



The Catholic Virginian

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Daughters of Mary Immaculate celebrate centennial



Left: Bishop Barry C. Knestout greets members of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate following the Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 31, marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of their order. Above: During the reception that followed, dancers perform a traditional Vietnamese dance. The celebration was held at the Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond. (Photos/Billy Nguyen)

Is drone warfare moral?

DENNIS SADOWSKI
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The tweet early Jan. 3 from Bishop Richard E. Stika of Knoxville, Tennessee, asked for prayers.

It wasn't an unusual request from a Church leader. Still, its significance stems from its context and its timing: a few hours after the overnight killing of Iran's top military leader, Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.

"Welcome to the new year!" Bishop Stika wrote. "Congress and the President are playing with the emotions of the people of this nation. A divisive election year. North Korea is watching all this and now the assassination of the number 2 man in Iran. Prayers for the world during this time of unrest."

Bishop Stika told Catholic News Service Jan. 6 that his tweet reflected a deep concern for uncertainty in today's world, especially as tensions rise between the U.S. and Iran.

"It just seems it could spark something and that it could be very difficult to control the aftermath," he said.

"I think about all of the individuals I have known who have been harshly affect by being in wars. The PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), lost limbs, trauma," the bishop continued. "It concerns me it could be a dangerous thing. The uncertainty of this could blossom into something that could become horrific."

Bishop Stika is not alone. Catholics working to shape public policy in favor of peace, collaboration and nonviolent

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Catholic Charities seeks foster families

'Urgent need' to place refugee children

KRISTEN L. BYRD
Special to The Catholic Virginian

They come from the Sudan, from Guatemala, from down the street. They come wearing their possessions on their bodies, or stuffed in garbage bags, or with none at all.

They come speaking Spanish or Somali or Pashto. Some come not knowing where their parents are, or if they're alive, or if they'll ever see them again.

They survived war and genocide and oppression; now they need a new home and someone new to love them.

These are the children that enter Commonwealth Catholic Charities' foster care program.

Since 1982, Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC) has provided foster care services to hundreds of children from infancy through 21

years old. Its program is one of the oldest and largest in the country. Most of the children served by CCC are Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, which means they are children who fled their native countries due to war or persecution based on their race, religion or political affiliation.

Their parents or other adult relatives have disappeared or died, and the children have traveled hundreds or thousands of miles alone, coming from all over the world. CCC currently helps place children from more than 20 countries including those from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Central and South America.

CCC located in Richmond served 70 children last year. BéBé Tran, CCC foster parent specialist, explained the horrors that some refugee children face to get here.

"Our refugee children fled from war-torn countries and during the chaos, they got separated from their parents and ended up in refugee camps. Some of them stayed in refugee camps for years before becoming eligible to come into our foster care program," she said.

Noting that the biggest difficulty for children is their "unknown future," Tran continued, "They are in constant fear for their life. Some witnessed the killing of their own parents or family members, witnessed violence, or got abused or raped during the journey."

As these children often arrive with nothing, CCC provides a backpack — "comfort cases" filled with shampoo and toothpaste, as well as coloring books and a stuffed animal, no matter the child's age, so they feel welcome

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The Catholic Virginian
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Bicentennial a time for renewing, growing in faith



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

With the liturgical celebration of the Baptism of the Lord last Sunday, our Christmas season has officially ended. But for all of us in the Diocese of Richmond, another celebration is underway — the bicentennial of the establishment of our diocese.

As I have read and learned about our diocese's history, my mind and heart were filled with profound gratitude, respect and appreciation for those who planted the seeds of our Catholic faith in Virginia and who, through countless challenging times, nurtured it and fostered its growth.

Our diocese and the parishes in which we nourish our spiritual lives are the result of hard work by clergy, men and women religious and laity who took to heart and lived the Gospel.

A noted historic leader who was known for his commitment to non-violence in effecting political change once wrote: "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history." Gandhi's words certainly apply to the history of the development of Catholic life in Virginia.

The unquenchable faith in the Catholic life and mission of Virginia's Catholics during the last 200 years has not only altered history but has also shaped it. Consider the impact our parishes, schools, hospitals, care facilities and organizations have had on our communities. Through their generosity in offering time and talent, Catholics have been witnesses of the Gospel, serving those in need, e.g., feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, caring for the infirm.

Our bicentennial, however, is more than a time for looking back; it is a new beginning for the entire Catholic community — a time for

renewing and growing in our faith, continuing to build and improve upon what we have inherited, engaging and evangelizing all whom we encounter. It is a year of opportunities for us — as missionary disciples — to respond to the words of Jesus: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15).

Our bicentennial year is filled with celebrations and events during which we can strengthen our faith and add to the historic legacy of the Church's life in the years to come.

We will have three regional Masses. The first, this Saturday, Jan. 18, 10:30 a.m., at Sacred Heart, Norfolk, (Eastern Vicariate) will mark the arrival of Bishop Patrick Kelly, our first bishop.

On Saturday, July 11, we'll celebrate the date the diocese was established with Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond (Central Vicariate). On Sunday, Sept. 27, we'll celebrate the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, patron saint of our diocese, at St. Andrew, Roanoke (Western Vicariate).

Three other important bicentennial events are our pilgrimages and the Eucharistic Congress. As we did with our pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington last October, there will be a second pilgrimage on Saturday, May 9, to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore, when we will seek the continued intercession of our Blessed Mother for help in drawing us closer to her Son. The Eucharistic Congress, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Nov. 6 and 7, will include two keynote talks, Eucharistic procession and Mass.

Throughout our year of celebration, please join me in praying our Bicentennial Prayer, individually and in your parish communities, that the inheritance of faith we have received will flourish and be a gift to future generations.

*Father of lights,
the radiance of your Son
has guided the advance of the Gospel
across the Diocese of Richmond for two centuries,
strengthening our Church
from the Eastern Shore to the Cumberland Gap.
Grant that the nearness of your Son
may dispel the darkness of our sins,
so that as our love increases more and more,
we may dare more than ever to fearlessly proclaim the word.
Holding fast to the word of life,
may we shine like stars in the world.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.*

Editor's note: For more information on the diocese's bicentennial, go to 2020@richmonddiocese.org or call 804-622-5200.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

Saturday, Jan. 25

Mass: Pastor Installation
St. Therese, Gloucester, 5 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 26

Mass and blessing of chapel
Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs,
Richmond, 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 28

Mass
Holy Comforter, Charlottesville, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 29

Invocation to House of Delegates
State Capitol, 11:30 a.m.



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

January 22, 1974, was the first anniversary of Roe v. Wade (1973), the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. Bishop Walter F. Sullivan, who at the time was the administrator of the Diocese of Richmond, called for a day of penance to mark that date.

Each year on January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday), Catholics in the United States observe the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. Voluntary penances done on this day, such as fasting, abstinence from meat, prayer and charitable works, make reparation for the harm caused by abortion and seek to promote the dignity of human life.

Bishop Sullivan's statement was published

in the January 4, 1974 issue of The Catholic Virginian. The text is as follows:

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our time has been ravaged by war, corruption in government, exploitation of the land, the systematic oppression of minorities among us, and the evil almost unique in our age, the horrible crime of abortion.

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States stripped the unborn child of the right to life guaranteed by our Constitution. Sadly, that decision accurately reflects the view of many of the people in our country. As a people of faith called by Jesus to give life, we have become accessories to that crime by our silence and our insensitivity.

Because of the guilt we share, I am proclaiming Sunday, January 20, 1974, a day of reparation for our offenses against the unborn. I call upon all of you to join me in reserving that Sunday as a day of prayer and fasting.

I ask you on that day to celebrate a spe-

cial liturgy for the forgiveness of our sins and those of our nation against the unborn, and all those affected by our sinfulness. I ask you, as I myself will do, to fast in some meaningful way: eat only one meal; refrain from alcohol and tobacco; or do some other penance. I also ask each parish to place a basket in a prominent place in the church where people may contribute to local projects supporting human life. This money may be used according to the wishes of each parish.

God, our Father, has called us to repent of our sins and turn back to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. In this Holy Year of renewal and reconciliation, let us make this day the beginning of our return to Him. Let each one of us seek new ways to defend the sanctity of life and improve the quality of life in our nation.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Walter F. Sullivan

Book highlights Sister Bernie's service in Appalachia

Stories, spiritual reflections chronicle more than 40 years of work

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

When Sister Bernadette “Bernie” Kenny, a religious in the Medical Missionaries of Mary, brought her nursing skills to Appalachian Virginia in 1978, she was startled by the long and steep distances between towns. But the Boston native soon found that driving those routes to provide health care changed her perception: they seemed shorter because they were familiar.

That image also fits her career of caring for the people in the southwest corner of the state, very few of whom are Catholic: first they were far apart, and now they are closer.

Sister Bernie has written a book about her experience titled “Better for Being with You: A Philosophy of Care,” released in December by Pacem in Terris Press.

“Every day, somebody in need comes in my path, and it is a privilege to make a difference for them,” said Sister Bernie, 81, a nurse practitioner who served in Ireland and East Africa before arriving in Virginia. “I believe God calls me in that way, in the number of people I can help.”

Pioneer in health care

“Better for Being with You,” which is Sister Bernie’s reply when people ask how she is, is a blend of autobiography, medical handbook, cultural chronicle and journal of spiritual reflection. It describes Sister Bernie’s longtime work with Remote Area Medical (RAM) services as founder of the Health Wagon, a Wise County-based non-profit organization with a mobile medical unit that, since 1980, has traveled mountain roads in all kinds of weather to provide health services to the medically underserved in southwest Virginia.

The Health Wagon, the first mobile health clinic in the nation, serves areas with poverty rates 70 to



Tauna Gulley and Sister Bernadette “Bernie” Kenny, co-authors of “Better for Being with You: A Philosophy of Care.” (Photo courtesy of Tauna Gulley)

140 percent higher than the rest of Virginia, an area where chronic unemployment, heart disease, diabetes, COPD, injuries and suicide are higher than elsewhere in the state. Struggles with substance abuse, addiction and depression are significant. Infant mortality rates have been high but are improving, through education and access to care.

The book also describes how Sister Bernie’s work has blessed her own life and how so many area people, Catholics and non-Catholics, work together to help others.

One of those colleagues is Tauna Gulley, who holds a doctorate in education and is a nurse practitioner, educator and Sister Bernie’s co-worker for more than 30 years – and a Southern Baptist minister’s wife – who co-authored the book. The two friends spoke recently to The Catholic Virginian by phone from the kitchen of the sister’s “log cabin on the side of a mountain, in a coal camp,” as Sister Bernie described it, in Clinchco.

Even though Gulley lives in Clintwood, a winding 10 miles away, she calls herself a neighbor.

“We wrote most of the book sitting right here at Sister Bernie’s kitchen table,” she said with a laugh. “We’re having a plate of potatoes and corn bread right now.”

People glad someone cared

Gulley first suggested that Sister Bernie, who was nearing retirement, write about her work and experiences as a way to guide others and offered to help her. The two began writing in September 2017.

The book has been well received by the community.

“It holds so many truths about our area, the challenges and how we can offer solutions,” Gulley said. “People are excited to be part of it and tell their stories and share what the care has meant to them, to know that someone cares about them.”

equipment. She also notes three Catholic parishes that have given exceptional support: St. Joseph, Clintwood; St. Joseph, Clifton Forge; and St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen.

