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Participants in a Prayer Pilgrimage for Black Lives and Racial Equity gather at the site of the old Confederate monument in downtown Norfolk, on Tuesday, July 28. Nearly 80 people walked from Virginia Beach to Portsmouth to Norfolk as part of the event organized by members of Holy Family Parish, Virginia Beach. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)

Prayer pilgrimage focuses on black lives, racial equality

WENDY KLESCH Special to The Catholic Virginian

n Virginia Beach, an empty platform stands beside the old brick Princess Anne County courthouse, surrounded by green netting and a chain-link fence.

Until Saturday, July 25, it was the site of a 27-foot-tall monument, installed in 1905, depicting a Confederate soldier holding a rifle.

Decades before that, it was the site of slave auctions, where people were whipped, separated from their families and sold.

On Tuesday, July 28, people of all faiths from across Hampton Roads gathered at the site as part of a Prayer Pilgrimage for Black Lives and Racial Equity.

During the course of the morning, participants traveled from Virginia Beach to Portsmouth to Norfolk to places where Confederate monuments either stand or once stood, for a day of reflection, remembrance and healing. Tim McCarthy, a parishioner at Holy Family, Virginia Beach, explained that the idea for the pilgrimage came about during an informal Zoom meeting of volunteers active in social justice ministries who joined together to form the working group Catholics and Friends for Black Lives and Racial Equity.

"We wanted to convey the message that there are Catholics who stand with the Black Lives Matter movement," he said. "We are called by our faith, as infused with Catholic Social Teachings — we are called by Christ — to stand with the marginalized, to stand up for justice where we can."

'Journey of transformation'

Father Kevin O'Brien, pastor of St. Therese, Chesapeake, began the pilgrimage with a prayer, addressing about 80 people who had gathered

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Diocese launches new Pathways for catechists

Certification program now online

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI The Catholic Virginian

aking what had been the heart of the catechist certification program in the Diocese of Richmond, fortifying it and then making it accessible anytime, anywhere has resulted in the development and presentation of Pathways: *Delivered*.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, the diocese's Office of Christian Formation launched the online program through which those who provide faith formation through parish religious education programs and in Catholic schools, RCIA, adult education and youth ministry can receive certification.

The development of the program, according Megan Cottam, an associate director in the Office of Christian Formation, was a response to those doing formation who wanted a more flexible program than that which the in-person Pathways training provided.

"We had catechists who wanted the training, but they could not find a way to make it to what we had to offer," she said. "So we were looking for an online opportunity to do this — one that wasn't just a rigid set of courses, but something that we could tailor to the specific needs of our diocese."

Convenient, engaging

Michele Kresge, coordinator of Ministry to Youth and Children at St. John the Evangelist, Waynesboro, was among participants in a pilot version of the program this spring. She welcomed the convenience of it.

"With Pathways: *Delivered*, being able to complete exercises on your own time is a huge benefit for myself and for those who want to take on catechesis," she said, noting the "tremendous commitment" catechists make, while also having full-time jobs and other responsibilities. "With (Pathways: *Delivered*) we have a unified message, and they're able to engage in it, listen to it and to feel they're also included in it."

Based upon feedback from pilot program participants, Cottam said that the first tier of the program can be completed in about five hours, but noted it is designed for self-pacing.

"You can start and stop. If you start after the kids are in bed at 9 and at 10 your brain is shutting down, then you shut down and come back another time," she said. "That's another aspect of the flexibility in this that is so beneficial to the individual."

Donna Waymouth, a pilot participant who teaches religion, language arts and social studies at Sacred Heart School, Danville, and who attended previous Pathways formation sessions, said, "This is so much nicer to do a program like this as opposed to sitting in a room for four to six hours."

Michael School, director of the diocesan Office for Evangelization, said the flexibility Pathways: *Delivered* provides is important.

"Even outside COVID, what we know is a lot of our catechists and those who are youth ministers, those who help educate our youth are parents, and as parents it is very hard for them to give up a whole Saturday to commit to doing this work," he said, referring to the sessions catechists had been required to attend for certification.

Calling the program "super accessible," School continued, "Especially as a result of the pandemic, people are not as unwilling to go out and try to engage through technology."

Vocation, Scripture, tradition

The first tier of Pathways: *Delivered* focuses on the vocation of the

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The Catholic Virginian 7800 Carousel Lane Bichmond, VA 23294 Office of the Bishop

Responsibility for protecting our children is ongoing

August 3, 2020

ear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, With so much happening this year and all that we've encountered as a faith community, I write this letter to connect and communicate with you on an important announcement from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The matter centers on the issue that remains of utmost importance – the universal Church's ongoing responsibility to address the protection of children.

As a new pastoral year approaches in the fall, this responsibility necessitates we consistently review our efforts

in our promise to provide a safe environment through transparency, accountability and enforcement of rigorous policies and procedures especially in our diocese. By God's grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we continue to do all we can at restoring the trust of our faithful.

As part of that effort to rebuild trust, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on July 16, 2020, published a Vademecum, or instruction manual, which provides specific guidance and procedural steps to bishops, religious superiors and others when governing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

Why is this manual significant? The document provides best practices and stepby-step guidelines to dioceses worldwide. This handbook does not alter Church law. However, it is a critical tool and a substantial step forward in the universal Church's responsibility to protect our most vulnerable members.

This initiative is a follow-up to the Vatican summit held in February 2019 regarding the protection of minors and the need for further stringent procedures of accountability, especially for bishops, resulting from the

grave sins of the actions and inactions of Church leaders. As we await the report from the Vatican on Theodore McCarrick, we recognize the importance of putting such measures into effect.

As you are aware, Pope Francis promulgated Vatican norms for the Church's handling of sex abuse in May 2019 by a motu proprio, titled, "Vos estis lux mundi" ("You are the light of the world"). Within that apostolic letter, one of the measures called for the establishment of a "metropolitan model" for the investigation of accusations of sexual misconduct against bishops and their peers.

I joined my brother bishops in approving the U.S. implementation of the directive in June 2019. Our diocesan website contains more information on the protocols for reporting abuse against bishops and about the nationwide service. I remind you that ANY report of child sexual abuse must be reported immediately to law enforcement and then to our diocese.

So where are we within our diocese concerning response and actions of accountability? I promised you, the faithful, of my commitment to address this wound in our local Church and to further our journey of spiritual renewal and reform. Please allow me to update you on the various mechanisms put into place within the last 18 months in our diocese:

• In June 2019, the Richmond Diocese established and began using a third-party, independent, hotline system called EthicsPoint. This independent reporting service allows clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, parishioners, vendors and other interested parties confidentially to report concerns about suspected financial or ethical misconduct and misuse of resources.

• High standards of professional behavior from our clergy, employees and volunteers are always expected. Effective March 28, 2020, I promulgated the Code of Ethical Conduct to strengthen and set a clear expectation of the core values and behavior that is consistent with Catholic Church teachings and required of all clergy, religious, employees and volunteers.

• In the ongoing promise in our local Church to help survivors with their healing, I directed a full audit of our clergy files by an independent entity and in February 2019, published the names of clergy with a credible and substantiated accusation of sexual abuse of a minor. This is being updated as required and includes the past assignments of our named diocesan clergy.

• One of the aspects to reconcile the sins in our local Church and repair the damage that has been done is the establishment of the

Independent Reconciliation Program (IRP). It was established to assist victim survivors who were sexually abused as minors by Catholic clergy. The program, announced in February 2020, is independently administered and remains ongoing.

• Our Diocesan Review Board, which consists of lay individuals, religious and clergy, continues to review all allegations of child sexual abuse by Church personnel and recommends actions to be taken.

• In my continuous commitment for greater involvement of the laity and co-responsibility of the care of our Church, the Diocesan Pastoral Council was formed and met for the first time in August 2019. The council is one of several advisory bodies that provides valuable counsel to me and reflects the voice of the lay faithful on important matters of policy, pastoral initiatives and pastoral planning. The council is composed of nine men and nine women selected for their parish experience and leadership. They are representative of the diocese's 15 deaneries.

• Our seminarians have the opportunity of studying at some of the best seminaries in order to prepare themselves academically, pastorally and spiritually for their life

of ministry. They undergo careful psychological assessments, training on child protection and reporting policies in our diocese, establishing expectations and guidelines for reporting sexual harassment as well as management courses in order to develop skills to serve as effective leaders in the Church.

• Through the VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children for Adults Program, all clergy, religious and employees are required to receive preventative and educational training that provides proactive measures on the issue of child sexual abuse. Volunteers who regularly work with children and youth are also required to take this training.

Please know I continue to hold in my heart the hurt and pain victim survivors have shared with me about the enormously profound impact these grave violations of sacred trust have had on their lives, and I will always do so. I continue to emphasize that our response will always be about what we are doing, not simply about what we have done. As we tend to the wound still healing in our Church, please join me in continuous prayer.

May the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God grant me and all in leadership understanding and strength as we continue to rebuild the sacred trust of our faithful.

Faithfully in Christ, and motor

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout Bishop of Richmond



Bishop Knestout's column is scheduled to return in the Sept. 7 issue of The Catholic Virginian.

