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Psalm 23

How parishes serve during COVID-19

KAREN ADAMS
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Special to The Catholic Virginian

The Psalmist assures the faithful that in the valley of the shadow of death the Lord is with them. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, pastors throughout the Diocese of Richmond are offering that reassurance as they try to meet the spiritual needs of their faith communities in ways that, until a few weeks ago, were untried in the Church, but which have become commonplace.

At Sacred Heart, Danville, Father Jon Goetz has been reading and sharing Psalm 23 often these days.

“I take a lot of comfort from it,” he said. “Maybe we’re literally in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and our good shepherd is leading us.”

The sense of grief at not being able to attend Mass in person and receive the Eucharist can bring us into solidarity with the rest of the world, he said. “There are lots of people around the world who don’t have access to the sacraments, and many of the saints didn’t either.”

He’s concerned especially about the isolation of those already isolated.

“Our homebound parishioners are lonely on a good day,” he said, adding that many — such as a heart-attack patient he recently visited in the hospital — are facing hardships unrelated to the virus.

Joy amid disappointments

Despite the challenges and disappointments, e.g., no first Communion at Easter, no graduation ceremony at Sacred Heart School and new work lives for its teachers, he said that parishioners

See *Parishes*, Page 3



At St. Jude, Christiansburg, a table outside the sanctuary provides hand sanitizer for those who come to pray and numbered cards to keep occupancy at 10 or fewer. (Photo/Lauren Coulter)

Website a virtual collection basket for parishioners

While Masses are suspended, need to support parishes is critical

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

While technology has provided Catholics throughout the Diocese of Richmond the opportunity to watch livestreams of privately celebrated Masses, something that technology doesn’t allow for at those celebrations is the passing of the collection basket.

To make it possible for parishioners to financially support their parishes while Masses remain suspended, the diocese, through the Catholic Community Foundation, has established offertory.richmonddiocese.org.

“This is designed to be a way for someone to support their parish if

their parish does not offer their own online giving solution,” Margaret Keightly, executive director of the Catholic Community Foundation, said in a release from CCF.

She emphasized that this is not a diocesan collection.

“When parishioners use the website, they can choose their parish,” Keightly said. “One hundred percent of funds raised through this website are sent directly to the parishes.”

She noted that less than half of the 138 parishes in the diocese offer the option of online giving to their parishioners.

“It is a goal of the diocese to make sure all parishes have an online giving solution in the very near fu-

ture,” Keightly said.

In addition to facilitating the website, she said the staff of the Catholic Community Foundation is focusing all of its resources and time to assist parishes.

“We want to help them in whatever ways possible to meet their financial needs so they can continue to minister to their flocks, pay their devoted staff members and, ultimately, keep their lights on,” Keightly said.

Bishop Barry C. Knestout said offertory.richmonddiocese.org should be seen as an “opportunity for giving, but not a demand.”

“I am sympathetic and understanding of those who are faced

with financial hardships due to the economic impact of COVID-19,” he said. “The understandable response to that is to hold back, hold on to what we have — especially those who are struggling with uncertainty about their employment, uncertainty about how they’ll make ends meet. It is understandable that charity begins at home.”

Bishop Knestout said that even though availability of the sacraments is limited, the work of the Church continues.

“The work of the Church in charity, spiritual direction and the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass, even though it is difficult to be present, are

See *Giving*, Page 5

Inside This Edition

Catholics Charities working to address critical needs
Page 4

Clericalism shuts down reliance on God’s grace
Page 6

What the Church teaches about organ donation
Page 8

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Despite contradictions, we are still spiritually united



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

Like the Scripture proclaimed on Palm Sunday, like Christ himself, who is a “sign of contradiction,” our Lent has been a story of contradictions. At the beginning of the Palm Sunday Mass we heard the din of hosannas, but by the end of the Gospel we heard the account of the Son of God’s brutal death.

Consider where we were on Ash Wednesday. We were hopeful as we entered into Lent — hopeful that we would be spiritually renewed and grow closer to Christ through the multiple opportunities our parishes were going to provide.

And then came COVID-19, and Lent became more penitential and more sacrificial than we could have ever anticipated. The season of hope, in which we as a Catholic community would journey to Calvary in anticipation of Risen Life, became days and weeks of concern about the spread of the virus, self-quarantines, school and business closures, announcements about the increasing numbers of those affected by the illness and the death of some.

The contradictions of Palm Sunday, i.e., jubilee and suffering, exemplify the contradictions we are experiencing in our daily lives. One day analysts are using superlatives to tout great historic gains in the stock market; the next day the same people are bemoaning sell-offs, lack of confidence and questioning if it will rebound.

One contradiction that is evident this Holy Week is how we will commemorate the most

important events of our salvation story. We have always celebrated the Mass of the Lord’s Supper as a *community*, partaking in the foot washing and taking time for adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

On Good Friday, we would gather as a *community* to celebrate our Lord’s Passion, to pray the Universal Prayer of the Church and to venerate the cross.

The Easter Vigil is one of the greatest celebrations in our Church year. The lighting of the Easter fire and the Paschal candle, proclaiming multiple Scripture readings, welcoming new members into our Church and the return of the Alleluias vividly remind our *community* that Christ is risen.

The contradiction to community has been defined and dictated by terms that will forever be part of our lexicon — self-isolation and social distancing. These practices for promoting physical health are not how we usually celebrate, which is always side-by-side and focused on this journey of our redemption.

Out of respect for human life we follow directives not to gather in large groups. Thanks to technology, we can watch these celebrations that are livestreamed in many of our parishes and from our Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. (See schedule accompanying this column.)

As we pray this week, COVID-19 and its effects will be in our hearts. The virus has been a humbling experience for us. It has required us to live differently and to relate to each other in ways in which we might not be accustomed.

While we are not physically together as a community, remember that we are spiritually united as members of the Body of Christ by our

baptism and our prayer. We accept with humility that the celebration of Holy Week we anticipated when Lent began is not going to happen this year as it has in the past.

Despite the contradictions brought on by COVID-19, we can reconcile them through spiritual communion in our hearts and in prayer. We will continue to do what we set out to do since Ash Wednesday: Grow closer to God through his Son and inspired by his Holy Spirit. May that be our common mission throughout Holy Week and the Easter season in communion with Christ and with one another.

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

All of the liturgies that Bishop Barry C. Knestout will celebrate for the Sacred Triduum and Easter Sunday will be private and livestreamed from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart at www.richmonddioocese.org/livestream:

Holy Thursday, April 9:
Mass of the Lord’s Supper, 6 p.m.

Good Friday, April 10:
The Passion of the Lord, 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday: April 11:
Easter Vigil, 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 12:
Mass, 10 a.m.

BISHOP JOHN J. RUSSELL

1820 **TIME CAPSULE** 2020

THE DAWN OF EVENING MASSES

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 Saturday evening Mass, which fulfills the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, is a staple of contemporary Catholic life in the United States. Yet this practice is only 50 years old.

Technically called an “anticipated Mass” and colloquially a “vigil Mass,” it originated from two sacramental developments in response to modern circumstances: (1) the permission to celebrate Mass in the evening, and (2) the decision to allow a Mass on Saturday to count for Sunday. These principles were also applied to holy days of obligation.

Although Christ instituted the Eucharist — the Mass — within an evening meal on Holy Thursday, close to Passover, the earliest records indicate that Christians regularly celebrated the Eucharist on Sunday morning in commemoration of Jesus’ resurrection. (There is a fascinat-



Bishop John J. Russell.

ing description of the Sunday Eucharist ca. 155 AD recorded by St. Justin Martyr, which can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1345.) Weekday feasts came later, but Masses on those days were still celebrated in the morning.

It was not until the 1940s, when times for Masses had to accommodate the disruption caused by World War II (1939–1945), that the Church granted permission for evening Masses in Europe (on Sundays and weekdays) on a case-by-case basis. These evening Masses became popular, so bishops in Europe and elsewhere requested them after the war.

Pope Pius XII (reigned 1939–1958) eventually granted general authorization for bishops to permit evening Masses, first on Sundays (Christus Dominus, 1953), and then on weekdays (Sacram communionem, 1957).

Just as evening Masses became more common during the 1940s and 1950s, so during the 1960s bishops increasingly requested and received permission for the celebration of Saturday evening Masses that fulfilled the Sunday obligation. The rationale for this decision was similar to that used for evening Masses: the practice would facilitate worship for people who could not attend Mass on Sunday because of the relative shortage of priests, changing working conditions or even new patterns of recreation.

The rationale for anticipated Masses did not include the concept of a vigil. The tradition of keeping vigil (literally, a “night watch”) was

Parishes

Continued from Page 1

are understanding. They are grateful that parish staff members are reaching out through email, Facebook and phone calls, and for livestreamed Mass and daily messages.

