



# The Catholic Virginian



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## ‘This is where we are meant to be’

### Parishioners grateful to be celebrating Mass

KAREN ADAMS  
WENDY KLESCH  
JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

After weeks of celebrating Mass before empty pews due to the coronavirus pandemic, Father Ken Shuping was grateful to finally hear, “And with your spirit” when he prayed “The Lord be with you” on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Sunday, May 24.

To the 35 people sitting far apart and wearing masks at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Salem, the pastor replied with a smile: “It’s really nice to hear a response to that.”

He noted that it was fitting that the first public Mass since March was held on this day.

“God is with us in the midst of difficulty,” he said. “On the Feast of the Ascension, we remember that Christ is among us.”

The priest noted that these have been long and challenging weeks during which parishioners have been hungry for Mass, and especially for holy Communion.

“There is a sense of how wonderful the Eucharist is,” Father Shuping said earlier.

He noted a sense of solidarity with Catholics of other times and places, such as mission churches around the world, which often don’t have priests available and may wait months to receive the Eucharist.

“And in the early days of Christianity, many monasteries had to wait weeks because they didn’t have a priest there,” he said. “They celebrated without the Eucharist but kept Christ in their hearts.”

At his parish of about 400 families, he invited people to Mass by email, starting with ministry members and their families. The number of Sunday attendees was manageable, and nobody had to be turned away.

Many parishioners had told him that they would wait for daily

Mass during the week to spread out their attendance since the Sunday requirement had been lifted for the moment.

#### ‘Happy to be back’

As people arrived for the 10:30 a.m. Mass, people whispered to usher Bryan Boggs as he seated them: “I’m so happy to be back here!”

Boggs felt the same way.

“There’s been a big hole in our lives for a while,” he said.

He noted that it has taken more effort for him to worship at home, to read and pray alone, but that it deepened his faith life.

“But being back here in the church, you can close your eyes and let that feeling of Christ’s presence sweep across you. This is what I missed,” Boggs said.

Parishioner and lector Tom Fame, who attended with his wife and daughter, likewise was grateful to be back at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

“I really need the Eucharist,” he said. “As Catholic Christians, receiving the sacraments is what makes our practice of our faith different from others’ practice.”

#### Presence of God, others

But he also found that during this time of isolation, his faith life has grown through deeper prayer, study and reflection, which has led to “moments of grace” and opportunities for evangelization.

“Each of us is called through baptism to advance the kingdom of God,” he said. “A hard experience also can be a time of grace and of appreciation for the gift of the Eucharist, which is the material source of spiritual life for me.”

His wife, Leah Fame, said that she has continued to feel Christ’s presence while away from the church building.

“We pray in the spiritual Communion prayer: ‘I embrace You as



Father Ken Shuping, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Salem, celebrates Mass for 35 parishioners on Sunday, May 24. With some COVID-19 gathering restrictions lifted, the weekend of May 23-24 was the first weekend since March during which public Masses were celebrated in most parishes in the Diocese of Richmond. (Photo/Karen Adams)

if You were already there (in my heart),” she said. “I believe he is already there.”

Even so, she said it was wonderful to be back in church despite the strange circumstances of wearing a mask and sitting far apart, noting she had missed seeing the crucifix, statues and stained-glass windows.

“But the best part was to be in the presence of others, and in the presence of God,” she said.

The Brown family — parents Chad and Angela, and their children Eva, Ben and Zack — sat together, all wearing Virginia Tech masks.

“I was pretty emotional,” Angela Brown wrote later via email. “What a glorious moment receiving Christ after so long. Although they did tell us entering church they might not have seating for a Hokie section. So very grateful we are opening.”

#### Unexpected blessings

Father Shuping said there have been some unexpected blessings in these difficult months.

“It’s been an interesting time

for evangelization,” he said, noting that on the livestreamed Masses, he can see how many people watch and sometimes where they are from. “Our Masses are being watched all over the world, and I wonder, ‘How did these people in the Philippines or Brazil connect with us?’”

He added that he has heard of non-Catholics who are curious about the Church and who enjoy watching online Mass privately.

“For some people that’s easier than sitting in the back pew,” the priest said.

At the church itself, even while closed, he also has been surprised to see cars drive to the parking lot and sit there. They simply want to be on church property to pray, he said.

One day he met a non-Catholic man who came to visit the large statue of Mary outside the church.

“He said it gave him a sense of peace,” Father Shuping said.

These days, he added, like the apostles, people may feel alone but they are not.

See *Thankful*, Page 10

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The Catholic Virginian  
7800 Carousell Lane  
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# Address challenges of COVID-19 with faith, hope



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

**G**iven the difficult separation we have experienced during the more than eight weeks we were unable to gather in our parishes to celebrate the Eucharist, our celebration of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (“Corpus Christi”) should have deeper meaning for us this year.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, a Catholic instinct fueled our longing for the Eucharist, our yearning to be fed the Bread of Life. This is an authentic Catholic instinct which we recognize by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is a desire expressed by the faithful of our parishes who want and need the nourishment of the Real Presence.

When we were not able to have public gatherings for Mass, people throughout the diocese wrote to me about their deep desire for the Eucharist — we miss it when we’re not there, just as we miss the real presence of our family when we’re distant from them. As a result, there is emptiness and sadness in our hearts..

We value being part of the Body of Christ — the Church into which Jesus has welcomed us and of which he is the head. More than an institution, the Church is our family, a living entity that forms us in the faith. Immersed in that faith, we carry out the mission we’ve been given — to proclaim the Gospel with our words and actions.

As many parishes have resumed limited public celebrations of the Mass, and as members of the Church have returned to their parishes, they have not only experienced the peace and elation that comes from receiving the Eucharist, but they have celebrated with their fellow parishioners, yet all the while adhering to guidelines necessary to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. With the Body of Christ, the faithful, are fed by the Body of Christ, the Eucharist and manifest the charity toward one another, which the Eucharist nourishes in us.

During the time public Masses were suspended, our churches remained open nonetheless for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. I know so many of you took this opportunity for adoration and private prayer. As public celebration of Mass resumes, I encourage you and your parishes to continue to express devotion to the Blessed Sacrament by celebrating Corpus Christi with some form of personal Eucharistic devotion on June 14.

In our physical longing for the Body of Christ — to receive the Eucharist and to worship with members of the Catholic community — we will go to great lengths to be united and experience communion with God and one another. My role as bishop is to facilitate this, but to also ensure that it is done in a way that is not going to cause danger to our physical health and well-being.

Throughout the pandemic and as we return to the celebration of public Masses, our Office of Preparation Task Force has been exploring ways to address this matter, seeking a balance

between our care and concern for the physical health of our neighbors, friends and fellow Catholics, as well as ensuring the spiritual health of all.

That care and concern is an expression of divine law, that we love God and our neighbor. All other laws and individual rights are subordinate to that supreme law.

A key word in Catholic life at this time is transition. It will take several weeks, maybe even months, before we return to what we consider “normal.” We have to remain adaptable in the midst of change. I encourage you to please continue to be patient, charitable and, most importantly, prayerful as we navigate these unsettling times.

As the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit has blessed us with the gifts we need to address with faith and hope the challenges COVID-19 presents. Let those gifts, especially wisdom and fortitude, guide all of us toward the blessings God desires for us.

## LEMI commissioning ceremony postponed

The commissioning for the 10 women who completed the diocese’s Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI) scheduled for Saturday, June 16 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart has been postponed due to restrictions on public gatherings.

As of press time, a new date for the commissioning had not been set.

# JAMES GIBBONS

1820 **TIME CAPSULE** 2020

## DEDICATION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

*Throughout the 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 Diocese of Richmond’s Bicentennial Task Force.*

“**T**o the second I gave the name Island of *Santa Maria de Concepcion.*”

Christopher Columbus was recounting in a letter the second landfall of his voyage in 1492, which likely occurred in the present-day Bahamas. This record is the first association between the Americas and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Columbus’ piety reflected a long-standing Catholic belief in the Immaculate Conception. Three-and-a-half centuries after the discovery of the New World, the bishops of the United States, gathered at the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore, chose Mary, honored under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the patroness of the country (1846).

Pope Pius IX confirmed this decision (1847), and seven years later he defined the dogma (formal belief) of the Immaculate Conception: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception ... preserved immune from all stain of original sin” (1854).

The definition of the dogma took place during a period of renewed Marian devotion. Several apparitions of Mary in the 19th century contributed to this piety, including two that featured references to the Immaculate Conception: in Paris, to St. Catherine Labouré (1830), and in Lourdes, to St. Bernadette Soubirous (1858).

In the Diocese of Richmond, two churches were dedicated to the Immaculate Conception during this period. St. Patrick Church in Norfolk (1831), home to one of the oldest organized Catholic communities in Virginia (ca. 1794), burned to the ground on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 1856). It was then rebuilt and renamed St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception (1858).