Light of Christ shines through joy, service

Sister Bernie’s work has earned her many awards. In 1998 she was honored to receive Catholic Extension’s Lumen Christi (“Light of Christ”) award — a national honor which recognizes extraordinary service to the poor.

“That tells me to be the light of Christ, be the joy of Christ, be of service to people,” Sister Bernie said.

“Very often I hear people call upon Jesus to give them strength, and that strengthens my own faith,” she said. “But it doesn’t matter which church people attend, or if they go at all. We all have the same God.”

With recent health challenges of her own, she has retired from the Health Wagon but still works part-time to maintain her nurse practitioner’s license. Several days a week she is at Appalachian Family Care, a low-cost health clinic at the Food City grocery store in nearby Vansant, run by a nurse, Frannie Minton, and her family, who are also Catholic.

Sister Bernie and the clinic staff treat minor injuries and illnesses, prescribe and refill medications, provide exams, check blood pressure and blood sugar, administer flu shots and advice, refer people to other resources, and more. She sometimes even walks the grocery aisles with clients to help them choose affordable and healthful food.

She sees much about which to be hopeful. A recent Medicaid expansion is helping many more people in the area, she said. A clinic in Clintwood, named after Sister Bernie, is being built this year.

“We’re working to break the cycle of fatalism,” of assuming that life will always be hard, she said. “People see their neighbors improving, and they want to learn how their lives can improve, too.”

After so many years of building friendships, growing trust, offering service and education, Sister Bernie said the area feels like home now.

Through it all, she said, God has been with her.

“There are ‘aha’ moments when I know that’s God, it’s not me,” she said. “I see supplies and medications show up in our cupboard after I was sure we didn’t have what we needed. I see people getting better after I thought they were going to die. That’s God at work.”

Another goal of writing the book is to have it read among the nursing, medical and social work communities, including students in those fields. The emphasis on respect and dignity runs throughout.

The foreword was written by author and former Big Stone Gap resident Adriana Trigiani, who writes: “Sister Bernie has served the beautiful Appalachian people with grace. This special servant of God, this humble and funny nun, is a dazzling light on the mountain.”

‘Pain doesn’t lie’

Sister Bernie’s work takes a holistic approach to care, noting how all health is connected – physical, mental, emotional, financial, spiritual – and how one problem can create other problems but how one success can create other successes. She offers reflections and emphasizes the importance of nutrition, rest, exercise and stress relief in daily life in addition to overall health.

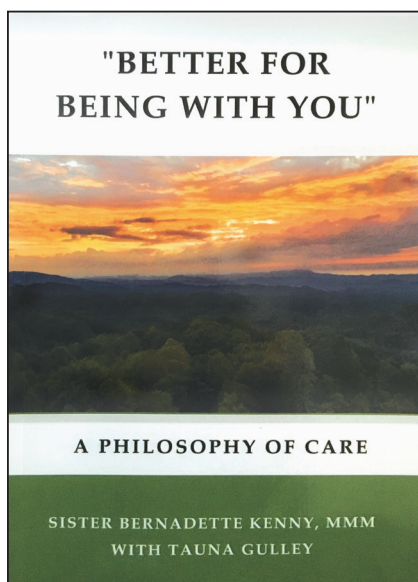
One passage in the book tells the plight of a young man who needed dental care, which he could not afford. His infected teeth hurt so much that he had trouble working at his part-time job at a fast-food restaurant. If he missed work, he would not get paid, and then he could not pay his bills or rent. His teeth affected his whole life.

A client like this does not expect perfect teeth; he just needs help removing the disease, writes a volunteer in the book: “Just so they can smile, they can eat, they can speak normally. That’s it. Most people come here because they are in pain and pain doesn’t lie.”

“That’s a typical dialogue,” Sister Bernie said, noting that dental and vision care are desperately needed.

“I have such respect for the medical community here, especially the dentists and optometrists, who are so generous,” she said.

Many have donated eyeglasses, hearing aids and other medical



\$1M campaign part of St. Benedict School centennial

Will provide funds for internal, external improvements

KRISTEN L. BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

For 100 years, St. Benedict Catholic School, Richmond, has welcomed children of all backgrounds. An urban school, parents drive from suburban neighborhoods, country farms, trailer parks and city apartments for their children to be educated here. Half of the students receive some form of tuition assistance.

Forty percent are students of color. Eighty-six percent are Catholic. One hundred percent want a quality classical education – not just a place to learn how to read, write and multiply, but a place to learn how to think, pray and live.

In celebration of its centennial, St. Benedict kicked off fundraising for its Centennial Campaign on Back to School Night last fall. The campaign's aim is to raise enough money through its Centennial Fund to drastically improve and renovate the school's aging building and grounds.

The bulk of the money will go toward a new HVAC system, with additional funds allotted to updating the outdoor campus and maintaining community spaces. The fund has a goal of reaching \$1 million and 100% participation from its school families, and it is on its way to succeed.

Support through #iGiveCatholic

The first Tuesday after Thanksgiving is widely known as Giving Tuesday, a day for people from coast to coast to give back to their communities. This past Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3, St. Benedict asked its community to donate to the Centennial Fund through an initiative called #iGiveCatholic, which encourages parishioners across the country to donate to their parishes, parochial schools and ministries. Nationally, more than \$7 million was raised.

Gretchen Ridgely, the school's director of admissions and development, said she was "absolutely humbled" by the support they received from school families.

"A whopping 98% contributed to the Centennial Fund during this time. In total, we raised nearly \$27,000 from our families with an average donation of \$144, which means a great deal in a community like ours," she said, noting the school topped the #iGiveCatholic leaderboard in Virginia.

An anonymous alumnus matched dollar-for-dollar what the rest of the community raised by Dec. 3.

In addition to seeking grants, the diocese's Catholic Community Foundation has been working with St. Benedict to reach out to alumni for help. St. Benedict has raised \$99,000.

"While we clearly have a ways to go to reach our \$1 million goal," Ridgely said, "we are very thankful to get off to such a great start and have the amazing support of our families to share with our alumni and grantmaking communities going forward. It shows what a dedicated and special community we have at St. Benedict's."

What school provides

Ridgely is passionate about this project, not just as an employee, but as a parent. She has two children who are St. Benedict students and explained why she chose this school for her career path and to educate her children.

"We drive, on average, about 30 minutes each way, passing many other schools along the way, to be here at St. Benedict. We clip coupons and give up vacations because we want our children to have this truly wholesome, faith-filled, Catholic education in this small school community," she said. "Our kids don't look the same or have the same life experiences, and that's precisely what enriches our community and elevates our children's minds



Students and faculty at St. Benedict School, Richmond, formed 100 last September to mark the celebration of the school's centennial. (Photo/ Doug Hanson)

to the beauty of God's amazing creation. Our kids grow up learning alongside one another, playing with one another and praying for each other every day as one community of God's beautiful children."

Paul Cooper, chairman of the St. Benedict School Board, has two daughters, ages 9 and 7, who are in fourth and first grades respectively. Cooper and his family love the close-knit community they have found here, and he can see the effect the school has had on his own children.

"Cameron and Cassidy are very compassionate children, and they have gained a better understanding of why it is important to always put others' interests and needs before theirs as Jesus taught us all," he said.

The school board is as diverse as the student population. Members offer their unique perspectives and work together for the good of the school and students.

As school board chairman, Cooper acts as an advisor to the school principal, Sean Cruess. The board, along with Cruess, Ridgely, director of parish finance Elizabeth Hanson, and Donnie Ross, major gifts officer with the Catholic Community Foundation, collectively decided how best to use the Centennial Fund.

'Students are legacy'

The HVAC system is estimated to cost \$700,000 and was marked as a top priority. It will replace dated window units and wall mountings and will feature centralized control and local temperature control, meaning each classroom can set its own

temperature. It is energy efficient, quiet, and will greatly increase the level of comfort within the school. Installation is slated for summer of 2020.

Outdoor improvements include moving the existing fence line to include more safe recreational space as well as create an outdoor classroom, resurfacing the large blacktop used for sports and physical education classes, redesigning the smaller playground and installing ground surface and equipment suitable for different stages of development, enhancing the school's garden, and raising a new school sign in the front of the building.

Inside, worn carpets, shelves, tables and chairs will be replaced, and a permanent display will be erected in the front lobby in honor of the centennial. Money will also be directed to the school's annual fund, which bridges the roughly 25% gap between tuition dollars received and actual operational costs.

Cruess is excited about the renovations but believes it's not what's inside the school that matters most, but who attends the school.

"The real legacy of our school is the students," he said. "Our current alumni are making a difference in the community. We have alumni in religious life, business, non-profits, athletics and the arts. Recent graduates of St. Benedict have excelled in some of the most challenging high school programs in the area and gone on to prestigious universities. Most importantly, our graduates live out their faith through service and virtue long after they leave our school building."

Editor's note: To learn more about the Centennial Fund, visit <http://www.saintbenedictschool.org/giving/>.

Diocese remains in compliance with Child Protection Charter

Stonebridge Business Partners, which conducts yearly audits for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Office of Child and Youth Protection, has confirmed that the Diocese of Richmond remains, as it has since 2004, in compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Bishop Barry C. Knestout received notice of compliance from the independent auditor in a letter dated Dec. 20, 2019.

Established in 2002 by the USCCB, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for addressing sexual abuse of minors within the context of the Catholic Church.

Each year the diocese's Office of Safe Environment submits data related to its work between July 1 and June 30. The diocese participates in an on-site audit every third year.

Since October 2004, the diocese has held 3,544 child protection training sessions, known as VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children for Adults. In the audit year, there were 318 training sessions. Approximately 60,201 individuals have participated and 175 facilitators have been trained to lead a VIRTUS training session since its introduction in 2004.

More information on the Diocese of Richmond's Office of Safe Environment is available at <https://richmonddiocese.org/child-protection-safe-environment/>.

Need

Continued from Page 1

and safe.

Refugee minors can only enter the country after gaining permission from the United Nations and the U.S. State Department – sometimes a lengthy process. Once the children arrive in Richmond, CCC takes legal custody of them within 24 hours and then places them with an approved foster family.

One of these families is the Porzios. Daniel and Lindsay Porzio have been fostering children through CCC for several years.

“We both felt a calling to become foster parents,” said Daniel. “We also liked the levels of foster care at CCC and their work with refugees. We are both in education and often talk about bringing our students home with us, and becoming foster parents helped us to do this in a different way.”

Lindsay is an elementary school principal and Daniel is a high school social studies teacher. They are currently fostering two children from Honduras — a 16-year-old boy and 20-year old girl. The couple admitted that being a foster parent is not always easy.

“There are many ups and downs, but we try to focus on the ups,” Lindsay said, adding that their foster children “fill our lives.”

The children come knowing little to no English, and they sometimes have to communicate using a translation app on their phones, especially in the beginning. Two of the children the Porzios have fostered have graduated from high school, a huge milestone and accomplishment for a refugee.

The Porzios also have two adult biological children and, just like any siblings, there is occasional bickering among all of them. However, the couple said the easiest part of fostering is having each foster child become part of the family.