There are moments of joy and even humor in all of this as well. In his daily Facebook message of March 30, Father Goetz talked about how grateful he is for the technology that brings his parish together and the people who make it happen. He demonstrated an animated filter that showed pink butterflies flying around his head, and a cartoon image of his dog, Lexie, speaking in his place.

"We will keep bringing Mass to you, gloriously unfiltered," he said with a laugh.

Such circumstances can help parishioners grow in their faith, he noted. For example, at Sacred Heart, a largely Hispanic parish, children in catechism classes are now learning mostly at home from their parents, who have been given teaching materials.

"This is a great opportunity," Father Goetz said. "Many of the Hispanic parents come from a Catholic culture but may have had limited catechesis themselves, so they're also learning more about what we believe."

These days can be unsettling for priests as well, he noted.

"There's a new urgency to my prayers," Father Goetz said. "But there's something incarnational about it. Jesus came to earth in a body, and he suffered and cried, too."

Providing comfort, peace to students

Father David Sharland, chaplain for Virginia Tech's Catholic Campus Ministry, has also been sharing Psalm 23 with Catholic students in Blacksburg who seek comfort.

"Our Good Shepherd is our consolation," he said. "And I also remind them of 1 John 1:5: 'God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.'"

After the popular annual Ring Dance was canceled, campus ministry staff created the "Ring of Protection" Dance on March 28. The dance, designed to bring some joy amid many cancellations, allowed one couple at a time to enter a large white tent, dance — apart — to a few songs of their choice while cheered by friends, and exit the tent, which was cleaned and readied for the next couple.

And, since the center's Sunday suppers also were canceled, Father Sharland started "Virtual Sunday Suppers" for students and staff, in town and away, to meet online via Zoom, listen to a speaker, have an online discussion and break to eat the same meal separately, at home.

"Students are hurt; they have this aching desire for the Eucharist," Father Sharland said. "My greatest joy will be when I can gather again with the congregation here at Virginia Tech and

celebrate the Eucharist together."

'How do I pray?'

Students watch livestreamed Masses and those who remain in town continue to spend time in adoration — sitting far apart — and come to the sacrament of reconciliation, which Father Sharland offers three days a week. But sometimes they just need to talk.

"They may not be praying well these days, and they feel distant from God," he said. "This is a very devout community, and they're asking, 'How do I pray?'"

He understands their frustration and finds that he too needs to spend more time alone in the chapel in prayer.

"The Lord wants to speak to us, and sometimes he's calling out to us in a whisper," he said. "He says, 'I want to give you consolation and peace.'"

Creative outreach

"We must rely on Christ," said Father Charles Ssebalamu, pastor of St. Jude, Christiansburg, referring to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 8:35-39. "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Jesus, the resurrected one, is with us."

In his homily during online Mass on March 27, he said, "Your life may be the only Gospel that some people will experience. Can people find in your life consolation? Let our lives radiate the beauty of Christian life, of the road less traveled, of following Christ."

His parish has been wonderful during this remarkable and difficult time, the priest said. While he had never considered celebrating Mass on Facebook or Zoom, he is grateful that these options exist and that his parish has been so receptive.

However, most striking, he said, is celebrating an online Mass and looking out at all the empty pews. "When the church is empty during Mass, it's an experience I will not forget. In 24 years of being a priest I have never seen that."

Father Ssebalamu offers confessions by appointment, and the church remains open for private prayer and rosaries, adoration and Stations of the Cross, although only 10 people at a time are allowed into certain areas, they must sit far apart and pews are cleaned afterward.

"We try to take care of them," he said, adding that daily words of encouragement and updates online are helping to make the parish community stronger. "Tough times force people to think and bring out the best in them, and creativity in finding ways of reaching out to our people is what is helping now at St. Jude."

Called to 'come alive again'

Father Chris Hess, pastor of St. Anne, Bristol, takes comfort in Psalm 144: "Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for war; My safeguard and my



Grant Bailey, 21, left, and Mary Wright, 20, dance at Virginia Tech's Catholic Campus Ministry "Ring of Protection" Dance on Saturday, March 28. The dance, organized by the ministry after the campus-wide Ring Dance was canceled, allowed one couple at a time to dance apart in a reception tent.

(Photo/Patti Connors)

fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer."

Having worked as a firefighter, EMT and paramedic for 17 years before entering the priesthood, he said that emergency training is now serving him during these unprecedented days.

"I'm relying on my past experience to help people through this," Father Hess explained. "What people most want, in crises and normal times, is presence."

In addition to livestreaming Masses, he's started a YouTube channel.

"Whether I'm doing something in person or online on YouTube, it's a way for me to reach out and stay in contact with people. They can see that the Church is still here," Father Hess said.

In one video he is seated on his couch with his dog, Skillet, asleep beside him. He opens by playing guitar and singing "Country Roads."

Then, before singing "Alive Again" by Matt Maher, he speaks about St. Augustine, on whom the song was based.

"Even when he was living in darkness, Christ was still present to him and working in his life," the priest said. "Finally, he had that encounter and came out of the darkness and came alive again. Because that is what Christ is calling all of us to do: to come alive again."

'Something everyone can do'

Besides seeing the empty church, Father Stephen McNally, pastor of Church of the Transfiguration, Fincastle, was struck one day recently by another sight: rows of unlit votive candles.

"Nobody is there, and that sight really made it clear to me," he said. "We have grown so accustomed to

showing up at church and sometimes we take it for granted."

These are frightening and stressful days, the priest noted, but "this too shall pass." He tells his parishioners that there is always something everyone can do — even in isolation — and there are always many helpers.

"God does provide, through others," Father McNally said. "And in times like these we discover how we are very much connected."

The key, he added, is to not give up and not give in to panic, because if people close the door to God then they may not get the help they need.

"We survived 9/11," Father McNally said. "It was something horrible, but we got through that."

People turned to God and their faith to get through those days, he said, and they spoke to other people of faith — sometimes for the first time.

"Not everyone is a person of faith, but everyone needs words that heal and give hope," Father McNally said. "We are Catholics reaching out to others. We can pray and send good messages for everyone."

Learning to adapt

In the chapel of Prince of Peace, Chesapeake, two green upholstered chairs face one another, set about 9 feet apart, one on either side of the room.

"The reconciliation room was too small," Father Romeo Jazmin, pastor at Prince of Peace, explained. "So, we are holding confession in here."

In order to create the new space for the sacrament of reconciliation, the Blessed Sacrament has been moved into the sanctuary, giving parishioners who want to pray plenty

See Parishes, Page 12

Catholics Charities preparing for requests in assistance

CCC, CCEVA working with others to address critical needs

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA) and Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC) are maintaining their current programs while preparing for what they expect to be a dramatic increase in requests for assistance.

"Our main message is that we really want to make sure the public knows we are open," said Christopher Tan, chief executive officer of CCEVA.

Jay Brown, chief executive officer of CCC, said a top goal of his agency is to continue serving its clients with "compassionate care" by "maintaining connections with them and making sure they have what they need."

CCEVA served 9,400 families last fiscal year; CCC, more than 20,000 individuals. Both CEOs expect those numbers to soar as people reel from the restrictions in place to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Among the measures in Virginia, Gov. Ralph Northam has advised people to limit all non-essential travel outside of the home, mandated the closure of recreational and entertainment businesses, ordered

dining establishments to provide delivery and takeout services only and directed those who have been exposed to the virus, have chronic health conditions or are age 65 or older to self-quarantine.

While Catholic churches remain open for private prayer and eucharistic adoration, Bishop Barry C. Knestout has suspended Masses and group activities in parishes.

Both agencies are using their websites and Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram to publicize their programs and keep clients, donors and followers abreast of changes and needs. They are also working with other businesses and organizations in a team effort to address the repercussions.

Tan said the people who will be hit the hardest are hourly workers, many of whom are living paycheck to paycheck, whose income is "already stretched thin" and are now experiencing decreased work hours and lay-offs.

Both agencies provide emergency financial aid to cover rent and utilities. That can free up money for other expenses such as groceries,

childcare, medical care and car payments, Tan said.

To protect the health of staff and clients, many of the agencies' services are being handled over the phone.

For CCEVA, that means case management and pregnancy, financial and mental health counseling are being conducted remotely. Care programs for senior citizens, respite care, guardianship and adoption services, all of which can involve in-person interactions, are "operating as usual," Tan said.

Life coaches continue to work in hospital emergency rooms to connect the uninsured and underinsured with primary care and access to resources such as food and transportation. In addition, individuals can pick up emergency baby supplies, including diapers, and representative payees may pick up their checks from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays and Fridays at CCEVA's Newport News office (12829 Jefferson Ave., Suite 101), and 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays and 8:30 a.m. to noon on Fridays at the Virginia Beach office (5361 Virginia Beach Blvd.)

