hope in it. Even if people don't say the rosary, they can turn to God because there is peace in that. That's the biggest thing because it's crazy right now," she said.

Phillips hopes people will continue to turn to God once the pandemic subsides.

"During this time we can go out and hoard toilet paper or we can deepen our relationship with God. If we take small steps, I would hope deepening our relationship with Christ would come out of it."

*Editor's note: For further information about the Sunday night rosary, go to <https://svdp-rva.org>.*

## Bishops criticize Northam for signing abortion legislation on Good Friday

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

Expressing sadness that Virginia Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam signed the Reproductive Health Protection Act, which had been passed by the state's Senate and House of Delegates, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington and Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Richmond criticized him for choosing the day on which he signed it.

"That he would take this action on Good Friday, one of the most solemn days for Christians, is a particular affront to all who profess the

Gospel of life," the bishops said in a statement released April 11.

The legislation repeals health and safety protections at abortion facilities, allows non-physicians to perform first-trimester abortions and removes essential informed consent requirements, including the opportunity to view an ultrasound.

"Over the past eight years, abortions have decreased by 42% in Virginia," the bishops said. "Tragically but undoubtedly, these changes to our state law will reverse that life-saving progress and increase the number of abortions."

Throughout the legislative session, the Vir-

ginia Catholic Conference had lobbied representatives to defeat the legislation.

While noting they were disappointed by the governor's action, the bishops said they would continue to pursue a "culture of life" in the state.

"This pursuit will continue to save lives because the sacrificial, life-giving love that Christ pours out on us is abundant, fruitful and overflowing. As the Easter season begins, the Lord of life calls us to embrace new life in him," they said. "Through this new life, let us come together with renewed zeal in prayer, advocacy and witness for life."

## Msgr. Barton not added to clergy sex abuse list

Following a lengthy investigation by the Diocesan Review Board, Bishop Barry C. Knestout has determined that Msgr. Raymond A. Barton, a retired priest of the diocese, will not have his name added to the diocesan list of clergy with a credible and substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse.

On Feb. 14, 2020, the diocese announced it had received a report of allegations of child sexual abuse against the retired priest. The information was brought to

the diocese by a representative of a deceased victim. When notified of the allegations, the diocese reported the information to law enforcement authorities.

In accordance with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the diocese conducted an internal investigation of the allegations involving Msgr. Barton. The information gathered was presented to the Diocesan Review Board which reported its findings and recommendation to Bishop Knestout. The bishop concluded

that while the allegation was credible, it could not be substantiated.

"There were several factors that weighed against my decision to add Msgr. Barton's name to the list of credibly and substantially accused. Chief among them is the fact that both the accuser, who is deceased, and the accused, who is unable to be interviewed due to health conditions, cannot clarify the question at issue," said Bishop Knestout. "Therefore, I will not add Msgr. Barton's name to the list of credibly and substantially accused at this time."

Individuals who have been sexually abused by a priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the diocese should report abuse directly to law enforcement, including Child Protective Services (CPS) at 800-552-7096, and by calling the Attorney General's Clergy Abuse Hotline at 833-454-9064.

Individuals are also encouraged to contact the 24-hour confidential Victim's Assistance Reporting number at 877-887-9603 or email [vac@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:vac@richmonddiocese.org) to report sexual abuse.