"Please know I continue to hold in my heart the hurt and pain victim survivors have shared with me about the enormously profound impact these grave violations of sacred trust have had on their lives, and I will always do so. I continue to emphasize that our response will always be about what we are doing, not simply about what we have

done."

- BISHOP BARRY C. KNESTOUT

Nun recalls 'new light' experiences of religious life Sister Pat McCarthy retiring after 21 years at St. Mary, Richmond

KRISTEN L. BYRD Special to The Catholic Virginian

he seeds of faith were sown deeply within Sister Pat McCarthy from an early age, and those seeds would grow roots that stretched across international borders and state lines.

Sister Pat has been a religious for more than six decades and served as pastoral associate at St. Mary Catholic Church, Richmond, for more than 20 years. Now, at age 87, she is retiring.

Born in Colombia to an American mother and Canadian father who each ended up in South America, both of her parents shared Irish heritage. Religion was major part of their lives, and they worked to ensure it was a major part of their three daughters' lives as well.

'Being Catholic was in their blood, and it flowed through every dimension of

their lives," she said. This was also reflected in Colombia, a country whose culture is enmeshed with Catholicism. For Sister Pat, there was no way to separate any facet of her life from her faith.

Even as a child, she had a passion for religion. She loved the mystery of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the celebration of holy days, the spiritual retreats and any opportunity she had to learn more about God.

The McCarthys lived in Colombia until Sister Pat was 13, when they moved to the United States. While her parents settled in Charlottesville, Sister Pat and her older sister attended a Catholic boarding school in Pennsylvania. She adjusted to the melting pot of the United States and enjoyed its diversity. She later attended Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and it was there that she first took the idea of a spiritual vocation seriously.

'Leaving all'

She spent a year under the spiritual guidance of a Dominican priest and theology teacher at Trinity before making her decision.

"I think I knew all along that I was going to

say, 'Yes,' but I also knew that I was going to be giving up a lot of things I enjoyed doing, and I needed spiritual support to do that," Sister Pat said. "This came through some friends, through prayer and through listening to what God was inviting me to do.'

> In 1955, Sister Pat entered a cloistered Carmel convent in Detroit in part because of her affinity for Carmelite nun St. Teresa of Avila and her focus on prayer and contemplation. She thought of one of the saint's quotes, "Prayer is nothing more than a simple conversation with One whom we know loves us," and she was eager to have that conversation.

"I felt a call to truly 'leave all' and to dedicate myself to a life of prayer hidden away from the world.," she recounted. "It was seen as a call to a life of perfection, and my heart said, 'Yes.' Her days there were very

structured. Prayer began at 5:25 a.m. and ended at 8 p.m. Blocks of time were dedicated to Scripture readings and solitude throughout the day as members sought a deeper relationship with God.

Ministry in the modern world

After 15 years, Sister Pat left the centuries-old order for a newly-established one that was formed in response to Vatican II, which sought to bring Catholicism into the modern world - a world in which Sister Pat wanted to be included.

'It seemed to offer new opportunities for the involvement of women in ministry. I saw religious life in a new light. I realized that for me, literally leaving the world was not what I was being called to do," she said.

Sister Pat joined the Sisters of Christian Community, whose charism is building a global community that focuses on the Gospel values of equality, love, forgiveness, reverence and nonviolence, among others.

Deciding to serve God in a pastoral setting, Sister Pat worked at different parishes while pursuing two master's degrees and a doctorate.

Her thesis focused on how sexism and racism are interconnected.

"Struggling against sexism, whether in Church or in society, also involved struggling against racism," she said. "The two were and are inter-related. The freedom of each individual woman and the freedom of all women are joined in one struggle, and the struggle won't be over until everyone is free.'

Blessings in Richmond

At St. Mary, Sister Pat was involved in the lives of parishioners from birth to death. She was coordinator of the baptism, eucharistic outreach, funeral and RCIA ministries. She worked as a translator and advocate and was involved in many community outreach programs.

She helped baptize hundreds of babies, held the hands of patients in the hospital, coordinated the receiving of sacraments, and helped grieving families arrange funeral services.

"I have been blessed through all these 21 years to get to know so many amazing families at St. Mary's, families and individuals who have shown me that they understand what it means to be a community of faith, and how to live and share that faith with those in the parish community, as well as thousands of others who are part of the broader community in the Richmond area," Sister Pat said.

Her time at St. Mary makes her hopeful for the future. She has been inspired by the growing number of adult formation classes and participation, as well as the desire for unity in a divisive world.

"I have seen the Church grow in compassion and seek to become a listener and healer in conscience issues," she stated.

Now she is making another change: retirement; but she has no fear of the unknown.

"I have never found it hard to adapt to changes in my life. I guess it is part of who I am," Sister Pat said. "When one phase of my life ends, another begins, and I just go with it. It is all part of my life journey, and I just move forward.'

While she is moving forward, she is not moving away. Sister Pat will remain a parishioner at St. Mary. Although her journey of faith has taken many turns, she never felt like she was making the trip alone.

"God has promised to always be with us," she said, "and will give us the grace and strength we need to do what is right, no matter what obstacles may appear."

In light of pandemic, pope will begin series on social doctrine

CAROL GLATZ Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and social and environmental crises worldwide, Pope Francis announced he would begin a new series of general audience talks aimed at helping build "the future that we need."

"In the next few weeks, I invite you to tackle together the pressing questions that the pandemic has brought to the fore, social ills above all. And we will do it in the light of the to assume a creative and renewed Gospel, of the theological virtues and of the principles of the Church's social doctrine," he said Aug. 5 during his weekly general audience.

We will explore together how our Catholic social tradition can help the human family heal this world

that suffers from serious illnesses," the pope said.

Christians can find strength and healing in the Gospel and the virtues of faith, hope and charity, he said.

These are gifts from God "that heal us and that make us healers, gifts that open us to new horizons. even while we are navigating the difficult waters of our time." Catholics need to renew their experience with the Gospel, which "invites us spirit," he said. "In this way, we will be able to transform the roots of our physical, spiritual and social infirmities and the destructive practices that separate us from each other, threatening the human family and our planet.'

Jesus offers examples of healing not just physical and individual By keeping their focus on Christ, afflictions, but spiritual, relational and societal ills as well, he said.

As disciples of Jesus, "we can ask ourselves: Today, in what way can we help heal our world?" because his disciples also are called to continue his work of healing and salvation "in a physical, social and spiritual sense."

The Church offers the sacraments and concrete charity and care. but it is "not an expert in the prevention or the cure of the pandemic. She helps with the sick, but she is not an expert," the pope said.

Neither does the Church give specific socio-political policies because "this is the job of political and social leaders," who, however, can be guided by the light of the Gospel, he

added.

Over the centuries, the Church has developed many social principles "that can help us move forward in preparing the future that we need."

He said the main principles are: the dignity of the person; the common good; the preferential option for the poor; the universal destination of goods; solidarity; subsidiarity; and care for the planet, "our common home."

"These principles help the leaders, those responsible for society, to foster growth and also, as in the case of the pandemic, the healing of the personal and social fabric," he said.

"It is my desire that everyone reflect and work together, as followers of Jesus who heals, to construct a better world, full of hope for future generations," said Pope Francis.



Sister Pat McCarthy

Silver jubilarian credits family with supporting vocation

assisted the priests at Masses in the

"I loved serving the priests,

and I loved doing the ministry and

ing during the Mass. That grew and

developed and deepened my voca-

Father Alcantara continued his

formation at the college seminary

Following graduation in 1985,

coming with the priests and serv-

Father Alcantara calls parents, siblings 'my prayer warriors'

barrios.

tion," he said.

JANNA REYNOLDS The Catholic Virginian

According to Father Patricio Alcantara, family has a very important role in a vocation to the priesthood.

"I've heard and learned from my former formator that the role of the bishop is to ordain and lay hands on the man to become a priest, but the family is the one making the head being laid by the bishop," he said.

Father Alcantara grew up in Sorsogon City in the southern part of Luzon, the northernmost island of the Philippines.

He said he first felt called to the priesthood while he was a student at Colegio de la Milagrosa in Sorsogon City, an elementary school run by the Daughters of Charity. The school had daily Mass, and Father Alcantara became an altar server.

"They had daily Mass at 6 in the morning, so I had to be in the school before that time. So I would leave around 5:30 at home and then be at the school before 6. And after the Mass, the school begins again. So that's when it started," he recalled.

The priest said his father, mother and six siblings were his support group and provided encouragement and prayers from the very beginning of his vocation.

"They are my prayer warriors, my family. Especially my mom. When I became a priest, the support of my family is always there from the very start of my ministry," said Father Alcantara, adding that his siblings still offer some critiques to help him improve himself and his ministry.

His family home was located very close to the seminary, which provided the priest with an unforeseen link to his later formation.

"I didn't know during the time that the place where I usually played with my kite when I was still in elementary (school) is the place where the seminarians are studying to become priests," he said.

Roots of formation

When he graduated, his mother encouraged him to take the entrance examination for Our Lady of Peñafrancia Seminary High School, which he passed.

As a high school student, Father Alcantara



Father Patricio Alcantara

and earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1989.

Later that year, he entered formation at Divine Word Theological Seminary in Tagaytay City.

After his second year of theology, Father Alcantara completed his clinical pastoral education, which is similar to the pastoral year seminarians have in the Diocese of Richmond.