Similarly, CCC's pregnancy, financial and mental health counseling, care programs for senior citizens and workforce development are being conducted over the phone. Continuing programs that may involve in-person interactions include guardianship, foster care and refugee resettlement.

Also, CCC is keeping the lobby of its Housing Resource Center and Youth Hub (809 Oliver Hill Way, Richmond) open to homeless individuals for access to a restroom, water and a care package that typically consists of toiletries, socks and underwear, said Paige Peak, marketing manager.

The two organizations are developing creative ways to help their communities. For example, CCC's food banks in Roanoke and Richmond have become drive-through services. CCEVA will loan staff to help man food pantries at area Catholic parishes because the number of volunteers is waning due to fear of contracting the coronavirus.

Anita Wallen, CCC chief officer, said a "remarkable" accomplishment was partnering with Richmond

See Assistance, Page 7

Rosary highlighted in Crozet faith formation

Provides fifth-graders with understanding of New Testament

JOSEPH STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

As she held her rosary beads before Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Peace retirement community in Charlottesville, resident Barbara Allison said praying can be hard sometimes.

"When you pray by yourself, it's so easy to get distracted," she said. "But when these children come, I'm able to stick with it and keep my mind on the prayers. I just love it."

The nine children leading her and other residents in the rosary on a sunny February afternoon are fifth-graders in the religious education program at the Crozet Mission Community. Holding their own beads, the students took turns reciting the Our Father and Hail Mary as residents like Barbara Lachance joined them.

"I've kind of slipped away from the rosary for a few years, but I'm getting back in it big time," she said. "I like to see little kids being brought up this way, in the faith. Too many people don't see it, you know."

It's the second time their teacher, Nicki Athey, has brought these 10-year-olds to the facility to lead the rosary. She started it in part as a way to remind the children of the corporal works of mercy, to "use your feet, use your voice, use your hands and your heart to touch other people."

The children have noticed how much their visits have meant to the residents.



Kaleb Estes, William Thorsen, George Novey, Thomas Mierzejewski, fifth-graders from the Crozet Mission Community faith formation program, lead the rosary for residents of the Our Lady of Peace retirement community in Charlottesville on Sunday, Feb. 23. (Photo/Joseph Staniunas)

"I realized that it was special to them because sometimes people don't get a lot of visitors," said student Woody LaVoy. "And sometimes it's good in their life just to see someone pray the rosary with them and know that they have God by their side. It's not just them alone."

Athey designs and sells rosaries, and the children have found that using her favorite prayer in their classes helps them understand the New Testament.

"It's talking about Jesus' life, what he did during his lifetime and talking about Mary and Joseph, too.

How they're really together and really powerful and can do a lot of things with God's help," said Thomas Mierzejewski

He and the other students have also made rosaries for relatives.

"I made my rosary for my uncle because he doesn't go to church that much and doesn't talk about God," Mierzejewski said. "So, I wanted to bring him closer to God."

Kaleb Estes said he made his rosary for his grandmother.

"She was very happy," he said. "She's a very religious person, and I also gave her the packet that shows

her how to pray."

"I made my rosary for my grandma," said George Novey, "because she was going into surgery and it was comforting to her."

The Crozet community's religious education program is based in homes, with parents responsible for much of the teaching and volunteers like Athey leading monthly group sessions. She said one of the best ways to teach her students about how to grow in faith is through experience. Her youngsters have learned how to gain a plenary indulgence and visited a cemetery as part of that sequence.

The class went to Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Crozet and talked to the sisters about their life in a community of work, study and prayer.

"They made them feel so comfortable," she said. "They were able to ask them questions that kids ask, like, 'What do you eat for dinner?' — really hilarious questions."

Athey said she includes "anything that will help root them and give them confidence in their faith" as part of the children's formation.

"I want them to have tools that they can build on and add to, not just have a random introduction to this saint and that saint, something that they can tie back to the Bible and see how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament, how the Bible is used in the Mass, how beautiful everything is," she said.

Staff reductions made at Pastoral Center

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

The financial impact of COVID-19 was felt by employees of the Diocese of Richmond on Friday, March 27, when Bishop Barry C. Knestout announced temporary layoffs and reduction in work hours for 41 people who worked in the Pastoral Center and campus ministry.

In a letter to priests of the diocese, noting that the Church had not been immune from the impact of COVID-19, the bishop called the decision “one of the most painful” he has made.

“Recognizing the fiscal reality in which our parishes and diocese find themselves, and after considering multiple options, I made the heart wrenching decision to temporarily lay off and reduce the work hours of the Pastoral Center workforce by one third,” Bishop Knestout wrote.

He continued, “Guided by the principles of stewardship, I did this to reduce our operating costs in order to bring relief to our parishes at a time when collections are down due to the suspension of Masses and ongoing concerns about the economy due to the coronavirus.”

The layoffs and reduced hours impacted

all offices in the Pastoral Center. Employees affected by the decision are eligible for unemployment insurance or partial unemployment insurance, and those enrolled in health insurance will be able to continue with their existing coverage and premium rates through the end of the current fiscal year.

“Nonetheless, that does not lessen the pain we feel in this separation from these dedicated, faith-filled coworkers,” the bishop wrote. “Please pray for them and their families, and please reach out to those you know or who are members of your parish.”

Noting that reports focus upon bad news, he told the priests “it is imperative that you and I are making a concerted effort to focus the faithful’s attention on the Good News.”

Bishop Knestout continued, “I am most grateful to you for the work you are doing in the midst of the challenges we face. None of our seminary formation addressed what we should do in a worldwide crisis, yet, we do what we can do each day: We turn to God in prayer and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That has always worked, and it will work today and, in the days, and months ahead.”

Weep for those impacted by COVID-19, pope says

CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — With so much suffering associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis asked people to reflect on whether they were feeling real compassion and sorrow for what was happening.

It is one thing to be actively trying to help or do some good, but people also must be capable of opening their hearts and being moved to tears for others, he said in his homily March 29.

Celebrating morning Mass in the chapel at his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the pope first prayed for the “many people who are crying: people who are isolated, in quarantine; the elderly who are alone; people who have recovered; people undergoing treatment; parents who, because there is no income, are not able to feed their kids.”

“So many people weep and we, too, from our heart, we accompany them. It wouldn’t hurt us to weep a little as our Lord wept for his people,” the pope said at the start of Mass, which the Vatican has been livestreaming online the past three weeks.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. John, which talked about Jesus’ reaction to the death of his friend, Lazarus, and the sorrow he and his friend’s family experienced.

Jesus wept at Lazarus’ tomb, but he also ordered the tomb be opened and for Lazarus to come out — resurrected from the dead.

“Jesus weeps with so much tenderness! He weeps from the heart, weeps with love, he weeps with those who weep,” the pope said.

“Today,” he said, “in a world that is suffering so much — so many people who are suffering the consequences of this pandemic — I ask myself, am I able to weep as Jesus certainly did and is doing now? Is my heart like Jesus?”

One’s heart can still be “too hard even if I am able to talk, do good things, help,” but one’s heart is not involved because “I am not able to weep,” he said.

The pope prayed for the grace of being able to weep with Jesus and for his people who are suffering, and that the day be a “Sunday of tears” for everyone.

Later in the day, after reciting the Sunday Angelus, the pope said he was praying especially for those who were unable or not allowed to have the required distancing or isolation needed to keep them safe during the pandemic, like those living in homes for the elderly or prisons.

Prisoners face potential tragedy because so many places of detention are overcrowded, he said, citing a March 25 warning from the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Pope Francis asked that authorities be aware of “this serious problem and take necessary measures to avoid further tragedies.”

Before praying the Angelus, the pope reflected more deeply on the day’s Gospel reading and Jesus’ command to “take away the stone” from Lazarus’ tomb so his friend could emerge, resurrected.

With this gesture, the pope said, Jesus demonstrates how he is the Lord of life, as he told Lazarus’ sister, Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

Jesus urges people to have faith, even in the midst of sorrow and mourning, even when it seems death has won.

“Take away the stone from your heart! Let the Word of God bring life back to where there is death,” the pope said in his address, broadcast from the library of the Apostolic Palace.

“We are called to take away the stones of everything that smells of death, for example: living the faith with hypocrisy is death; destructive criticism of others is death; offenses and calumny are death; marginalizing the poor is death,” he said.

God wants people to take away these impediments so that life, in Christ, can spring forth once again, he said.

IN MEMORIAM

John Francis Barrett



John Francis Barrett, who served as the chief financial officer of the Diocese of Richmond from 1981 to 2010, died Saturday, March 21, three days after his 89th birthday.

A Richmond native, Barrett served in the U.S. Marine Corps for eight years and then began his career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, first in Washington and then in Richmond. He later became an agent and instructor for the Internal Revenue Service.