Daniel and Lindsay, members of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, have relied on their faith



Foster parents Daniel and Lindsay Porzio, members of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, say, “Service above self is a huge part of our faith that we bring to being foster parents.” (Photo provided)

through the highs and lows.

“Being Catholic has helped us because we continue to know that when things get hard, God has called us to do the work and that he’s behind us,” she said. “Service above self is a huge part of our faith that we bring to being foster parents.”

CCC works to provide constant support to foster families. They visit the homes regularly, host dinners and cultural events throughout the year, provide financial assistance and 24-hour on-call emergency support, and are there to provide guidance along the way.

The process to become a foster parent takes about five months of training, assessment and approval. One must be at least 25 years old, financially and emotionally stable, provide references and pass a criminal background check.

According to information provided by CCC,

foster parents can be single or married and from any cultural background. They must understand what they are undertaking and have the time and temperament to welcome a child into their home.

Because many foster children have survived severe trauma which results in behavioral challenges, a higher degree of patience and understanding is needed on the part of the foster family.

CCC offers training to teach parents methods for coping with children who are going through trauma, separation and loss, and how to effectively discipline, embrace diversity and build relationships.

Tran said that the hardest children to place are teenagers, especially boys, and children who are Muslim, LGBTQ or have special medical needs. CCC’s Richmond office has about 30 foster families, and Tran hopes to add another dozen in 2020. There are also CCC offices in Roanoke and Norton that offer foster care, and the program is beginning to branch out to Charlottesville and the Hampton Roads area as well.

While CCC is always looking for volunteers to help with various events throughout the year, the most urgent need is finding foster families.

“Our children have been through a lot,” said Tran. “They are the most vulnerable among us. All children need a safe place to live. They need loving families so they can start the healing process.”

Editor’s note: For further information on becoming a foster family, contact BÉBÉ Tran at 804-545-5949 or bebe.tran@cccova.org.

Notice

Susan A. Travis Reese is kindly requested to contact Reverend Monsignor R. Francis Muench at 804-355-9155 regarding her marriage to Lewis W. Campbell.



Catholic Diocese of Richmond
1820 Bicentennial 2020

All are invited to join Bishop Barry C. Knestout for the

Bicentennial Regional Mass



Commemorating the arrival of our first Bishop of Richmond, Patrick Kelly,
and the opening of our Bicentennial

Saturday, January 18, 2020 at 10:30 am

**Mass in Recognition of the Catholic Presence in the Eastern Vicariate
with Reception to Follow**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
520 Graydon Ave, Norfolk, VA 23507

In addition to the Bicentennial Regional Mass in the Eastern Vicariate, the weekend of January 18/19, parishes across the Diocese will use the Mass setting “For the Particular Church” from the Roman Missal to commemorate Bishop Patrick Kelly’s arrival to Virginia and the opening of the 2020 Year. This Mass setting will also include special readings, intercessions, as well as the reciting of the Diocesan Bicentennial prayer.

2020.richmonddiocese.org

Life issues, religious liberty top VCC concerns

GUEST COMMENTARY

JEFF CARUSO
VIRGINIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

The 2020 session (Jan. 8-March 7) of the Virginia General Assembly will feature numerous hotly contested issues, many in which the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) will be deeply involved. On our agenda, defending pro-life policies, religious liberty and parental choice in education are areas of high focus. So, too, are continuing to build momentum against the death penalty, enacting just policies for immigrants and advancing measures to reduce gun violence and poverty.

The pivotal November 2019 elections significantly altered the General Assembly's composition and power structure. Before the elections, Republicans held thin majorities in the 40-member Senate and the 100-member House of Delegates. Now, Democrats control both chambers.

In some fundamental areas where we had previously made gains, this shift signals stiff challenges. Measures already filed seek to remove parental consent and ultrasound informed consent requirements before an abortion is performed, eliminate health and safety standards for abortion facilities, and even establish a "right to personal reproductive autonomy" in Virginia's constitution.

Resolutions have been introduced to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the language of which has already been used to challenge and overturn pro-life laws in other states. Legislation has also been filed seeking to deny religious employers and service providers the ability to operate consistently with their beliefs on human sexuality and marriage — creating lawsuits against faith-based providers. A bill to legalize assisted suicide, first introduced in 2019, is expected to resurface in 2020.

The VCC will take strong stands

against each of these measures and others that threaten to roll back longstanding, hard-fought policies that protect life and liberty and that enhance the lives of families and communities.

Conversely, in areas of our advocacy that have not succeeded, prospects for passage have improved. Early filed legislation seeks to help immigrants get to work, go to school, access health-care and attend church by creating a state-issued permit granting driving privileges to those who cannot obtain driver's licenses because of their immigration status. Bills have been introduced to limit and even abolish the death penalty. Several bills have been filed to expand the instances in which background checks are required for gun purchases and transfers.

We will be a key supporter of those initiatives and a number of others likely to be proposed in those areas.

Many more bills continue to be filed in key areas of VCC advocacy such as education, poverty reduction and access to health-care. We continue to monitor the introduction of bills closely to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

People often ask, "How can I make a difference?" Join the VCC network at www.vacatholic.org, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. Each of these platforms will provide action alerts throughout the session and provide you with easy and effective ways for you to contact your legislators before they vote on key bills.

Also plan to be a part of the second annual Virginia March for Life on Thursday, Feb. 13, and Virginia Vespers: Evening Prayer for the Commonwealth on Thursday, March 5. Details about both will be posted to www.vacatholic.org.

Caruso is executive director of the Virginia Catholic Conference.

Let truth bring us together in Christ

I would like to give thanks to the parishioners who called out the Pachamama and to others who have written over the years, exposing the sometimes hidden political agenda of the left which seems to be infiltrating every aspect of our society, even our Church.

The Catholic Virginian's transparent and unbiased willingness to provide information and opinion from both sides of the many issues we face has done more to reinforce my faith than most anything else I have encountered in recent years.

I am thankful to know that in the midst of a barrage of secularism, there are many in our community that still hold traditional Catholic values close and are willing to speak of them aloud.

May the truth, regardless of our personal opinions, bring us together in Christ.

— Pete Nardone
Keswick

Help meet need for affordable housing

I applaud Catholic Charities and the work it does in Richmond to help the needy and suffering. There is one area, however, where I would like to see more involvement by our diocese: development of affordable housing.

Every day, my parish receives requests for rental assistance, and as Richmond moves to develop Navy Hill and redevelop public housing,

many more of our poorest neighbors may be left behind.

The Church can help prevent future homelessness, especially by people making less than 40% of area median income, in two important ways. First, the diocese can develop some of its existing unused or under-used properties into truly affordable housing units.

Secondly, it should apply to develop additional properties available through the Richmond Land Bank. Catholic Charities is already doing similar work in other cities, such as New York and Denver.

The Gospels tell me that we in Richmond cannot continue to "step over Lazarus" as we go about our daily business. Housing is not affordable when it eats up 40-80% or more of household income. Vouchers are useless when no law requires landlords take them and a majority of them refuse to do so.

We Catholics provide charity through food pantries, hosting CARITAS, collecting gifts for low-income families, tutoring ESL and more, which is all very good. But I pray we will also become a diocese that provides people with the dignity of having decent, sustainable homes.

Certainly, the Church does not have to do all, but it has the doctrine, authority and resources to be part of the solution.

— Nancy Kunkel
Richmond

Letters

Catholics cannot vote 'pro-choice'

Re: "Church tells us how to vote, not for whom" (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 2) and "For Catholic voters, politics challenging" (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 16):

Abortion is a grave sin contrary to God's moral law, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church states excommunication is warranted for anyone who "formally cooperates with an abortion" (Nos. 2272, 2322). It further dictates the State must forbid or oppose abortion, because the intentional killing of the unborn is a serious sin and a grave offense against God (No. 2273). Furthermore, the Church confirms that abortion is, in practice, murder, and such killing is therefore a direct violation of the fifth commandment (No. 2274).

When members of a political party formally encourage abortions by publicly supporting and funding them, they are, in a sense, excommunicating themselves from the Church. Neither gun control nor immigration policies warrant this canonical penalty.

Because abortion is clearly forbidden under pain of excommunication, Catholics are morally obligated to vote against a party that believes such heinous crimes can be committed without remorse.

One cannot authentically live the faith while ignoring

the Church's authoritative and immutable teachings. When a candidate is consistent with a party platform that promotes direct violations of the moral law, such as abortion and other similar acts condemned by the Church, a Catholic cannot vote for that candidate.

This is not a matter of preference. It is the only choice a person in full communion with the Catholic Church can make.

— Seth Bauer
Chesapeake

Grateful for priest's compassion

The letter "Don't equate abortion with the death penalty" (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 30) from Dave Tezza reminds me to thank Father John David Ramsey of St. Benedict Parish, Richmond.

Tezza insists that babies who die without baptism are "excluded from the beatific vision" and "deprived of union with God forever." Father Ramsey, on the other hand, is well aware that the Church does

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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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Australian fire victims buoyed by faith

CANBERRA, Australia (CNS) — Saying that “there is no end in sight to the horror which confronts us,” Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said the bishops have implemented a national response to months of wildfires.

The bishops have set up a national network, connecting people affected by the fires with “people who can help with tasks such as preparing meals, clearing properties, rebuilding communities, as well as pastoral and counseling support.” They are collaborating with other religious agencies and their institutes and will take up a special collection the last weekend in January, when Australia Day is celebrated.

Archbishop Coleridge said people who do not want to wait to donate to their parish collections can donate to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, known in Australia as Vinnies.

The bishops’ conference also set up a special page, www.catholic.org.au/bush-fires, with a button for donation to the Vinnies, as well as resources such as prayers of intercession, prayers for those affected, and statements on the fire from other organizations.

“We have all seen the apocalyptic images, even if we are not in the areas most affected,” the archbishop said. “Lives have been lost, homes and towns have been destroyed, smoke has shrouded large swathes of our country.

“The efforts of firefighters have been heroic. The resilience of the communities affected has been extraordinary.”

At least 24 people have died in the fires, which began in August and now are in four states. CNN reported Jan. 7 that more than 2,000 homes in the state of New South Wales alone have been destroyed.

Archbishop Coleridge said the bishops were aware of “the huge amount being done” by governments and first responders and noted that local faith communities also were responding.

“This has been Australia at its best, and we all stand

with those who have been most stricken and with those who are putting their lives on the line to fight the fires,” he said.

He also renewed his call for “insistent prayer for those stricken by drought and fire, for those who have lost their lives in the fires and their families, for rain to quench the parched land and extinguish the fires, and for urgent action to care for our common home in order to prevent such calamities in the future.”

“A genuinely Catholic response to a crisis of this magnitude must draw strength from prayer, which inspires concrete and compassionate action.”

He said experts recognized that it would be a long-term process to help people and whole towns rebuild.

At the Vatican Jan. 8, during his general audience, Pope Francis also remembered those affected by the fires: “I would like to ask everyone to pray to the Lord to help the people in this difficult time, with that blaze that is burning so strong. I am close to the people of Australia.”

Those affected by the fires echoed the pope’s call for prayer.

Marie Burton, a parishioner of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, in the New South Wales Diocese of Wagga, lives on a farm in Jingellic, near the border with Victoria border. In late December and early January, Jingellic was surrounded by fire twice.