During the first half of the year, he served as a hospital chaplain.

"We are being trained how to minister to people and how to adapt to a situation or anything with regards to ministry and ministering to people. That's what we do," he said.

Father Alcantara said the second half of the clinical pastoral education was in a "community situation" where the seminarians "process your way of relating to people" by examining any issues that arise and learning "how you can improve and how you can make good ministry to people."

He graduated from Divine Word Seminary with a bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology in 1994 and was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Sorsogon on August 15, 1995.

Love of priesthood

Father Alcantara said what he loves most about priesthood is his ministry to the people.

"That's what makes my ministry as a priest become more meaningful, by bringing God to the people and by serving the people of God in that way. So whatever help, not only spiritual needs of the people, but also the total formation of the person, is what makes my priesthood more meaningful.," he said.

Father Alcantara said that priesthood "is not easy," but love for Christ and his Church gives meaning to his life as a priest.

"Whatever you choose in life, there's always trials and difficulties, but once you learn to love what you are undertaking, especially learn to love priesthood, all of these things will become easy because of the love in your heart," he said.

Father Alcantara said the brotherhood and the camaraderie with his brother priests "gives me strength to continue."

"Only your brother priests can understand you. People will listen to you, but the struggle you are having as a priest, only your brother priests can understand. So, for me personally, that's what keeps me on my vocation as a priest," he said.

'All grace from God'

Father Alcantara came to the Diocese of Richmond in October 2019 on loan from the Diocese of Sorsogon thanks to a partnership established in 1998 between Bishop Walter F. Sullivan of Richmond and Bishop Jesus Y. Varela of Sorsogon.

"I'm happy that the Diocese of Richmond continues to welcome us here, that the legacy of the two bishops continues," he said.

He has served as parochial vicar at Prince of Peace, Chesapeake, since October 2019, and said he is learning to love the Diocese of Richmond.

"It's another challenge for me and another way of doing ministry because it's a different kind of community, a different kind of people, a different culture," said Father Alcantara. "It's a challenge and somehow is helping me develop more of my ministry as priest."

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Father Alcantara intended to celebrate his 25th anniversary at home in the Philippines while jointly celebrating his father's 80th birthday. Now he will mark his silver jubilee at Prince of Peace with a simple celebration "to thank God for all the blessings and the graces that I have on my 25th year as a priest," he said.

He added that if there is a COVID vaccine and travel is possible next year, he will celebrate again with his family in the Philippines at that time.

"In my life as a priest, I can say it's all grace from God. It's all grace. Pure grace. Because looking back, I don't know how I survived, but I believe that there's really a Holy Spirit and there's really the grace of God. All my failures, all I'm lacking in the ministry, are being supplemented by the graces of God," he said.



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. The Diocese of Richmond has always been geographically expansive. Originally, its territory was the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, which reached from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ohio River (1820). The territory of the diocese was reconfigured several times (1850, 1868, 1974).

On August 13, 1974, several territorial changes took effect simultaneously. The ecclesiastical boundaries of the Dioceses of Richmond and Wheeling (soon to be renamed Wheeling-Charleston) were aligned with the civil boundaries of Virginia and West Virginia, respectively. To achieve this result, southwest Virginia was transferred from Wheeling to Richmond, and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia was conveyed from Richmond to Wheeling. The Diocese of Wilmington ceded the Eastern Shore of Virginia to the Diocese of Richmond.

The next territorial change of 1974 was the most significant as the Diocese of Arlington was created to encompass northern Virginia. Consequently, the Diocese of Richmond transferred 21 counties and 5 inde-

St. Nicholas 'disciples' reach out during pandemic Volunteers staying connected with senior parishioners

JENNIFER NEVILLE Special to The Catholic Virginian phone call can go a long way. It can reassure an individual that he is important, is cared for and is missed. It can give hope in bleakness.

Such is the premise of the newly established Discipleship CHRIST Force (DCF) at St. Nicholas Parish, Virginia Beach, through which volunteers have been reaching out to older parishioners regularly by phone during the pandemic.

After Bishop Barry C. Knestout suspended public Masses in the diocese on March 16, St. Nicholas pastor Father Venancio Balarote, known as Father Jun, called an emergency parish staff meeting in which they prayed and brainstormed on how they could help parishioners during the pandemic. They decided to reach out to parishioners over age 60, herein called seniors, because of their increased vulnerability to the coronavirus.

DCF, which was up and running within a week, has 41 volunteers who have called a collective 270 senior households regularly throughout the COVID-19 "shutdown," said Lora Di Nardo, pastoral associate/ business manager.

Several callers and recipients said the hardest part of the pandemic for seniors has been isolation.

"Many of the seniors were involved in church ministry. To take that away from them was dramatic," said caller Brian Garrison. "The calls let them know the parish is still thinking (about) and praying for them. It's a way for the parish to connect as a family."

The volunteers chat with the seniors, ask what they or the parish can do for them and inform them of opportunities such as praying in the church, watching livestreamed Masses and participating in par-



Brian Garrison, one of 41 volunteers with the Discipleship CHRIST Force at St. Nicholas, Virginia Beach, calls a senior from his home on Friday, July 24. The group has called a collective 270 households since March. (Photo/Mellisa Garrison)

ish activities, mostly virtual. They help tangibly, as needed, by grocery shopping and running other errands, some as simple as picking up palms for them for Palm Sunday. Sometimes they helped them over the phone with Facebook so the seniors could watch the Masses and keep in touch with the parish.

Father Jun said the primary objective is to tend to their spiritual needs, to offer Christ "non-sacramentally" to the seniors and reassure them they are not alone in this struggle, that Christ is with them always.

Steve Branning, director of Christian Formation and Evangelization, said DCF provides the opportunity for callers to be "a light in the darkness.'

"This isn't just volunteering to help with groceries or to bring food to the vulnerable; it's reaching out to people spiritually," said Branning. For example, the caller might share the day's Gospel reading, tell them about their favorite saint, talk about

a faith-based book or pray the Act of Spiritual Communion or another prayer with them.

Angie Spears, one of the volunteers, agreed the calls can be a way to strengthen recipients' faith and offer hope "by letting them know the Lord is with them and won't forget about them."

'We are acting as the body of Christ to be his hands and to be his voice. We are each part of that," Spears said. "The purpose is to spread his love, his word, even in the simplest way with a phone call."

Caller Ken Inglesby said DCF has helped "keep our congregation together.'

'It's important for the parish to reach out to folks in tough times and let them know that it doesn't matter what turmoil is going on, what uncertainty they face, what fears or concerns they have, the important thing is we are there for them," Inglesby said.

A few youth and young adults

are among DCF callers. Youth minister Ryan Castro said their involvement in the ministry shows the importance of helping others and demonstrates their ability to do so.

'The ministry has given volunteers the opportunity to be Christ to one another" Castro said.

Though COVID-19 restrictions are easing, DCF won't have a formal ending; rather, outreach will either taper off or continue depending on the seniors' needs and on the connections caller and senior have established.

Father Jun said the seniors are "thrilled and grateful" for the calls.

"It's comforting to know that someone is worried about your health and welfare and is willing to help you," said Bernie Galante, one of the seniors receiving calls. He added that the calls remind him that the church is just a building, but individuals make the parish a family.

Some of the seniors already had a support network of family and friends, yet several of them wanted the callers to continue reaching out to them.

The ministry is a way to give back to the seniors who have been active in the parish, Di Nardo said.

"The seniors made this parish a stewardship parish," she explained. "They do so much for our parish, and this is our opportunity to support them in this time of uncertainty.'

Mary Lou Ferralli, Just Seniors chair, said the calls she has received were reassuring.

"Their calls showed that seniors are an important part of the Church family, and they are looking out for us," Ferralli said. "It's reassuring because if we needed help, they were there for us."

"They see Christ in us," she continued. "It is very heartwarming. It's one of the reasons I just love my parish."

Priest hopes Bible study brings participants hope, calm

BETTY ARAYA Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Father John Kartje, rector of Mundelein Seminary at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Illinois, is hosting an online Bible study this summer called, "Living on the Edge of Chaos: Finding Hope in the Face of Fear."

The current events that have devastated the world have left many confused and hopeless. This Bible study, that now has over 1,500 participants, aims to help that.

The self-guided series can be accessed by signing up at www.usml/ edu/chaos and will be distributed as a series of four weekly email messages. Once they have subscribed online, participants will immediately receive the first session via email and each subsequent session will be sent for

the next three weeks on the day they originally signed up.

"Obviously, there's a lot going on in the world these days," said Father Kartie in an interview with Catholic News Service. "But I teach Scripture, that's just a love of mine; And I often find that there's wisdom in Scripture in a very kind of pragmatic or practical sense that isn't always appreciated."

The goal was to offer a genuine Bible study that examines Scripture, while also analyzing how these passages reflect current experiences and become a tool for coping.

"The stress of uncertainty, you know, the stress of illness, fear, shame and discouragement, all those kinds of emotions and feelings are not unique to our times," said Father Kartje, a priest of the Chicago Archdiocese.

acters and narratives from the Old

and New Testaments, my hope was (that this) might help people actually see their Bible and see Scripture as a true resource for finding (and) interacting with God in the midst of not only the chaotic situations of this spring and summer, but wherever those kinds of stresses might surface in their life," said Father Kartje.