As the diocese’s CFO, Barrett worked to support parishes, clergy and diocesan staff. He advocated for the expansion of Catholic education, led the establishment of retirement homes for the elderly, supported shelters for battered women and their children, helped establish the McMahon Parater Foundation to foster student scholarships and promoted many charitable endeavors. In 2003, in recognition of his work, he was awarded a papal honor, the Benemerenti Medal.

A member of the Knights of Columbus since 1961, Barrett served the organization on multiple levels as Grand Knight of Council 395, Faithful Navigator, Richmond Assembly and two terms as State Deputy. He served as Supreme Director and Assistant Supreme Treasurer in the national office.

He was also a member of The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem which supports schools and shrines in the Holy Land.

Barrett is survived by his wife of seven years, Dr. Mary Ann Beatty Barrett; stepchildren, Dr. Charles Beatty, Clare Dooley (Daniel), and Colleen Dooley (Thomas), four grandchildren, sister-in-law, Karen Barrett, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother, William; sister, Anne Saunders; brother-in-law, Sam Saunders; and first wife, Gloria Hearn Barrett.

When the present health crisis eases, a funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. Mary Catholic Church, Richmond.

Memorial donations can be made to the Virginia Knights of Columbus Charities, Inc., 116 Meredith Way, Newport News, Va. 23606, the McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, Va. 23294 or a charity of your choice.

Giving

Continued from Page 1

graces and helps for all of us in terms of salvation,” he said. “That work continues so there is a need for our parishes to be supported.

The bishop said that while there are those who are not able to contribute as they have due to financial difficulties, he hoped others will be generous.

“There are many in our community who have the resources and abilities and who are in a position where they can continue to support the Church,” Bishop Knestout said. “We ask that they think about the Church and be as generous as they can.”

He said that in giving, people are “imaging our Lord and caring for those who are in need.”

“The need is ongoing, even when the environment is harsher and more challenging, so that generosity is greatly appreciated,” the bishop said.

Clericalism shuts down reliance on God's grace

GUEST COMMENTARY

FATHER PAT APUZZO

When I decided to write about clericalism, it was to help expose its human face.

I did not want to mask or dilute how clericalism can infect us and damage our faith. On the contrary, the more familiar we are with clericalism, the more we can diminish its strength and prevalence among us.

To remedy the problem, we must go behind the label "clerical" to meet these people for who they are and for what they are experiencing. They are sisters and brothers who are living with a spiritual disorder. It is a struggle for them to trust the reliability of God's grace.

When I started composing these reflections, the coronavirus epidemic had not yet become a pandemic. In observing the actions and reactions of one another – as well as my own – we have a window into seeing more clearly just what clericalism is.

Yet, as a flood of human tragedy rises, there are the blessings of a stream of words, perspectives and actions that demonstrate everything that clericalism is not.

How we react – or how we are instructed to respond – in human moments when God seems to be absent will distinguish whether or not clericalism is stirring.

To help with that distinction: even though its root is the word "cleric," clericalism does not pertain only to the ordained. Some laypersons

practice clericalism. There are a lot of deacons, priests and bishops who do not.

A universal symptom of clericalism is separation. The practitioners perceive themselves as being apart from the common crowd, superior in any number of ways from the ordinary believer. Worst of all, clericalism devises a self-image of someone indispensable for others to have faith, yet they envision themselves practicing faith without others.

When fellow believers, with their faith strangled by feelings of being abandoned or rejected, cry out, "Where is Jesus now?", what do we do? We invoke trust in Jesus of the Gospels. There, in the Gospels, Jesus walks through walls to calm the fears of his disciples. Jesus growls at death at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Jesus, as he suffers on the cross, trustingly places himself into the dependable hands of God.

Those suffering with the spiritual disease at the core of clericalism will often mock such an approach.

As if we should take as fairy tales Jesus' insistent testimonies to God's relentless mercy, "clericalists" will often ridicule invocations of those portrayals as "loosey-goosey" or scorn them as "cheap grace" — a misapplication of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase from "The Cost of Discipleship" in which he defines "cheap grace" as "grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate [my emphasis]."

Since mercy is not weakness, and it doesn't exclude confrontation, those afflicted with the disease of clericalism need our love and our honesty.

When Jesus encounters Thomas after the Res-

urrection, his words to the apostle are sharp and direct, yet his actions are intimate and emboldening. Jesus demands that Thomas put an end to his unbelief and directs him to start believing. Then, Jesus invites Thomas to come close and to touch, and to be touched by the wounds that Jesus carries to all of us from the cross. (Jn 20:27).

In what we are experiencing these days – with a pandemic disease striking fear, grief and despair into so many hearts, it is a special moment for us to be a Church of people – for each other and for so many others – who dare to invite others to keep our hopes open to trust that God is with us.

Even though we are unable to gather in our churches, wherever we gather Christ promises he is with us. Nothing can separate us from Christ. We can remind each other not to panic since Jesus is in this boat with us, cheering us to hold tight to faith in God. We have a graced time to assert and insist that there is no one human life that is more demanding of dignity and protection than any other.

And, let us use this special opportunity to reunite as a Church. To put each one of us back on common ground with each other. To allow none to stand above or below the other. To re-introduce ourselves as needing each other — all of us ready and able to serve the rest.

Father Pat has been a priest of the Diocese of Richmond for 43 years. Before retiring, he served as a pastor for 24 years and as "priest-for" at several parishes who were without a local pastor. He also served as Priest Secretary for the late Bishop Walter Sullivan and in several other positions on the diocesan staff.

Discrimination based on skin color is racism

Re: The letter of Jack Rowett (Catholic Virginian, March 23): Rowett's letter includes by definition examples of racial discrimination, attributing causation of behavior and perception of culture to color of skin. When discrimination indicates superiority of one skin color to another, this is racism.

In a Texas suburb called DeSoto, the population is 70% black. Based on Rowett's rationale, that "Black culture" causes high crime rates, this suburb should have incredibly high crime rates.

But it has low crime rates. Why? Perhaps because using color of skin to make judgments about human beings, each made in the image of God, isn't the right path. These assumptions are not facts, they are opinions, sometimes racist opinions.

Perhaps we should talk facts. In DeSoto, 90% of the population are high school graduates, over 30% have a college education, and 60% of the businesses are owned by African Americans. Maybe access to quality education, employment opportunities and a number of other factors

make a real difference.

Maybe we should ask ourselves how we make sure all people in our country have equitable access to these factors. Maybe we shouldn't put a timetable on how long we think it should take generations of people to recover from literal dehumanization and subjugation in the form of slavery, Jim Crow laws and many other despicable forms of systemic racism that have happened and are still happening in our country.

Maybe those of us who have white skin should take a dose of humble pie and recognize we will never know what it is like to live without it.

— Nicole Gerardo
Charlottesville

Letter writer painted inaccurate picture

Whenever I hear a phrase similar to "I'm not racist, however..." I know that a racist statement is sure to follow, and Jack Rowett did not disappoint in his letter to the editor (Catholic Virginian, March 23).

Rowett claims that black incarceration rates can't be unjust because they accurately reflect higher criminal behavior in African Ameri-

Letters

can populations. The 13th amendment abolished slavery over 150 years ago. The vestiges of slavery very quickly morphed into a system of black mass incarceration.

The entire criminal justice system from beginning to end is stacked against African Americans. I suspect that Rowett is using a few rudimentary statistics to declare that a very large and complicated system is just and fair.

Mr. Rowett, I implore you look deeper into this. I pray that God will open your eyes to the suffering that has ravaged our communities and that you will feel compelled — at the very least — to stop spreading divisive statements that paint an inaccurate picture.

— Jennifer Garrett
Virginia Beach

Statistics don't tell whole story

Jack Rowett says in his letter (Catholic Virginian, March 23) that by looking at incarceration statistics, one can see that African Americans commit more crimes than other demographics. This is not wholly accurate.

Incarceration statistics don't reflect all crimes committed. Even assuming that no one was wrongly convicted, incarceration statistics only reflect a portion of crimes committed.

These statistics are crimes that were witnessed, their perpetrators apprehended, charges pressed, perpetrators found guilty and perpetrators sentenced to serve time. Many, many things can occur along that

path that can lead to injustice or, at least, unfairness.

Perhaps someone along that chain of power was racist (racist officers, lawyers, and judges do, sadly, exist), or perhaps the perpetrator didn't have a lawyer that was very good or able to reach a plea bargain. Being able to choose one's lawyer costs money, and poverty disproportionately affects people of color.

— Rachel Condon
Hanover

CV letters policy

The Catholic Virginian welcomes signed letters to the editor that can be considered for publication *and/or* posting on The Catholic Virginian website. Submissions should be no more than 270 words and include the writer's name, address or email, and phone number as all submissions are acknowledged. At the editor's discretion, submitter's name may be withheld from publication/posting. Letters should address topics reported in the CV or other topics relevant to Catholics. Personal attacks are not published. Letters may be edited for style, length or content. Opinions expressed by letter writers do not necessarily reflect those of The Catholic Virginian or the Diocese of Richmond.