“We know so many Catholic people who are being affected. There’s a lot of suffering going on, and we’re continuing to pray,” Burton said in tears.

“Twice our home was saved. On Monday evening — and again on Tuesday.

“The fire came up over the hill but there was no stopping it. My husband was getting things out of the house, but he was told to just get out of there.

“We didn’t know for 24 hours (what happened) but luckily, it was saved.”

Burton has taken shelter with her sister’s family, the Darlows, including nephew Matthew Darlow, a member of the local brigade of the Rural Fire Service. The Darlows live at Lankeys Creek, approximately 12 miles north of Jingellic. While staying with her relatives, Burton has been cooking at a shelter to feed firefighters.

“We just need to band together, get the fires out and support those who have lost their homes and livelihoods,” said Darlow.

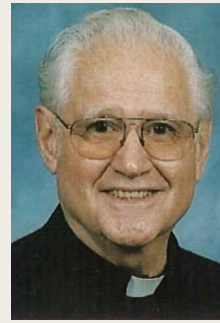
“We’re waiting on a change in wind that could affect things, and an increase in temperature, tonight or tomorrow,” said Darlow, who asked Catholics around the world to pray.

“Offer up prayers for the people who’ve lost their lives and those who’ve lost their livelihoods so that they can rebuild as quickly as possible,” he said. “And pray particularly for widespread

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IN MEMORIAM

Father Antonio “Tony” R. Malabad



A memorial Mass for Father Antonio “Tony” R. Malabad was celebrated at St Bede Catholic Church, Williamsburg, Friday, Jan 10. Father Malabad, 92, died Sunday, Dec. 29.

A native of Philadelphia, Father Malabad was educated at St. Paul Elementary School and High School in Portsmouth. After completing seminary studies at St. Mary, Baltimore, he was ordained a priest on May 9, 1953.

During his 66 years of priesthood, Father Malabad served as associate pastor at Blessed Sacrament, Alexandria (1953-1958); Cathedral of the Sacred Heart (1958-1966); St. Jude, Franklin (1966-1969); St. John the Evangelist, Waynesboro (1969-1971); St. Mary of the Presentation, Suffolk (1971-1975); St. Andrew, Roanoke (1975-1977); St. Peter, Richmond (1977-1979); and St. Patrick, Richmond (1981-1983).

He served as chaplain at the Virginia State Penitentiary (1979-1981) and as administrator of St. Mary the Mother of God, Wytheville, (1983-1984).

Father Malabad was parochial vicar at St. Bede in 1984, and in residence at the parish from 2002-2006.

He is survived by his brothers Luke (Marion) and Patrick (Barbara); and nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his brother Joaquin; his sisters Gloria, Grace and Isabella; and his parents.

IN MEMORIAM

Benedictine Father Luke Policicchio



A memorial Mass was celebrated Thursday, Jan. 9, at St. Gregory the Great, Virginia Beach, for Benedictine Father Luke Policicchio, a monk of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pa.

Father Policicchio, 78, died Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019. His funeral Mass was celebrated in the St. Vincent Archabbey Basilica on

Thursday, Jan. 2.

Ordained in 1988, the Pennsylvania native served as parochial vicar at St. Gregory the Great from 1988-1996 and again from 2003-2010.

At the archabbey, he served in the tailor shop, infirmary and general store.

He is survived by his brothers Frank (Christina) and James (Kathy) Policicchio.



Remembering the aborted

On Saturday, Dec. 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, members of St. Bede Knights of Columbus and Friends for Life Ministry placed 700 white flags in front of the church. Each flag represents 1,000 abortions as a

reminder of the 700,000 surgical abortions performed in the United States during 2018. The flags will remain in place until Friday, Jan. 24 — the day of the annual March for Life in Washington. (Photo/Ted Cors)

Morality

Continued from Page 1

alternatives to war expressed concerns that the drone strike likely will fuel an escalating tit-for-tat series of responses that would engulf the Middle East in war.

They instead called for a new round of diplomacy to resolve the differences between the two nations and protect innocent civilians, particularly religious minorities.

Among those calling for a diplomatic solution were the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, who Jan. 3 called on the U.S. government to “reject violence and militarism.”

“Our position would still be that international cooperation is the only way to be in the world. Violence begets violence,” said Jean Stokan, coordinator of nonviolence and immigration of the Sisters of Mercy’s Institute Justice Team.

“The problem with these strikes is that drone strikes are expanding war, not limiting war,” said Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of international relations at The Catholic University of America.

Drone attacks also can “lead to a very short-term mind frame, that you can try to target a particular person without taking those long-term considerations about how this is going to build a positive, sustainable peace and protect the most vulnerable people,” she said.

Johnny Zokovitch, executive director of Pax Christi USA, said drone attacks offer “no accountability, no sense of responsibility” in violation of Church teaching on war and peace. He said the killing of Soleimani as approved by President Donald Trump “further contributes to the cycle of revenge and innocent men, women and children will suffer.”

Under the Catholic Church’s long-standing just war teaching, Love explained, an act of war “has to be the right intention, made by public authority, a positive intention to build a positive peace, that the harms from the action won’t outweigh the harms that come from the action and there must be protections for civilians.”

“All of that is called into question under drone warfare,” she said.

At the same time, Love added, the immediacy of attacking a target by drones in warfare “takes away from civilians the only means of protection they have, which is running away.”

At the same time, she said, just peace is violated because using drones does not allow for the ability to involve the people most impacted in dialogue, fails to build right relationships and does not lead to sustainable peace.

Stephen Schneck, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, said he expects that violent retaliation eventually will be

carried out by “Iran and its allied groups against Americans and U.S. interests.”

“The danger is that Soleimani is, by all accounts, in essentially a Cabinet-level position in the Iranian government,” Schneck explained. “His assassination would be akin to the Iranian government ordering an assassination on a U.S. Cabinet member. What would we expect the U.S. response to be if in fact a U.S. Cabinet member was assassinated by a foreign government?”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for more than a decade has raised questions about the morality of drone warfare. In a pair of June 2018 presentations to the Interfaith Conference on Drone Warfare in Chicago, retired Bishop Richard E. Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, cited numerous reasons for concern.

Specifically, he pointed to the rapid growth in drone technology without adequate guidelines for their usage, the possibility of collateral damage, the disparity in the risk between the target and the remote operator and the possible lowering of the bar to use armed force.

He said armed drones are “changing the nature of warfare,” requiring the bishops to raise moral concerns in order to protect human life.

“We owe it to ourselves to keep asking the questions on the moral gravity involved in using drones for targeted killings. ... The use of attack drones in target killings should be inseparable from the question of whether it promotes peace and security around the world,” he said.

As for U.S. relations with Iran, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese of the Military Services, in June called on the Trump administration to seek “sustained dialogue” to resolve its differences with the Iranian government.

In a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the archbishop, then the chairman of the bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace, called for “a different approach” in order to head off war.

The committee’s new chairman, Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, cited Archbishop Broglio’s letter in a brief statement Jan. 3 after Soleimani’s killing: “We raised our concern over the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran last summer which has only grown. Just passing the 53rd World Day of Peace, the Church continues to pray for peace in our world, including a just and peaceful resolution to these growing hostilities between our two countries.”

Follow Sadowski on Twitter: @DennisSadowski

Iraqi cardinal says innocents will ‘be the fuel’ for fire

Anticipates ‘volcanic eruption’ after drone strike

DALE GAVLAK
Catholic News Service

Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako, responding to a U.S. drone attack in Baghdad that killed Iran’s top general, said “wisdom is required to avoid the ‘volcanic eruption’ we are about to face.”

Speaking during the Epiphany Mass in Baghdad Jan. 6, he said the current crisis resulted from the “upsetting escalation, as well as the emotional and impulsive decisions taken which lacked wisdom and the sense of responsibility.”

Speaking at St. Joseph Cathedral in the Iraqi capital, the cardinal addressed his words to world leaders to avoid a further escalation in violence, because, he said, “innocent people will be the fuel for such fire.”

He also invited Christians and Muslims to pray for the decision-makers to act wisely and consider the consequences of their strategies.

Two days earlier, the cardinal said “Iraqis are in a state of shock” following the killing of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and six others.

“It is unfortunate that our country turns into an arena for settling scores, rather than being a sovereign homeland, capable of protecting its land, wealth and citizens,” Cardinal Sako said.

“In the face of this sensitive and dangerous situation, we call on all the parties concerned to exercise restraint, show wisdom and act rationally, and (to) sit at the table of dialogue and understanding to spare the country the unimaginable consequences,” Cardinal Sako said.

“We raise our prayers to God Almighty in order for life to return to its normal course, and (for) Iraq and its people (to) enjoy peace, security and goodness,” he said.

Iraqis fear their country, already weary from years of war, may be dragged into a conflict between the United States and Iran.

“We prayed during the days of Christmas for peace on earth, and the timing of this revenge from America creates in us a big anxiety about what will happen,” Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Yousif Thomas Mirkis of Kirkuk, Iraq, told Catholic News Service by phone Jan. 3, after the drone strike.

“This can also divide the population. Some are against. Some are for,” Archbishop Mirkis explained, but warned that the assassination of Soleimani, known as the architect of Tehran’s proxy wars in the Middle East, could spark further sectarian divisions in Iraq between Sunni Muslims and Shiites.

Many of the recent demonstrations rocking the capital, Baghdad, and southern Iraq were against the growing influence of Iran and Solei-

mani’s al-Quds Force inside Iraq. Soleimani was widely seen as the second-most-powerful figure in Iran, behind Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader. Soleimani is believed to have been responsible for hundreds of U.S. service member deaths in Iraq. He was also Iran’s main strategist in the Syrian conflict.

“We only pray that the situation can be calm and peaceful. We are waiting to see,” Archbishop Mirkis said. “The situation in Baghdad and the South is more troubled. But Kirkuk and Kurdistan region is still calm. Until now, this is all that we can say.”

The drone attack was the lead news story in L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, Jan. 3: “The raid last night was only the latest episode in a long escalation of tensions culminating in the attack Dec. 31 of a crowd of demonstrators on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.”

Archbishop Leo Boccardi, apostolic nuncio to Iran, told the Italian news agency ANSA that the first reactions in Tehran were “incredulity, pain and anger.”

“I think tensions have reached a level never seen before, and this is worrying and further complicates the situation in the region, which truly appears to be intensely heated,” he said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad issued a security alert telling Americans to “depart Iraq immediately, via airline while possible, and failing that, to other countries via land.”

Analysts say Soleimani was a “much more powerful figure” than former al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden or Abu Bakr Baghdadi, the now-deceased leader of the so-called Islamic State.

The Soleimani killing was sparked by a series of escalating attacks between the U.S. and Iranian-backed forces. It began with the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite militia Kataeb Hezbollah’s firing of 31 rockets into a base in Kirkuk province Dec. 27. The attack killed an American contractor and wounded several U.S. and Iraqi servicemen. In response, the U.S. bombed five of the militia’s sites in Iraq and Syria. Militia supporters retaliated by setting fire to the wall and attacking the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

On Jan. 5, the Iraqi parliament approved a resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

Adel Abdul-Mahdi, Iraq’s outgoing prime minister, called for the emergency session, saying the U.S. presence there is limited to training forces to fight terrorism. He described the attack that killed Soleimani as a “violation” of conditions for the U.S. troop presence.