Obviously there are beautiful prayers, powerful psalms and so forth (that) in the midst of chaotic times somebody might use as a prayer resource," the priest added, "but there's just also all sorts of instances of people dealing with the kinds of things people are dealing with today (in the Bible)."

The study includes audio meditations recorded by Father Kartje

"So by looking at a series of char- with accompanying Bible passages and spiritual exercises designed to inspire reflection.

> "My hope, really, my desire is that it (Scripture) would be a resource for people to use in the face of any stress they're finding now, but that it also might help open the door to the beauty of Scripture."

Correction

In the June 29 article regarding the ordination of Thomas Lawrence III as a transitional deacon, it incorrectly stated that he "earned an undergraduate degree in theology and is continuing work on a Master of Divinity degree." In addition to the Master of Divinity degree, he is also earning a graduate degree in theology.



Why Catholics should be in forefront of fight against racism

GUEST COMMENTARY RICHARD DOERFLINGER CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

"A state need not subsidize private education. But once a state decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious."

So said the Supreme Court's majority opinion in Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue on June 30.

Montana had disqualified Catholic schools from a state-subsidized scholarship program under its constitution's "Blaine Amendment," named for Congressman James G. Blaine, who sponsored a similar amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1875.

That amendment narrowly failed to pass Congress, but inspired amendments against funding "sectarian" schools in over three dozen states. Public schools promoted reading of the King James Bible and a generic Protestantism — "sectarian" was largely a code word for "Catholic."

Such policies reflected prejudice against Catholic immigrants. Anti-Catholic riots in some cities included the burning of Catholic churches and other institutions. Anti-Catholicism was a tenet of the Know-Nothing Party, in some ways a forerunner of the Ku Klux Klan.

Such prejudice has waxed and waned but never entirely disappeared. The chief "impurities" that brought Puritans to our shores in 1630 were residual Catholic beliefs and practices in the Anglican Church. Among the original Colonies, only Maryland initially welcomed Catholics; Catholicism was banned even there for a time when Protestants gained power.

When the U.S. Constitution was sent to the states for ratification, some objected to its ban on religious tests for public office — claiming that without such a test "popery" may dominate the country or a pope become president. If that seems bizarre, we should recall that senators recently expressed grave concern over judicial nominees' belief in Catholic "dogma" — and over a nominee's membership in a Catholic fraternal society, the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights were actually founded at a

time of severe anti-Catholic prejudice. They chose Columbus as patron not because of his treatment of indigenous people — a checkered history beyond the scope of this column — but to remind elites claiming descent from the Mayflower, "We (Catholics) got here before you did."

The Ku Klux Klan was racist and anti-Catholic. It supported the Blaine amendments, and in Oregon succeeded in banning Catholic schools — a law overturned by the Supreme Court in 1925. An article in the July/August issue of the Knights' magazine Columbia recalls that a Klan publication described the Knights as "the organization most interested in the destruction of the Ku Klux Klan."

But the Knights' anti-Klan efforts were not motivated solely by Catholic self-interest. During World War I, their hospitality centers for U.S. soldiers were unique in equally welcoming soldiers of all races. "The Gift of Black Folk," a book by NAACP co-founder W.E.B. Dubois documenting black Americans' contributions to the nation, was commissioned and published by the Knights. The Columbia article recounts how the Knights have advanced racial equality throughout their history.

This does not mean anti-Catholicism in the U.S. is comparable to our society's shameful history of racism. Catholics were not dragged here in chains and enslaved. As the U.S. bishops' 2018 pastoral letter "Open Wide Our Hearts" observes, racism has been called the "original sin" of our nation. Nor are American Catholics without sin, as even some religious orders and dioceses once owned slaves and resisted racial justice.

My point is this: Catholics should be in the forefront of the fight against racism in our society for two reasons. First, Catholic teaching declares our equal dignity before a loving God. Second, historically we can appreciate what it feels like to be looked down upon, to be seen as inferior by other Americans. The struggle against bigotry is one struggle, and it is ours.

Doerflinger worked for 36 years in the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Washington state.

Letters

Appreciated what was published

Thank you for the inclusion of the two letters (Catholic Virginian, July 13). I am encouraged by the two women who wrote. Kathleen M. Sullivan expressed what I also believe: our Church should welcome members of the LGBT community because we are all God's children.

Let us follow the wisdom of Archbishop Jose Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: "Every person is made in the image and likeness of God."

I went on to read the letter from Maureen Marroni of Norfolk, and my heart leapt to hear a voice standing with the Black Lives Matter movement and others calling for an end to racism in our country. We share in the shame of how our Black sisters and brothers have been and are treated. I hope our voice as Catholic Christians can help end this sinful past and present.

I also appreciated the articles about those who served and are serving in our Church in southwest Virginia: Father Paul Maier and Melanie Coddington. I appreciate your service

to the diocesan Church.

– Kathy Hutson Abingdon

Catholics remember victims, too

As Catholics, we hold out hope for each soul, taught not to support state execution, aka the death penalty. This is often nearly impossible when young innocents are raped, terrorized, trafficked or murdered. Yet we loyally follow Christ's example, and that of Pope Francis.

A friend asked, "What about the victims? Doesn't anyone care about them?" I found that question deeply relevant.

Sadly, amid the outcry against state execution, victims often go unnamed, many having been murdered decades ago, while newly penitent prisoners on death row have had those decades to reform, becoming models of peace. I believe this is possible — that God continually calls all to grace.

Recently, before his execution, a reformed prisoner had time to recite a famous poem after much activism failed to save him. Yet the heart also breaks for victims, brutally murdered, buried long ago, with no friends or media to mourn their slaying, no time for poetry as they left the earth, some with less than 12 years around the sun to ready themselves for Paradise.

I'm a poet, deeply saddened that the murderer's victims, executed without warning, never had any such moment of grace to contemplate the divine poetry of their lives. All families in mourning should know that Catholics whisper a prayer for them, too.

The graves of the innocent cry out. To all the slain, "May flights of angels send thee to thy rest."

 Kathryn Forrester Thro Norfolk

Read more letters at www.catholicvirginian.org.

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Sheriff's office investigating Dinwiddie church break-in

JENNIFER NEVILLE Special to The Catholic Virginian

S acred items, which will cost several thousand dollars to replace, were stolen from St. John Nepomuceme Catholic Church, Dinwiddie, in late July.

Stolen were an Infant of Prague statue, monstrance, presider's chalice, processional cross, two censors of incense, an antique wooden icon and a plastic statue of St. Peregrine. The items' monetary worth is still being determined, but parishioner Ron Franzyshen said the items have "spiritual and personal value and are irreplaceable to many parishioners."

For example, parishioner Patsy Root said the wooden antique icon from Czechoslovakia on which Mary and the infant Jesus were painted was at least 100 years old, and parishioners cherished the Infant of Prague statue which parishioners cloaked in liturgical colors each Church season.

"It's a small parish, and a lot of parishioners have been here all of their lives," Root said. "The stuff they stole means something to the community, and it's irreplaceable. My prayer is that they give the things back."

No desecration, vandalism or intrusion on the Blessed Sacrament occurred in the robbery, said Father Joe Goldsmith, parish administrator, yet the robbery is bound to be upsetting to the approximately 100 families in the parish.

"I think it will be an unpleasant jolt to the parish community that our sacred space has been intruded upon," Father Goldsmith said. "I don't know if we can recover what was lost, but I hope we can have a conversation about the value

of our sacred items and why the Eucharist is the most precious of all."

Root feels that jolt.

"To me, it feels like someone broke into our home. It really does hurt your heart," Root said. "The church belongs to the community. When something like this happens, it happens to all of us."

Franzyshen and said the robbery "didn't make sense."

"What baffled us is they took certain things and didn't take other things that may have been of monetary value," said Franzyshen, who discovered the break-in two days later.

What really raises a question is why the plastic statue was taken, Father Goldsmith said.

Although Major William B. Knott, chief deputy of the Dinwiddie County sheriff's office, said there are no leads as of Friday, July 31, the types of the stolen goods may help the investigation.

"The items are not ordinary like watches, rings or guns. They will stand out," Knott said. "The items they took are unique which should raise a red flag to the pawnbrokers."

Knott said that whenever someone brings in an item to sell, the pawnbroker must report it to law enforcement which enters it in a database of pawn-shop purchases from across the country.

Franzyshen noticed items missing when he made a routine visit to the church July 29 to replace the candle in the sanctuary. The breakin may have occurred Monday, July 27, because neighbors later offered potential clues.

One spotted a grey SUV or van in the church parking lot around dusk and another reported seeing someone put items in a SUV or van in the parking lot, Root said. She explained that the neighbors did not call the sheriff's office at the time because it is common for cars to be parked in the church parking lot where drivers/passengers say they get better phone service than at home.

Knott encourages anyone with any information about the theft to report it either to the Dinwiddie County sheriff's office at 804-861-1212 or to Petersburg/Dinwiddie Crime Solvers via a form on the sheriff's office website. Individuals can share the information anonymously. If law enforcement uses the information to make an arrest, the person may be eligible for up to a \$1,000 reward.