The second church to have the title Immaculate Conception was in Buckner’s Station (today Buckner), in Louisa County (1877). The construction of the Louisa (later Virginia Central) and Blue Ridge Railroads connected Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley (1850–1858) and brought immigrants to Louisa County.

The Catholic population in Buckner’s Station included Germans, and so the community there became a mission of St. Mary, the German national parish in Richmond (1848–1937). The mission was originally called St. Boniface after the apostle to Germany (672–754), and in recognition of the community’s heritage.

*See Time Capsule, Page 12*



Immaculate Conception Church

# Faith at core of St. Bridget students' project

## Using 3-D printers to make ear savers, door grabbers for health care workers

KRISTEN L. BYRD  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

While COVID-19 has closed schools throughout the United States, some students are using their education to help others. Middle school students at St. Bridget Catholic School, Richmond, under the guidance of their robotics teacher, have been using 3-D printers to manufacture equipment for health care workers.

Eric De Boer, one of two robotics coaches at St. Bridget, saw posts on social media about 3-D printing helping in the battle against the coronavirus by providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

"After the diocese announced we would not be physically returning to school for the rest of the year, I thought we could put our 3-D printers to work during this pandemic," he said, "Our school values service, and this seemed like a way for our students to serve our community."

### 'To do nothing would be wrong'

He sent emails to his students and their parents looking for volunteers. Quickly, 14-year-old eighth-grader Bridget Plank and 13-year-old seventh-graders Hayden Veech and Anthony Pennock replied. Turning their homes into makeshift factories, they have produced hundreds of items for health care workers.

The students were inspired by their faith, especially the Golden Rule.

"Jesus said, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,'" said Plank, "So if I were a health care worker during this time, I would want people to help me and my co-workers in any way they could."

Veech added, "My faith taught me to treat others as you want to be treated. It would be wrong to do nothing."

### Fulfilling a need

With their team assembled — virtually, via Google Hangout — they got to work. De Boer knew the school's printers were too small to print large PPE gear like face shields and masks, but he was also sure that workers on the frontline could still benefit from their help.

He connected with #MakeItThru Alliance, a group of engineers that has been coordinating efforts to produce and distribute 3-D-printed materials to local health care personnel and essential workers such as bus drivers and customer support staff.

The leader of the #MakeItThru Alliance, Jean-Etienne LaVallee, welcomed the students with socially-distant open arms. He told De Boer that there was a need for small items such as "door grabbers" and "ear savers" which could be printed on smaller 3-D printers.

Door grabbers are small plastic devices that hook over door handles, allowing people to open doors without actually having to touch the handles themselves. This helps reduce the spreading of germs.

Ear savers are designed to reduce irritation brought on by wearing facemasks. Each elastic ear band on a regular surgical mask hooks on to one end of the ear saver, alleviating the pressure on the ears themselves.

The ear saver strap, which can be adjusted for size, sits at the back of a person's head. This provides relief to hospital workers who wear masks for several hours at a time.



Anthony Pennock, a seventh-grader at St. Bridget School, Richmond, prints a door grabber on his 3-D printer. Beside him are the finished products, along with the tools he uses to remove excess filament. (Photo provided)



Left: Bridget Plank, an eighth-grader at St. Bridget School, Richmond, removes extra filament from the 3-D printer base plate on which she made an ear saver, ensuring that it is smooth and ready for the back of a head.

Above: Some of the hundreds of door grabbers Pennock, Plank and seventh-grader Hayden Veech made under the guidance of Eric De Boer, a robotics coach at St. Bridget School. (Photos provided)

### Providing hope, encouragement

While the robotics students have experience planning and producing objects, this is the first time they have had the responsibility of manufacturing products on their own.

Each student has a printer in their home. Adhering to quarantine guidelines, De Boer used video chat to give the students instructions for how to complete their projects. Once the student finishes a print job, they sanitize the product and put it in a plastic bag. They leave the bag in a "drop zone" at the school and members of #MakeItThru pick it up.

According to Veech, health care workers appreciate the students' work.

"They loved that we were helping out with simple tools that made working much easier," he said.

Once De Boer posted about the group on social media, several health care professionals expressed interest.

"In addition to the practical support this provided, there is also the emotional support felt when strangers reach out to help," De Boer explained, "Knowing others around you care for you and are with you can provide a great sense of hope and encouragement."

### Working together

3-D printing is relatively inexpensive. Each spool of filament (the 3-D printer version of ink)

costs around \$20, and each spool can make dozens of ear savers or door grabbers.

St. Bridget teachers are chipping in to help cover the costs. It takes one hour to print a set of two door grabbers and a half-hour to make an ear saver.

"It feels just as good to give to others as to receive things yourself," Plank stated.

The students have shown that people can work together for the greater good even if they aren't physically together. They believe helping others is what will get people through this pandemic.

"I am very hopeful about the future because I know that when this is all over, I will feel so relieved that life is finally getting back to normal," Pennock said. "I think that COVID-19 has brought the countries of the world closer together because we are all working together to end this virus."

De Boer, whose wife is a physician, recalled how one day she was conducting COVID-19 testing at a drive-thru clinic. The face shield she was wearing was donated by none other than the #MakeItThru Alliance.

"Seeing that connection made my eyes well up with tears," De Boer said, "It felt like God saying, 'I am here. I am working. I am your protector and provider. I am your shield.'"

*Editor's note: For more information, please call St. Bridget Catholic School at 804-420-4940.*

# SVDP conferences preparing for ‘really bad storm’

## Anticipate greater need among the poor this summer

**BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI**  
The Catholic Virginian

According to Dan Kearns, a storm is coming this summer. It's a storm that will have great impact upon the poor — the people the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) serves throughout the Diocese of Richmond.

As president of the Diocesan Council of SVDP, which includes six conferences serving nine parishes, Kearns said that during the COVID-19 pandemic some of the conferences are seeing more requests for help, some are not.

“The general expectation is that there will be a surge in mid- to late summer requests for assistance,” he said.

With people having received stimulus checks, those who have lost jobs receiving unemployment through the CARES Act, evictions on hold and utilities functioning, people are feeling “somewhat safe right now,” according to Kearns, who is also president of the SVDP conference at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen.

### IN MEMORIAM

## Benedictine Father Adrian W. Harmening

A private funeral Mass was celebrated for Benedictine Father Adrian W. Harmening, Friday, May 22, at the Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond. He died Monday morning, May 18, at the age of 92. A public memorial service for him will be announced at a later date.

A native of Defiance, Ohio, and raised in Connellsville, Pennsylvania,

he entered the armed forces at 17. He served in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard's Pacific Theatre of Operations. Upon his return to the states, he enrolled at St. Vincent College in Latrobe and completed his seminary studies at Belmont Abbey. He later earned a master's degree in education from the University of Virginia.

Father Adrian made his profession as a Benedictine monk in 1949 and was ordained a priest in 1955. Following ordination, he received a one-year assignment to Benedictine High School, Richmond. He never left. He taught chemistry, Latin and theology, and served as disciplinarian and principal for a total of 25 years.

In the monastery, Father Adrian served his brother monks in various capacities including novice master, prior and canonical administrator.

Father Adrian served for 20 years as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Richmond, for 28 years as Catholic chaplain for the Boy Scouts in Virginia, and as chaplain for Knights of Columbus Councils 12525 and 395 and the Navy League Richmond Council.

Memorial contributions may be made to the New Monastery Fund for Mary Mother of the Church Abbey at 12829 River Road, Richmond, VA 23238.



“But put this together — unemployment through the CARES Act is set to expire in July, stimulus checks will be long gone by then, and with the Payroll Protection Program companies had to agree not to reduce head counts until June 30, but after that they can do what they want and it is not going to impact their loans,” he said. “All of this coming together looks like a really, really bad storm from July through Labor Day. The worst is coming.”

### Constant need for food

Even if the “friends” — the term SVDP uses for the people they serve — are receiving aid from other sources during COVID-19, food is always requested.

At St. Matthew, Virginia Beach, the Vincentians have operated the food pantry since 2015.

“If you come to us for food, we'll give it to you,” said Krissann Zoby, SVDP conference president. “We've always had food.”

Until coronavirus restrictions went into effect on March 22, the pantry was open from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

“Just prior to closing, we made a big outreach to the people we regularly serve,” Zoby said. “We took food out to as many people as we could. That was our last-ditch effort. We haven't been able to do anything since.”

She praised the generosity of parishioners whose in-kind donations of food to the pantry topped \$37,000 last year.

“We have a lot of older people,” Zoby said. “Even if people don't have a lot of money, they contribute food.”

As the impact of COVID-19 is felt this summer and fall, a stocked pantry will be vital, she said.

