



The Catholic Virginian



Serving the People of the Diocese of Richmond for 90 years

Vol. 96, No. 4

www.catholicvirginian.org

December 14, 2020

Pope proclaims year dedicated to St. Joseph

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Marking the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being declared patron of the universal Church, Pope Francis proclaimed a yearlong celebration dedicated to the foster father of Jesus.

In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, “Patris Corde” (“With a father’s heart”), the pope said Christians can discover in St. Joseph, who often goes unnoticed, “an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble.”

“St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all,” he said.

As Mary’s husband and guardian of the son of God, St. Joseph turned “his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home.”

Despite being troubled at first by Mary’s preg-

nancy, he added, St. Joseph was obedient to God’s will “regardless of the hardship involved.”

“In every situation, Joseph declared his own ‘fiat,’ like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane,” the pope said. “All this makes it clear that St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood and that, in this way, he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation.”

St. Joseph’s unconditional acceptance of Mary and his decision to protect her “good name, her dignity and her life” also serves as an example for men today, the pope added.

“Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence toward women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man,” he wrote.

Pope Francis also highlighted St. Joseph’s “creative courage,” not only in finding a stable and making it a “welcoming home for the son of God

(who came) into the world,” but also in protecting Christ from the threat posed by King Herod.

“The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today, too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider St. Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty,” the pope said.

As a carpenter who earned “an honest living to provide for his family,” Christ’s earthly guardian is also an example for both workers and those seeking employment and the right to a life of dignity for themselves and their families.

“In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which St. Joseph is an exemplary patron,” he said.

Providing warmth



Kenny Brink, left, of Knights of Columbus Council 367, and Marion Person, right, help distribute coats and other winter clothing during the council’s fifth annual “Coats for Families” event, Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Columbus Club in Norfolk. More than 150 items were given to clients served by area ministries and shelters, as well as to others. (Photo/John Person)

In need? Ask God for help

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Praying to God in times of joy and sorrow is a natural, human thing to do because it connects men and women to their father in heaven, Pope Francis said.

While oftentimes, people can look for their own solutions to their suffering and difficulties, ultimately “we should not be shocked if we feel the need to pray, we should not be ashamed,” the pope said Dec. 9 during his weekly general audience.

“Do not be ashamed to pray, ‘Lord, I need this. Lord, I am in difficulty. Help me!’” he said. Such prayers are “the cry, the cry of the heart to God who is the father.”

Christians, he added, should pray “not only in bad times, but also in happy ones, to thank God for everything that is given to us, and not to take anything for granted or as if it were owed to us: everything is grace.”

During the general audience, which was broadcasted from the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican, the pope continued his

series of talks on prayer and reflected on prayers of petition.

Prayers of petition, including the “Our Father,” were taught by Christ “so that we might place ourselves in a relationship of filial trust with God and ask him all our questions,” he said.

Although the prayer includes imploring God for “the highest gifts,” such as “the sanctification of his name among people, the advent of his lordship, the realization of his will for good in relation to the world,” it also includes requests for ordinary gifts.

In the “Our Father,” the pope said, “we also pray for the simplest gifts, for the most of everyday gifts, such as ‘daily bread’ — which also means health, home, work, everyday things; and it also means for the Eucharist, necessary for life in Christ.”

Christians, the pope continued, “also pray for the forgiveness of sins, which is a daily matter; we are always in need of forgiveness,

See Help, Page 12

The Catholic Virginian
7800 Carousell Lane
Richmond, VA 23294

Inside This Edition

Like Mary and Joseph, remember: God is *always* with us
Page 2

What Christmas will sound like
Pages 6-7

Pope did not change teaching on marriage
Page 8

LIKE MARY AND JOSEPH, REMEMBER: GOD IS *always* WITH US



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Socially and liturgically, this is going to be an unusual and challenging Christmas. For many, due to fear of spreading COVID-19, the traditions of gathering with family and friends in our homes and as families of faith in our churches will look, sound and feel different than those of Christmases past.

While our parishes are doing all they can to ensure that there is a place for everyone who wishes to celebrate Mass in person, other aspects of our Christmas celebrations, e.g., the pageants with school children and the concerts by choirs, are either virtual, taped, canceled or significantly limited in size and format.

Disruptions during this season are not new. Each of us can recall when illness or death of a loved one altered or suppressed our Christmas celebrations, when calamities and wars separated people from family and friends and muted the mood and warmth of Christmas.

While “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” was written and recorded in 1943 from the viewpoint of a GI stationed overseas during World War II, we can relate the lyrics to situations in our own lives, especially the final words: “I’ll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams.”

There was this underlying sadness about all the destruction to the familial

bonds, and yet there was a longing to come home for Christmas, to be with one another. This is really what the Nativity was.

I am certain Mary and Joseph would rather have prepared for and celebrated the birth of their son in Nazareth with the support of their families instead of having to make a treacherous, 90-mile trip to Bethlehem where they were alone and unwelcome, not even being able to have a room at an inn.

While our Christmas cards depict beautiful scenes, the images of the Nativity have been romanticized, failing to show the hardship and pain Mary and Joseph endured. The result is that the harsh reality of the first Christmas has been hidden in the background.

However, with what we have experienced this year, that difficult reality has come to the foreground because there is a parallel in our day to what Mary and Joseph were going through. We have a better understanding of what they experienced — isolation, distance from family and anxieties about the future.

As COVID continues to impact our lives — personally and communally — we can approach it one of two ways. One is to react only in fear, to let frustration and gloom dictate how we live.

Or, like Mary and Joseph, we can be courageous, rooting our lives in faith in God and move forward with hope in faith and life. We

can prayerfully reflect upon how they never wavered in their faith, how they believed, even in their most difficult moments, as we believe — God is *always* with us!

During the remainder of Advent, through the Christmas season and into 2021, let us hold fast to our faith as we confront isolation and separation, sickness, death of loved ones and concerns about the unknown.

For we know, as St. Paul did when he wrote to the Romans: “...that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his decree” (8:28). “...Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial, or distress, or persecution, or hunger...” (8:35)... (*or pandemic, or quarantine, or social distancing?*). “... Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us” (8:37).

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend
Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond

Eagle Scout restores a part of parish history

Kody Kopacki leads renovation of New Kent County cemetery

JENNIFER NEVILLE
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Before 16-year-old Kody Kopacki started his Eagle Scout project, many at his parish, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament (OLBS), West Point, didn't know that St. John of Kanti (SJK) Cemetery exists because it is tucked away in rural New Kent County. Some didn't know a church of the same name once stood beside the cemetery. Others may not have known the parish existed at all.

"It was like an unknown entity for a long time," said Linda Drexler, parish historian. "It was a story that got lost through the cracks."

Kopacki, a junior at King William High School in King William County, changed that with his Eagle Scout project — renovating the cemetery on the 1800 block of Polish Town Road. The project entailed clearing trees and brush, landscaping and other improvements on about an acre of land.

He refurbished the flagpole, gave it a new flag, installed a solar-powered light to illuminate it at night and moved the pole so it can be seen easily from the road. He made a metal cross, which he placed at the top of some concrete steps — the only remaining structure of the church that was destroyed in a fire in 1935.

His project created a 250-foot gravel path that loops from the entranceway to the steps and back. Other improvements included staining an existing sign at the entrance, installing a historical marker and adding three benches.

"It's such a quiet and peaceful place there," said parishioner Margaret Mountcastle. "You just get this special feeling when you go there. It's just a nice place really to go and sit."

Kopacki, who is active in the OLBS youth group and is an altar server, wanted his Eagle Scout project to benefit his church community. After touring the cemetery and talking to Bob Ryalls, OLBS business manager and cemetery committee member, Kopacki decided to spruce it up.

Henry Franzysen whose grandfather and great uncle were among the first families in the parish, called Kopacki's project "a very admirable endeavor to save the cemetery and also recognize the old church that was there." His wife, Natalee, praised the project for "bringing a greater awareness of this cemetery and its long history."