"They can call in anything. No matter how insignificant a person thinks it is, we want that information. Maybe it's the link we are missing to be able to solve the case," Knott said, adding that the sheriff's office follows up on all leads.

"We take any break-in seriously, and want to solve it, but to me it is especially troubling that they took items from a place of worship," said Knott. "We want to work with the church to find the items, give them back to the church and hold people accountable. We will work diligently to do that."

Knott said investigators dusted the church for fingerprints and swabbed for DNA samples from the crime scene which they sent to a Virginia Department of Forensics lab in Richmond, but it may take a while to receive the results because the lab prioritizes cases with homicides bumping up to the top of the list, he said. The sheriff's office will continue to investigate the crime as they look for witnesses and suspects.

<u>Pathways</u>

Continued from Page 1

catechist, Scripture and Catholic tradition. Cottam likened it to taking prerequisites before embarking upon electives in a college major.

"Our foundation is starting from where our catechists have been called because it's not just about knowledge, but it's a calling from God to be a catechist," Cottam said.

That section also includes a video featuring Bishop Robert D. Barron speaking about the vocation of a catechist. It includes reflection questions where participants need to stop and write.

Matthew Kelly, founder of the Dynamic Catholic Institute, is featured in videos throughout the section on Scripture.

"I love Matthew Kelly," said Waymouth. "He's wonderful for teacher formation and on becoming a better version of yourself. We love listening to him."

Describing herself as a "huge Matthew Kelly fan," Wendy Sellers, who teaches first reconciliation and Eucharist at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Richmond, and first grade at the parish school, liked the way he presented different parts of the Bible.

"He talks at our level," she said. "I loved the way he presented the Gospels. He showed a different way to look at them and how you can talk about them in the classroom."

Isaac Jackson, youth minister at St. Thomas More, Lynchburg, knows

how he will apply what he learned during the Scripture portion of the pilot.

"I hope to take the knowledge I got from that and apply it to get the youth more involved in Scripture because one thing people struggle with, especially youth, is the Old Testament readings: How does this apply to today? Why are we reading this? What's the point of this?" he said. "This can help us dive into Scripture."

The section on Catholic tradition was written and narrated by Patricia Clement, who holds a doctorate in ministry from the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Ind., and is coordinator of adult faith formation at St. Ann, Colonial Heights. Among topics covered were the Creed, papacy and councils and the Magisterium.

The second and third tiers are being developed and are scheduled to launch in September 2021 and 2022, respectively. The second tier will focus on catechetical skills in a specific area, e.g., adults, youth, elementary, etc. The third tier will address a variety of subjects relevant to each area of catechesis.

Accountability key

Another factor in developing Pathways: *Delivered* was making sure there was a measurable way of gauging what participants had learned.

According to Emily Filippi, director of the diocesan Office of Christian Formation, while the in-person Pathways sessions sought feedback from participants, the new version takes it further.

"It was important to us to find a way of incorporating measures within the actual course that could actually help the catechist," she said, adding that if a catechist needed help in a specific area, e.g., the Beatitudes, pastors or parish formation leaders would be aware of that through the message boards that are part of the program. "This is really a step up from that engagement that is beneficial to the individual catechist where they need it."

The course structures in Pathways: *Delivered* were original to the Pathways program and vetted through diocesan clergy, according to Filippi, but taken to another level in the new version.

"With the advantage of online learning, we were able to put a little more flesh on the bones, and it wasn't just handouts or paper. That's the creativity of this online program," she said. "You engage the individual learner in a variety of ways, knowing and integrating and then embracing or remembering specific things that were new to them."

Filippi said Pathways: *Delivered* is designed to set the catechist up for success.

"If they're having difficulty in one area, then there's opportunity for a leader to intervene and sit down with them, help them so they are successful," she said, adding that it provides participants with information about how to build their own faith and how they can pass it on to others.

Answering the call

Kresge recalled that she got involved in faith formation when her now 29-year-old daughter was preschool age, and the parish director of religious education announced in church that there would not be a preschool formation program if volunteers did not come forward. She came forward.

"Some of the hesitancy among people is that they're not trained enough or know enough. I love the phrase 'God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called,'" she said. "Pathways: *Delivered* offers some of that affirmation for potential catechists. They are answering a call, a vocation, and that here is support from the Church as well as expectations for how we pass on the faith to others."

Cottam said everyone is called to life-long faith formation, always needing someone to teach them, but it doesn't stop there.

"We're all called by the virtue of our baptism to form one another. We are not Catholics alone. We don't believe in personal faith; we believe in community," she said. "As such, we are all called in some way to form each other. Being a catechist is moving from an informal role to taking that step to a more formal role of that formation."

Editor's note: Further information about Pathways: Delivered is available by contacting Megan Cottam at mcottam@richmonddiocese.org.

How Catholics understand original sin

QUESTIONS & FATHER KENNETH DOYLE CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

🤳 🛛 When I was a Protestant, I never heard mention of "original sin." We were told that each person is responsible for their own sins and need not even worry about sin until we approached "the age of accountability" - usually said to be about the age of 10. Until then, we were told, people are in a "state of grace" — meaning that, if they died, they would go to heaven.

Now, as a Catholic, I hear original sin mentioned almost weekly and, it seems, we all (from birth on) are held responsible for Adam and Eve's initial sin in the Garden of Eden — and if we die (kids, too) prior to some kind of salvific experience to erase it, we will go to hell. Please help me by explaining original sin more thoroughly. (Indiana)

A. Actually, I am a bit surprised that you heard no mention of original sin during your years as a Protestant. The doctrine of original sin, first articulated precisely by Augustine in the fifth century, was popular with Protestant reformers,

including Martin Luther and John Calvin.

The Catholic understanding is that original sin involves no personal guilt on our own part; it simply means that, as a consequence of the fall of our earliest parents, we have been weakened in our ability to resist temptation - we still possess free will, but we are born into the world with an inherited inclination to evil.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Original sin is called 'sin' only in an analogical sense; it is a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed' — a state and not an act" (No. 404). As to your concern about children who die without baptism going to hell, that is not the belief of the Church.

In fact, in 2007, the Church's International Theological Commission, with the authorization of Pope Benedict XVI, published a document that concluded explicitly that "there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved." God, after all, is reasonable; he created people to be happy and wants to bring us to heaven.

• I am a wandering Cath-

olic. I identify as a Roman Catholic, although I have not been to a Church service in quite a while. I have made excuses to myself and to Our Lord as to why that is. I have started reading the Bible and would like to know if the King James might want to obtain a version Version is accepted by the Church. (I have been trying to get to church, as it brings me peace. My reasons for not attending are varied, mostly health related.) (Onley)

A. First, about the Bible. The King James translation was completed in 1611 and is written in a lofty literary style. Like Catholic versions, its New Testament section includes 27 books. But in the King James version (as well as in other Protestant editions), the Old Testament has only 39 books while Catholic versions have 46 books.

The seven additional books in Catholic editions are: Tobit, Judith, First and Second Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch. (In addition, Catholic Bibles also include some sections of Esther and Daniel that are not found in Protestant Bibles.) These additional books are considered by the Catholic Church as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Having said that, the Catholic Church does not forbid anyone

from reading any version of the Bible. I am happy that you have begun to read the King James Bible and believe that you will find inspiration in doing so.

At some point, though, you called the New American Bible. Last revised in 2011, this is the version used for the scriptural readings at Catholic Masses.

Now, about your being a "wan-dering Catholic." I hope that when your health permits, you will decide to return regularly to Mass. That is the way to be most faithful to Jesus and the surest help for living his way.

Jesus told us at the Last Supper that he wanted his followers to come together regularly to celebrate their faith, to recall his life and teachings and to be nourished with his body and blood.

It may be that legitimate health concerns make it unwise right now for you to go to church, especially during the current pandemic. If that is the case, would you consider calling your parish priest and asking to be placed on the Communion list for home visitation?

That way, you will be able to have your confession heard and to feel the peace and the strength of Iesus in the Eucharist.

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

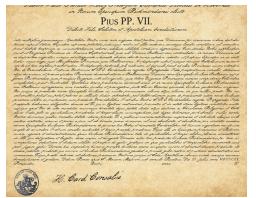
A LOST APOSTOLIC BRIEF: THE FOUNDING DOCUMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND

The July 27 issue of The Catholic Virginian featured a translation of the apostolic brief for the establishment of the Diocese of Richmond. The following article, written by Father Anthony E. Marques, chair of the Diocese of Richmond's Bicentennial Task Force, explains the brief and provides insight into life during the early decades of the diocese.

n the 12th inst. [August] I received the Apostolic letters dismembering the Archdiocese of Baltimore, erecting the State of Virginia into the church of Richmond and constituting me as its Bishop. ... I am at present pennyless and cannot reckon upon any thing as my own to meet the expenses of my voyage except what may result from the sale of my horse and furniture. ...

"I have received no additional information concerning the state of things in Norfolk beyond what you [Father John Rice, an influential priest in Vatican affairs] mentioned in your letter and what his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect [Francesco Fontana, head of the Vatican department in charge of overseas missions: Propaganda Fidei] communicated in a letter which accompanied my apostolic letters. This circumstance creates me much uneasiness and will, I am certain, keep me restless until I shall have set out on my journey" (August 31, 1820).