“They'll go through this (stimulus) money and I don't know if they'll get back to work as quickly as they wanted,” Zoby said of the friends they serve. “There'll be a greater demand for our pantry. We'll have greater requests for financial assistance, too.”

With limited financial support, she said the conference is careful how it spends its resources.

“We can't spend money that we don't have, and God will give us what we need,” Zoby said. “He's always, always, always done that.”

### Planning for what might happen

A basic element of SVDP outreach is the home visit during which two Vincentians meet a friend at their residence. That aspect of the ministry has been curtailed due to COVID-19.

“Not being able to do that in person is a difficult thing,” said Anne Hogan, president of the SVDP conference at St. Andrew, Roanoke. “We've reverted to phone calls, but we have not gotten many calls. If calls come to us, instead of home visits, someone will make contact by phone.”

Hogan said that since people are utilizing area food banks, their conference tries to collaborate with other organizations.

“If the Knights of Columbus are doing a food drive, St. Vincent de Paul can help with that,” she said.

The conference is planning and preparing to receive at least a dozen calls a month during summer rather than the three or four they usually get.

“Whether it is early summer or mid-summer, when all of the (stops on) eviction notices and cutoff of utilities are lifted, there are going to be a lot of people in a panic because I don't know when people are getting their stimulus money,”

Hogan said, adding she hoped they used it to cover needs.

“If it is somebody who has no income and they are using (stimulus money) to pay their groceries and their electric bill, it probably wasn't enough to pay all of that plus a mortgage, so I have a feeling that come early or mid-summer a lot of the conferences are going to be hit with some major need,” she said. “I'm glad we're in pretty good financial shape to help out some people.”

*“If it is somebody who has no income and they are using (stimulus money) to pay their groceries and their electric bill, it probably wasn't enough to pay all of that plus a mortgage, so I have a feeling that come early or mid-summer a lot of the conferences are going to be hit with some major need.”*

- ANNE HOGAN

### Help wanted

As the SVDP conferences prepare financially for meeting the needs their friends will have, they are hoping they will also attract people who want to be Vincentians.

Noting that 50% of the calls the St. Michael conference receives are from areas not currently served by SVDP, Kearns said, “There's still hope that we get more people and parishes interested in joining this effort.”

Hogan said the St. Andrew conference, which has 15 active members, needs more Vincentians.

“We don't want to burn out the active members we have,” she said.

With 12 active members in the St. Matthew conference, Zoby termed increasing membership its “greatest need.”

“We would like to have younger, active people who are committed to spiritual growth, friendship and then as a conference they see the food pantry,” she said. “Membership is first about growth in holiness and then we need volunteers who want to pray for and with people.”

Before COVID-19 hit, Zoby started a conference call prayer meeting with Vincentians. She has continued it through the pandemic.

“We always pray just for the purpose of prayer,” she said. “We really feel by doing that we're going to attract people who understand that foremost this is what we're about.”

She added, “I fully believe God blesses us and we can bless others and that is the whole reason for St. Vincent de Paul, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have this ministry.”

*Editor's note: For more information about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul or to support its work, contact Dan Kearns at [Info@svdp-rva.org](mailto:Info@svdp-rva.org).*

# To mask or not to mask

## GUEST COMMENTARY

GREG ERLANDSON  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

I've been a bit puzzled about all the debate and outrage over wearing masks. I know some of it is weirdly ideological, but some of it seems to be a misunderstanding of why we have been asked to wear masks in the first place.

The objection is often phrased as a personal right: "If I choose not to wear a mask, it's my own darn business whether I want to take that risk."

It reminds me of the debate about motorcycle helmet laws: "If I want to go roaring down the freeway on two wheels and have the wind blowing in my hair, it's my own darn business."

When it comes to wearing helmets, there is a kind of logic to such a position, if one does not think of the first responders who have to clean up the mess.

I remember my motorcycle accident when the nurse in the emergency room asked me if I knew what they call motorcycle accident victims? "Donors," she answered her own question, with nary a smirk.

But asking someone to wear a mask to

prevent the spread of a virus is more akin to asking someone not to leave a loaded gun on the coffee table. The idea is not that you might get hurt, but that someone else might because of your carelessness.

We wear masks to protect others because the vast majority of us don't know from day to day if we might be the contagious ones. It reflects our concern for the common good and our fellow men and women, and our hope that they have a similar concern for us.

This small sacrifice of wearing a mask in public settings is also a sign that we are all in this together, not just the first responders and the ER doctors, the nurses and the morticians. That little strip of cloth is a flag of solidarity.

At times, it doesn't feel like we are all in this crisis together. We are approaching 2 million sick and 100,000 people dead who were alive three months ago, yet the stats are often treated like a box score. After 9/11, there was a rush of sympathy for New York. This time, there was a rush of discussion about how fast to open up, and other hot spots are getting far less national attention.

We really aren't asked to sacrifice much these days for greater goods. We have historically long wars, but it never really touches

us unless we have family serving. We run up mountains of debt, but don't feel it should fall on us to pay it back.

The pandemic has exposed lots of social weaknesses, like the inequalities of our health care system and our educational system and even our access to the internet. Those who are weakest are the most vulnerable once again: Unable to afford not to go to work when the pandemic is in full flower. Unable to afford to stay home when they are called back to work while the risk is still great.

In thinking about the common good, we place ourselves firmly within the moral and social teachings of the Church, which in turn goes back to what Jesus taught: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets" (Mt 7:12).

I don't know what the lasting effects of this pandemic will be: Whether we will rush backward to our old normal as quickly as possible, or whether we will learn new lessons from these few months of sacrifice. I for one am hoping that in our isolation, we've learned something about fellowship.

*Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.*

### Thank you to real heroes

As a physician I'm acutely aware of what I step into voluntarily every day.

I'm no hero. I do my job.

I would, however, like to publicly thank the people who pick the veggies, prepare and process the meat, transport the results and day in and day out stick it on a shelf where I can get it.

Without them, I can't do my job.

Real heroes?

Definitely. No explanation necessary.

Low pay, tough working conditions with limited protection.

Sounds like a hero to me.

– **Dr. S. Restaino**  
Chesapeake

### Preach homilies, not sermons

Re: your story, "Few mentions of abortion in sermons" (Catholic Virginian, May 4). In a sermon any issue can be preached. However, since Vatican II we are supposed to be preaching homilies.

A homily is preaching on the Scriptures just proclaimed. It is a breaking open the Word of God just proclaimed to the particular congregation assembled at this time. The homily should be explaining the Scriptures just proclaimed to the congregation so they can go out and live the Word of God in their daily lives.

The homily is not a

time to preach on various subjects of the Christian life unless a subject fits into the word proclaimed. Some preachers can twist thing around to fit what they want to say, and that is being dishonest to what a homily should be.

In the Catholic Church today we should be preaching homilies, not sermons.

– **Rev. Louis R. Benoit**  
Roanoke

### What Catholic politicians must do

Kudos go to Robert R. Kaplan and his letter, "Bishops' response laudable but weak" (Catholic Virginian, May 18). He makes several excellent points regarding clergy response to Governors Ralph Northam and Andrew Cuomo.

I would like to add that abortion supporters such as Cuomo, Biden, Pelosi and other supposedly Catholic politicians in high places always fall back on the lame excuse that Roe v. Wade is settled law.

Given that logic, we would still have slavery in the United States today because the 1857 Dred Scott decision ruled that slavery was legal. Can you envision our country today with Dred Scott still in force? Even though it was the "law of the land," it was eventually overturned because politicians and citizens worked to right a grave injustice.

## Letters

Prayerfully, those Catholic politicians holding high office today will rethink their position and work to overturn Roe v. Wade and protect the sanctity of life.

– **Ted Cors**  
Williamsburg

### Beg Holy Spirit for grace to do right

Father Anthony E. Marques' articles on the Civil War and the Cathedral of St. Peter (Catholic Virginian, May 18) remind us that Catholics have a complicated history with slavery — from the notorious Dred Scott decision, authored by Chief Justice Roger Taney, a Catholic, to the support of many Virginia Catholics for the Confederacy, with varying degrees of ardor and for various reasons.

We may be appalled by their compromises with evil. Or we may want to defend their choices as misunderstood or the best that could be made of a difficult situation.

Rather than merely prompting condemnation or justification, resulting in partisan debate, this history should deepen our empathy for those making difficult choices and prompt us to beg the Holy Spirit for the grace to do what is right in our own day.

– **Aaron Linderman**  
Ruckersville

### A document Catholic musicians should read

A letter from William Yearout from Willis (Catholic Virginian, May 18) caught my attention. The letter thanked the organist and music director of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart for using the proper antiphons while the Mass was being livestreamed from the cathedral.