When Kopacki pitched his ideas to the OLBS cemetery committee in January, he thought the renovation would be completed within three to four months, but COVID-19 slowed things down. Mandates to stay at home, maintain social distancing and limit group gatherings meant the scout couldn't do fundraisers nor schedule workdays until summer's end. Nevertheless, some progress was made by adult volunteers who could work alone such as those who planted flowers and removed trees.

Kopacki organized a total of four workdays in August, September and October during which 10 to 15 volunteers, mostly Scouts, worked together for three-and-a-half hours doing yard work and making other improvements. He estimated that the entire project amounted to 390 volunteer hours.

Kopacki raised the \$3,500 for the project by appealing to the Knights of Columbus, speaking at Masses, putting information in the parish bulletin and manning a display in the church lobby. The cemetery committee also contributed.

"It feels good that a lot of people actually will be liking this, and people will be coming to see it a lot," Kopacki said of the project that was rededicated on Oct. 24.

He is the first member to do an Eagle Scout project in Troop 360, which he helped establish in seventh grade. The cemetery project further honed his leadership skills, he said, but its most significant impact was building his confidence for public speaking and calling businesses and individuals he did not know.

SJK Parish began with 10 or so Polish immigrant families who started coming to the area in 1915. The parish was established in 1917, dedicated its church in 1920 and established its cemetery in 1925, both on a roughly four-acre plot. When a lightning strike caused the church to burn down in 1935, the pastor decided not to rebuild. Instead, SJK parishioners joined OLBS a few miles away.

Almost forgotten, the SJK cemetery has a mere 20-some known graves dating from 1925 to 2018. The cemetery can accommodate another 100-150 graves, more if additional tree removal and landscaping are done, Ryalls said.

Kody Kopacki, in baseball cap, directs members of Troop 360 as they pour gravel onto the walkways as part of the renovation of the St. John of Kanti Cemetery in rural New Kent County. The renovation was Kopacki's Eagle Scout project.

Below left: Brush covers the steps — the only remaining part of St. John of Kanti Church, which was destroyed by fire in 1935. Below right: After clearing away debris, Kopacki and more than a dozen volunteers, including members of Troop 360, landscaped the area. Kopacki made the cross that is at the top of the steps. (Photos provided)

OLBS' larger St. Theresa Cemetery, located on the 2400 block of King William Ave., is used more often and is better known because it is on the same main thoroughfare as the church. The cemetery, within a mile from the church, has about 550 burials with approximately 300 gravesites still available, Ryalls said.

Mountcastle said the SJK cemetery fell into disarray until the late 1960s when her father, Z. Roger Staskiel, and her brothers, Roger and Michael, gradually cleared and maintained about an acre of the cemetery, primarily because her father wanted to be interred there. After he died in 1990, Mountcastle and her mother lugged jugs of water to the cemetery to plant and tend flowers for several summers.

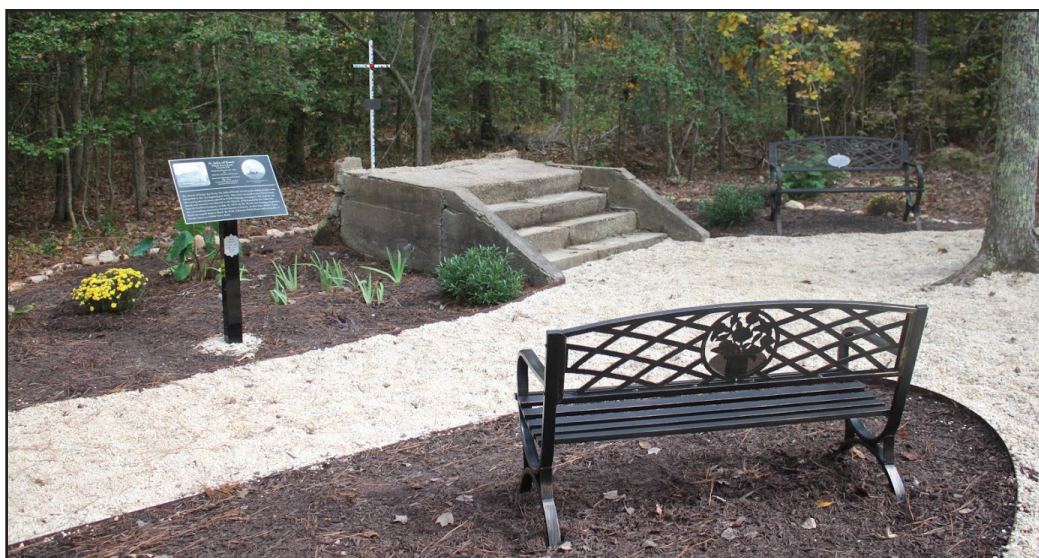
When her father and brother began clearing the graveyard, she wondered why her father would want to be buried in such a "terrible looking" location.

"You just couldn't have believed that place," she said. "It was so full of trees and brush. It was just awful."

For the next few decades, the Staskiels oversaw the cemetery's upkeep, with Roger taking the reins after his father died. He maintained it with help of his extended family, Michael said.

About two years ago, OLBS assumed the upkeep responsibilities of SJK cemetery. Kopacki's project went beyond the improvements the cemetery committee was considering, said Gary Silvia, OLBS cemetery committee chairman.

"Truthfully, he deserves an unbelievable amount of gratitude from the church and this committee for the work he's doing out there," Silvia said. "He's just done an outstanding job."





Knights of Columbus®

Fr. McGivney Beatification Celebration!

Become an Online Member for FREE.*

Now through December 31st, enter code **MCGIVNEY2020** for FREE first year membership.

*regular dues are \$30/year

Visit kofc.org/joinus use Promo Code **MCGIVNEY2020**



Second Collection



Commonwealth Catholic Charities
We  The Power of Hope Every Day

“WHEN YOU GIVE TO THIS COLLECTION YOU ARE SUPPORTING CATHOLIC CHARITIES AND THE THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO WHOM THEY MINISTER EACH DAY.”

-Bishop Knestout

Merry Christmas!



Find more inspiration for Advent and Christmas at www.catholicvirginian.org

Affordable housing planned



In a partnership with the Diocese of Richmond and St. Elizabeth Parish, Richmond, Commonwealth Catholic Charities is planning to build and operate 56 affordable housing units in Richmond’s Green Park neighborhood on land adjacent to the parish. The project, with building partners Baskervill, Timmons Group and UrbanCore Construction, has been in development for about 18 months and is expected to break ground in 2022.

#iGiveCatholic raises more than \$383K

This year, the Diocese of Richmond had 49 organizations, including Catholic schools, Catholic campus ministry programs, parishes and nonprofit organizations, participate in #iGiveCatholic for Giving Tuesday, Dec. 1. Those organizations raised a total of \$383,018 from 1,467 donors. That amount was the eighth largest raised by the 42 dioceses and archdioceses participating in the campaign.

Advanced giving was open from Nov. 16-30, and gifts were also accepted offline.

Throughout Giving Tuesday, totals were tallied on a virtual leaderboard, which provided the amount donated to each ministry and the number of donors who contributed to that amount. The leaderboard can be viewed at richmond.igivecatholic.org.

Additionally, \$5,000 in prize money from sponsors Faith Direct and FACTS was awarded to the following organizations: St. Benedict Catholic School, Richmond; James Madison University Campus Ministry; Portsmouth Catholic Regional School; Virginia Commonwealth University Campus Ministry; Roanoke Catholic School; All Saints Catholic Church, Floyd; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Richmond; St. Pius X Catholic Church, Norfolk; Catholic Campus Ministry at Hampden-Sydney College and Longwood University; and Catholic High School, Virginia Beach.