Contributing to this story was Doreen Abi Raad.

Co-responsible lay leaders key to parish vitality

Parish councils require 'connection to Holy Spirit'

FATHER PAT APUZZO

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Let's consider how parish pastoral councils are, or surely can be, treasures for our parishes — precisely because of the people who are our parishes. As a backdrop, recall what Jesus said before his first visit back to his old neighborhood. Then, recall how that neighborhood welcomed Jesus:

"Then Jesus told them, 'Every teacher of the Law who is schooled as a disciple in the Kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings out treasures, both new and old, from the home's storage room.' After saying this, Jesus left that place and returned to his hometown. There, the townspeople rejected him." (Mt 13:52-54,57)

The people of that town, like many others, were victims of religious charlatans — those frauds who talked like they owned both religion and God. They shamelessly claimed that, without them, the faithful were powerless to gain favor with God.

Jesus comes into that environment with a startling "new" message. He assures them that God's favor is already abundantly gifted to all God's people. While they dismiss Jesus' message, the announcement of God's free gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers quickly emerges as the heart of Jesus' mission.

Jesus' insistence that the Holy Spirit actively dwells in all God's people is the foundation of the Church's assertion that parish pastoral councils are valuable and necessary.

Jesus often refers to faith as the gift of the Holy Spirit, freely and equally active within every person of God. Jesus uses the declaration, "Your faith has saved you" (Lk 17:19), to recognize how the Spirit draws the needy close to him. A bond forms with the person, Jesus, and the one who sent Jesus. Within that communion, God heals, gives peace and brings new direction.

Lay councils provide vitality to parish

The Second Vatican Council echoes the energy of communion between the shepherd and the parishioners: "Many benefits for the Church are to be expected from the familiar relationship between the laity and their pastors" (Lumen Gen-

tium, 37).

All of our recent popes have upheld the necessity of a service partnership of pastor with parishioners in the co-responsible leadership of a pastoral council:

"Pastoral planning with the lay faithful should be a normal feature of all parishes" (Pope Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Asia," Nov. 6, 1999).

In an Aug. 10, 2012, address to the International Catholic Action Forum, Pope Benedict XVI said, "Co-responsibility requires a change in mentality, particularly regarding the role of the laity in the Church, who should not be considered 'collaborators' with the clergy, but as persons truly 'co-responsible' with them."

During visits to parishes in Rome and elsewhere, Pope Francis has regularly stated: "The laity need to be involved in their parishes. Parishes do not belong to any person or collection of persons, they belong to the parishioners. Without councils of the laity, a parish lacks vitality."

Connect with Holy Spirit

Because it might be unrealistic to expect blind trust in pastor-with-parishioner co-responsible leadership, I offer you this personal experience of risking to rely on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

During one of my pastorates, I visited a couple at their home. They had served together in youth ministry for all their marriage. Now, the wife was dying. The husband was her caregiver.

The woman told me that losing their shared ministry was worse than death itself. The man grieved that a terminal illness had shattered a spiritual bond between his wife and him.

After grasping for what to say or do, it struck me. We worked it out that the couple would be at our Masses the next weekend. I asked them to share with our parishioners what it's like, as a couple of faith, to face so much dying.

They came forward at the end of the first Mass. She was in her wheelchair, he behind her, hands on her shoulders. Sharing a mic, they poured out their hearts — and the Spirit, too. As parishioners wept openly and applauded loudly, she looked up into her husband's face and exclaimed, "Honey, listen, look ... we are ministers again!"

A lot of teaching occurred at our three Masses that day. It was a living religious instruction. The couple taught with their life story and human emotions. The parishioners were teaching with tears and applause and, by going to the commons to circle that couple, with closeness, communion and love.

I learned from this and other experiences like it that assisting one another to connect with the Holy Spirit is a demanding task, but it doesn't disappoint.

How to make it happen

If you hope to get things on course for a council in your parish or to adjust things for a better direction, here are some basic suggestions:

Start with parish-wide education. Emphasize that all parishioners are spiritually competent to assist the pastor with his duties toward the mission of the parish.

Communicate that the pastor develops plans and programs for ministry in study and consultation with the pastoral council. Explain how the pastor entrusts the mission to parish staff (paid and volunteer) so they can resource, empower and assist parishioners in implementing the mission within and in outreach from the parish.

Direct education to create excitement about the role of a pastoral council. Provide a process so parishioners can apply to serve, and assemble a group to assist the pastor to conscientiously discern a choice of council members from among the applicants.

Finally, consult and keep sharing ideas with other pastors and pastoral council members in other parishes!

For more ideas, read "Parish Councils: Pastoral and Finance" by James A. Coriden and Mark F. Fischer, Canon Law Society of America's Pastoral Resources, 2016.

Fr. Apuzzo 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. As director of communications, he organized with diocesan staff the publication of mission and action guidelines for parish ministries.

Will 'ecological sin' become part of the catechism?

Pope's plan to define, include it sparks debate

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis' announcement that the Catechism of the Catholic Church would be updated to include a definition of "ecological sin" sent Catholic Twitter into a frenzy.

Reactions ranged from praise for how seriously the Church was taking the obligation to care for creation to cynicism or even outrage over the Church's involvement in what many considered to be a highly politicized issue.

"This 'create a sin' is absurd," one person tweeted.

Another Tweet argued that "harming people is a sin but not 'harming the common home' as if the environment were a being."

If the wording of the catechism

change "is vague or broad," the tweet continued, it will do nothing "except foster politicized interpretations."

Ecological sin was discussed at length during Synod of Bishops for the Amazon in October, and several members of the synod called on the Church to deepen its theology in a way that would help people recognize such sins.

In their final document, synod members proposed that the Church define ecological sin as "an act of commission or omission against God, against one's neighbor, the community and the environment."

Nearly three weeks after the synod, Pope Francis told members of the International Association of Penal Law that there were plans to include a definition of ecological

sin in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The "Twitterverse" often reacts to news with sarcasm, and the mention of "ecological sin" was no exception. One tweeter surmised that a change in the catechism would mean considering "how many extra squares of toilet paper a Catholic can use before it becomes a sin."

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been two weeks since my last confession. I turned on the AC four nights, I used 9 pieces of single-use plastics, I forgot to compost, I gunned the engine twice, I ate imported fruit and neglected to recycle aluminum cans 6 times," another Twitter user tweeted.

Theologian Celia Deane-Drummond, director of the U.K.-based Laudato Si' Research Institute,

told Catholic News Service in late November that ecological sins "are in one sense simple to understand, but in another sense complex, since they are in between the category of natural evil and moral evil."

"Those natural disasters that happen, for example, with greater frequency due to climate change, can, at least in part, be attributed to human activity," Deane-Drummond said.

While some argue that sins against creation in general cannot be equated with sins against other human beings, Deane-Drummond said ecological sins "join together human suffering and those of other creatures," based theologically "on a doctrine of creation."

'Serious reason' needed to miss Sunday Mass



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. My wife sometimes travels on work assignments on a Sunday and is not able to attend Mass. Is she committing a sin? (Lagos, Nigeria)

A. The obligation for Catholics to attend in Mass on Sundays does admit of exceptions. This is what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "The faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor" (No. 2181).

I, and every priest I know, would view your wife's work assignments as a "serious reason." But she might feel more comfortable if she spoke to her pastor and was formally dispensed from the Sunday obligation. This does not dispense her, however, from the responsibility every Catholic has to pray and worship regularly. Is it possible that she could attend a weekday Mass, so as not to be deprived of the unique strength that comes from the Eucharist?

When the opportunity does present itself again for Sunday worship, she should go to Mass; meanwhile, she should not forget to pray. The Church's Code of Canon Law notes that when one is deprived

for a grave reason of the chance for Sunday worship, it is "strongly recommended" that a person "devote themselves to prayer for a suitable time" (Canon 1248.2).

Pope Francis has lamented the fact that some no longer set Sunday aside as a special day for worship and rest. At an audience in December 2017, he urged Catholics to go to "Sunday Mass to encounter the risen Lord, or better still, to allow ourselves to be encountered by him."

In that same talk, the pope said, "The Sunday encounter with the Lord gives us the strength to experience the present with confidence and courage, and to go forth with hope." And Sunday Mass teaches us "to entrust ourselves during the course of the week to the hands of the Father," he added.

Q. Is treatment for erectile dysfunction against Catholic teaching? (City of origin withheld)

A. Within the context of marriage, the medical use of such products as Viagra is permitted by Catholic moral teaching.

Father Tad Pacholczyk, director of education for The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, has written this: "In the case of erectile dysfunction, a normal biological process may have become impaired due to age or injury, and through the use of Viagra, this impairment can sometimes be remedied. Viagra does not aim to disrupt normal function,

but rather to restore it. Within marriage, the medical use of Viagra for such restorative functions does not generally raise moral problems."

I am assuming that your question refers to married men. If not, that would change the moral calculus. The Catholic Church has always taught that sexual intercourse "must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin and excludes one from sacramental Communion," as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 2390).

Q. Most of my family is Protestant, but I became an adult convert four years ago and was baptized and confirmed in the Catholic faith. Members of my family often ask me questions about Catholic beliefs, and usually I can answer them, but recently my mother asked me one with which I need your help.

She said, "Since Jesus is now resurrected and sits at the right hand of God the Father, why do Catholics keep him crucified on the cross in your statues, religious jewelry, pictures, etc.?" (Chillicothe, Ohio)

A. The image of the tortured body of Jesus on the cross has been used by Christians as a devotional symbol since the early centuries of Christianity. The purpose, of course, is to illustrate the immense love that Christ had for us and the sacrifices he endured to redeem us. The crucifix serves, too, to remind us that we are

called to make our own sacrifices on behalf of others.

In one of his sermons, St. Augustine (354-430) gave the underlying rationale for the use of the crucifix, writing, "The death of the Lord our God should not be a cause of shame for us; rather, it should be our greatest hope, our greatest glory. In taking upon himself the death that he found in us, he has most faithfully promised to give us life in him, such as we cannot have of ourselves."

This depiction of Christ on the cross takes its inspiration from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, where St. Paul writes, "We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23).

What you might want to say to your mother is that the Catholic Church honors her perception that Jesus now shares in glory — so much so that some Catholic churches today choose to portray the image of Christ on the cross dressed in the white robes of his resurrected glory.

Most crosses that adorn Catholic Church steeples and bell towers display only the cross, not the body of Jesus; likewise, Catholics are not adverse to using such religious symbols as the Jerusalem cross or the Celtic cross. So Christians of all denominations, though their devotional symbols may sometimes differ, clearly reverence the passion of Christ as well as his resurrection.

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

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How to let God speak to your heart



The saying that God is a God of surprises is often quoted when life takes a direction that has neither been planned nor anticipated. As I begin the 21st year of writing this column and my third year as a columnist for the Liguorian, I can attest to the truth of that statement.

Writing was never a profession I'd considered, so when I was asked to write a column for The Catholic Virginian, my immediate response was, "I can't do that. I'm not a writer."