At Sacred Heart, Norfolk, we have sung the proper Communion antiphons from the "Graduale Romanum" for at least 25 years. For example, the Communions for the Sundays of Lent 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Cycle A summarize the Gospel for the Sunday.

An example is the Communion for Lent 4 Lutum fecit (The Lord made mud from spit, and put it on my eyes: and I went, I washed, and I saw, and I believed in God.) [Note the absence of

and in I believed in God.] All four of these antiphons are short, easy to sing and could be said to summarize the Gospel.

Yearout mentions the document "Sing to the Lord" written by a committee of the USCCB. This document has never been sent to Rome for their approval so whatever is in "Sing to the Lord" are only suggestions.

The document that is not suggestions and which needs to be carefully read over and over again is "Musicam Sacram." This is a document of the Second Vatican Council with a publication date of March 5, 1967. Everything pertaining to music in the Catholic Mass is covered in this document. It should be read by all Catholic musicians.

– **James A. Gallatin**  
Organist and Music Director  
Sacred Heart, Norfolk

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BENEDICTINE COLLEGE PREPARATORY



**Valedictorian:** Nathaniel Gleberman is the valedictorian due to his GPA of 4.57, while amassing 10 academic and leadership awards during his time at Benedictine. He serves as the Judge Advocate General for the Corps of Cadets, presiding over its Honor Court. Nathaniel earned the Paul A. Ambrogi Scholarship, Benedictine's most prestigious award, and was a four-year merit scholar. He has served as class treasurer and been a member of the Cadets' soccer and tennis teams. Additionally, Nathaniel earned the rank of Eagle Scout and was selected to attend Boys State. He is also an altar server at St. Mary Church and at Mary Mother of the Church Abbey. This fall, he will attend the University of Virginia School of Engineering and Applied Science.



**Nathaniel Gleberman**  
VALEDICTORIAN

**Salutatorian:** Gabriel E. Slate is the salutatorian due to his GPA of 4.50, having excelled in 10 AP courses. As a senior, Gabriel was selected to serve as the Corps of Cadets' Inspector General, with a rank of major. He has earned first honors during every quarter of his four years at BCP and is a member of the National Honor Society. Gabriel has been a four-year member of the Benedictine wrestling team, twice earning state and All-American titles. He has also set a state record in powerlifting. Gabriel has won numerous essay competitions and has served as an usher for his parish church (Sacred Heart, Petersburg), as well as an elementary school volunteer aide. He will attend William & Mary in the fall.

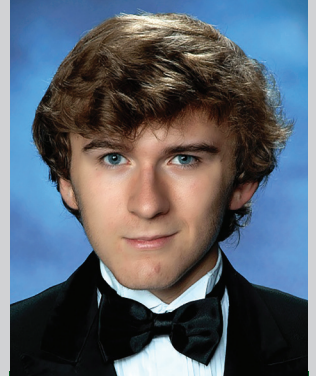


**Gabriel E. Slate**  
SALUTATORIAN

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



**Valedictorian** Matthew Mytych, a three-time winner of the Pope Francis Award for volunteer service and captain of the state champion National Ocean Science Blue Crab Bowl team, will be studying mechanical engineering at the Calhoun Honors College at Clemson University.



**Matthew Mytych**  
VALEDICTORIAN

Salutatorian Hunter Quigley, Executive Council President with All-Conference and All-State recognition for Cross Country, has accepted a Naval ROTC Scholarship to study biology at Duke University.

The 96 members of the Class of 2020 earned over \$8.6 million in scholarships and grants. Students were accepted at colleges and universities in 29 states, the District of Columbia, Wales, Scotland, and Great Britain. The University of Notre Dame, Dartmouth College, the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, the United States Coast Guard Academy, Villanova University, Georgia Tech, the University of Virginia, and William & Mary are among the colleges and universities accepting graduates of the Class of 2020.



**Hunter Quigley**  
SALUTATORIAN

BLESSED SACRAMENT-HUGUENOT CATHOLIC SCHOOL



**J**ames Hawkins has attended BSH since Preschool and has always been an active member of the school community. He has been Class President every year since 6th grade and is also currently NHS President. A passionate and talented soccer player, James has played for BSH since middle school; this year, he joined the varsity football and varsity basketball teams. He was the school's Richmond Times Dispatch Scholar Athlete of the Year. James will be attending the University of Virginia in the fall.



**James Hawkins**  
VALEDICTORIAN

Raymond Avery has attended BSH since Kindergarten and has been a scholar athlete while participating on the football and basketball teams as well as being an active member of the Latin Club. This year, Raymond scored his 1,000th point during a varsity basketball game and was team captain. Raymond will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall.



**Raymond Avery**  
SALUTATORIAN

HOLY CROSS REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL



**T**he 140th and final graduating class from Holy Cross School holds a special place in our hearts.

Valedictorian Anna Mooney will complete her 14th year at HC and will attend Randolph College to major in psychology.



**Anna Mooney**  
VALEDICTORIAN

Salutatorian Terrence Ward joined us in his sophomore year and will attend Liberty University to pursue a civil engineering degree. Maria Mrad will attend the University of California Davis to major in biochemistry and molecular biology; Keon Waller will study business and communications after choosing a college from his many acceptances; Jordan Ferguson will attend CVCC; Haden Golden is dual enrolled at the University of Lynchburg and CVCC and will complete his associates degree in Science; and Madison Luther will attend Sweet Briar College and begin her Pre-Med studies.



**Terrence Ward**  
SALUTATORIAN

PENINSULA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



Jennifer Jiang

VALEDICTORIAN

Jennifer is a member of the Forensics and Tennis teams. She served her community as a Junior Volunteer at Riverside Hospital. A member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, and National Spanish Honor Society, Jennifer will graduate with a 4.81 GPA. Jennifer will attend Johns Hopkins University this fall as an engineering student.

Tim served as captain of the cross country team and senior facilitator of the retreat team. Tim was inducted to the National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, and Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society and was a key member of the Honor Code Council. With a GPA of 4.8, Tim will be attending Virginia Tech, where he hopes for a career in space exploration as an engineer or even as a future astronaut.

- 77 Seniors
- 400 college applications to 103 different institutions
- Awarded almost \$4 million in college scholarships
- 12,307 hours of volunteer service to others over 4 years



Timothy Wojcik

SALUTATORIAN

ROANOKE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Michael Pilar started at Roanoke Catholic in 4th grade after immigrating from the Philippines. He serves as treasurer of the Key Club and National Honor Society, and is also a member of Medico Club (for students interested in a career in the medical field), Pro-life Club, Red Cross Club, SQUAD (club that supports women's athletics), and the school choir. Throughout his high school career he has medaled for varsity swimming at the Virginia Independent Conference meet and has qualified for the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association state swim meet. In the fall he will enroll at the University of Virginia and plans to be on the pre-med track with a major in biochemistry and a minor in psychology.



Michael Pilar

VALEDICTORIAN

A student at Roanoke Catholic since 8th grade, David Gepitulan serves as president of the National Honor Society, secretary of Key Club, and executive secretary of the Student Government Association. David is also a member of Medico Club (for students interested in a career in the medical field) and the school choir. He placed on the all-Virginia Independent Schools Conference team in 2018, has qualified for the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association state meet each year of high school, and qualified for the VISAA state swim meet and in track in 9th grade. In the fall he will enroll at the University of Virginia and plans to major in biochemistry and mathematics.



David Gepitulan

SALUTATORIAN

SAINT GERTRUDE HIGH SCHOOL



Kara Gallagher

VALEDICTORIAN

Saint Gertrude's class of 2020 is full of energy, kindness, academic success and leadership. These 55 young women have volunteered thousands of hours throughout the local, regional and international communities over their four years and have succeeded on the athletic fields and in the classroom. Our 2020 Gators will be heading off to 24 different esteemed colleges and universities around the country.

**Valedictorian:** Kara Gallagher is an outstanding student and school leader and holds our top leadership position in the school as SCA president. A two-sport athlete, Kara is competitive on the field playing softball and on the court playing tennis. She is a role model to her teammates and sets an example every day with her grit and school spirit. Last year she won the varsity tennis spirit award, presented to the player who "best exemplifies the love of the game and a positive attitude." She will be an example to her new cohort of peers at The College of William & Mary.

**Salutatorian:** Sarah Hess is the consummate scholar; she is focused, organized, diligent and dedicated to her academic studies. While she has taken the most rigorous program possible at Saint Gertrude, her focused, diligent character also serves her well in her leadership roles at school. She is a member of the Honor Council and is a student ambassador and a math peer tutor. Sarah will thrive in her post-secondary education and will continue to be a role model for her peers at The College of William & Mary.



Sarah Hess

SALUTATORIAN

WALSINGHAM ACADEMY



Walsingham Academy's Class of 2020 includes 37 graduates who earned more than 220 college/university acceptances and over \$4.5 million in merit-based scholarships and awards as of early May. Matthew Wilcox, this year's valedictorian, will attend the University of Virginia to study biology.