More than 1,600 organizations representing 42 archdioceses and dioceses in the United States raised over \$12.7 million through #iGiveCatholic this year.

No confession by phone

CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Even though the world is facing a pandemic that may limit many people’s ability to celebrate the sacraments, particularly those people who are in isolation, quarantining or hospitalized with COVID-19, confession by phone is still most likely invalid, said Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, head of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

In an interview Dec. 5 with the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano, the cardinal was asked whether a phone or other electronic means of communication could be used for confession.

“We can confirm the probable invalidity of the absolution

imparted through such means,” he said.

“In fact, the real presence of the penitent is lacking, and there is no real conveyance of the words of absolution; there are only electric vibrations that reproduce the human word,” he said.

The cardinal said it is up to the local bishop to decide whether he will allow “collective absolution” in cases of serious necessity, “for example, at the entryway of hospital wards where the faithful are infected and in danger of death.”

In this case, the priest would have to take the necessary health precautions and should try to

See Phone, Page 12

Become agents of change

Black Catholic History month was celebrated in November, and this year our parish, St. Elizabeth, Richmond, listened to personal testimonies of what it means to be Black and Catholic.

Each story witnessed faithfulness to the Gospel, concern for humanity, love of God and the teachings of the Church. Each personal encounter embraced the Church with a respectful acknowledgement of the experiences of being Black and Catholic. As the stories were shared, I prayed that we all become agents of change who embrace cultural values and love of humankind and stand up against racial injustices.

Through truth and reconciliation, we can begin a healing process that acknowledges our true history of race relations and stand in truth and reverence so that dignity and respect for all is a shared, teachable value and belief that becomes a lived experience in all parishes.

– **Cathy Woodson**
Richmond

What was meant by 'right now'?

Regarding the article "Action must flow from devotion to Eucharist" (Catholic Virginian, Nov. 16). There is much reported about Cardinal Gregory's preaching on Gospel-based charity and justice that elevates. "A deeper commitment to the needs of the poor, the forgotten... the least of [Christ's] sisters and brothers" is always the life of a Christian. It needs reminding.

But something in the article, or in Cardinal Gregory's address, perplexes me. This expression "the current moment" used more than once, clearly referencing "institutional racism" and "hating one's neighbor," in a very pointed way stresses "right now."

What is "right now," or the "current societal moment," referring to? What a senator a few years ago revealed when she admonished a Black minister for Senate testimony that was very different from testimony she'd heard from other church ministers who looked like him? Too far back?

Or was the racism "right now" referring to what was revealed very recently in the statement of a major candidate for political office when

he stressed to a Black journalist that you are not Black if you don't vote for him?

Or am I wrong in thinking, as some have speculated, that he was joining his voice to the chorus that has been charging another, and those around him, for several years running, with racism, crypto-fascism, misogyny, indifference to the poor and hatred and prejudice for the immigrant?

– **Franklin Debrot**
Spottswood

Church leaders must stand firm on moral principles

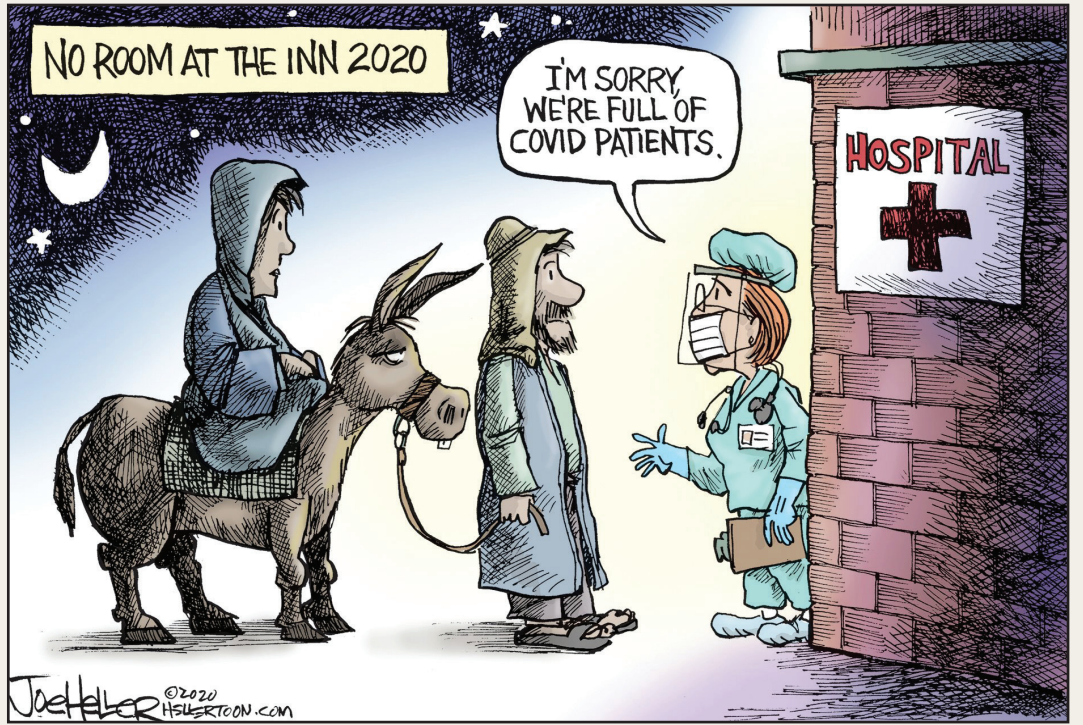
Re: "How Cardinal Gregory hopes to work with Biden" (Catholic Virginian, Nov. 30): The cardinal says he wants to have a conversational relationship with Biden and that he wishes to cooperate in areas of the social teachings of the Church while noting that there are areas where they won't agree. Cooperation? Yes. Compromise on moral imperative? No.

One major area of disagreement is Biden's support of legal abortion as opposed to the Catholic position of opposition to any abortion. In spite of this serious disagreement on abortion, which is contrary to Catholic teaching, Cardinal Gregory will not prevent Biden from receiving Communion.

He also says that "informed Catholics" know the teachings of the Church on the sacredness of human life so he does not believe they would be confused by the Church cooperating with Biden on other issues. Aside from the fact that this indicates that Biden is not an "informed Catholic," there are more serious implications.

The first being that there a double standard in the Church when dealing with the elite as opposed to the average Joe. Secondly, it shows, to those who are "uninformed Catholics" and to all non-Catholics, that members of the Catholic hierarchy are willing to compromise our moral principles, indicating that the end justifies the means.

If leaders of our Church are not willing to stand firm on very serious moral principles, what can they expect of the people in the pews? Church leaders must show the courage of their Catholic convictions. As St. Thomas More said, "I am the king's good servant, but God's first."



– **Dick Robers**
Roanoke

Disappointed in bishops' statements regarding Biden

Regarding the article, "After election, Catholic leaders pray for healing, unity" (Catholic Virginian, Nov. 16), I was deeply disappointed by the statement of Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Wilmington, Delaware, congratulating President-elect Biden and expressing his hope that voters will now heed the Gospel's call for unity.

Is Bishop Malooly suggesting that Catholics unite around Biden's stated approval of abortion on demand for all nine months of pregnancy? Or perhaps he is referring to Biden's plan to end the contraception exemption for the Little Sisters of the Poor as reported by the Catholic News Agency, July 9, 2020. Or to Biden's full-throated support of same-sex marriage? Are these causes for unity among Catholics?

Separately, a letter from Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the USCCB, offered a very similar message, calling for national unity and adding a celebratory note that Biden would become "the second president of the United States to profess the Catholic faith." Biden professes his faith in the Democratic Party, but I have heard nothing from him that indicates he witnesses to the Catholic faith.

It seems to me the duty of all Catholic bishops, and all clergy for that matter, is to shepherd the flock in the truth of Jesus Christ and the teachings of our Church.

Sadly, this seems to be severely lacking, at least on the part of these two bishops.