Patrick Kelly (1779-1829), a priest of the Diocese of Ossory in Kilkenny, Ireland, had just been ordained a bishop. He was preparing to cross the Atlantic Ocean to take up his position as the first bishop of Richmond (1820-1822).



Pope Pius VII (reigned 1800-1823) had established the Diocese of Richmond on July 11, 1820. Kelly was the president of St. John's College, a seminary in Birchfield, Ireland, at the time of his appointment to Richmond.

In the above letter, Bishop Kelly used the terms "apostolic letters" and "bull" interchangeably to refer to the document that founded the Richmond Diocese and named him as its bishop. It was technically an apostolic brief, and Kelly probably received several copies of it.

Beginning in the late 18th century, for a period of time the brief replaced the bull as the standard document issued by the Vatican to announce and certify the appointment of bishops. This was likely because bulls were expensive to produce and mail.

Both the bull and brief were written on vellum (calfskin parchment) but carried different forms of authentication. The "bull" took its name from the lead seal (Latin: bulla, meaning "bubble," referring to the appearance of the seal), which functioned as the pope's signature.

By contrast, the "brief" (Latin: breve, meaning "short") was a less formal decree that used a wax seal, and later an ink stamp, of the papal fisherman's ring for authentication.

The brief Kelly received explained why the Richmond Diocese had been established: "Since it seems to be very expedient for the extinction of the schisms which have arisen in it... We...have established and decreed that ... a new ... Church ... be erected at Richmond... and that it should embrace the whole State of Virginia."

In additional correspondence, the Vatican instructed Kelly to begin his ministry in Norfolk. There he should try to overcome the schism, meaning the formal division among believers, which was mentioned in the brief, and then proceed to Richmond.

The Norfolk Schism (ca. 1794-1821) had arisen over the question of authority: Who could own Church property and appoint pastors - the archbishop of Baltimore, who had responsibility for Virginia at that time, or the lay leaders (trustees) of the Catholic community in Norfolk? Officials at Propaganda Fidei eventually decided that the way to resolve the Norfolk Schism was to appoint a local bishop who would assign priests for the territory of the new diocese.

Patrick Kelly was chosen in part because his Irish nationality could appease the trustees. They had requested an Irish bishop on the pretext that

God gives us strength, courage to swim in mud



IN LIGHT OF FAITH BARBARA HUGHES

an I swim in the mud?

The question jumped off the page of the book I was reading. As I tried to visualize doing the breaststroke covered in a goopy mess, the answer was obvious. The question, an analogue by author Karen Karper, a Poor Clare nun of 30 years, was posed in response to her decision to live a life of solitude. The book describes her transition from life in the convent to inhabiting a shack located in a sleepy holler in West Virginia, absent running water and electricity.

As a follower of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, the call to live the Gospel in a more radical way eventually became too loud to ignore. So, when a shack in the woods near a hermitage, where two Franciscan nuns lived in response to a similar calling, became available, Karper decided to take the plunge.

Armed with a Bible, a few hundred dollars, and a 10-year-old Ford Bronco, she began a journey which depended largely on faith. Arriving during one of the rainiest summers on record, she found herself surrounded by mud, and quickly learned that a pair of sturdy boots served her far better than naïve notions about living in the wild.

Engulfed by feelings of desperation, amid insects, rodents and an occasional snake, she questioned her sanity, giving rise to her self-imposed query that demanded an answer.

Swimming in the mud meant staying the course despite the natural inclination to pack up and leave. Years after documenting her sojourn into solitude, Karper continues to live a life of voluntary poverty, relying on quilting and writing rather than rely on the grace that keeps me to support her lifestyle.

I'm in awe of people who have the courage to embrace the Gospel in so radical a manner. Although I don't feel called in the same way, I'm always challenged by their faith and trust in Divine Providence, which is why the author's question resonated.

I may not be surrounded by physical mud, but as I look around our world, mud and mudslinging seem to be everywhere. Amid pain and violence, corruption and racism, bullying and indifference, I find myself asking: "Can I swim in the mud?"

Swimming in the mud is an appropriate analogy because wherever there is life there will be pain and suffering. It's the consequence of sin. Yet, as Christians, we're called to persist because faith isn't about ignoring the pain, nor is it about putting a smiley face on life's difficulties, on God or on faith.

Suffering isn't always bad. Sometimes living amid harsh conditions helps us discover who we are and what we value. It helps us separate needs from wants and strengthens resolve. It's where we learn to persevere, learn patience and practice charity even as we struggle to keep evil from muddving our own heart.

Like a pair of sturdy boots, prayer and the sacraments help us slosh through the mud of life without having to throw mud at others. If we're honest with ourselves, it's probably one of life's greatest challenges.

Only God can give us the strength to remain hopeful, to keep swimming, while reminding us that weeds and wheat exist side by side for a reason. When I allow the mud to hold me back swimming, it's because mud has seeped into the cracks of my heart.

Then the words of St. John of the Cross serve me well: "See that you are not saddened by the adversities of this world, for you do not know the good they bring, being ordained in the judgments of God for the everlasting joy of the elect."

In this life, things will not always be to our liking, nor will life be easy. We won't always get everything right, and sometimes it feels as if we're swimming in the mud. However, just because it seems impossible doesn't mean we can't do it.

Jesus said, "With God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26). God came down from heaven and pitched his tent among us, right in the middle of the mud so that we could swim all the way to heaven.

As Karper discovered, God is present in every person and circumstance, even in what seemed like a perpetual pool of mud. Not only did she learn that she could swim in the mud, but it became a life-changing experience.

Amid never-ending challenges, the author learned that God doesn't make mud disappear; he gives us the strength and courage to keep swimming — a lesson we can all take to heart.

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

In the eyes of God, all are equal

BELIEVE AS DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

he readings speak to us about for whom salvation is intended and the worthiness of all people of God's love. In the first

You Pray

reading, Isaiah tells the Israelites the Lord will bring to his mountain anyone who joins themselves to the Lord, becomes his servant, keeps the Sabbath and holds to his covenant.

Paul tells us that the salvation offered to the

Israelites was ultimately offered to the Gentiles because of Jewish rejection. By Gentiles, Paul means the rest of the world.

In the Gospel the disciples wanted Jesus to send the Canaanite woman away, to cure her so she would leave. Jesus replies, "I was sent to the lost sheep of Israel." This may have been said with sarcasm in his voice because of the Jewish belief that salvation was only from the Jews.

The Canaanites worshipped Baal and were enemies of the Jewish people. The Jews referred to them as "dogs," placing them in a class that

was sub-human. But this woman does something that would have been unheard of coming from a Canaanite — she acknowledges Jesus as the Son of David and calls him Lord.

This is tantamount to calling him the Messiah. So she, a Canaanite, recognizes what the Jewish leaders did not: Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah.

Jesus always recognized what was in the

heart of the Pharisees, Scribes and others who approached him. He most certainly knew her faith. If Jesus recognized her faith, why does he engage her in a conversation? Why does he test her? Jesus needs his disciples to

know she is a woman of faith and that she is worthy of being called

a believer, not a "dog." In the exchange between them, Jesus elevates the Canaanite woman to the same level as the Jews and in essence is saying that anyone who believes and lives according to the Gospel is worthy of the same status as a believer.

In granting the request of the woman, Jesus honors her as a person of faith, someone equal to the Jewish people in the eyes of God. She has honored God by acknowledging Jesus as Son of David, the Messiah. In doing this, he has also refuted the man-made practice of downgrading other people because they were not Jewish.

In the early Church, there was a great discussion among Church leaders about for whom the Gospel and salvation were intended. I have to believe that in those discussions incidents like this where Jesus treated non-Jewish believers, Samaritans, Canaanites and others as equals in the Kingdom of God were recalled.

Isaiah tells us that God said his house shall be a house of prayer for all people. Jesus reinforced this in his ministry by accepting all who had faith in him.

Peter also supports this belief when he says, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

All people are worthy of the peace and justice offered in the Kingdom of God. In following Jesus, we need to follow his example and treat all people with the same justice with which Jesus treats us; give them the same love and peace that Jesus gives us.

In the Kingdom of God, no one group is inferior to another. Conversely, no one group is superior to another. In the eyes of God, we are all equal.

Deacon Christopher Colville serves at Church of the Redeemer, Mechanicsville.

Twentieth Sunday Ordinary Time Cycle A Is 56:1, 6-7; Rom 11:13-15, 29-32 Mt 15:21-28

- NEWS/OPPORTUNITIES -

OPPORTUNITIES

Christ the King Catholic School, Norfolk, has a full-time opening for a teacher in its preschool for 3-year-olds during the 2020-21 school year.

Applications will be accepted immediately, and interviews will be scheduled for candidates until the position is filled.

Essential responsibilities include: • Demonstration of understanding devel-

opmental changes

• Ability to adapt lessons around cognitive, language, physical and personal development.

Teaching and modeling Christian values.Ability to lift 30 pounds.

Applicants should have an associate's degree or certification in Early Childhood and a minimum requirement and three years' experience. Please send a diocesan application, résumé, and three references to Kim V. Callahan, kcallahan@ ctkparish.org.