Matthew Wilcox

VALEDICTORIAN

Salutatorian Olivia LeJeune will attend the University of Tennessee to study engineering. Additionally two members of the Class of 2020 will continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level with Tanner Schobel playing baseball at Virginia Tech and Leyjah Hamrick participating in track and field at James Madison University.



Olivia LeJeune

SALUTATORIAN

# COVID-19 is a time of our judgment, not God's



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

**Q.** In a recent letter to our archdiocesan paper someone wrote: "In regard to COVID-19, there is no evidence that God had anything to do either with its development or with its dispersal." There's an obvious problem with theology here. Was COVID-19 self-existent? Or did God create it? (Tigard, Oregon)

**A.** The human origin of the coronavirus is disputed; among the theories are that it originated in bats and was subsequently passed to humans, that it came from a seafood market in China or that it was engineered in a biolab and accidentally released. Whatever account one ascribes to, we are still left with this question: Why would a loving God let this happen?

That is the age-old "problem of evil," which theologians have grappled with for centuries, and the most honest answer is: "We just don't know." In March, a large sign in Dallas asked: "Is the coronavirus a judgment from God?" My answer would be "No," and I would call both Jesus and Pope Francis as my witnesses.

Remember in the Gospel of John (9:1-7) when Jesus was asked about the blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Christ's response was: "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him."

In a meditation that he offered

recently, Pope Francis said of the coronavirus that this is not a time of God's judgment but of our judgment, "a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not."

The pontiff lauded health care workers and all those who are praying for victims of the coronavirus; in the midst of this crisis, the pope noted, God is calling people to faith — not just believing that God exists but turning to him and trusting him.

**Q.** The prayer "Hail, Holy Queen" has three phrases that trouble me. They are: "to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve"; "mourning and weeping in this valley of tears"; and "after this, our exile." The author of this prayer makes life on earth appear to be a punishment. What is the history of this prayer, and was the author troubled? (Suffolk)

**A.** The origin of the prayer "Hail, Holy Queen" (its Latin title is "Salve Regina") is uncertain, but many historians ascribe it to an 11th-century German monk and scholar, Hermann of Reichenau — and your question and the wording of the hymn incline me to think this may be true.

This monk is sometimes referred to as Hermann the lame, or Hermann the Cripple. He was born with a cleft palate, cerebral palsy and spina bifida; he had great difficulty moving and could hardly speak. When Hermann was 7 years old, his parents placed him in the care of the

Benedictine monks of the abbey of Reichenau.

Despite his physical disabilities, Hermann was a brilliant student and wrote several works on mathematics, astronomy, history and theology. Later in his life, his sight beginning to fail, Hermann is thought to have composed religious poetry and music, including the "Hail, Holy Queen."

It is one of the Church's best-known Marian prayers and is commonly recited or sung in monastic communities at the close of day; it is also frequently used by Catholics as the concluding prayer when reciting the rosary. Often, too, the "Salve Regina" is sung at the end of a priest's funeral by his fellow clerics.

The "Hail, Holy Queen" strikes me as a prayer of love and devotion coming from the heart of an author who may have suffered greatly during his life. Different prayers, of course, speak to the life experiences and preferences of different people, and there is no obligation to pray with wording you might find troublesome.

Some historians note that in 1492, on his voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus would gather his crew on the deck each evening and sing the "Salve Regina," signaling their confidence in Our Lady's protection.

**Q.** My cousin was married 40 years ago in a civil ceremony when she was only 17. After eight years, that marriage ended in divorce. She has now been remarried for some 25 years — once again, not in the Catholic Church. All these years later,

she still attends Mass regularly but never receives holy Communion. Is this right? What are the rules of the Catholic Church on this? (City and state withheld)

**A.** Your cousin is correct in not receiving holy Communion when she attends Mass. In the Church's view, those eligible to take the Eucharist are those who are living "in communion with" Catholic teaching. For a married person, this would mean having been married in a ceremony with the Church's approval.

I admire your cousin's honesty in choosing not to take Communion. The solution, though, might be a fairly easy one. Because her first marriage was a civil ceremony (and presumably without Church approval), and since your cousin (I'm assuming) was a Catholic at the time, that marriage "did not count" in the Church's eyes and could be dismissed with some simple paperwork. It's called, technically, a "declaration of nullity for absence of canonical form."

That would leave her present marriage (which seems to be a stable one, since it has lasted 25 years!). And assuming that her present husband had not been married before, this marriage could then be "convalidated" or "blessed" in the Catholic Church by having the couple repeat their vows in the presence of a Catholic priest or deacon. Following that, of course, your cousin would be eligible to receive the Eucharist — and probably thrilled to do so.

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

## Catholic school teachers honored in virtual ceremony

Catholic school teachers from across the diocese, their principals and guests gathered virtually on Wednesday, May 13 for the third annual Excellence in Catholic Education awards presented by the Office of Catholic Schools.



Mandy Mills

During his opening remarks, Bishop Barry C. Knestout expressed his gratitude to the nominees for their work.

"It incorporates the faith, but it is much beyond that in terms of all the other aspects of human life and formation for our young people," he said. "It

makes me proud and it's great to be a part of the work of the diocese that is carried out so beautifully by each of you."

The Excellence in Catholic Education awards honor teachers who represent the best in Catholic teaching in each region and across the diocese. Administrators and colleagues at each school selected one teacher to be recognized based on their exceptional commitment to Catholic education through their leadership and service to their

students, parents, colleagues, parishes and school communities.

The Excellence in Catholic Education school award winners are:

- Mary Davison, All Saints Catholic School
- Barbara Green, Catholic High School
- Mandy Mills, Blessed Sacrament Huguenot School
- Katie Milnor, Charlottesville Catholic School
- Theresa Sullivan, Christ the King Catholic School
- Sarah Whalen, Holy Cross Regional Catholic School
- Marisa Tribble, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School
- Dominican Sister Mary Josephine, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School
- Michael Pilola, Peninsula Catholic High School
- Peggy Campbell, Portsmouth Regional Catholic School
- Catherine Schlessler, Roanoke Catholic School
- Lorraine Schwarz, Sacred Heart Catholic School
- Angelina Bush, St. Anne Catholic School
- Michelle Cisik, St. Benedict Catholic School
- Shannon Barry, St. Bridget Catholic School
- Rachel Franklin, St. Edward Epiphany School
- Julie Mazzeo, St. Gregory the Great Catholic School
- Diane Astrin, St. John the Apostle Catholic School
- Linda Elkins, St. Joseph Catholic School
- Patricia Harris, St. Mary Catholic School
- Dominican Sister Mary Augustine Brilliant, St. Mary Star of the Sea
- Roxanne Catoire, St. Matthew Catholic School
- Carol Novisk, St. Pius X Catholic School
- Myriam Traub, Star of the Sea Catholic School

Milnor, first grade teacher at Charlottesville Catholic School, was the recipient of the Western Vicariate award. In his nomination, her principal, Michael Riley, wrote: "She is often found helping students resolve their differences in an age-appropriate manner, utilizing the teachings of Jesus to help them be more accepting, respectful, and compassionate."

Davison, first grade teacher at All Saints Catholic School, Richmond, received the Central Vicariate award. Her principal, Michael Kelleher, wrote in his nomination of her: "The praise that parents shower upon this nominee is well deserved and it runs the gamut from her ability to implement effective classroom management techniques, to assessing student learning, to creating quality, engaging learning centers for the students. ... It is easy to see that she loves her students and they love her."

Pilola, the Eastern Vicariate honoree, teaches English at Peninsula Catholic High School, Newport News. In her nomination, Jenny Franklin, principal, wrote: "Michael never forgets where he is or what his purpose is here ... to form these young people into great citizens who are strong in their faith."

She added that he is a "role model to his col-

*See Honors, Page 12*



# Let hope allow you to look beyond the bleak



## IN LIGHT OF FAITH

BARBARA HUGHES

Recent statistics indicate that more than 50% of the population has been affected by the coronavirus either directly or indirectly. Thankfully, no one in our family has been a victim of the disease.

However, one daughter has been furloughed, a son laid off, and high school graduation was postponed for one of our granddaughters. All of these were short-lived. Our son who was laid off got a better job, our daughter is scheduled to return to work by August and a new graduation date has been set for high school seniors in Florida.

In retrospect, the most unexpected and difficult adjustment is not being able to receive daily Eucharist. Not being able to participate in person has been a hardship, and yet attending Mass online has also been a blessing.

During the past weeks, my husband and I have been able to reap the spiritual benefits of the many charisms bestowed upon religious orders within the Catholic Church. Via YouTube, we've attended Mass celebrated by Carmelite priests in the basilica at their monastery in Holy Hill, Wisconsin.