I believe many bishops have failed in guiding the faithful, especially preceding this election. How else does one explain that 49% of Catholics voted for pro-abortion Biden as reported by AP VoteCast?

– **Delia Laux**
Charlottesville

Appreciates priest's concern for environment

Many thanks to Father Louis R. Benoit for his letter (Catholic Virginian, Nov. 30). He deserves great credit for emphasizing the current and

most recent two popes' call for taking protection of the environment seriously, most recently in "Laudato Si'."

It is so rare and yet encouraging to hear that Father Benoit is at least one priest in this diocese — home to great natural beauty, and with a Virginia constitutional mandate to conserve and protect our atmosphere, waters, lands and other natural resources (Article XI) — address this need to be stewards of creation.

– **Gerald McCarthy**
Richmond

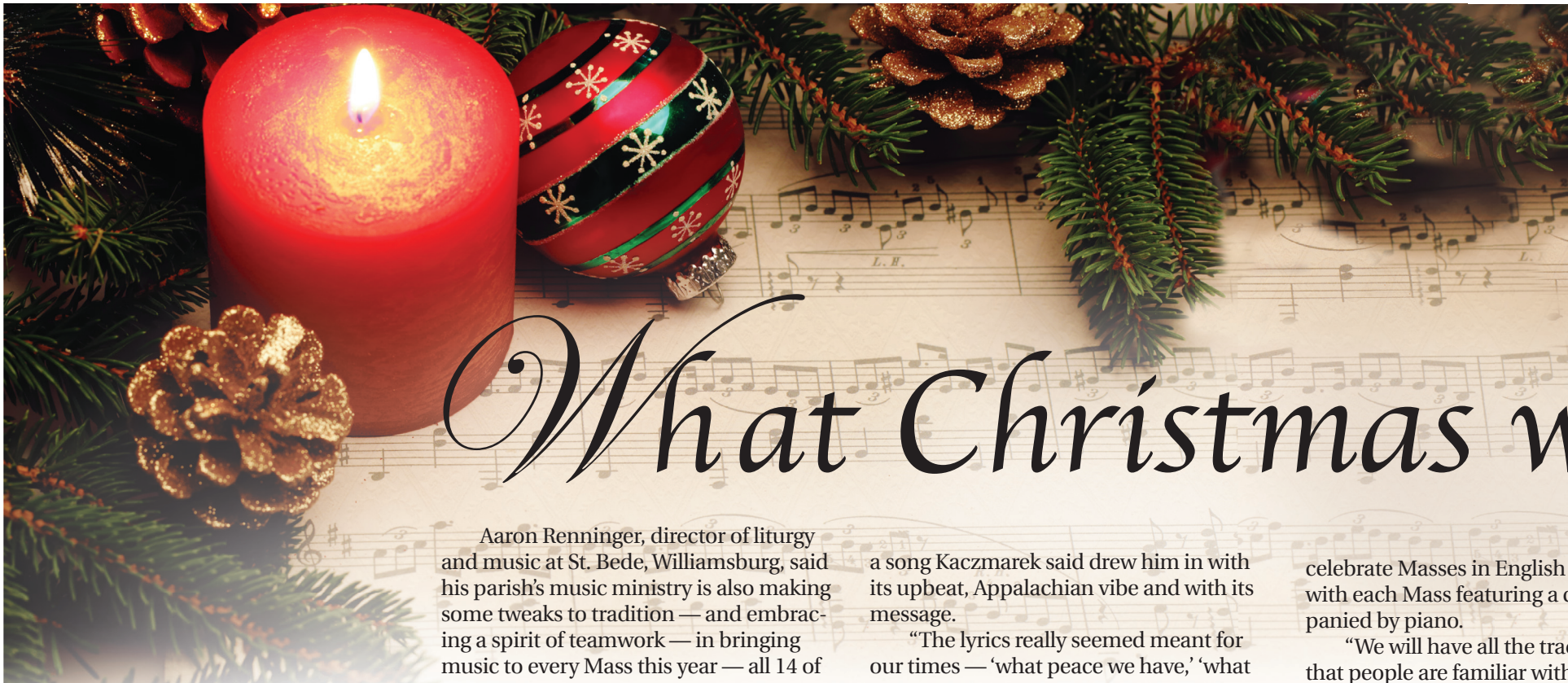
CV letters policy

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.

Mail: The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Ln., Richmond, VA 23294
Phone: (804) 359-5654 • www.catholicvirginian.org
Circulation changes to: akrebs@catholicvirginian.org

Publisher: Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Editor: Brian T. Olszewski (804) 622-5225 bolszewski@catholicvirginian.org
Creative Director: Stephen Previtera (804) 622-5229 sprevitera@catholicvirginian.org
Circulation: Ashly Krebs (804) 622-5226 akrebs@catholicvirginian.org
Eastern Correspondents: Wendy Klesch and Jennifer Neville
Western Correspondents: Karen Adams and Joseph Staniunas
Central Correspondents: Kristen L. Byrd and Rose Morrisette

Postmaster: Send address change to The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. The Catholic Virginian ISSN 0008-8404 – Published every other week on Monday by The Catholic Virginian Press, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA. Periodical postage paid at Richmond, VA and at additional mailing office. Sixty cents per copy, \$15 per year.



What Christmas w

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

During Advent, parish music ministries across the diocese are working to ensure that Christmas Eve won't be a silent night.

Preparing to celebrate the first Christmas under social distancing guidelines and COVID-19 restrictions, they are shining a new light on well-loved traditions — finding creative ways to make Christmas 2020 truly a season of joy in these darkest days of the year.

"It might not be just like it was before," said Patty Trail, pastoral care coordinator at St. Luke, Virginia Beach, "but it can still be a reverent and beautiful holiday."

Joyful and triumphant: overcoming challenges

Music has been part of the season for almost as long as the celebration of the holy day itself, with St. Hilary of Poitiers' "Jesus refulsit omnium" ("Jesus illuminates all") dating to just a few years after the first recorded celebration of Christ's Mass in 336.

"Music is a vital part of the Mass," said Steven James, music director at St. Vincent de Paul, Newport News. COVID-19 restrictions might present a few challenges to music ministers this year," he said, but "we'll always have music."

Traditionally, James said, Christmas Mass at St. Vincent de Paul has featured a full Gospel choir. "Go Tell It on the Mountain" serves as the Mass' customary entrance song and recessional, he said, but this year, he's making a few adjustments.

"We won't have the choir this year, of course," he explained. "And, as a piece, it's not as effective with a soloist."

James said he is considering drafting a new arrangement of the song, one better suited to a single cantor accompanied by the piano. He said that he also plans to include "Silent Night" and "O Come, All Ye Faithful" in this year's repertoire.

"I want to keep to songs that are familiar so that the congregation can all sing along in their minds," he said. "We aren't encouraging singing aloud this year, so we are hoping everyone will sing along in their thoughts."

Aaron Renninger, director of liturgy and music at St. Bede, Williamsburg, said his parish's music ministry is also making some tweaks to tradition — and embracing a spirit of teamwork — in bringing music to every Mass this year — all 14 of them.

To lessen the size of the crowds, St. Bede, a parish of around 3,000 families, is planning to celebrate up to 14 Masses at three different locations this Christmas: in the church's worship space, in the parish hall, and at the nearby Shine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

It's a schedule that will prove a challenge, especially in 2020. In years past, Renninger said, a Christmas Mass at St. Bede might have featured one of the parish's seven choirs, accompanied by a brass quintet and timpani, and augmented, at times, with singers and musicians.

"So a lot of my resources are out of commission this year," he said.

Renninger said his ministry will be adjusting its repertoire to suit the season's sparser, softer sound and banding together with liturgical volunteers to make each Mass something special.

"It will be a little different, but we will definitely have music at each Mass — a cantor and an accompanist," he said. "We just feel fortunate that we have the space to do this, so that we can bring everyone together."