Peninsula Catholic, a college preparatory high school in Newport News, is seeking to fill the following positions for the 2020-2021 school year:

• A qualified part-time or full-time instructor in AP Chemistry. Candidates should have experience in teaching (preferred), enthusiasm for youth, skills for effective integration of technology in the classroom and a desire to be part of a community with a 117-year history of excellence in Catholic education. The successful candidate should have a current Virginia teacher license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas. master's degree preferred.

• Long-term substitute teacher for AP Chemistry. Long-term substitute teachers must have a bachelor's degree. Experience in teaching and subject matter is preferred. Please send résumé and diocesan application to Peninsula Catholic High School, Attn: Principal; 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 or email to jfranklin@peninsulacatholic. org. Application deadline is Friday, August 7, 2020, or until the position is filled. Applications for employment can be downloaded from the Diocese of Richmond's website (Human Relations tab).

The Office of Human Resources is seeking a Victim Assistance Coordinator to provide compassionate outreach to victim survivors of sexual misconduct by Church personnel of the Diocese of Richmond. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist the Director of Safe Environment with the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations and develop and implement healing programming to support victim survivors on their path of healing. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will provide other support to the Office of Safe Environment as required. Must be a Catholic in good standing. The successful candidate must also have a bachelor's degree in counseling, social work or other human service-related field with a minimum education and experience that demonstrates the knowledge,

skills and abilities of the subject matter. Other qualifications include strong oral and written communication and ability to work under deadlines. Experience in working with victims and an understanding of stages of victimization and healing process is desired. This fulltime position will require approximately 35 hours per week with the expectation of some nights and weekends. There will be required travel with some overnight required. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume and diocesan application to jobs@richmond diocese.org.

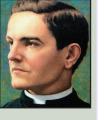
SHORT**AKES**

Michelangelo — **A Different View** through Sunday, Aug. 30, MacArthur Center, 300 Monticello Ave., Norfolk. Complete exhibit of Michelangelo's ceiling frescoes and Quattrocento frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. Visit vafest.org/michelangelo for hours, tickets and other information. Box office: 757-282-2822.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Blessed are they: Come Oct. 31, Father Michael Mc-Givney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, will be known as Blessed

Michael



as he will be beatified in Hartford, Conn., on that day. Learn more about Father McGivney's cause for sainthood at www.fathermcgivney.org.

McGivney

Service with humor: It was great listening to Frank Solari a couple of weeks ago as he reminisced about his late sister, Sister Mary Agnes. A Sister of Mercy for 70 years, she passed away a little more than a year ago. Sister Mary Agnes was a Richmond native and St. Gertrude High School alumna who was active in the Catholic Theater Guild and modeled for Seventeen Magazine during her teenage years. Frank noted she had a "great sense of humor" and, at one of the convents where she lived, had a pet pig. Sister Mary Agnes taught at and was principal of several Catholic schools in North Carolina, and later served in campus ministry at UNC-Charlotte and Central Piedmont Community College.



Proud to be Catholic: In a 1996 interview, the late Regis Philbin said, "I think everything I am is the result of 16 years of Catholic

education. The values that you learn as a kid stay with you the rest of your life. Certainly, those nuns and brothers and priests drummed enough of those values into us that it helped us tremendously." Would that more people in the entertainment business spoke of their Catholic roots in a similar manner. Read more about Philbin at www. catholicvirginian.org.



Continued from Page 4

pendent cities' worth of territory – 49 parishes, seven missions and 93 priests – to the new diocese.

Northern Virginia had been geographically and culturally distinct from the rest of the territory of the Richmond Diocese for some time. That area experienced its first growth spurt following U.S. entry into World War I (1917). The construction of the Key Bridge (1923) was decisive since it permitted trolley cars to cross the Potomac River. It was then that northern Virginia became a suburb of Washington, D.C.

Sizeable growth occurred in northern Virginia during and after World War II (1939–1945). In addition to a nationwide population boom, Catholics from other states came to the area to work for the federal government, including the military and related industries, all of which continued to expand during the postwar era.

The number of Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond nearly quadrupled, from 38,000 to 145,000, during the tenure of Peter L. Ireton (1935–1958), the ninth bishop of Richmond. The growth of the Catholic population, based mostly in northern Virginia, accelerated during the time of Ireton's successor, Bishop John J. Russell (1958–1974).

The new Diocese of Arlington and the reconfigured Diocese of Richmond were disparate neighbors. Whereas Arlington was geographically small (6,500 square miles), mostly suburban, densely populated and wealthier, Richmond was geographically extensive (33,000 square miles), largely rural, sparsely populated and poorer. With this territorial change, Richmond resumed its historical identity as a missionary diocese.

Furthermore, the two dioceses were ideologically divided concerning the legacy of Vatican Council II (1962–1965), as more traditional priests generally went to the Diocese of Arlington and more progressive priests chose the Diocese of Richmond.

The founding of the Arlington Diocese and the territorial reconfiguration of the Richmond Diocese took place following the retirement of Bishop Russell (1973). Walter F. Sullivan, an auxiliary bishop of Richmond (1970), administered the diocese for over a year (1973–1974).

On June 13, 1974, the batch of changes was announced, including the appointment of Sullivan as the 11th bishop of Richmond. Bishop Sullivan was installed on July 19, 1974. He administered northern Virginia (along with eastern panhandle of West Virginia), until the other territorial changes took effect on August 13, 1974, when Thomas J. Welsh was installed as the first bishop of Arlington.

A decree issued by Archbishop Jean Jadot, the papal representative to the bishops to the United States, dated August 2, 1974, explained the forthcoming establishment of the Diocese of Arlington:

By the Apostolic Letter Supernae Christifidelium, dated the 28th day of May, 1974, our Holy Father, Paul VI, graciously committed to us the duty of making effective everything contained therein. Therefore, through the faculty granted to us, we hereby decree and command the following:

1. A new Diocese is established from territory separated from the Diocese of Richmond; the new Diocese will take its name from the County of Arlington;

2. The new Diocese will be a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Baltimore;

3. All documents pertaining to the new Diocese are to be transferred to its archives as soon as possible;

4. There is to be a fair and equitable distribution of diocesan assets.

5. Priests will belong to the new Diocese as indicated in the Apostolic Letter; seminarians, who were either born within its territory or have a legitimate domicile there, will also belong to the new Diocese; other seminarians are to be equitably assigned to one or the other Diocese with the prior approval of all concerned;

Finally, we wish and direct that this our Executorial Decree become fully effective and have juridic force on the 13th day of August, 1974.

In proof whereof, we have signed this decree with our own hand and have ordered that the Seal of the Apostolic Delegation be affixed hereto.

Given at Washington, from the Apostolic Delegation, on this 2nd day of August, 1974.

Jean Jadot Apostolic Delegate.



In this undated photo, Bishops Walter F. Sullivan and John J. Russell, the 11th and 10th bishops of the Diocese of Richmond, respectively, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. (Photo/Diocese of Richmond Archives)

Felicidades Pbro. Julio, por tu si al sacerdocio

ESCRITO POR JANNA REYNOLDS | TRADUCIDO Y RESUMEN: DANIEL VILLAR

I diácono Julio Hernán Realegeño Reyes, de 30 años, es el hijo mayor de Hernán Realegeño Gómez e hijo de Trinidad de Jesús Reyes de Realegeño. Tiene un hermano, Benjamin, que vive en El Salvador con su padre. Su hermana, Abigail, vive en Italia.

En su juventud, su madre, quien falleció en abril, vendía pupusas, una comida tradicional salvadoreña. Su padre era miembro de la policía nacional y luego se convirtió en guardia de seguridad.

En el 2008, a los 18 años, el diácono Reyes terminó su bachillerato y comenzó a discernir su futuro. "Estaba tratando de decidir qué hacer con mi vida. De alguna manera, durante mi tiempo de oración... esto vino a mi mente, mi plan para el futuro... la pregunta principal era ¿dónde puedo servir mejor? Quería ser un soldado como lo fue mi padre... y lo fue algunos tíos. Y en realidad, quería ser miembro de

las fuerzas armadas... me estaba dando cuenta de que, como soldado, como miembro del ejército, sería bueno servir a las personas como deberían hacerlo los soldados, pero luego me di cuenta de que serviría mejor como sacerdote. Así es como me decidí ser sacerdote...".

Ingresó al seminario en El Salvador en 2008, pero dejó la formación después de unos meses debido a circunstancias en el hogar para ayudar a mantener a su familia. Él dijo, "cuando estaba fuera, extrañaba todo lo espiritual que tenía en el seminario".

En el 2012, el regresó al seminario en El Salvador para estudiar filosofía y permaneció allí durante tres años antes de que el obispo Bolaños y el difunto obispo Francis X. Di Lorenzo de Richmond hicieran un acuerdo por el cual la diócesis de Richmond pagaría los estudios del diácono Reyes a cambio de que sirviera en la diócesis durante varios años después de la ordenación.

"El (obispo Bolaños) me hizo la oferta, '¿Te gustaría ir a los Estados Unidos? Porque el equipo de formación y yo hemos decidido que eres un posible candidato para ir a estudiar a los Estados Unidos" El diácono Julio aceptó la oferta y comenzó a prepararse para la vida en un nuevo país.