We've watched the Jesuits celebrate Mass and preach from a chapel in Canada, joined the Franciscans for Mass at EWTN, and worshiped with diocesan priests — a different presider each day — from the Archdiocese of Boston.

On Sundays, we tuned into our home parish, St. Gregory the Great, Virginia Beach, to celebrate with the Benedictines.

While it's not the same as attending Mass in person, it has given me a greater appreciation for the charisms within the Catholic Church, each founded in response to the needs of the time by saints who God raised up just as he raised us to become.

Not all are called to religious life, but within the context of family life we have a role to play within the domestic Church. For us it's taken the form of prayerful encouragement during times of unemployment, offering a helping hand during times of financial uncertainty and listening to our 6-year-old granddaughter read a bedtime story to us via Facetime.

It's not what we do that's important but the love with which we do it. Whether we are participating in a drive-by birthday celebration or sending a condolence card for a grieving member of the community, joy comes to us when we are involved because not even COVID-19 is able to destroy the bonds of love that unite us as children of God.

As heartbreaking as it is to watch those who have lost family members share the heartache of not having been able to say goodbye, there is comfort in knowing that death is not the end and that one day we will be together with loved ones who have preceded us in death. Until then we can be united with them through prayer.

On one level, life is beginning to return to normal, but I doubt that it will ever be the same. I suspect we will bear the scars of this latest travesty for a while because the presence of a rain-

bow doesn't eradicate the ravages of the storm.

However, it does give us hope. Hope allows us to look beyond what seems bleak and know that human nature is resilient because we bear the mark of the resurrection deep within our soul.

As we move forward, we all have a role to play, depending on our life circumstances. I think of my parents who grew up in the shadow of World War II and the Great Depression. They heard about the atrocities inflicted on victims of the Nazi death camps in real time. Yet, they remained steadfast in their faith and found the courage to go forward.

History has shown there has never been an age without horrendous suffering and yet we continue not only to survive and but to thrive. Crises of the past have given rise to greater creative ingenuity.

The problem arises when we lose sight of the fact that every good thing that we do is a gift from God for the good of the world. The tendency to want to take credit for what is clearly not our doing reveals our ignorance.

St. Therese explained that when we take credit for gifts that God has given to us, we are like the donkey who carries relics and thinks the adulation paid by the crowd along the way is meant for him rather than for the saints.

Imagine how different the world would be if we acted more like saints than donkeys. While there's nothing wrong with donkeys, I'd rather be a saint.

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

## Heed exhortation to rejoice, mend ways, live in peace



## BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY

MELANIE CODDINGTON

This Sunday's first reading permits us to eavesdrop on a conversation between Moses and the Lord God as they meet inside a cloud hovering at the peak of Sinai-Horeb, the mountain of covenant.

God has called this meeting and Moses arrives as instructed, carrying a second set of tablets for the inscription of the Commandments since he smashed the first in a temper after finding the Israelites in thrall to a golden calf at the foot of the same mountain.

In this brief episode, we hear the divine name (YHWH) proclaimed by the Lord God and followed by a self-description that echoes throughout the psalms: "...a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity."

Moses himself sets the precedent for recalling this moment of God's self-communication in subsequent covenant conversation as he brings the Lord's own words to bear on God's frustration with his chosen people in Numbers 14:13-19.

The divine name forms a bridge between this reading and the Responsorial Psalm for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, which

declares, "...blessed is your holy and glorious name."

Today's selection comes from Daniel chapter three. The term canticle signifies its origin outside the Book of Psalms. Its biblical setting takes me back to my Presbyterian roots, to Sunday school days in the church of my childhood.

As the story goes, three notorious Hebrew youths — Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego — have refused to comply with a direct order from their boss, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and have been cast into a white-hot furnace for their disobedience.

Instead of burning to a crisp like the servants who threw them in, they walk about in the flames, singing praises to God. Even when the king's men stoke the fire with brimstone and pitch, it does no harm to the faithful Hebrews.

"The angel of the Lord went down into the furnace ... drove the fiery flames out ... and made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it" (Dn 3:49-50).

The four verses selected for today's response come forth from the miraculously unsung lips of our three heroes and form the introduction to a lengthy canticle, found in our Catholic Bible's expanded version of the Book of Daniel. (The Catholic canon of Scripture, based on the Septuagint, an early Greek translation of the Old Testament, includes 100 verses of Daniel 3. The Hebrew text, on which the Protestant canon relies, frames the story of the three faithful Hebrews much more succinctly, exclud-

ing the long song.)

We hear variants of the refrain, "... praiseworthy and exalted above all forever," in today's verses, which stack one upon the other in a mighty crescendo, framing images of God's glory that soar upward on an ever-grander scale. One can imagine the three singers walking in time through the fire, taking turns with the call line and responding together.

Today's brief Gospel connects directly to the image of God presented in Exodus 34, as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." This one "so loved the world" that he brings about the salvation of that world through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection on this so-called economy of salvation, over time, brought to expression the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity that we celebrate this Sunday.

Our second reading from Second Corinthians, chosen, no doubt, for the Trinitarian blessing that concludes it, speaks firmly to our time, exhorting us to rejoice, mend our ways, encourage one another, agree with one another and live in peace.

In these days of tentative and awkward reopening, still in the deadly shadow of COVID-19, we do well to take these words to heart, and put them into action toward all of God's beloved, even though the "holy kiss" of greeting will have to wait.

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

## Thankful

Continued from Page 1

In his homily on May 24, he said the Ascension is not about Jesus leaving, but about his being more present.

“He walks among us and shows us what humanity was meant to be, what our lives were meant to be,” Father Shuping said. “Remember, Jesus said: ‘I am with you always, until the end of the age.’”

### ‘Thankful for Mass’

According to parishioners at St. Joseph, Petersburg, the nearly two months without public Masses have been a time for people to grow in their faith. It has been an opportunity to connect to private Masses virtually across the world, a time to deepen one’s prayer life and a time to evaluate their lives.

Like most Catholic churches across the diocese, with the exception of those in the City of Richmond and the County of Accomack, St. Joseph Parish again opened its doors for public Masses on May 23. Approximately 140 people attended the four weekend Masses. Parishioners were quiet, contemplative, prayerful and joyful.

“Everyone was excited to come back to Mass,” Deacon Bob Young said. “They were all thankful they could come. You could tell even in their masks they were smiling, and you could read it in their eyes.”

Before public Masses returned, the pastor, Father Brian Capuano, and the parochial vicar, Father Nicholas Redmond, used — and continue to use — the internet to nourish parishioners’ faith through livestreamed daily and weekend Masses, and Father Capuano’s “Sunday Catechesis” on Facebook Live each Sunday evening.

Zoom conferencing, also continuing, is used for faith formation classes: family-based religious education, adult classes and RCIA on Sundays and sacramental preparation classes on Saturdays, explained Deebe Robinson, coordinator of religious education.

Father Redmond gave a virtual tour of the church each Wednesday by spotlighting different areas such as the grounds, bell tower and stained-glass windows and on a more

whimsical note, the attic. The program will continue in celebration of the parish’s bicentennial.

During COVID-19 restrictions, the church was also available for private prayer, the sacrament of reconciliation was offered daily and the anointing of the sick was administered when desired.

Cindy Merrix said “what Father Redmond and Father Capuano have done is comparable to having your boat capsize and then having a safety float appear in front of you.”

### Cultivating faith

For some, the COVID-19 crisis has led to new habits.

For example, each evening Merrix and her husband Don listen to the daily Masses that were recorded that morning. She said the Masses are “uplifting” and “a great opportunity to focus at the end of the day.” They plan to continue “the spiritual experience.”

Parishioner Rick Fortune, furloughed as a security officer for the Chesterfield County court system, said “this time of isolation and quarantine” has given him the time to cultivate his faith. In addition to watching Father Redmond’s sermons and learning from Father Capuano’s catechism, he watches livestreamed Masses from the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and the National Marian Shrine in Knock, Ireland, during which he prays the rosary.

He also examines his life for his strengths, weaknesses and priorities so he can “become closer to God” and “become a better father, a better husband and a better worker.”

“We need to look to God at times like this,” he said. “God does not go into isolation.”

Some parishioners are also finding other ways to foster their faith. Diane Young and a friend read and discuss Catholic-based books, and Young does SoulCore exercises which combine core strengthening, stretching and functional movement with the prayers of the rosary.

While parishioners said they appreciate having opportunities to nourish their faith during COVID-19, they said they have also “longed” for the return of public Masses, Father Capuano said.