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Via phone, priest helps dying man through act of contrition

ED LANGLOIS
Catholic News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. — Because of hospital coronavirus restrictions, a suburban Portland priest March 22 was not allowed to meet with a Catholic patient dying of COVID-19.

Msgr. John Cihak, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Milwaukie, did make telephone contact and because of a provision in Church law was able to lead him through the process of an act of contrition and a prayer for forgiveness.

"This may become a common occurrence given restrictions placed by hospitals," said a March 23 memo to western Oregon priests from Msgr. Gerard O'Connor, director of the Office of Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Portland.

Although the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick cannot be administered over the telephone, a Vatican

tribunal's March 19 indulgence offers another possibility.

"Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by 'votum confessionis,' that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones," said the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary, reaffirming long-standing Church law regarding forgiveness when confession is not possible.

On the evening of March 22, Msgr. Cihak received a call from Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center in Milwaukie. The family wanted last rites for the man, but hospital regulations barred the priest from entering the unit.

The patient, on a respirator, was not able to respond but had the phone put to his ear. Msgr. Cihak helped him through the process of an act of contrition and a prayer for forgiveness.

"God has tied his grace to the sacraments but he himself is not bound by them," Msgr. Cihak said, explaining that God offers mercy to those who, through no fault of their own, cannot get to the sacraments.

"It felt a little strange," said Msgr. Cihak, who served as a master of ceremonies for Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis before returning to Oregon. "You can't help but feel a little like you are letting the person down."

Msgr. Cihak said he is able to visit other patients in the hospital, but not those in isolation because of COVID-19.

On March 27, the Archdiocese of Portland's Office of Divine Worship issued guidelines on forgiveness of sins when a priest is not available.

The Church recognizes sins are forgiven when a penitent:

- Expresses true sorrow and detestation of sins with sincere love of God (a "perfect contrition").

- Makes a sincere request of God for forgiveness.

- Resolves to go to confession at the first opportunity.

The archdiocese's guidelines, really a reminder of established Church law, said the current health crisis means it may be impossible to go to a sacramental confession.

"By devoutly and sincerely performing these actions, one can obtain forgiveness of all sins," the instruction said. "Those who come before Almighty God with sincere contrition for their sins and a fervent desire for forgiveness can be confident of God's mercy."



TIME CAPSULE

Continued from Page 2

understood to be a time of prayer in preparation for a feast rather than a sharing in the feast itself.

However, the liturgical reform mandated by Vatican Council II (1962–1965) broadened the notion of vigil: "The liturgical day runs from midnight to midnight, but the observance of Sunday and solemnities [major feasts] begins with the evening of the preceding day" (Congregation for Divine Worship, General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 1969, no. 3).

The shortening of the eucharistic fast contributed to the spread of anticipated Masses. Pius XII had reduced the fast from midnight to three hours for evening Masses (Christus Dominus, 1953), and then for all Masses (Sacramentum, 1957). Pope St. Paul VI reduced the fast to one hour (announcement at Vatican Council II, 1964).

On January 10, 1970, the bishops of the United States collectively received authorization to allow the fulfillment of Sunday and holy day obligations by attendance at Mass on the evenings prior. This authorization lasted five years and was renewed in 1974 and again in 1979.

In 1983, it became universal law that attending Mass on Saturday evening, or on the evening before a holy day of obligation, fulfilled the precept of

worship (Code of Canon Law, canon 1248 §1).

Interestingly, the Church has never specified the start of "evening" with respect to fulfilling a Mass attendance obligation. By custom, 4 p.m. is regarded as the earliest time based on Pius XII's decree concerning evening Masses.

A second question about time is whether two obligations can be met simultaneously by attending an evening Mass (for example, when Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday). Although the Church has not provided a definitive ruling on this matter, it is generally held that the two obligations must be fulfilled by attending separate Masses (in the example cited — one for the Sunday and one for Christmas).

Throughout the development of anticipated Masses, the Church has stressed that this practice should not obscure the significance of Sunday nor the obligatory feast. For this reason, the precept of refraining from unnecessary work on Sundays or holy days of obligation still applies to those who have participated in an anticipated Mass (canon 1247).

It is worth noting that while the readings and prayers used at an anticipated Mass are typically those of the Sunday or the next day's feast, those of any Mass — for example, a wedding, the feast of the day itself or even the Divine Liturgy of an Eastern Catholic rite — also fulfill the obligation (canon 1248 §1).

On April 14, 1970, John J. Russell, the 10th bishop of Richmond (1958–1974), announced

the start of anticipated Masses in this diocese. Excerpts from his letter appear below.

"I hereby grant permission for Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond to fulfill their Sunday Mass obligation by attending Mass on Saturday evening beginning the week of May 3rd."

"Each parish in the diocese may avail itself of this option. ... The permission allows one or two evening Masses in each parish church after 5:00 P.M. on Saturdays and on evenings before Holy Days of Obligation. ..."

"Parishes using the privilege should revise their Sunday Mass schedules to permit more time between Masses and thereby foster a more meaningful liturgical celebration."

"Prior to implementation, our people should be well instructed on the significance of the Sunday observance. Anticipation on Saturday does not lessen the sacredness of Sunday. It is in keeping with the early traditions of the Church when the people celebrated the liturgy on the vigil of the Day of the Lord."

"The adoption of this practice should prove advantageous to those people who find it difficult or inconvenient to attend Mass on Sunday. At the same time, it should lessen the overcrowding at the late Sunday morning Masses. Priests in mission areas or those obliged to trinate [celebrate three Masses] on Sunday should find this permission helpful. ..."

"Father: Please read this letter at all Masses on Sunday, April 19th."

Assistance

Continued from Page 4

city, local businesses and agencies to move 78 homeless individuals living in a makeshift tent encampment into local hotels in three days. CCC will pay for the hotel rooms for at least two weeks.

While Brown said CCC is analyzing which services will be affected most, Tan said he expects financial aid to be the most impacted program.

CCEVA normally spends \$75,000 to \$100,000

for financial aid. To accommodate "the dramatic increase" in requests that Tan anticipates, the agency is seeking donations for its new St. Joseph Fund. His goal is to raise \$10,000 which is "nowhere near what's needed," but is a good start, he said.

Requests for various types of assistance may not come immediately, Tan said. He explained that "people may be in a state of shock right now, but eventually, as the restrictions are lifted, people will come out of that fog and realize what

they will need help for."

Brown said it is difficult to project what the needs will be so "we have to be flexible, nimble and creative."

Also at a time like this, maintaining social interaction is crucial, said Diane Hargraves, coordinator of the CCC Independence for Seniors Program.

"Isolation and loneliness can take a toll on someone's health," she said. "A phone call can make a difference."

What the Church teaches about organ donation



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
 CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. What is the Catholic Church's position on donating body parts for medical science? (Northampton, Pennsylvania)

A. Let's divide the answer into two parts: post-mortem transplants and those from living donors. Gifts from a donor who has clearly died — either to a living recipient or to scientific research — is the easier part.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity" (No. 2296). The Church does teach that the remains, after organ donation or medical research, should be treated with reverence and should be entombed or buried.

As to gifts from living donors — bone marrow, say, or a lung — this is morally permissible so long as it is not life-threatening to the donor and does not deprive the donor of an essential bodily function (and provided that the anticipated benefit to the recipient is proportionate to the harm done to the donor).

In his 1995 encyclical "The Gospel of Life," St. John Paul II called organ donation an example

of "everyday heroism," and in 2014, Pope Francis told the Transplantation Committee for the Council of Europe that organ donation is "a testimony of love for our neighbor."

Q. I have a friend whose father-in-law died recently. The man wanted to be cremated. The family called the church, and the pastor asked where the burial plot was located. When they said that they didn't have one, they were informed that there would not be a funeral Mass.

Do you have to show proof of a burial spot to have a funeral Mass celebrated? (Bettendorf, Iowa)

A. Since 1963, the Catholic Church has permitted the practice of cremation — although the Church's preference is still for burying the body, since this expresses more clearly the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body.

When cremation does take place, the Church has specific guidelines as to the final disposition of the cremains.

The appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals states: "The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires" (No. 417).

That teaching was reaffirmed by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in an instruction issued in 2016. This instruction explains that "the reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community."

Still though, I am not aware of any universal mandate for proof of a burial place prior to scheduling a funeral Mass. My own inclination would be to explain to the family of the deceased the rationale behind the Church's rule on cremains but not to prohibit a funeral Mass.

Q. I have always been attracted to the verse in John's Gospel (11:35) that says that, learning of the death of Lazarus, "Jesus wept." It shows how much Christ loved Lazarus and all of humanity. But I'm wondering just why Jesus wept.