I was working for Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia at the time, and in celebration of the 2000 Year of Jubilee, the executive director, Margie Robertson, and Charlie Mahon, editor of the diocesan newspaper, decided that penning a column on everyday spirituality would be a good way to highlight the year.

Since my graduate degree was in formative spirituality, I was deemed the likely candidate. After a bit of cajoling, I finally agreed to what I thought would be a one-year commitment. Little did I know that it would open doors for me that would set my life on a very different trajectory — a blessing that I have come to appreciate only in hindsight.

The fact is that God knows us far better than we know ourselves. When life happens, occasions or events that are sometimes perceived as a challenge can be a blessing when we trust God to guide the process.

Like many lessons learned, they are often recognized only in retrospect, but that, too, is part of God's plan. When we are mindful of our limitations, we are more apt to trust in the grace of God rather than rely solely on personal skills and ideologies.

One of my early spiritual directors cautioned that if my life was going exactly as I planned, there was a good chance I wasn't being open to the Holy Spirit. His words remind me of another pearl of wisdom, which is the adage, "Let go and let God."

Admittedly, I remind myself of this on a regular basis because it's easier said than done. Letting go is not so much about non-attachment to material possessions, but about letting go of perceived limitations, ideologies or hurts that keep us from being open and trusting the Holy Spirit.

The beginning of the new year is always a good time to take inventory of our spiritual progress. With the holidays over and the weather conducive to staying indoors, why not pour a cup of coffee, or tea if you prefer, and have a fireside chat with God. Hopefully, the following questions will offer food for reflection:

1. How has God surprised me during the past year or years?
2. What challenges did I encounter that turned out to be blessings in disguise?
3. Have I been surprised by what I was able to accomplish when I trusted God's grace?
4. Has the experience led to an increase of faith and trust in God?

5. Am I clinging to hurts or misunderstandings? If so, can I give them to God?
6. What can I do to better let go and let God direct my life?

You may wish to journal about the questions or simply take them to God in prayer. Either way, we can be certain that God will speak to us in the stillness of our heart. Only God has the power to heal and help us keep things in the right perspective.

No one knows us better than the One who created us. When life's challenges loom before me or when the path before me is not always clear, I take comfort in a prayer Thomas Merton wrote:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do I really know myself. The fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

"But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have the desire to please you in all that I am doing. I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

"Therefore, I will trust you always, though I may seem lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

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

Light of Christ continues to shine throughout diocese



The first reading today should sound very familiar. We heard it two weeks ago on the Feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, and this weekend we begin the celebration of our diocese and the light of Christ manifested to the state of Virginia through it.

Our mission statement calls for us to be a diocese of "love, life, justice and peace." It calls us to that through "Word, Worship, Community and Service." For two centuries, the Church in our diocese has been a beacon of hope in Virginia. Our worship of God in word and sacrifice has led us to service in our communities.

Although the geographic area of the diocese has changed, that mission, to bring the light of Christ to Virginia, has continued in every region. The Lord has shone upon us and his glory has appeared over the entire Commonwealth.

I've been blessed to have lived in many

parts of the diocese: Northern Virginia (when it was still part of the diocese), the New River Valley when I was in college, the Shenandoah Valley, Southwest Virginia and Richmond with my wife and family. We visit family in Roanoke and Harrisonburg often and visit Virginia Beach at least twice a year.

Before I retired, my full-time paying job took me to every area of the diocese where a correctional facility is located. I have seen the light of Christ shine brightly in the diocese and continue to see it shine from the coast to the cities to the mountains.

It shines brightly throughout the diocese in hospitals, schools, diocesan-wide programs and regional programs involving individual parishes like the migrant ministry at Star of the Sea or ecumenical ministries like MCEF (Mechanicsville Churches Emergency Functions); Friends of the Homeless in Richmond, the RAM Ministry (Roanoke Area Ministries) for the homeless in Roanoke, the Health Wagon in far Southwest Virginia, Project WITH (Outreach to Families of the Incarcerated) in Harrisonburg and many other ministries throughout the diocese.

The light of Christ shines not only within the diocese, but to people of Haiti through our twinning programs with the parishes in the Diocese of Hinche. While we don't come close

to the standard set in the early Church where Christians held everything in common and took care of each other's needs, we do share the light of Christ with others and we do tend to the needs of others.

In a diocese this vast, starting on the Eastern Shore and Virginia Beach and stretching to a point further west than Detroit, there are bound to be differences. When those differences have been overcome or embraced and celebrated, that beacon of hope has shone even brighter.

When this happens, we embrace the universality of the Church and become a greater sign of God's presence in our world. When this happens, the hungry are fed, the homeless find shelter, those with needs have them met.

We begin this bicentennial celebration just two weeks after the celebration of Jesus' manifestation to the Gentiles. Just as we celebrated the star's manifestation of the presence of a new king to the Magi, the diocese celebrates the manifestation of Jesus to the Commonwealth of Virginia through us and those who have gone before us. We also celebrate those who will come after us and continue to shine the light of Christ throughout the diocese.

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

Mass for Commemoration of Bishop Patrick Kelley's Arrival in Virginia

**Is 60:1-6;
Acts 2:42-47;
Mt 18:15-20**

Pope explains why Curia needs to be revamped

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The ongoing reform of the Roman Curia is a necessary part of the Catholic Church's fidelity to its mission to proclaim the Gospel, recognizing that very few countries today can be described as "Christian" and that new ways of evangelizing are necessary, Pope Francis said.

But attempts to meet the new challenges are threatened by "the temptation of assuming an attitude of rigidity," the pope said Dec. 21 during his traditional pre-Christmas meeting with cardinals and top officials of Vatican offices.

"Rigidity, which is born of the fear of change, ends up erecting fences and obstacles on the terrain of the common good, turning it into a minefield of incomprehension and of hatred," the pope said. "And today this temptation of rigidity has become very evident."

Pope Francis quoted from St. John Henry Newman, whom he canonized in October: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

"Obviously," the pope said, "it's not about seeking change for change's sake or about following fashions, but of having the conviction that development and growth are characteristic of earthly and human life while, from a believer's perspective, at the center of everything there is the stability of God."

"For Newman," he said, "change was conversion, that is, an interior transformation," which clearly shows that the Christian life is a pilgrimage, a process of moving closer to God.

Conversion and transformation are part of an individual's response to God's call, but also must take place within the Curia, which is called to be at the service of the Church in its efforts to share the Gospel, he said.

Merger coming

Looking specifically at the Curia reform process and the planned reorganization of Vatican offices according to the draft constitution, "Praedicate Evangelium," ("Preach the Gospel"), Pope Francis addressed the question of merging the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples with the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization and placing the office ahead of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Vatican's organizational chart.

But first he told the cardinals and top Curia officials that the

Church engages with the changing world "anchored principally on fidelity to the deposit of faith and tradition."

The Curia reform project, he said, "has never had the presumption of acting as if nothing existed before; on the contrary, it focused on valuing what good was done" and on preserving its "roots" so that it can be fruitful.

"Invoking memory does not mean grasping on to self-preservation, but recalling the life and vitality of a process in continual development," he said. "Memory is not static, it's dynamic. By its nature it implies movement."

As he has often done, Pope Francis quoted the 19th-century composer Gustav Mahler, who said, "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire."

'Christendom no longer exists'

The pope discussed the changes proposed for the doctrinal congregation and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the large Curia office that supports and oversees Church efforts in lands traditionally known as "missionary territory" — like Africa and Asia.

The two congregations, he said, were instituted "in an age when it was easier to distinguish between two fairly well-defined shores: a Christian world on one side and a world still to be evangelized on the other."

"This situation no longer exists," the pope said.

"In fact," he said, "the populations that still have not received the proclamation of the Gospel do not live only on non-Western continents, but live everywhere, especially in the large urban concentrations, which require their own specific pastoral work."

"Christendom no longer exists," he said. "Today we are not the only ones who produce culture, nor are we the first or the most listened to."

Christianity, "especially in Europe, but also in a large part of the West, is no longer an obvious premise of our common life, but rather it is often denied, derided, marginalized or ridiculed."

'New evangelization' an urgent need

Evangelization and the "new evangelization" St. John Paul II called for are urgent needs, the pope said, which is why the Curia itself must change and adapt.

Pope Francis told the Curia officials there are and will be

challenges and complications "for the simple fact that between a glorious past and a creative future on the move, we find the present in which there are people who necessarily need time to mature," and there are "juridical and institutional questions that must be resolved gradually, without magic formulas or shortcuts."

The pope also spoke about the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and why he merged into it the previously separate offices for justice and peace, charity, migrants and refugees and health care.

"In all its being and acting, the Church is called to promote the integral development of the human person in the light of the Gospel," he said.

The Church does so, he continued, by "serving the weakest and most marginalized, in particular forced migrants, who represent at this time a cry in the desert of our humanity" and are "the symbol of all those thrown away by our globalized society."

The Church, he said, "is called to testify that for God no one is a 'stranger' or 'excluded.' It is called to awaken consciences numbed by indifference to the reality of the Mediterranean Sea, which has become for many, too many, a cemetery."

"Rigidity, which is born of the fear of change, ends up erecting fences and obstacles on the terrain of the common good, turning it into a minefield of incomprehension and of hatred. And today this temptation of rigidity has become very evident."

- POPE FRANCIS



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CNN settles lawsuit with Covington Catholic student

CAROL ZIMMERMANN
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — CNN reached an undisclosed settlement Jan. 7 with Nick Sandmann, a Kentucky Catholic high school student who sued the cable news outlet for defamation over its coverage of an incident that occurred after last year's March for Life.

Sandmann, a junior last year who was at the center of the viral video controversy, sought \$275 million in damages in his lawsuit filed against CNN last March. He has also sued The Washington Post and NBC Universal. After the announcement, Sandmann tweeted: "Yes, We settled with CNN," which gained more than 82,000 likes by the next day and hundreds of comments, primarily of support.

Sandmann sued media outlets for what he claimed was biased coverage of what transpired at the Lincoln Memorial Jan. 18, 2019. That day, Sandmann, wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat, smiled just inches away from Nathan Phillips, a Native American leader, as Phillips chanted and beat a drum.

The day after that encounter, clips from a video of that encounter

went viral almost immediately, which showed students surrounding Phillips while appearing to be mocking him. The clip caused immediate outrage, particularly on social media. But by the next day, extended footage of how the situation unfolded revealed that another group had taunted the students and some responded back. Phillips said he had walked over to the students and the group as an intervention.

After the initial video went viral, Sandmann said in a statement that he had "received physical and death threats via social media, as well as hateful insults."

Sandmann's school and the Diocese of Covington initially condemned the students' behavior but then backed down as more information came forth and they called for a third-party investigation into the situation.

The conclusion of that report, released by the Covington Diocese Feb. 13, 2019, found no evidence that the students had issued "offensive or racist statements" that they had been accused of doing.

Faith

Continued from Page 7

rain across the whole country."

Catholics such as the Burtons and Darlows say their faith is strong.

"We have a very deep faith," said Burton. "I put a scapular on the door and sprinkled the house with holy water, and we have statues in our home,

including the Infant of Prague, and so I prayed — we prayed very hard, and asked other people to pray.

"All of these people are amazing people, with an amazing Catholic faith, and we know God will protect them," she said. "Every time we hear good news, we're overjoyed that these people haven't lost their homes. There is just miracle after miracle happening."