'What hope we have'

"This Christmas is not going to be how it always was," said Tom Kaczmarek, music director at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen. "There is a real longing, in this season, for things to be as they always were. But then again, if we think about it, we realize they never really were. Things are always changing, all the time."

Kaczmarek said that, through the months of quarantine, it's been his goal to find new ways to gather the ministry's volunteers together so that they might continue to bring music to the parish. Choir practice is still on Wednesday nights, just as it always was, only now he is recording each singer and musician one person at a time.

The recordings are then mixed and edited to produce videos that can be inserted into live-streamed Masses or uploaded onto the parish's YouTube channel so that parishioners can sing along with them at home.

This summer, the ministry put together a video of "Hallelujah is Our Song,"

a song Kaczmarek said drew him in with its upbeat, Appalachian vibe and with its message.

"The lyrics really seemed meant for our times — 'what peace we have,' 'what hope we have, even in the longest night,'" he said. "Even though they were apart, when you watch the video, you can see it, the joy in everyone's faces, in connecting with people they couldn't see or hear."

For Christmas, the ministry will be bringing more parishioners together as it holds a virtual reunion of sorts, of all those who have participated in the St. Michael children's choir over the past 20 years. Each singer will be recorded performing "A Song of Peace," a song that's been a standard for the choir for the past two decades.

"It will be the children's choir, alumni edition," Kaczmarek said. "We'll have current members singing along with those currently in their early 30s. A living mosaic of people."

Christmas Masses at St. Michael will feature live music, he said — only rather than performances by the choir and an ensemble of strings, brass and percussion, they'll feature a single cantor accompanied by piano and a string section.

"Strings are in vogue right now, because they don't exhale," he said, laughing.

The challenges his ministry has faced over the past year, Kaczmarek said, are representative of our times: during quarantine, it's easy to lock yourself away, he said; it helps when people can find something to work on together, a common goal. And music, of course, is one of them.

Quiet, reflective sound

Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville, is also working to bring its parishioners together while embracing a quieter, more reflective sound this year.

At Christmas, said John Konstrain, coordinator of worship, the parish typically celebrates multiple Masses, with the parish's family choir ringing in the season at the Christmas Eve afternoon Mass, with all the well-loved carols worshipers know by heart.

"It's a beautiful tradition we have at Church of the Incarnation," he said. "Rather than children singing in a separate choir, it's made up of parents singing along together with their children."

The choir will not be performing this year, but Konstrain said that music will still, as always, be a part of the celebration.

For Christmas, the parish plans to

celebrate Masses in English with each Mass featuring a cantor accompanied by piano.

"We will have all the traditions that people are familiar with," she said. "The songs we hope will give everyone a sense of being together, even though they've been so much apart. Very festive, but much in the spirit of Christmas."

Joy to the world — all

Music is a universal language, she said, but at St. Luke, Virginia Beach, other languages also hold a special place in celebrating the liturgy.

It's long been a tradition at St. Luke to celebrate a trilingual Mass — in English and Tagalog during the Christmas season — a Mass that ends with a high note, with a rendition of "Joy to the World" sung in all three languages.

The Mass, however, requires a significant amount of teamwork and fluency in each language, "so, unfortunately, we're not holding it this year," Trail said. "I can't have that many people participating in it this year."

Instead, the parish will celebrate Christmas Masses in English, with music by a cantor and piano, and in Spanish by a cantor and guitar.

St. Luke parishioners may not have the chance to participate in the traditional Simbang Gabi series of nine Masses held in the days leading up to Christmas.

Trail said St. Luke is collaborating with area parishes to see if they can turn hosting the Masses, as they have in these days of social distancing, into an open church door for the community.

"We want to be sure we can reach everyone," Trail said. "The best thing people can do this year is to register, to let churches know they're interested so they can plan accordingly."

That way, she said, they can ensure there is room for everyone, even those who are at the inn.

Comfort and joy: keeping

Dan Keeley, music director at St. Luke, is looking for ways to bring the community together for Christmas. He is turning to technology to foster a sense of togetherness.



will sound like

and Spanish, cantor accom-
ditional songs
." Konstrain
ill bring every-
er when we've
stive, very
nas."

the world

guage, it's often
Beach, three
treasured
gy.

at the parish
s in Spanish,
the Christmas
on a definite
of "Joy to the
guages.

quires an inor-
k, with cantors
we won't be
d. "We just
together all at

be celebrating
sic provided by
panish, featur-

ight also have
the Filipino
— a devotional
n the days lead-

laborating
they might take
s it's not easy
ncing to simply
s without

can hold all
n accommo-
ctually, the
s year is to
w your plans,
y."

can make sure
his Christmas,

g connected

ctor at Our
said that in
e faith commu-
the parish staff
orge a sense of

In lieu of the traditional caroling, Keeley said, the music ministry plans to pre-record choir members, each singing separately, performing a mix of contemporary and traditional music, in order to produce a video that can be shown as a prelude to the Mass.

The parish's new youth group, OLN Youth Creates, a performing arts and communications group formed in direct response to the recent spate of COVID-19-related cancellations, will also get the chance to participate in working on the video, with a rendition of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

"We got tired of telling the kids that everything is cancelled," said youth minister Meg Griffith. "So we decided to start something new. They've been excited about it. And for us, it's been a chance to say 'yes,' instead of always having to say 'no.'"

Keeley said that an added benefit of producing the videos is that they can be shared with parishioners at home.

"It's a challenge to make Christmas feel like Christmas this year," he said. "It's a sad time for many. We are hoping that these pre-recordings will bring some joy into people's holiday."

Let nothing you dismay

At Christ the King, Abingdon, music director Melanie Coddington said her ministry has found that, amid COVID-19 restrictions, they have an unexpected advantage.

"We have a small choir, 10 or 12 at the most. So scaling back hasn't been a problem," she said.

Coddington said that her parish's choir is largely liturgical; they rarely sing by themselves, but when they do, they tend to specialize in shorter pieces and in rounds.

"We don't have a lot of voices," she said, "but by layering the voices we do have, we've managed to create some very good music."

Coddington said the secret to the group's success is the unison they have achieved in working together — collaborating on small details from how to pronounce vowel sounds to where to place each breath in a song.

It's a degree of teamwork that has come in handy these past few weeks as they have embarked on a new project together: a prerecorded Christmas concert that can be played as a prelude to the Christmas Eve Mass, which will also be

prerecorded and uploaded to the parish's private YouTube channel, and that can also be piped into the church's sound system before the in-person Mass on Christmas Day.

"We are a small parish with limited resources, so we haven't invested in a mixer and a lot expensive equipment," Coddington said. Instead, they've been using a parishioner's camera to record.

Since the air handling system in the church is fairly loud, they've been turning it off during recording sessions, and so, to stay on the safe side, they've been going into the church in groups of twos and threes, every few days, recording one song at a time, tag-teaming and doubling up on tasks.

"One of our altos is also our camera-woman," she said with a laugh.

The concert will include a series of rounds, including "Christmas Bells are Ringing," "Jubilate Deo Omnis Terra," and "Rose Tree Carol," as well as a solo of "O Holy Night."

Coddington said it's the ministry's hope that a concert by the parish's own choir and pianist will add a glimmer of familiarity and festivity to Christ the King's Christmas.

"And, just like everyone else," she said, "I can't wait to get everyone back together and singing again."

Let every heart prepare him room

Dr. James Gallatin, music director at Sacred Heart, Norfolk, said he plans to take advantage of his parish's worship space — a basilica-style building with a large hall lined by colonnades — to make sure his musicians are socially distanced.

With one cantor in the choir loft and an instrumentalist at the front of the church, he said, his musicians will be far more socially distanced than what the guidelines call for, while filling the church with the sounds of the holy day — a bit toned-down, perhaps, but still full of the light of Christmas.