After the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, May 24, Aaron Hostetter, youth minister at Holy Trinity, Norfolk, and parishioner Luke DeHon wipe down the pews. Worship spaces in all parishes were to be cleaned and disinfected after each liturgy celebrated the weekend of May 23-24. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)

“I can’t say thank you enough to the priests who have given us the opportunity to have the connections we’ve had over these past months,” Cindy Merrix said. “As wonderful as it’s been, it’s not the same as being there in person.”

Similarly, Robinson, speaking as a parishioner, said that although Fathers Capuano and Redmond “have done a super job livestreaming Masses,” the virtual liturgies are “no substitute for being physically present while the lord is physically present.”

### ‘Showing us what is important’

The parish followed Bishop Barry C. Knestout’s mandate for wearing masks and maintaining six feet of social distancing. Every other pew was cordoned off and ushers escorted individuals into the nave where they could choose to sit on the edges of a pew or in its center. Families could sit next to each other. Individuals kept six feet apart when they received the Eucharist.

The parish’s four Masses ordinarily draw about 550 people each weekend. With social distancing, Father Capuano said the church, with a maximum occupancy of 300, could accommodate 70 people in the pews. No one was turned away because maximum seating was not reached; however, as the number of people attending Mass grows, seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Father Capuano said some parishioners who hadn’t “made their faith a serious priority” are doing so now as they have time to reflect on their lives.

“Crises have a way of showing us what is important,” Father Capuano said. “What I’ve seen that has been beautiful is people are being able to see that the sacramental and devotional life of the Church and the charitable works are important aspects of our lives.”

### ‘Everyone has a story’

“It’s nice to see your faces again,” said Father James Glass, pastor at Holy Trinity, Norfolk, at the start of Mass on Sunday, May 24.

“Or, at least,” he amended, “the top halves of your faces.”

Around 90 parishioners wearing a variety of masks — from medical-grade PPEs to folded collegiate bandanas — gathered the weekend

of May 23-24 for one of the first public Masses held at the church since the easing of lockdown restrictions in the commonwealth.

“It’s been wonderful being able to get back again,” said office manager Erika Erickson. “Everyone has their own story to tell. Some seniors have been home alone. Some parents have been at home, working and trying to homeschool their kids. You don’t know what experiences people have had over the past several weeks that they are bringing with them, bringing into the Mass.”

Even though it has been more than eight weeks since the Holy Trinity community has been able to come together, parishioner Trudy Franklin said it did not feel the least bit strange to be back.

“It doesn’t feel odd at all. The situation is odd, certainly,” she said, “but this is where we are meant to be.”

### Practice makes perfect

Hector Miranda, maintenance and facilities director at Holy Trinity, explained that the staff — who doubled as ushers during this first trial weekend — practiced in order to see how they might best put the new social distancing and safety guidelines into practice.

“Father Glass stood at the front door and handed us pieces of paper with different numbers on them, representing the number of people in a group that might come in,” he said, “and we had to place them in the pews, according to how we would seat them.”

Miranda said that although the team measured the lengths of the pews and assessed the dimensions of the sanctuary, marking off safe distances with blue tape, they found during their practice session that determining the number of people who could be admitted to Mass depended not so much on the size of the church, but rather on the varying sizes of the groups that might come through the front doors. Four individuals, for example, require more space than a family of four.

“We found it wasn’t so simple,” he said. “That’s when we realized we would have to lower the numbers.”

Parishioners were asked to register beforehand using the online site Sign-Up Genius in order to give the



Parishioners at Holy Trinity, Norfolk, remain six feet apart as they prepare to receive the Eucharist during Mass on Sunday, May 24. In addition to observing rules of social distancing, all congregants wore masks at Masses celebrated at parishes throughout the diocese. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)

# Office of Ethnic Ministries

In September 2019 the Office of Ethnic Ministries introduced its Intercultural Leadership Formation Certification Program in partnership with the University of Dayton. The program was in English and Spanish.

The goal of this certification program was to allow participants the opportunity to obtain a perspective and an opening to a rich and diverse world where everyone and their cultures contribute to our common faith. In addition, it prepared them to live and work together with people of all kinds of backgrounds and nationalities.

Applicants were from various ethnic backgrounds. Ngan Bui, (Student, from the Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs, Richmond) stated that she joined this program because she realized there was a lot of diversity in her parish and community. She found the program very enriching because she had the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and from different backgrounds. She said she learned from the other students' experiences and she was able to share her experience with them.

Applicants from across the diocese were accepted into the program upon recommendation from their



Group photo of students of 2019/2020 program



Comboni Sister Delia M. Contreras facilitating class during the weekend retreat, November 2019



Students celebrating Mass during the weekend retreat, November 2019



Orientation day at the Pastoral Center, August 2019

program, nine of which were male and 18 were female. Interestingly, the number of males and females on the Spanish program were equal. However, on the English program there was only one male and 10 female students. Alvin Ho (student from St. Michael the Archangel Church, Glen Allen), was the only male on the English program. He explained that, "...before we started the Intercultural leadership program we were a bit intimidated, but once we started it gets very interesting and wonderful. We learn a lot about our life, our faith and our purpose."

The program was aimed predominantly at young adults aged between 18 to 35; with the hope to better educate and develop them and make them agents of evangelization in an intercultural Church. However, 32% of the students were between 36 - 45 years old.

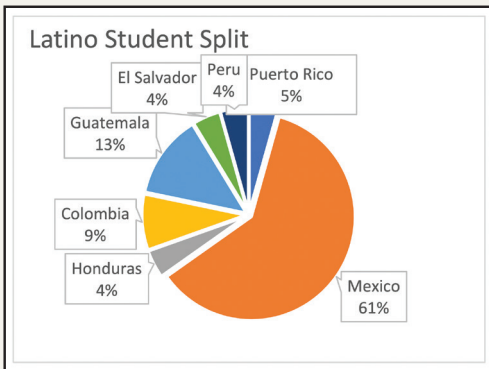
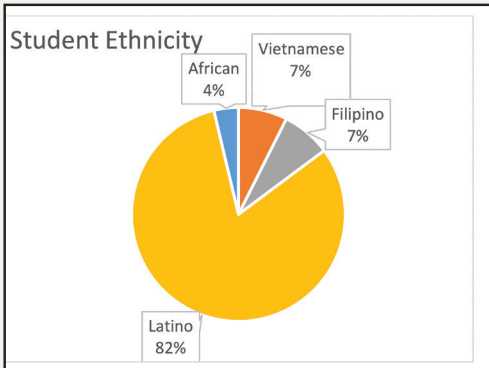
It was good to see that this program was attractive to a wide age range of people. Anne Ho (student from St. Michael the Archangel Church Glen Allen) stated that, 'we learned so much and at the same time made new friends. We are fascinated with the knowledge we gained on this journey which deepens our faith and encourages us to continue the mission of our Lord as his disciples'.

In November 2019 the students participated in a weekend retreat as part of the program. The retreat took place at the Comboni Missionary Sisters house in Lakeside, led by Comboni Sister Delia M. Contreras. The objective was to come together to build community life and to grow in culture, emotional maturity and leadership skills. Through different activities, the participants focused on the concept of vulnerability, connection and support as a way to implement these aspects in their dealing with people in ministry as missionary disciples of mercy.

The third part of the Intercultural Leadership Formation program is mission experience. The Office of Ethnic Ministries hopes to make volunteering a pillar of missionary culture. By volunteering, individuals provide a service with meaningful action. This helps discover genuine faith while actively caring for and serving others. Volunteering teaches compassion, self-sacrifice and how to love our neighbors as ourselves. All this is central to a successful ministry. The Intercultural Leadership Formation students have volunteered at different locations including: Our Lady of Hope, Commonwealth Catholic Charities and events organized by the Office of Ethnic Ministries.

The current program is due to finish in August 2020. Upon completion of the program, the students will receive a Missionary Discipleship Ministry Certificate from the University of Dayton and an Intercultural Leadership Certificate from the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

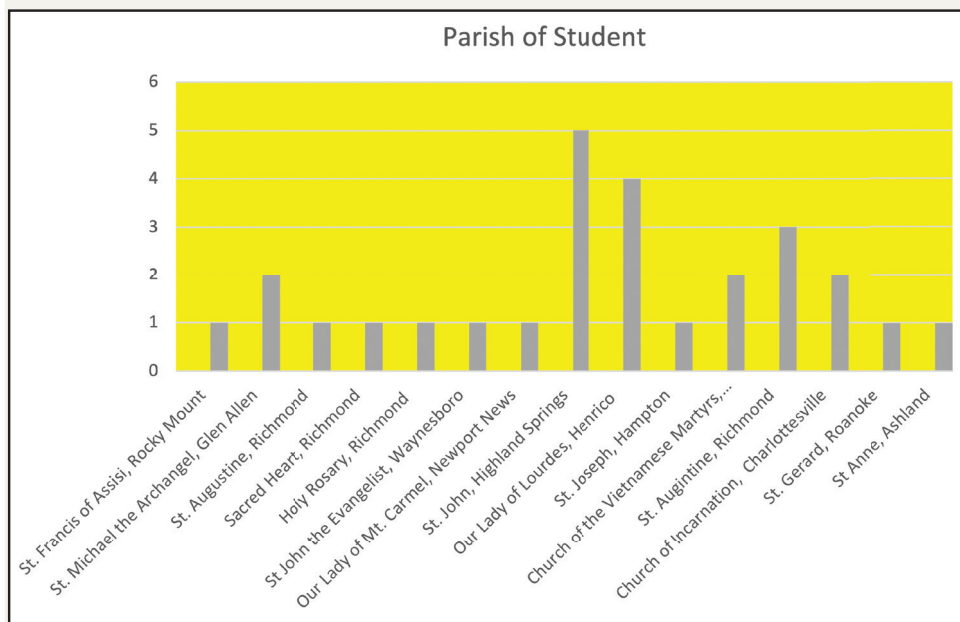
Ursule Nancy Essangabela (Student from Holy Rosary Church, Highland Spring) stated, "I would recommend this program to anyone who wants to learn more about the Catholic Church, learn how to get closer to God, learn about the Bible or learn about Leadership skills which will help the community in the future or now."