Was it because Jesus was actually grieving over the death of his friend? Or did he shed tears of joy, knowing that Lazarus was not suffering from his illness anymore, that Lazarus was perhaps getting a taste of heaven and that Christ was going to use the occasion to show forth the power of God? (Waipahu, Hawaii)

A. That short and simple verse from the Gospel reflects a complex truth — a truth that prompts

your excellent question and makes the answer difficult. Jesus had two natures — truly human and truly divine. Both natures were at work in the matter of Lazarus.

Pope Leo the Great, reflecting on this same passage, is thought to have said: "In his humanity Jesus wept for Lazarus; in his divinity he raised him from the dead." Jesus felt deeply the pain of Lazarus' death. When Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus of the impending crisis, their message had been, "Master, the one you love is ill."

Clearly, Jesus knew in advance what he was going to do, for he told them, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God." But his awareness of that eventual outcome did not relieve Christ's human sorrow, and this is the mystery of his dual nature. The answer to both of your questions is "Yes."

Jesus was truly grieving over Lazarus' passing and the pain it was causing Martha and Mary, but just as surely, he knew that the situation would ultimately serve to glorify God.

The mystery of that duality will only lift fully when we rest in God's house; meanwhile it may help to think that, right now, we ourselves struggle to balance those twin feelings. When someone we love dies, our faith promises the joy of reunion; yet, even so, we feel deeply the sting of loss. We believe in eternal life, but that doesn't stop our tears.

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

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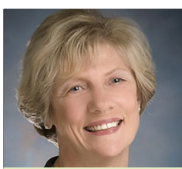
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IN LIGHT OF FAITH

BARBARA HUGHES

As we approach the celebration of the sacred Triduum and the feast of Easter, we are at a different place on the journey. Phrases like “unchartered waters” and “foreign soil” come to mind as the deadly coronavirus has attacked the United States. Death has become real as the number of victims accelerates, and unknowns about treatment and the lack of vital equipment have become part of the daily news cycle.

The times in which we live make the desert experience of Jesus more real than ever. During these final days of Lent, we can relate to the anxiety of the apostles as the clouds of dissent began to gather around Jesus.

Jesus overturning the tables of the money-changers in the temple doesn't seem so remote when we consider the sexual abuse crisis that has afflicted the Church, or the plunging stock market. Jesus' agony in the garden has become a personal agony for those who are struggling for their next breath or to put food on the table for their family.

At this writing, the doors to the Eucharist have been shuttered. How long this unprecedented measure will last is uncertain. No one knows the answer, just as we never imagined the Body and Blood of Jesus would not be there for us to receive.

A spiritual fast has been imposed, making the words of Jesus, “Man does not live by bread alone” especially poignant. And while the option for spiritual communion is always present, the Word of God, as manna for the soul, continues to sustain us when we take and read, pray and reflect.

Through the virtual transmission of Mass via television and internet, we remain united. We can visit the Blessed Sacrament, read the Passion narratives and set up a place to venerate the cross in our home, silently remembering the price that was paid for our salvation.



As we remember how the Word of God became flesh and loved us to his death, the story of Jesus' Passion and death never gets old, but seeps more deeply into our soul each time we experience it through prayerful reflection.

In my office is an icon of Jesus portrayed as the suffering servant, rising from a tomb that represents a baptismal font. His wrists, though crossed, are unbound because he was bound by the cord of love, and his skin is charcoal grey. Only after years of meditating with the icon did the

words, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pt 2:24) did I understand. Sin is dark and ugly, and the dark color of Jesus' skin represents what St. Paul wrote, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21).

In his book, “Poverty of Spirit,” Johannes Baptist Metz explained that when Jesus became man, he didn't simply don human nature as if he were putting on a costume that he could discard when it became inconvenient. He was truly like us in everything but sin, and yet he took on our sins.

Now when I look at the icon, I am reminded that if we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must shed our self of all that is dark and ugly in us so that Jesus did not die in vain.

As we approach the Triduum, another image of Jesus comes to mind. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he is praying, kneeling next to a large rock the size of a boulder, which serves as a pre-dieu during his agony in the garden.

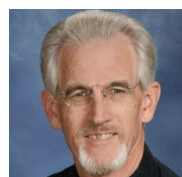
I never gave it much thought until I visited the site in the Holy Land. Amid olive trees whose roots date back to Jesus' time, I looked for the rock, but to no avail. It was nowhere to be found.

Recently, the absence of the rock has taken on new meaning. The image of Jesus praying at the rock as the angel offers him a cup to assuage his anguish has become for me a foreshadowing of the rock that was rolled in front of his tomb on Good Friday only to be rolled away during his Resurrection.

During these times of uncertainty and travail, let us remember that death was only the beginning, not the end of the story. Rocks that seem as big as boulders in this life will one day be rolled away if we remain faithful, for we, too, will rise with Christ.

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

Answer your call to be an Easter person



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY

DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

We hear in the Gospel for Easter morning that Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb alone. She jumps to the

conclusion that the body is gone because the stone has been rolled back, and she shares that conclusion with Peter and John. If we read a little further, we hear how after Peter and John leave the tomb, Mary saw two angels and then encountered Jesus, recognizing him only after he calls her by name.

For Jesus and Mary, this is not just a moment in time, an event that happens and nothing comes of it. It cannot be for us either.

On Good Friday, there was fear and isolation. After the crucifixion, the disciples all gathered in one place behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. Sounds a little bit like us and COVID-19. We know Thomas ventured out because he wasn't there that evening when Jesus

appeared to the disciples, and Mary left to visit the tomb.

In her encounter with the risen Lord, she is transformed from not knowing where Jesus is (verses 2, 13, 15) to proclaiming him risen (verse 18). The Resurrection of Jesus changed Mary's life forever, not only from the outside but from within as well. After Jesus calls her by name, he sends Mary to the other apostles. Mary no longer lives in the fear of Good Friday; she lives in the joy of Easter.

In a world where a woman's word was not taken seriously, a woman is chosen to be the first to proclaim the Resurrection. Like the Samaritan woman at the well, there is no hesitation. That's the result of experiencing the Resurrection — complete and certain response to Jesus' command to share the good news of the Resurrection with others.

In the context of our lives, we must determine how we answer Jesus' call and respond. The Resurrection gives meaning to everything Jesus did before that day and changes us from Good Friday people to Easter people.

What is the result of your Easter experience? Even though it may be a different sort of Easter than we've ever experienced, it will happen. One ad that just passed through my

computer this morning proclaimed, “Easter's Happening, No matter what!”

While there may be no large gatherings as communities of faith to celebrate the Resurrection and many people will be missing from our celebrations, the Resurrection happens. It happens every time we celebrate the Eucharist, every time we reach out to one another.

We venture out from our isolation for work and necessities such as food, drink, medicine. We can also venture out, literally or electronically, in a socially responsible way to those who are the most at risk – to parents who are self-quarantined with children out of school or others who need someone with whom to talk.

Hearing the voice of another person makes people feel less isolated and in a small way enables them to experience resurrection in their lives. When this crisis is over, we will continue this in our daily lives just as Peter and the apostles did.

Jesus calls us by name just as he called Mary by name. Just as Mary was sent by Jesus to proclaim the Resurrection to the apostles, we are sent to proclaim this news to the world. We are called to the Resurrection, to live as Easter people.

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

Easter Sunday 2020

Acts 10:34a, 37-43;

Col 3:1-4

Jn 20:1-9

OPPORTUNITIES

The Diocese of Richmond's Office of Human Resources is seeking a Victim Assistance Coordinator to provide compassionate outreach to victim survivors of sexual misconduct of 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.

Qualifications: 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 demonstrate 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. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and diocesan application to jobs@richmonddiocese.org.

Peninsula Catholic High School seeks an innovative, collaborative and experienced full-time science teacher with a background in any combination of Science, Physics, Chemistry for the 2020-21 academic year. Applicants must have an 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.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Hands-on inquiry and STEM focus are a must. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teacher license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas. Please send cover letter, résumé, diocesan application (which can be found at www.richmonddiocese.org) and references to Peninsula Catholic High School, Attn: Principal; 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 or email jfranklin@peninsulacatholic.org. Application deadline is Thursday, April 30, 2020 or until position is filled.

Peninsula Catholic High School, a college preparatory high school, serves students of all faith traditions in grades 8-12. Please visit www.peninsulacatholic.org for more information about our school.

The Church of the Redeemer is seeking a qualified individual to perform as a Religious Education Coordinator (REC) who will work in collaboration with the pastor to maintain parish catechetical programs for children K-5th grade level in accordance with the diocesan catechetical guidelines. The REC provides catechetical programs and preparation for sacraments; recruits catechists for programs; ensuring volunteers are VIRTUS certified and well prepared; coordinates and oversees Vacation Bible School. Applicant must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Some knowledge of budgeting, along with excellent communication, organizational and interpersonal skills. A bachelor's degree from an accredited university in theology, or equivalent with at least three (3) years' experience as a catechist or religious education teacher is required. This is an exempt position with flexible hours to include evenings and weekends.