"Christmas will always be Christmas," Gallatin said. "It doesn't change. We'll come in with 'O Come, All Ye Faithful,' and go out with 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing.'"

Today Christ is Born. A proclamation that's true whether it's sung by a choir of hundreds or murmured from behind a mask.

It's different, but it's still Christmas

No choirs nor congregations singing. While strings and percussion are allowed, no angels will be heralded with brass and woodwinds. Those absences, according to Father Sean Prince, will make Christmas "very different, very odd" this year, just as the Church's celebrations of the Triduum and Easter were odd.

"We've been down this road, sadly, of sacrificing these major liturgical celebrations in life that we live as Catholics in the Church in these moments," said Father Prince, director of the Diocese of Richmond's Office of Worship. "But we celebrated Triduum and Easter; it was different, but there was still Easter Sunday. We will celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; it will be different, but it's still a celebration."

To offer encouragement to those concerned about the impact COVID-19 restrictions will have on Christmas, Father Prince notes that churches were closed during the Triduum and Easter, with a maximum of 10 people allowed at the Sunday Mass.

"The music might be different, caroling may not be there, but for Christmas we can actually still gather as Church at this moment," he said. "We can receive the Eucharist, and all members of the faithful can feel comfortable doing so."

Father Prince, a member of the diocese's COVID-19 Task Force, said the diocese has been effective in passing along to the parishes the COVID prevention information it has received from the governor's office and the CDC.

"We as a Church, from what I've seen and understand, have done a very good job in this time of pandemic," he said, noting the implementation of protocols, practices and guidance the task force provided.

While some are bemoaning how different Christmas will be, Father Prince suggested they reflect on the true nature of Advent.

"This is a season of waiting and of anticipation, a season of darkness waiting for the light. The pandemic has given us a new and more tangible understanding of the liturgical season of Advent," he said.

He encouraged the faithful to ask themselves: "How can I unpack, unlock and understand in a unique way the life we are currently living and its intersection with the liturgical life we're living?"

He continued, "The Lord has offered us an incredible moment here to really see what the Church has been teaching for centuries: that the liturgical life really does guide our everyday life and is connected to our everyday life. This Advent season and Christmas season couldn't speak more clearly and beautifully to that teaching of the Church." — Brian T. Olszewski

Pope did not change Church teaching on marriage



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. Why is the pope approving of civil unions for homosexuals? Isn't this still one of the deadly sins? (Lexington, Indiana)

A. First, to clarify: I have never seen homosexuality mentioned as one of the seven deadly sins. In fact, many people with a homosexual orientation are celibate. The seven deadly sins are commonly listed as pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth.

Now, to the matter of Pope Francis' recent quote. A documentary entitled "Francesco," released in Rome this past October, quoted a comment the pope made in a 2019 interview with the Mexican network Televisa.

There, the pope said, "Homosexual people have a right to be in a family. They are children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable over it. What we have to create is a civil union law. That way they are legally covered."

In saying this, Pope Francis was not changing the Church's moral teaching or its understanding of marriage. Marriage is an indissol-

uble union between one man and one woman, a union open to the transmission of life; as a result, gay marriage is unacceptable, and Pope Francis has often affirmed that.

In the quote in question, he was speaking simply of the need to provide legal protection for the rights of nonmarried people living together in a stable way — rights, for example, involving inheritance, health care decisions and visitation when one is ill.

Q. I have done something terrible. I committed a mortal sin and then I received the Eucharist. Am I going to be condemned? I am very worried. I am 17 years old, and I was baptized just two months ago. If I go to confession, will I be forgiven? (I was afraid that my parents would question me if I did not take Communion, so I went up to receive even though I knew it was wrong.) Please help me to know what to do. (City and state withheld)

A. Please be at peace. You are not going to be condemned, and you will surely be forgiven in the sacrament of penance. It strikes me that some of our best-known saints made their way back from moral wrongs to find healing and joy in God's forgiveness.

I'm thinking of St. Paul, who once persecuted those who believed in Jesus; of St. Peter, who during Christ's Passion denied that he even knew Christ; of St. Augustine, who had fathered a child out of wedlock. God can forgive anything, and he wants to. His very purpose in creating us was so that we could share eternal happiness in his presence.

Just go to confession and tell the priest of your sin and the fact that you went to holy Communion despite recognizing its gravity. And congratulations on your recent baptism. Like most Catholics, I was baptized as an infant, but I often find that those who entered the Church later on have a faith that is more reflective and stronger.

Q. I am a practicing Catholic, and my daughter is in the third grade at a Catholic school. In my former parish in Arizona, I used to have my hands raised in prayer during Mass. But now that I live in Michigan, we don't do that, and it bothers my daughter when she sees my hands uplifted. Am I doing it right or wrong? (Michigan)

A. Not infrequently, I have seen individuals lift their hands during the Our Father, and occasionally I have witnessed entire congregations do the same.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has evidently been asked this question so often that, with regard to a congregational posture during the Lord's Prayer, the bishops now say on their website, "No position is prescribed in the Roman Missal for an assembly gesture."

I take that to mean that you are free to do as you wish — and praying with outstretched arms is, after all, one of the historic postures of prayer.

I am, of course, familiar with the distinction between private prayer and liturgical prayer, and I recognize that the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (No. 42) says that "a common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the sacred liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them."

But having your hands uplifted in prayer doesn't seem to me to constitute a grievous violation of that canon of universality.

What you might do is explain to your daughter that this is the way you've been trained, the way you feel comfortable praying and the way that helps you lift your mind and heart to God — which, after all, is what prayer is.

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

Time Is Running Out!

Receive a Charitable Tax Deduction Before The Year Ends

Did you know that you can make a gift of cash or appreciated property before December 31 and enjoy a charitable tax deduction and valuable tax savings on this year's tax return?

Your gift can even provide you with income for the rest of your life!

Make Your End of Year Gift Today!



**Catholic
Community
Foundation**
of the Diocese of Richmond

For more information, contact Maggie Keenan at
(804) 622-5221 or mkeen@richmonddiocese.org

Interior journey our most important one this season



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES



iStock

To travel or not to travel is a question that many people are wrestling with this holiday season. Weighing risks against the desire to be with loved ones is a sign of prudence.

However, regardless of our decision, the weeks preceding Christmas remind us that the most important journey we undertake is the interior journey of the heart. It's what Advent is about. As people of faith, we wait for Christmas, not as passive bystanders, but as active participants in the journey to Bethlehem.

The lighting of the Advent wreath symbolizes the centuries-old pilgrimage of the Israelites who prepared the way for the Messiah. Week by week, Christians ponder all that preceded the birth of Jesus, becoming agents of conversion because the interior journey should always inspire action.

Consider that immediately after Mary learned that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, she hurried to the hill country of Judea to be of assistance to Elizabeth. She didn't wait to be told that Elizabeth, pregnant in her old age, could use some help. Mary was full of grace, and to be full of grace is to be filled with love.

Mary's action prompts the question: How can I be of service to those in need? Is there someone in my parish whose vulnerability to COVID-19 has kept them from attending Mass? If so, why not ask permission to bring Eucharist to them? If that's not possible, a phone call, a Christmas card or an offer to shop for them are all ways to bring Christ to those who are sheltering in place.

Providing gifts for angel tree recipients, sharing Christmas cookies with a neighbor and

contributing to the food bank are just a few ways we can bring hope to individuals and families who have fallen on hard times.

Every act of kindness when done in the name of Christ is a participation in the Incarnation, building up the Kingdom of God one act of love at a time.

When Mary entered the home of Zechariah, she graced their threshold with holiness, and together with Elizabeth and Zechariah formed the first Christian community. Praising God who had come to earth in the person of Mary, the elderly couple recognized Jesus in the womb of Mary, whose body served as the first tabernacle.

Hidden in plain sight, Jesus was present to them in a way that's not so different from the way Jesus is present to us in churches throughout the world. It begs the question: When was the last time I spent time with God, simply gazing at Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament?