Palmyra pastor installed

Bishop Barry C. Knestout and Father David Martin Ssentamu concelebrate Mass, Sunday, Nov. 24, at Sts. Peter and Paul, Palmyra. The bishop installed Father Ssentamu as pastor of the parish during the liturgy. (Photo/Robert Allen)

Sin

Continued from Page 9

"The story of Genesis portrays the fall of humanity as a breakdown of relationships between God, each other and the natural world. Everything, as Pope Francis says dozens of times, is interconnected," she told Catholic News Service.

"It is therefore not surprising and completely in keeping with many centuries of Christian thought for ecological sins to be part and parcel of what it means to sin," she added. "That is, both direct and indirect harms to other creatures and other people that are related to our human activities."

Talking about "ecological sin" is not unprecedented, Deane-Drummond said, pointing to the Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics, a joint statement signed in 2002 by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and St. John Paul II.

The degradation of the environment and its natural resources, the statement said, is not an issue that is "simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual."

"A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead

to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine conversion in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act," the document stated.

"This idea has been around for some time," Deane-Drummond told CNS. "What Pope Francis has done is to find a way to embed it more firmly in the Church."

Deane-Drummond told CNS that, in a practical sense, providing a definition in the catechism will help Catholics be more aware of detrimental practices such as overconsuming resources, lifestyles that promote a culture of waste, indifference to the suffering of people impacted by climate change and actions that lead to the extinction of species.

"By naming this as ecological sin, it makes our actions more visible," she said. "The problem with the challenge we face is that such changes are both cumulative but also often invisible — it is hard to take moral responsibility for them as we don't visibly 'see' what is happening."

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Cristo Rey Richmond High School is accepting applications for teachers for the upcoming 2020-2021 academic year. Cristo Rey Richmond High School is a Catholic learning community that educates young people of limited economic means to become men and women of faith, purpose and service. Through a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, integrated with a relevant work study experience, students graduate ready to succeed in college and in life. For full information, go to <https://www.cristoreyrichmond.org/apps/pages/apply-to-be-a-teacher>.

SHORTTAKES

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Waynesboro, invites you to the "Sanctity of Life" presentation by Dr. John Seeds, emeritus professor Ob/Gyn at VCU, Saturday, Jan. 25, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the O'Brien Family Room. Lunch will be provided. There is no charge for this event. RSVP by Saturday, Jan. 18 to Lucy Pardee at 540-337-3490 or Diane Butler at 540-221-6160 or email dmbutler23@gmail.com.

Polish Night, Saturday, Feb. 1, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #14129, St. Mary's Parish Hall, 9505 Gayton Rd, Richmond. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Food includes Ostrowski kielbasa with sauerkraut, "gołąbki" – stuffed cabbage, pierogi, and carrot cake. Polish beer, wine and alternative beverages available. Limited seating; purchase tickets early on-line at www.stmarysrichmond.org. Tickets sold after St. Mary Masses Jan. 18 and 19. Tickets are \$25 for adults; \$10 for children 5 to 15; free for

5 and under. No ticket sales at the door! Entertainment by Michas Polish Dance Ensemble; K of C silent auction. For more information email Dave Kupstas at dkupstas2@hotmail.com.

St. Paul Catholic Church, Richmond, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2020. One highlight of the year-long celebration will be a homecoming Mass and dinner on Saturday, April 25, 2020. Former parishioners are asked to contact the church and provide their names and addresses so they can be invited to the Mass and dinner. Former parishioners can call, write or email the parish office at: 804-329-0473 or churchoffice@saintpaulscc.com or St. Paul Catholic Church, 909 Rennie Ave., Richmond, VA 23227.

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church 2019-2020 Concert Series presents the Strolling Silver Strings Valentine's Concert. Sunday, Feb. 9, 4 p.m. Free and open to the public. Reception to follow. For further information please visit www.blessed-sacrament.com.

Fr. Brian Capuano, pastor of St. Joseph, Petersburg will be leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Oct. 12 - 23. Daily Mass, daily rosary and a series of reflections throughout the trip. Deposits for the trip are due by, and the last day to register is, Monday, Jan. 20. For more information, please email Fr. Capuano: bcapuano@sjcpetersburg.com. More information can be found on the link on the homepage of the parish website: www.sjcpetersburg.com.

Letters

Continued from Page 6

not definitely teach that unbaptized babies are lost forever, and bereaved parents may have hope in the great mercy of God regarding the possible salvation of their children.

To emphasize this hope, Father Ramsey celebrated a Mass for miscarried children at St. Benedict on Nov. 7, 2019. I was there to pray for the two babies that we never got to meet. I am deeply grateful to Father Ramsey for his compassion and remembrance of those who were gone too soon.

– **Mary Jo Anger Chester**

Kwanzaa not a Catholic, Christmas tradition

What is the rationale for the inclusion of Kwanzaa in the article "... and the festivities continue" (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 30)?

The article opens with statements about "the Catholic culture" and "universal Church." A description of the Hispanic traditions of Three Kings Day followed, which was interesting and entirely appropriate.

But Kwanzaa is not a Catholic tradition. It is not Christmas tradition. Kwanzaa was created in California in the late 1960s as an alternative to Christmas. It was initially designed to pull

people away from Christmas. And The Catholic Virginian is associating Kwanzaa with Catholic cultural Christmas traditions?

There are so many Catholic cultural Christmas traditions that could have been the included in the article, e.g., Polish *Wiligi*, Italian *La befana* or the Puerto Rican *parrandas*.

The article attempts to justify linking Kwanzaa with Catholic Christmas traditions by stating "they emphasize the importance of unity in community."

By this logic, we should be seeing an article describing the rituals of the Winter Solstice by Wiccans in an upcoming issue of The Catholic Virginian. Witches have "unity in community," too. And don't forget about Festivas!

Nearly every Christmas (or "holiday") TV program emphasizes the importance of "unity in community." These programs also stress the importance of giving, family and friendship as well. But what is missing in these Christmas/holiday specials, as well as during Kwanzaa, is the real reason for the season – the birth of Jesus.

There is nothing wrong with the celebration of Kwanzaa, but to associate it with Catholic culture is ridiculous and irresponsible.

– **Jay Smigielski Virginia Beach**

Knights providing free rides to March for Life

For the 37th consecutive year, the Knights of Columbus will provide free bus transportation for people in the Richmond metropolitan area to attend the 47th annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Friday, Jan. 24. Seating on buses is limited and will be by reservation only. A registration fee may be required; however, the registration fee will be returned when you take your seat on the bus. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or approved temporary guardian with written permission.

Charter bus services are scheduled for the following locations:

East End Pregnancy Center, 4705 Nine Mile Road, Henrico. Bus arrives at 7:30 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 7:45 a.m., then proceeds to the **Altria Theater**, 6 N. Laurel Street, Richmond (near the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart), for an 8 a.m. pick-up and departs by 8:15 a.m., and then proceeds to **St. Paul Church**, Chamberlayne and Rennie avenues, Richmond, for an 8:25 a.m. pick-up and departs by 8:35 a.m. Contact Jeffrey Gargiulo, 804-836-9265 or jrgarg55@yahoo.com.

St. Gabriel Church, 8901 Winterpock Road, Chesterfield. Bus arrives at 7:45 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 8:05 a.m., then proceeds to the **Church of the Epiphany**, 11000 Smoketree Drive, Chesterfield, for an 8:25 a.m. pick-up and departs by 8:35 a.m. Contact Tom Loviza, 804-307-0086 or Loviza6@verizon.net.

St. Joseph Church, 828 Buford Road, Richmond. Bus arrives at 8 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 8:30 a.m. Contact St. Joseph Church Secretary, 804-320-4932 or office@stjosephrichmond.org.

St. John Neumann Church, 2480 Batterson Road, Powhatan. Bus arrives at 7:15 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 7:30 a.m., then proceeds to **St. Edward Church**, 2700 Dolfield Drive, Richmond, for an 8 a.m. pick-up and departs by 8:10 a.m., then proceeds to **St. Bridget Church**, 6006 Three Chopt Road, Richmond, for an 8:20 a.m. pick-up and departs by 8:30 a.m. Contact Tony Hackenberg, 804-339-0267 or tjhack@hotmail.com.

St. Mary Church, 9505 Gayton Road, Henrico. Bus arrives at 7:30 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 7:45 a.m. Contact St. Mary Church Secretary Melanie Ogo, 804-740-4044 or mogo@stmarysrichmond.org.

Columbian Center, 2324 Pump Road, Henrico. Bus arrives at 7:30 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 7:45 a.m. Contact Darius Yazdgerdi, 804-740-9633 or dmyaz@verizon.net.

Church of the Redeemer, 8275 Meadowbridge Road, Mechanicsville. Bus arrives at 7:30 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 7:45 a.m. Contact Ed Gillikin Sr., 804-737-7628 or EdGilli@msn.com.

St. Mary Church, Columbian Center and Church of the Redeemer buses will stop at the **Diocese of Richmond Pastoral Center**, 7800 Carousel Lane, Henrico (just off of Parham and Shrader roads), at 8 a.m. for additional pick-up and a brief prayer service. **Church of the Redeemer bus** will also stop at **St. Mary of the Annunciation Church**, 10306 Ladysmith Road, Ladysmith. Bus arrives at 9:20 a.m. for pick-up and departs by 9:30 a.m. Contact Pat Brim, 410-336-9100 or pbrim01@gmail.com.

Marchers must check in at the pick-up location at least 30 minutes prior to the specified departure time and must bring a lunch, soft drinks, cell phone, hat, gloves and suitable clothing for weather conditions. Buses will normally return by 6:30 p.m.

Encounter the voices of migrants and refugees in our diocese

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Directora- Oficina de los Ministerios Étnicos
Diócesis de Richmond

*"I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
(Matthew 25:35)*

This year, 2020, we will be celebrating 200 years of faith, worship and service in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. For this bicentennial, the Office of Ethnic Ministries will continue to engage in fruitful missionary work, promoting the long-standing tradition of receiving and embracing the different cultures and traditions that have been present since the inception of our diocese. In order to continue this work, we are presenting the One World Encounter in the Love of God (OneWe) initiative, which takes diversity awareness to the next level by creating intercultural experiences among communities and individuals that would normally not encounter and/or engage with each other. Our goal is to form common bonds in an atmosphere of understanding and dialogue, allowing for the construction of something new and dynamic through the Holy Spirit, contributing to the richness of our faith and allowing us to "shine like stars in the world."

To request this exhibit for your parish, please contact our office at 804-622-5241.

Encontrar las voces de los migrantes y refugiados Diócesis de Richmond

*"...porque tuve hambre, y ustedes me dieron de comer; tuve sed, y me dieron de beber; estaba de paso, y me alojaron;..."
(Mateo, 25, 35)*

Este año, 2020, estamos celebrando los 200 años de fe, culto y servicio de nuestra diócesis. Para este bicentenario, la oficina de Ministerios Étnicos continuará participando en un fructífero trabajo misionero, promoviendo la larga tradición de recibir y abrazar las diferentes culturas y tradiciones que han estado presentes desde el inicio de nuestra diócesis hasta hoy. Para continuar con este trabajo, hemos adoptado la iniciativa de "One World Encounter in the Love of God" (OneWe) que promueve la diversidad de nuestro ser Iglesia, creando experiencias interculturales entre comunidades e individuos que normalmente no se encontrarían y/o comprometerían entre sí.