A detailed job description can be requested by emailing rwatson-fields@churchredeemer.org. A complete package including cover letter, diocesan application and résumé may be submitted to the above email or by regular mail (no faxes) to Regina W. Fields, Director of Parish Administration, Church of the Redeemer, 8275 Meadowbridge Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23116, by Thursday, April 30.

and faculty! Tickets include delicious heavy hors d'oeuvres, full bar and dancing. Enjoy a live and silent auction and a festive wine pull. Valet parking is available, and parking is plentiful onsite. Leave your mark with an ad in our Commemorative Centennial Booklet. Congratulate the school, honor a teacher or memorialize a family member or classmate by purchasing an ad in our booklet. You can do all of these things online at: <http://bit.ly/SBCSGALA> or visit us at SaintBenedictSchool.org. Tickets on sale only until Wednesday, April 1; ads until Wednesday, April 8. Questions? Call 804-254-8850 or email Centennial@SaintBenedictSchool.org.

Father Nicholas Habets Assembly 1505, the patriotic degree of the Knights of Columbus in Virginia Beach, is hosting the 2020 USO Warrior Classic Golf Tournament at the Sewells Point Golf Course on Thursday, May 14. The tournament is open to the public. All net proceeds from this tournament will be donated directly to the USO-HRCV to support local programs. For more information visit <https://birdeasepro.com/2020usowarriorclassic>.

Former Fordham president dies

NEW YORK (CNS) — Jesuit Father Joseph A. O'Hare, Fordham University's longest serving president under whose tenure enrollment climbed, student academic achievement advanced and the institution conducted its first comprehensive fundraising campaign, died March 29 at age 89.

A native of the Bronx, Father O'Hare also was editor-in-chief of America magazine from 1975 to 1984 and won several Catholic Press Association awards as a columnist. Father O'Hare became Fordham's 31st president in 1984 and held the position for 19 years until retiring in 2003.

Jesuit Father Joseph M. McShane, who succeeded Father O'Hare as university president, wrote on the university website, "He placed all of his considerable intellect, integrity and vision in service of the university, and in doing so transformed Fordham into a powerhouse of Jesuit education. We will miss his wisdom, steady counsel and warm wit."

SHORTTAKES

Call first

Because of the restrictions that have been placed on public gatherings, i.e., no more than 10 people, we suggest that you call and/or email the parish, school or organization hosting an event before making plans to attend something listed in ShorTakes.

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 19, 3-4 p.m., St. Joan of Arc, Yorktown. Observance includes eucharistic adoration, reflection on Divine Mercy by Father Mike Joly, chanting of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, readings from Scripture and St. Faustina's Divine Mercy, and Benediction. Light refreshments to follow.

Saint Benedict Catholic School will celebrate its 100th anniversary, at The Commonwealth Club, Richmond, Saturday, April 25, 6-10 p.m. Calling all alumni, students, parents and faculty! Join us for a wonderful celebration 100 years in the making with fellow classmates

There's more!

You'll find additional Catholic news and information at www.catholicvirginian.org.



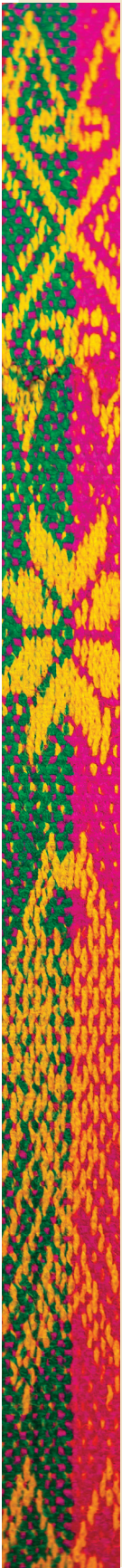
At CCC we are committed to providing our most vulnerable neighbors with food, shelter, and other vital resources. Your support is critical as we continue responding to the crisis.



SPEAK UP FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL WHO ARE DESTITUTE. SPEAK UP AND JUDGE FAIRLY; DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR AND NEEDY. PROVERBS 31:8-9

Visit our website to make a donation that will change a life, www.cccofva.org/donate.





Migrant Ministry: Accompanying the most vulnerable

Five (arch)dioceses of Episcopal Region IV (Wilmington, Delaware; Baltimore, Maryland; Richmond, Virginia; Arlington, Virginia; and Washington, D.C.) gathered at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Landover Hills, Maryland, a few weeks ago to receive an introductory training in migrant ministry by the Pastoral Ministry Institute (Archdiocese of Chicago). There were more than 100 volunteer parish leaders in attendance representing the different (arch)dioceses of the region.

We began the day with the Mass presided by Bishop Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop from the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. He was accompanied by other priests from the same archdiocese and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The Pastoral Ministry Institute team then gave a presentation that brought into focus the meaning and importance of this ministry as well as how it is being carried out in the different (arch)dioceses around the country.

Thanks to the Office of the Propagation of the Faith and the Annual Diocesan Appeal, our diocese has the financial resources to help parish groups that have taken very seriously the accompaniment and welcome of our migrant brothers and sisters. We are currently focusing on advocacy and leadership formation for those who work with migrant farm workers. We have also begun working on preparing a group of volunteers from different parishes to visit and help with the liturgy at two ICE detention centers where many of our brothers and sisters are waiting on whether they will be deported or remain in the country.

In order to give better service and accompaniment to the volunteer leaders that are involved in these ministries, our diocese has a program of formation and certification that takes the leader on a journey through the social doctrine of the Church, helping them to be inspired and be an active part of a Church that goes out, embracing those who are the most vulnerable of our society today.

We invite you to join us on this mission and go to the peripheries where we are called to be missionary disciples of the Word. Will you join us?

Pastoral Migratoria: acompañar a los más vulnerables

Nuestra diócesis junto con otras archi/diócesis de la región episcopal IV (Wilmington, Delaware; Baltimore, Maryland; Richmond, Virginia; Arlington, Virginia; Washington, DC.) se reunieron hace unas semanas para recibir información e introducción sobre la pastoral migratoria siguiendo el modelo que el instituto de pastoral migratoria de la arquidiócesis de Chicago presenta. Hubo una participación de más de 100 líderes parroquiales voluntarios representando las diferentes archi/diócesis de la región.

Iniciamos este momento formativo con la misa presidida por Mons. Dorsonville, obispo auxiliar de la arquidiócesis de Washington, DC. al que le acompañó otros tres sacerdotes de la misma arquidiócesis y de la de Baltimore. Después se impartió la presentación realizada por el equipo del Instituto de la Pastoral Migratoria de la arquidiócesis de Chicago. Durante esta presentación el grupo de voluntarios que representaba a nuestra diócesis se dio cuenta del significado e importancia de este ministerio y como se esta llevando a cabo ya en nuestra diócesis.

Gracias a la colaboración de Propagación en la Fe y de la Campaña diocesana, nuestra diócesis cuenta con recursos financieros y grupos parroquiales que han tomado muy en serio el acompañamiento y acogida de nuestros hermanos/as migrantes presentes en nuestra diócesis. Actualmente, nuestra diócesis se ha enfocado en abogacía, formación de líderes para trabajar con los campesinos migrantes que temporalmente visita nuestra diócesis en tiempo de siembra y cosechas, y últimamente hemos estado trabajando en la preparación de un grupo de voluntarios de diferentes parroquias para visitar y animar la liturgia en los centros de detención donde muchos hermanos/as nuestras esperan la decisión de las cortes jurídicas para poder seguir en este país o ser deportados/as a sus países de orígenes. En el territorio que abarca nuestra diócesis existen dos centros de detención y son en ellos donde realizamos esta pastoral de acompañamiento.

Para dar un mejor acompañamiento y servicio pastoral nuestra diócesis cuenta con un programa de formación y certificación para seguir formando a nuestros líderes parroquiales voluntarios en adquirir un conocimiento más profundo sobre la doctrina social de la Iglesia y tomar conciencia de ser una Iglesia en salida con un espíritu misionero que extiende sus brazos a los más vulnerables de nuestra sociedad hoy.

Te invitamos a que te unas en este nuestro esfuerzo para crecer misioneramente como Iglesia en salida e ir a la periferia de nuestras parroquias y diócesis para ser discípulos misioneros de la Buena Nueva. ¿Te unes a nosotros?

Intercultural convocation for volunteer parish leaders

The weekend of March 7, the Office of Ethnic Ministries held a convocation for intercultural parish leaders. We began the day with the Holy Mass presided by Bishop Knestout. This celebration was held in various languages, incarnating the Word in the different cultures represented in the assembly.