En preparación, el diácono Reyes tomó clases de inglés con un profesor que era feligrés en una de las parroquias de su diócesis y tomo tiempo en preparar todos sus documentos



Father Julio Reyes

legales.

Llegó a los Estados Unidos en septiembre del 2015 entrando al seminario regional St. Vincent de Paul en Boynton Beach, Florida

Cuatro semestres de homilética ayudaron al diácono Reyes a superar el miedo a hablar en público. "Espero y creo que soy un buen predicador, así que eso es algo que estoy seguro de compartir con la comunidad. Me encanta estar cerca de las personas y servirles como pueda, especialmente con los sacramentos", dijo. "Principalmente para celebrar la misa. Creo que es algo que realmente quería hacer todos estos meses", dijo, y agregó que los últimos meses en el seminario los pasó practicando para ese momento. "El principal regalo que puedo dar a la comunidad es estar allí para ellos y rezar por ellos como sacerdote, como ministro de la Iglesia".

"Me hace sentir feliz e intentar prepararme para servir a las personas en la parroquia donde me asignan. Esa es mi esperanza,

y eso es lo que le pido a Dios en mis oraciones: darme esperanza y darme alegría en cualquier momento para ser siempre un sacerdote alegre para la gente", dijo.

Inspirado por los santos

Los católicos admiran a los santos por muchas razones: sus contribuciones a la Iglesia, la forma en que vivieron sus vidas con el ejemplo de Cristo y la forma en que se adhirieron a sus creencias a pesar de las presiones sociales para abandonar su fe.

El diácono Julio Reyes... tiene "muchos santos favoritos". San Oscar Romero, el primer santo de El Salvador, su país natal. El Papa San Juan Pablo II, quien dirigió la Iglesia Católica durante casi 27 años. San Ignacio de Antioquía, un obispo de Antioquía que no negó a Cristo y fue sentenciado a morir. "Pero si tuviera que elegir uno de los tres, elegiría a San Ignacio de Antioquía", dijo el diácono Reyes.

En su tiempo libre, el Diácono Reyes escucha música, lee, ve películas y ocasionalmente juega videojuegos, y también hace tiempo para conectarse con su familia y amigos. Está aprendiendo el italiano porque su hermana, que vive en Italia, se va a casar, y ella y su prometido quieren que el futuro padre Reyes celebre la misa de su boda.

Nota: El diácono Julio Reyes fue ordenado sacerdote el 11 de julio en la Catedral Sagrado Corazón y es vicario parroquial de Our Lady of Lourdes en Henrico.



Tras su ordenación sacerdotal el sábado 11 de julio, el Padre Julio Reyes da su primera bendición como sacerdote al Obispo Barry C. Knestout. (Photo/Whitten Cluff)



Durante la misa del 11 de julio, el Padre Julio Reyes da la comunión a un oficial de la policía de Richmond. (Photo/Whitten Cluff)

Pilgrimage

Continued from Page 1 beneath the spreading oak trees in front of the old courthouse.

"We gather before this memorial to the victims of a war that tore our nation in two," Father O'Brien said. "We stand here in memory of the peacemaker prophet we follow."

He continued: "Wherever the dignity, safety, freedom and value of a human life is in danger, there we are called to take a stand. So we stand here, and in the shadow of this monument, we shine the light of love to open eyes once blind to the roots of slavery and racist violence that have long distorted our vision of this nation."

Abby Causey, a parishioner at Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach, and one of the organizers of the event, also spoke, explaining how the idea of a pilgrimage is an important part of Catholic faith tradition, how – at heart – a pilgrimage is not just a journey from place to place, but a journey of transformation, a time to leave the comfortable and well-trodden path in order to learn to see things differently and to gain new perspectives on the world.

'Love listens'

One of the goals of the pilgrimage, Causey said, was to give members of the Black community the opportunity to tell their own stories.

We wanted it to be a day for listening," she said. "Love listens. It's frequently harassed by the other often through stories that our hearts students. are changed."

At times, guest speakers had to compete with the buzz of cicadas, the rumble of traffic or even the roar to work harder for a more equitable of an occasional jet, as each took a turn to be heard and to address issues critical to the Black community

Dr. B. Theron Williams, CEO of the Center for Global Diplomacy and co-founder of Kingdom Reign Church in Virginia Beach, addressed the issue of policing, sharing an experience of how an incident in his church's parking lot led him to be confronted by the police, he said,

illustrating how quickly situations with law enforcement can go awry.

Although our faith teaches us to value every human life and that we are all made in God's image, Williams said, all too often, "we believe there is a caste system, or a class system, and for some reason, people who look like me end up on the bottom." The bottom when it comes to opportunity, he said, and when it comes to law enforcement, at the bottom "when police have to make the call."

At Portsmouth, the next pilgrimage stop, Ray Smith, who worked for 41 years with Dominion Energy as an operations specialist and who has served nine years on the Portsmouth school board and five years on the city council, spoke of the importance of education, and how pursuit of education has played a pivotal role in his life.

Smith said that while growing up in Portsmouth in the late 1960s, he witnessed how racism was endemic in the school system. When it was time for schools to be outfitted with new books, for example, predominantly black schools were typically given the passed-down, used materials.

In the ninth grade, Smith said he attended Woodrow Wilson High School, a predominantly white school, because it offered an electronics class that he wanted to take, and during his time there, he was

Smith credited his faith for helping him in times of struggle and said that the struggle motivated him system.

"I beseech you to continue to fight racial injustice," he told those assembled. "We all can love one another and we all can live and get along with one another."

From faith to action

Steve Baggerly of the Norfolk Catholic Worker explained that the pilgrimage is more than simply one day of reflection; it's also about working to change policy long-term. "Especially now, during the

COVID pandemic," he said, "which has uncovered so many fissures in our society — in housing, in education, in health care — issues that need our urgent attention."

At the stop in Norfolk, across the street from the cordoned-off platform where a Confederate monument once stood on Commercial Place, Lavonne Pledger, a community advocate and member St. Paul's Advisory Council, spoke about the St. Paul's Redevelopment Project, a project in which the city plans to demolish a large section of public housing and to replace it with apartments, displacing 4,500 residents.

It's vital, Pledger said, that the city have concrete plans in place for those residents before proceeding.

"I don't live in the future," he said. "I live in the here and now."

Teresa Stanley, a parishioner at Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach, and one of the organizers of the event, agreed that it's important to work to keep the momentum inspired by the pilgrimage going in order to effect real change.

She said that the group has set up a website, bit.ly/program728, where those who want to get involved can learn of ways to help. 'This is what it means to be

Catholic," Stanley said. "To be moved by our faith into action."

Feeding the hungry



Will Sinsabaugh and Eric Legaspi, alumni of St. Matthew School, Virginia Beach, unload produce on Thursday, July 30, in the St. Matthew Church parking lot. The parish and school are a distribution site for the Portsmouth-based Mercy Chefs community kitchen. Through contactless delivery, parishioners and school students served 220 families by loading the boxes into recipients' vehicles as they arrived. (Photo/Elizabeth Allen)

<u>Apostolic Brief</u>

Continued from Page 8

such a prelate could effectively minister to the Norfolk Catholic community, which was largely composed of Irish and French immigrants.

When he arrived in the United States, Bishop Kelly disembarked in New York. He then traveled to Baltimore, where he presented his credential (brief) to Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal (1764-1828). The archbishop had strenuously opposed the creation of a diocese in Virginia and was openly hostile to Kelly.

From Baltimore, the first bishop of Richmond traveled by ship to Norfolk, arriving on Jan. 19, 1821. Kelly soon celebrated Mass at a chapel there named St. Patrick's, where he presented his apostolic brief to the local community.

The Norfolk Schism, which had brought Kelly to Virginia, eventually subsided as belligerents left the area. Bishop Kelly remained in Norfolk,

but with no income from the local community, he opened a school to support himself.

Less than a year after Kelly's arrival, the Vatican realized that the Diocese of Richmond had been established prematurely. Kelly was appointed bishop of Waterford and Lismore in Ireland. and the archbishops of Baltimore administered the Diocese of Richmond for the next 19 years (1822-1841). Bishop Kelly left Norfolk in June or July 1822, having never reached Richmond.

What became of the original apostolic brief establishing the Diocese of Richmond is a mystery. Like the diocese itself in the period after the Norfolk Schism, the founding document faded from view.

There are, however, copies of the brief in three archives, with minor variations among them: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Propaganda Fidei (today the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples), and the Vatican Apostolic Archives (formerly the Vatican Secret Archives).

An artistic reproduction of the founding document and a translation were commissioned for the bicentennial of the Diocese of Richmond. This facsimile and translation are included in the bicentennial commemorative book, "Shine Like Stars" (Éditions du Signe, 2019).

The disappearance of the actual document that established the Diocese of Richmond mirrors the loss, for two decades, of a residential bishop of this local Church. The text of the decree, which has survived, is therefore a precious link to the past.

This "relic" can help Catholics in the diocese today to appreciate the hardships of that time, as well as the fortitude and perseverance that have brought the Richmond Diocese to its bicentennial jubilee.

Editor's note: The bicentennial commemorative book, "Shine Like Stars," is available for purchase at parishes in the Diocese of Richmond.