Encontrar las voces de los migrantes y refugiados es un proyecto que desea crear un espacio de encuentro y acercar la vida de nuestros nuevos amigos a la nuestra. No podemos amar lo que no conocemos. Esperamos que este nuevo encuentro brille como las estrellas en

nuestras vidas como Jesús lo hizo por el mundo.

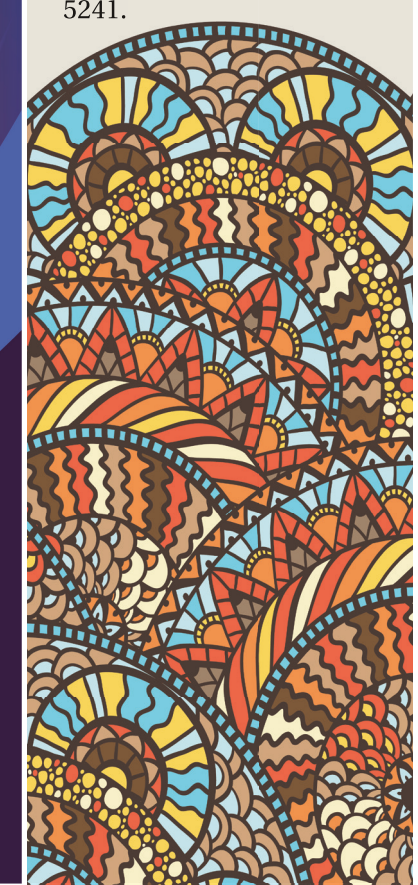
En fin, nuestro objetivo es formar lazos comunes en un ambiente de comprensión y diálogo, que permitan la construcción de algo nuevo y dinámico a través del Espíritu Santo, contribuyendo a la riqueza de nuestra fe y permitiéndonos "brillar como estrellas en el mundo," como expresa el logan de nuestra celebración bicentennial.

Puedes solicitar esta exhibición para tu parroquia, favor de llamar a nuestra oficina 804-622-5241.

ENCOUNTER THE VOICES of Migrants and Refugees
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Display Day
January 22-25
Open: 10:00AM - 3:00 PM

Pastoral Center
7800 Carousel Ln | Henrico, VA 23294



From near death to witness for God

Faith, hard work made wrestler a champion

ANDREW BUTLER
Catholic News Service

Dan Beaudrie is a man of faith who beat the odds. Actually, he didn't just beat them, he crushed them.

Both faith and wrestling were important to Beaudrie, a high school student in Cody, Wyoming. He trained his way up and ranked third in a statewide tournament his freshman year.

But in a matter of weeks, he lay in a hospital where a doctor told him that not only would he never wrestle again — he wouldn't be doing much of anything ever again. Beaudrie was in a tragic car crash on his way home from a tournament in Wyoming. He broke a rib, fractured 14 vertebrae and bones around his skull, and suffered bleeding to the brain — affecting his auditory nerve and frontal lobe. For teenagers, bleeding in the frontal lobe usually means death.

Beaudrie's condition was severe enough that his pastor from St. Anthony of Padua Church gave him last rites.

But he survived.

"A few days later when I saw him again, I told him, 'You know, Danny, God must have a very

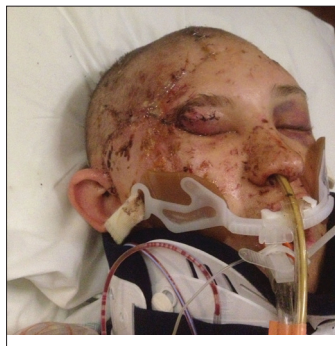
"God's given me this, and he's preserved my life, and given me all these kind people, and I want to give back to him by making use of the talents and gifts that he's given to me."

- DAN BEAUDRIE

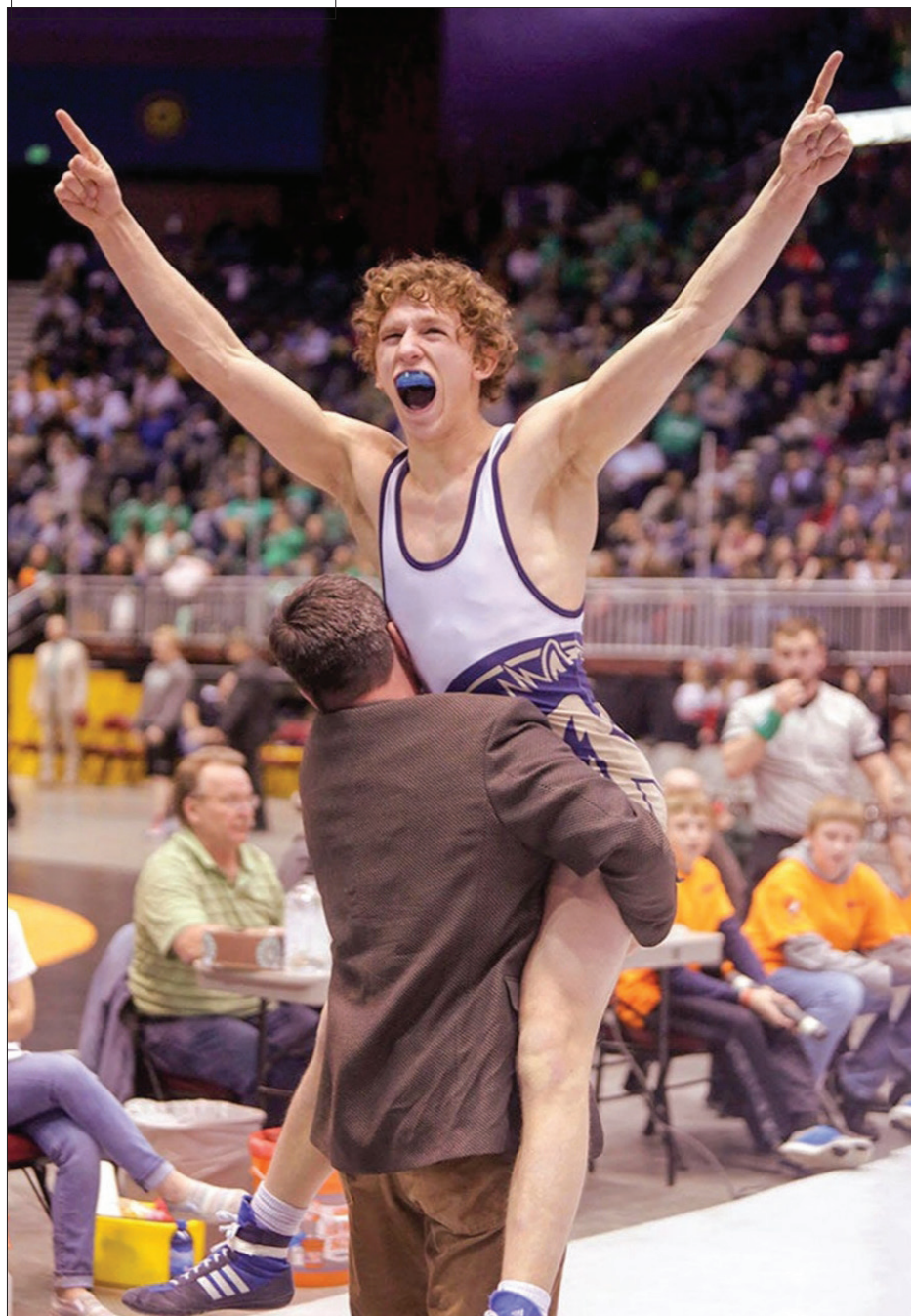
special plan for your life," Father Clark said, urging Beaudrie to ask Jesus how he should serve him.

Beaudrie was determined to do just that and to do it completely. He eased into training by running track and then swimming. At times, he pushed himself too hard and suffered some injuries along the way.

But his efforts paid off: Nearly a year after the accident, he was



Dan Beaudrie was told by doctors that he may never wrestle again after sustaining severe injuries following a near-fatal car accident in March 2015. Two years later, he became a Wyoming state champion in his weight division. Beaudrie credits his Catholic faith, his family and determination that helped him defy medical expectations. He is currently a student at Michigan State University. (CNS photos/Spirit Juice, courtesy Knights of Columbus)



cleared to wrestle again, right after the state tournament in February 2016.

Beaudrie, a junior in high school, made progress training for wrestling season but constantly ached.

Through that, he kept his eyes on the state tournament.

"I didn't stop because what else was there to do? What do you do? Do you come this far, and you just tap out?" he said.

Throughout the season, he repeatedly placed second at regional tournaments. Then a week before a qualifier for the state tournament, a doctor advised him not to compete. He had damaged a nerve in his arm, and if he damaged it again there was a good possibility his right arm

would become completely paralyzed.

He recounted the thoughts going through his mind.

"Why, Lord? I'm offering each competition, every part of my life for you," Beaudrie said. "I have been pushing because I want to show the world how strong that you are, how powerful, how good that you are through my life."

Despite this questioning, Beaudrie said his faith was the most important thing throughout his recovery process. What was simply athletic accomplishments his freshman year now had new meaning.

"God's given me this, and he's preserved my life, and given me all these kind people," Beaudrie said. "And I want to give back to him

by making use of the talents and gifts that he's given to me."

His coach approached him with a plan he called "Operation: Keep the Dream Alive." Beaudrie would train each day before the tournament, increasing the intensity each time, but if he experienced pain at any point, the coach would pull him.

The plan worked. He made it through the regional tournament and qualified for a chance at the state title, adjusting his style to avoid injury. Then, Beaudrie — the teenager who was told he would never wrestle again — won the state tournament.

"I get up, find where my family and my crowd — my home — is sitting in the stands," Beaudrie said. "I point up to them and I scream. I let it all out in that victory and triumph."

For his witness of faith and healing against all odds, Beaudrie is featured in "Everyday Heroes," a video series produced by the Knights of Columbus showcasing ordinary men acting in extraordinary ways, who are strengthened by their Catholic faith and membership in the Knights of Columbus.

Beaudrie isn't quite sure why God allowed this to happen to him, but he hopes that it serves as a witness to others.

"I hear people tell my parents about, 'Wow! This young man's life means something to me, and it has helped encourage me to be able to deal with whatever it is that is being difficult in my life.'"

Father Clark said that Beaudrie's accident was just one chapter in the unfolding of his spiritual life. He said that even as a young boy, Beaudrie always had a strong spiritual life and was active in the parish.

"He stood up for his Catholic values and he had no compunction about doing that," Father Clark said. Beaudrie is now studying electrical engineering at Michigan State University with the hope of eventually working in the field of orthotics and prosthetics. As for the accident, he thinks it is helping him prepare for whatever future God has in store for him.

"When somebody asks me to describe myself it's quite simple: I'm a Catholic, I'm a patriot. I'm a wrestler, and now I am a Knight of Columbus."

Editor's Note: A video accompanying this story can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_u28f0Es8Y. To share your story of an everyday hero with the Knights of Columbus, contact andrew.fowler@kofc.org.