This convocation offers a space for our different parish leaders to meet and receive integral formation that will help them strengthen their ministries and their knowledge of Church doctrine. This year, we examined, reviewed and reflected upon the most recent documents written by His Holiness Pope Francis on ecology, which served to help and inspire leaders to take a more holistic approach when it comes to us as Creation along with the rest of creation.

We encouraged and continue to encourage all our parish leaders to stay up to date with their formation so that they can provide the best pastoral care possible in response to the current needs of those they serve.

Convocación intercultural para líderes parroquiales voluntarios

El fin de semana del 7 de marzo, la Oficina de Ministerios Étnicos realizó una convocación para líderes parroquiales interculturales. Comenzamos el día con la Santa Misa presidida por el Obispo Knestout. Esta celebración se llevó a cabo en varios idiomas, encarnando la Palabra en las diferentes culturas representadas en la asamblea.

Esta convocación ofreció un espacio de encuentro entre los diferentes líderes parroquiales y propiciando una formación holística para reforzar sus ministerios y sus conocimientos sobre la doctrina de la Iglesia. Este año nos acercamos a los documentos más recientes escritos por su Santidad el Papa Francisco sobre la ecología, el cual nos motiva a realizar una pastoral ecológica integral como parte de un todo que somos.

Desde aquí animamos a todos los líderes parroquiales a que sigan formándose y actualizándose en la doctrina más reciente que la Iglesia nos enseña para proveer una formación actual y una pastoral holística que responda a las necesidades de hoy.



Parishes

Continued from Page 3

of room to keep their distance — as long as their number is less than 10.

There is only one caveat, Father Jazmin said. Those waiting for reconciliation are asked to wait outside the sanctuary.

“To protect the sanctity of the sacrament. People have to speak a little more loudly, since they are sitting so far away,” he explained with a laugh.

Adjusting to social distancing rules initiated by COVID-19 has been a challenge for Church members.

“It goes against human nature,” Father Jazmin said. “People are social creatures. They like to talk.”

It’s also human nature to adapt, he said, a skill that’s been necessary for parishes across Hampton Roads.

‘It hurts not to be able to do more’

Brenda Orie, the retired director of social ministries at St. Vincent de Paul, Newport News who still comes into the office a few times a week, said that her office was once a bustling center of activity.

Located just inside the door of the large old house on 33rd Street in downtown Newport News — the home of Backdoor Ministry, the parish’s social outreach center — Orie’s office had been a welcoming place where volunteers would pop in with a question and where clients stopped to ask for bus fare or toothpaste or simply to talk.

Now, Orie said, her office has grown far quieter. “I hate that we can’t do all that we used to do,” she said. “People used to come right on in. When you have worked somewhere for 20 years, you grow close to the people that you work with.”

The gates leading to the ministry’s courtyard, where people once gathered outside the kitchen door waiting for lunch to be served, have been closed, she said, in order to discourage large gatherings. Volunteers now hand bagged lunches over the fence.

Orie pointed out that one difficulty the ministry has faced over the past few weeks is that many of its volunteers are elderly, and some have needed to stop working at the center. Also, with Masses canceled, parishioners who once might have brought donations with them on Sundays are staying home, resulting in fewer donations to the ministry.

“It hurts to not be able to do more,” she said. “Because the need will go on. But for now, we will do all that we can.”

New way of serving

The food pantry at Prince of Peace, Chesapeake, has faced similar challenges, said pantry coordinator Nick Vacca. Volunteers used to set up tables along a hall in the church and then invited clients to pick up items they needed — a set-up that, under the new guidelines, is no longer possible.

“We wanted to keep the pantry running, so I asked the Lord, ‘OK, you’re the boss, what’s a good way we can do this?’” Vacca said.

The solution? A drive-up food pantry.

Every Wednesday morning, pantry volunteers and Father Patricio Alcantara, parochial vicar at Prince of Peace, don gloves, pack paper bags full of groceries and bring them into the church’s parking lot.

“Clients come up and pop the trunk, we load the groceries and they are on their way,” he said.

Like Orie, Vacca said donations are down since there are no Masses to which to bring them.

“So, we started a drop-off service as well,” he said. “Monday between 10 and 11 and Wednesday between 10 and 12, people can drive by and donate, without ever leaving their cars.”



Food pantry volunteers John Williams and Father Alcantara, parochial vicar at Prince of Peace, Chesapeake, load groceries into a client’s trunk. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)

Connected by technology

Cindy Nettleton, secretary at Christ the King, Norfolk, said that her parish had turned toward technology to help keep everyone connected.

“We are a small parish, but we are lucky to have some tech-savvy people,” she said.

Father Matthias Lusembo has been livestreaming Sunday Mass on the church’s Facebook page with the help of a parishioner who works in the communications industry, and Deacon Michael Brown has been leading a “virtual Stations of the Cross” on Friday evenings by telephone.

Father Esteban de Leon, pastor at Star of the Sea, Virginia Beach, said he has also turned to technology to bring a bit of the familiar into his parishioners’ disrupted lives. The parish livestreamed Masses on its Facebook page and through its YouTube channel.

“On Tuesdays, I led the students at the school in the Stations of the Cross,” he said. “So, we livestreamed that as well so the children could watch with their parents at home.”

Father de Leon said he also has delivered a message to the parish via YouTube.

“It’s a little more personal than emails,” he said, although he allowed that speaking alone to a camera does take some getting used to.

“It’s just me in my office,” he said, laughing.

Celebrating differently

The social distancing guidelines have wrought some of their greatest changes to those rites of passage that are central to life. A wedding planned at Star of the Sea in April, Father de Leon said, will be simple.

“There won’t be any music. And with the bride and groom, and then me and the coordinator, there can be only six guests,” he said.

A funeral scheduled at St. Jerome, Newport News, will also be attended by only a small party, said Margaret Curtis, director of religious education at the parish.

“It’s a bit tricky as he comes from a large family,” she said. “Everyone is aware, of course, of what’s happening and is taking it in stride.”

Curtis said that her parish has turned to technology to keep connected, but, like Father Jazmin, she acknowledged that screen time isn’t quite the

same as gathering as a community or meeting face-to-face.

“It’s definitely quieter. We’re going through a desert. But then, it is Lent. It’s meant to be a reflective season,” she said. “God is there, through all of this, always.”

Father Alcantara echoed Curtis’ sentiments.

“The Lenten season is all about toning down,” he said. “And that is what we are learning now. How to tone everything down, how to have more time to reflect. This is a time to pray — both because of the situation and because we have more time to commune with God.”

“Prayer, abstinence, alms giving,” Father Alcantara said, “those are the disciplines of Lent. It’s a time to reach out to your neighbors and see if they need help. There is no stopping being a Christian. This is a time to share.”

Deep concerns

The ways in which parishes have utilized social networking for spiritual enrichment, instruction and general communication with their members have added a new dimension to Church life.

“It has been encouraging to see the bishop and parishioners take so quickly to the internet to provide comfort and pray for so many people,” said Msgr. William Carr, pastor of St. Bridget, Richmond.

“Parishioners are afraid of what’s out there,” he continued, “There is the virus itself, but we also worry about food and other kinds of medical care. There is deep concern for older people and there is palpable disappointment about not being able to receive the holy Eucharist.”

Staffs at multiple parishes are reaching out to the elderly, ill and homebound to meet their needs. Parishioners have volunteered to bring meals to those who cannot venture out, drive pregnant women to their doctors’ appointments and deliver groceries to the elderly.

Father Jim Arsenault, pastor of St. Elizabeth, Richmond, noted that his church has established phone trees for their various ministries to keep people up to date. The parish lacks the technological capability to livestream Mass but is posting videos of daily Mass on its Facebook page.

While weddings have been postponed, Father Arsenault has presided over one graveside burial with fewer than 10 attendees, with plans for memorial Masses at a later date.

“It is difficult not to see each other and communicate on the one-on-one basis that only a face-to-face encounter can provide,” he said, but he is comforted by how his parish community has made sure the most vulnerable have not been forgotten.

It has also been difficult for Father Walter Lewis, pastor of St. John Neumann, Powhatan, to be separated from his flock. Though he occasionally daydreamed about what it would feel like to sleep in on a Sunday after four decades of priesthood, the reality proved to be less than ideal.

“I discovered that I wasn’t prepared at all for the sense of loneliness and emptiness that seemed so prevalent,” he said, “It felt very strange not to be with my parishioners last week.”

Many parishioners in this sprawling rural area don’t have internet. The church itself didn’t have a camera to record Mass until the onslaught of coronavirus. Now that they have the proper equipment, they will be livestreaming weekly Masses.

“As a pastor, you love your people, and being with them is vitally important; in fact, it is at the center of ministry,” Father Lewis said, “Not being able to gather, not being able to give Communion, not being able to ‘keep up’ with parishioners is painful.”

“My best friend during the tough weeks so far has been Psalm 23,” Msgr. Carr said. “The Lord is with us in the turmoil and the triumph.”