If thoughts like "I'm too busy" or "There's too much to do" come to mind when the Holy Spirit nudges you to pay a visit to the nearest church, consider that Mary and Joseph dropped everything and left their home to travel to Bethlehem

when it was anything but convenient.

Mary had every reason to stay home, but once again she embarked on a physically taxing journey, guided only by the faith that enlightened and informed her every action. With the birth of Jesus imminent, the Virgin Mother trusted God.

During days of travel and uncertainty, she held fast to the words of the prophet, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Mi 5:2).

Mary left Nazareth and all that was familiar to her, venturing into the unknown, armed only with the calm assurance that comes with following the will of God. After Mary consented to be the Mother of God, there were no more angelic visitations. Like us, Mary had to discern God's will through prayerful listening to the people and events in her life. In aligning her will with the will of God, Mary found the courage and wisdom to face all that life as the Mother of God would demand of her.

As exemplar of faith and humility, Mary is not only the Mother of God, she is also our mother and will never leave nor forsake us. As the countdown to Christmas continues, we are reminded that although the days are far spent, the journey continues.

Therefore, let's make the most of the remaining days in hopeful anticipation that our journey to Bethlehem will find us bowing in humble adoration before the God who became man in the "City of Bread" so that he could feed us and fill us with his love.

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

Emulate Mary; say 'yes' from your heart



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY
DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

In the Gospel for this weekend we see just how human Mary is; we discover how much she is like us and how we are different. As human beings we are very inquisitive.

When told something is going to happen, we want to know what will happen, when and where it will occur and how it will take place.

When we are asked to do something, it is also quite normal to ask questions about it.

Mary's question to Gabriel, "How can this be?" is a normal human response. Mary wants to know how this pronouncement from Gabriel, that she will conceive a child, will take place since the normal circumstances for her to conceive a child have not occurred. Once she hears the answer, she proclaims, "I am the handmaid of the Lord".

In biblical times the term handmaid was used to describe a servant. Mary's response

acknowledges that she is a servant of the Lord and it is as a servant of the Lord she is was able to say yes. When asked to participate in a ministry, we also may think that we are not worthy. We may make excuses why we can't or shouldn't say yes: we don't have the time; we're not knowledgeable enough; we don't have the training to do those things to which God calls us.

The differences between our response and Mary's are where it originates and its completeness. Mary receives the word of God from Gabriel first in her heart and then physically conceives the Word of God in her womb (St. Augustine Discourses, 215, 4, quoted by Pope Francis, Feast of the Immaculate Conception Homily, 2014).

Her response was complete, coming from her heart. Oftentimes when God calls us to a ministry in the Church through messengers today, our pastor or other Church leaders, our response comes from our head not our heart. Because it is not from our heart, we may have caveats, spoken or unspoken, and our yes isn't complete.

We are like Mary in the grace we receive. The angel Gabriel referred to Mary as "full of grace" and she certainly was blessed as the

mother of our Lord. However, she was more blessed to be his follower.

In response to the statement, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breast that fed you," Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it" (Lk 11:27-28).

We receive the same grace as Mary. At our baptism we were filled with grace and every time we approach the altar to receive Eucharist, that same grace is present. If we believe in our hearts that we are receiving the body and blood of Jesus that grace can also take hold of us. We are as blessed as Mary if we hear the word of God, Jesus, and also follow him.

As we prepare to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth, we are reminded of Mary's response. Paul tells us, "All glory belongs to ... God who strengthens us through Jesus Christ." Mary gave all glory to God through a yes that started in her heart and involved her whole being, and was able to bring Jesus to the world physically.

We are called to emulate Mary. If we say yes from our hearts and with our whole being, we become that of which we partake in the Eucharist and can be the physical presence of Jesus in our world.

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

**Fourth Sunday
in Advent Cycle B**
**2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12,
14a, 16; Rom 16:25-27;
Lk 1:26-38**

OPPORTUNITIES

St. Elizabeth, Richmond, is looking for a part-time parish secretary. Applicant must have a minimum of three years of experience, be self-motivated, able to work with little direction and have good organizational skills. Duties include assisting priest administrator and bookkeeper with secretarial needs, facilitating marriage prep paperwork and interacting with parishioners, visitors and callers. This position is typically 8-12 hours per week with normal office hours being Tuesday-Friday, 1-4 p.m., however can be flexible. Ideally the start date would be Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021. Please send your résumé to Father Jim Arsenault at Jarsenault@richmonddioocese.org.

SHORTTAKES

Call first

Because of the restrictions that have been placed on public gatherings, we suggest that you call and/or email the parish, school or organization hosting an event before making plans to attend something listed in ShorTakes.

Trinity Organ Series: Celebrate the Christmas season with music by organist John Palmer, retired organist/choirmaster from Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tenn. Attend this free concert in-person, socially distanced, while following all diocesan COVID-19 protocols or watch live-streamed on the "Music of St. Bede" Facebook page. Please join us Wednesday, Dec. 30, noon, at St. Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road, Williamsburg. For more information, call 757-229-3631 or visit www.bede.deva.org/concerts.

Correction

The Nov. 30 Catholic Virginian incorrectly listed Trevor Chapman, winner of the Eucharistic Congress art contest, as a student at St. Mary Star of the Sea School. He is a parishioner of St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish, Fort Monroe, where he participates in the parish youth ministry program.

There's more!

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



BISHOP ANDREW J. BRENNAN

1820 **TIME CAPSULE** 2020

A CHRISTMAS GREETING AND PROPHECY

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

When Andrew J. Brennan (1877–1956) published a Christmas message in 1927, he was marking the end of his first year as bishop of Richmond. Brennan had come to the diocese from Scranton, Pennsylvania, where he was a priest (1904) and then auxiliary bishop (1923).

In retrospect, Brennan's Christmas message seems to have foreshadowed the accomplishments and challenges of the Diocese of Richmond during the next decade. He wrote that the peace joyfully announced by angels at Christ's birth "can be enjoyed in the midst of poverty, in the midst of external strife, and even in the midst of pain and suffering."

Brennan's tenure as the eighth bishop of Richmond (1926–1945) included growth and development in the diocese but also the challenges of anti-Catholicism, the Great Depression and personal adversity.

Several parishes received resident pastors during this period. To better manage the diocese, Brennan made several administrative changes, including the establishment of deaneries – regional groupings of parishes overseen by a senior priest called a dean.)

Furthermore, in response to a growing number of Catholic students, campus ministries were begun at the College of William & Mary, the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech (ca. 1923–1939). (At that time, Virginia Tech was located in the neighboring Diocese of Wheeling, but Richmond priests ministered there because most students had their permanent places of residence in the Diocese of Richmond.)

In another sign of growth and maturity in the diocese, Bishop Brennan presided over the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond (1931) and the dedication of two charitable institutions made possible by generous benefactors. These were St. Joseph's Villa in Richmond (1931), for white girls, which replaced St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum and Free School (1834) and which continued to be run by the Daughters of Charity, and the Barry-Robinson School for Boys in Norfolk (1934), which was under the care of the Benedictines.

Following a wave of anti-Catholicism in 1928 associated with the candidacy of Democratic Gov. Alfred E. Smith of New York, the first Catholic to be nominated for president, Bishop Brennan decided that the diocese should have its own newspaper to provide a Catholic perspective. He purchased The Virginia Knight, founded in 1925 as the monthly publication of the Knights of Columbus, and renamed it The Catholic Virginian in 1931.

Even with the Great Depression underway (1929–1939), but before it reached Virginia, several schools and churches were built. But the arrival of the economic catastrophe in 1932 halted such projects and inflicted widespread hardship.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched several initiatives to ameliorate the effects of the Great Depression, including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which employed young men in the construction of public works (1932–1942). Priests in the diocese ministered to the approximately 1,400 Catholics working at the 61 CCC camps in Virginia.