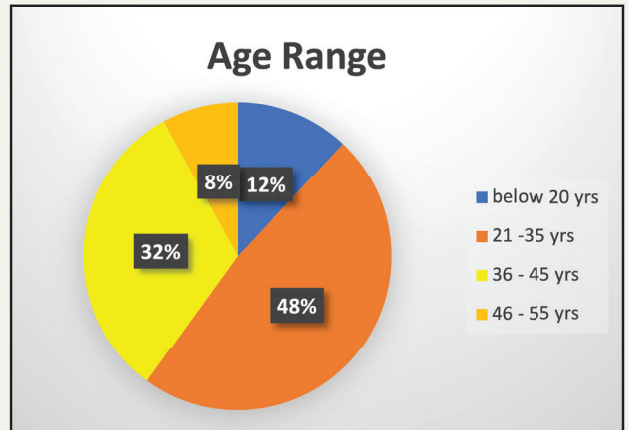
pastor. This gave a good mix of diversity, experiences and practices to share among the students. The first part of this program was to study eight online courses provided by the University of Dayton.

Kayla Acosta, (Student, from St. Francis of Assisi Church, Rocky Mount), commented that she was very happy that the courses were online and therefore, she did not have to travel to the pastoral center because she lives too far. Online studying was an advantage.

A total of 27 students were enrolled into the



For further information or to apply for this program please contact the Office of Ethnic Ministries at 804-622-5241 or [ethnicministries@richmond-diocese.org](mailto:ethnicministries@richmond-diocese.org)



Si estas interesado/a en crecer como discípulo misionero en un contexto eclesial intercultural. Te ofrecemos este certificado de la universidad de Dayton.

Compartelo con tu párroco e informate con nosotros a: [ethnicministries@richmond-diocese.org](mailto:ethnicministries@richmond-diocese.org)

## Thankful

*Continued from Page 10*

staff some indication as to whom to expect. Those who do not have access to the internet — or who simply did not have the chance to check the parish website — were able to register at a table set up at the door.

“We’ve been fortunate that we’ve been able to seat everyone,” Miranda said. “We didn’t want to turn anyone away.”

### Unexpected blessings, unexpected challenges

Aaron Hostetter, youth minister at Holy Trinity, and Mary Lewis, parish bookkeeper, noted that, for some, even the trying times of quarantine have brought unexpected blessings.

“It’s given families more time to be together,” Lewis said, “to take a step back from their busy lives.”

Hostetter said that when he served as a cantor at Easter, members of his extended family, scattered across California, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia, all sat down at the same time to watch the Mass as it was livestreamed, sharing the experience.

“That would never have happened otherwise,” he said.

Both have noticed in their work, however, that parishioners have been missing the social interaction that comes with being part of a community.

Lewis explained that, as the weeks went on, phone calls that began with quick questions about online donations occasionally evolved into neighborly chats.

“People want to talk to other people,” she said. “We all want community again.”

Hostetter agreed, saying that he abandoned the idea of Zoom sessions for his religious education classes after he realized how tired his students were of living life via their screens.

“The kids are zoomed out,” Hostetter said. “They’re exhausted. They’ve actually been doing more work at home, keeping up with online sessions and assignments. I could announce any sort of trip right now, and the sign-up list would be full,” he added with a laugh.

“We might not get to normal,” he said. “Normal can be a dangerous word, because it won’t ever be as though this never happened. But the kids just want to get to a point where they can be together.”

### ‘This is where we gather’

It was one of the first publicly attended Masses of the Easter season, but, in the end, the mood was uncharacteristically solemn as parishioners quietly filed out, each keeping to their separate households, while staff members and volunteers set about wiping down the ledges of the pews.

It won’t quite be the same, Father Glass said, until the time comes when parishioners are able to socialize again, but for now, he hopes it’s a start.

Parishioner Luke DeHon, who stayed after the dismissal as a part of the cleaning crew, said that because he serves as a lector, he was able to attend Mass a few times during the quarantine, “but sometimes,” he said, “until the homily started, it felt more like a rehearsal.”

“But today, having everyone here from the beginning, having the community here, it all seems much different,” he said. “It feels like, ‘This is the Mass. This is where we gather. It’s a blessing, to be back.’”

## Gratitude Walk at Marian Manor



Marian Manor employees and staff, along with priests, women religious and office staff from St. Gregory the Great, Virginia Beach, participate in a Gratitude Walk, Thursday, May 7, on the grounds of the assisted living facility. Led by Vicki Bohannon, pastoral counselor at Marian Manor, the group prayed for the well-being of Marian Manor and all assisted living communities in the Tidewater area. (Photo provided)

## Parade for pastor



Nearly 200 cars were part of the Honk Parade at St. Ann, Ashland, Saturday, May 9, as parishioners honored their pastor, Father Christian Haydinger, on the 44th anniversary of his priesthood ordination. That weekend the Little Sisters of the Poor were to be at the parish to raise funds, but since the sisters couldn’t appear in person, the participants in the Honk Parade donated \$5,000 to them. (Photo provided)

## Honors

*Continued from Page 8*

leagues and they respect him not only for his skills but for the manner in which he supports them — always positive, always with a smile and always with a helping hand.”

Mills, a second grade teacher at the Blessed Sacrament Huguenot School, Powhatan, received the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award — given to a teacher “based on their selfless work in service of the Gospel in both word and deed, their dedication to Catholic education, their instructional expertise, and their

witness to their faith to help transform the lives of our Catholic school students and communities,” according to the diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

In her nomination of Mills, Paula Ledbetter, head of school, wrote: “Mandy is dedicated and committed to the well-rounded development of her students, working to enhance the academic and cocurricular programs at the school, coaching and teaching colleagues in new initiatives and participating in church and community events. She is a reliable and dedicated teacher who is respected and valued by her colleagues.”

## Time Capsule

*Continued from Page 2*

The change to Immaculate Conception highlighted the spiritual connection to the mother parish in Richmond. The earliest baptism in Buckner took place in 1869, and monthly Mass was offered from around 1876.

The next year, James Gibbons (1834–1921), the fourth bishop of Richmond, dedicated Immaculate Conception Church in Buckner’s Station. Gibbons had been made the vicar apostolic (missionary bishop) of North Carolina at age 33 (1868–1872), earning him the nickname “the Boy Bishop.”

Gibbons achieved prominence during his time in Richmond (1872–1877) by writing “Faith of Our Fathers” (1876), an influential book that, unusual

for its time, presented Catholicism in a diplomatic way. This technique reflected Gibbons’ experience as a bishop in North Carolina and Virginia, where Catholics were a minority that endeavored to gain social acceptance.

From Richmond, Gibbons went on to become the archbishop of Baltimore (1877–1921), the second American cardinal (1886) and a national figure. He aspired to demonstrate the compatibility of the Catholic faith and American society.

To Gibbons, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, “Taking your life as a whole, I think you now occupy the position of being the most respected, and venerated, and useful citizen of our country” (1917).

James Gibbons recorded in his diary the dedication of Im-

maculate Conception Church, which continues to be used for worship today:

### Dedication of the Church at Buckner’s Station

*June 25th [1877]. This morning after arriving about 11 A.M. by the train at Buckner’s Station Louisa Co. (48 miles from Richmond) I dedicated the new church just erected there. It is a frame building about 30 x 50 [feet]. There was a large concourse of people present from the neighborhood of Richmond. I preached on the occasion & at the end of Mass I administered Confirmation to nine candidates, including three converts. Frs. Benno [Hegele] and Bernardine [Dolweck] assisted me. The Church is dedicated to the B. V. Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception.*