In 1934, Brennan suffered a stroke. He was unable to carry out his duties or even speak, but he officially remained

bishop of Richmond until 1945. In the meantime, Peter L. Ireton of Baltimore was appointed administrator of the diocese and coadjutor bishop, meaning he would automatically succeed Brennan upon his formal resignation.

Brennan resigned in 1945 and was made an assistant to the pontifical throne — an honorific position in the papal court. Following his death in 1956, he was entombed in the chapel of St. Joseph's Villa.

Nearly 30 years earlier, The Virginia Knight had published Bishop Brennan's Christmas message in its December 1927 issue. Perhaps Brennan found solace in recalling this message amid his own suffering.

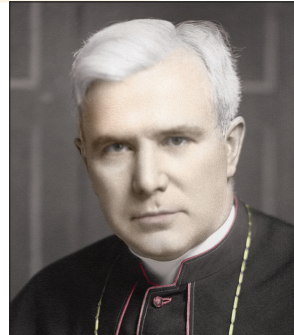
*Christmas Message from
Right Reverend Andrew J. Brennan, D.D.,
Bishop of Richmond*

The angelic message, sung from the hillsides of Judea, strikes the keynote of the Christmas spirit: "Peace to men of good will" [Lk 2:14]. It

is a season of joy and happiness, but a joy and happiness tempered by a celestial peace, and this peace is not simply a cessation of strife — a negative peace — but a God-given gift which seems to be a breath from heaven itself.

As peace was the first message of the incarnate God to man, so also was it his last message. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you" [Jn 14:27], was His final message to His apostles at the last supper. But the peace of which our Lord spoke is an interior peace, a peace of soul. It is a peace which can be enjoyed in the midst of poverty, in the midst of external strife, and even in the midst of pain and suffering, because it is a peace which comes from a union of the soul with God. It is God-given and cannot be disturbed by worldly strife. Without it there is no genuine worldly happiness.

The Christmas message which the Church proclaims to the world today is the same message which was proclaimed by the angels from the hillsides of Judea on that first Christmas morn, and this message we are pleased to convey to the readers of The Virginia Knight. May your Christmas be a holy and happy one, and the Infant King, from His manger throne flood your souls with that celestial peace which is, and can only be given, to men of good will.



Bishop Andrew J. Brennan

IN MEMORIAM

Richard Arthur 'Dick' Keeney

A funeral Mass was celebrated Friday, Dec. 4, at St. Andrew, Roanoke, for Richard Arthur "Dick" Keeney of Salem. Mr. Keeney, 88, passed away on Saturday, Nov. 28.

A native of Akron, Ohio, Mr. Keeney grew up in

Northern Ohio with his family. He attended John Carroll University, graduated and entered military service as an artillery officer. He later attended Case Western Reserve Law School.

Mr. Keeney is survived by his wife, Janet Ruby Keeney, and by his children: Monsignor Timothy Keeney, Kathleen (Kevin) Madden, Bridget (Michael)

Waterman, and William Keeney; and from Mrs. Keeney's side: her daughter, Sharon (Arthur) Provenzano; her son, William Ruby, and Valerie Casler; her daughter, Paula Ruby, and her husband, William Gerrol; and her son, Scott Ruby, and his wife, Miles Ruby.

Mr. Keeney is also survived by his siblings: David (Margaret) Keeney, Kathleen (Ron) Debranski and Mary Alice Zittle.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles Arthur and Helen Elizabeth Keeney.

Mr. Keeney was an active member of Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke.



Papa: La memoria, no la nostalgia, nos ayuda a alcanzar el reino de Dios

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

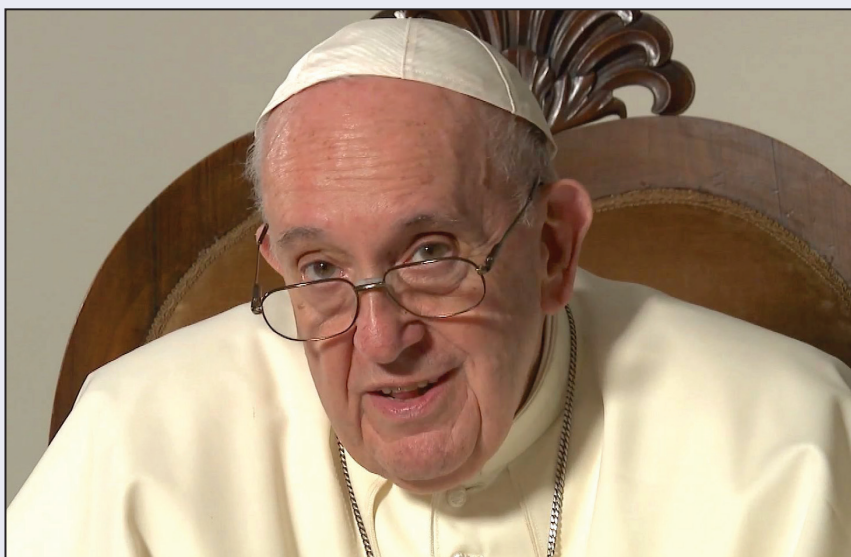
CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — Para los cristianos, la memoria implica recordar las promesas de Dios para el futuro; no se trata de “nostalgia, que es una verdadera patología espiritual”, expresó el papa Francisco.

La nostalgia “bloquea la creatividad y nos vuelve personas rígidas e ideológicas, incluso en el ámbito social, político, y eclesial”, señaló, mientras que la memoria, que está “intrínsecamente ligada al amor y la experiencia”, es una dimensión esencial de la vida humana.

El papa envió un mensaje por video el 26 de noviembre al Festival Nacional de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia en Italia, un evento en línea de tres días que sobre el tema, “Memoria del futuro”.

El título, expuso el papa Francisco, es un llamado a la esperanza.

“Para nosotros los cristianos, el futuro tiene un nombre y este nombre es esperanza”, dijo. “La esperanza es la virtud de un corazón que no se cierra en la oscuridad, que no se detiene en el pasado, que no solo se enfoca en el presente, sino que sabe ver el mañana”.



Video mensaje del Papa Francisco el 26 de noviembre para el Festival Nacional de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia en Italia, un evento en línea de tres días sobre el tema “Memoria del futuro”. El Papa dijo que la memoria, no la nostalgia, ayuda a los cristianos a trabajar por el reino de Dios. (Foto del CNS / Vaticano)

Si uno ha sido bautizado en Cristo, explicó el papa, entonces debe recordar el sacrificio que Cristo hizo por la salvación de todos y vivir una vida que se prepara para su prometida venida y para el establecimiento de su reino.

“Por tanto, estamos llamados a vivir nuestra vida en comunión con Dios, es decir: en la intimidad de la oración en la presencia del Señor; en el amor por las personas que encontramos, que es en la caridad; y finalmente hacia la Madre Tierra,

que indica un proceso de transfiguración del mundo”, comentó.

“No podemos vivir como creyentes en el mundo a menos que manifestemos la vida misma de Cristo en nosotros”, indicó el papa Francisco.

“Con la fuerza y la creatividad de la vida de Dios en nosotros”, declaró el papa, los cristianos fascinarán a los demás y los atraerán al Evangelio, además de promover “proyectos de una economía y una política nuevas e inclusivas capaces de amar”.

Las celebraciones a la Virgen de Guadalupe 2020

La diócesis de Richmond y la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano le quiere dar las gracias por su colaboración en cerciorar que nuestros hermanos y hermanas estén sanos siguiendo las directrices de la diócesis en su parroquia. Este año la pandemia nos ha traído muchos desafíos. Hemos tenido que modificar nuestra forma de evangelizar y catequizar, abriendo un espacio nuevo para la creatividad con el uso de la tecnología. Durante este tiempo de Adviento, habrá muchos hermanos y hermanas que no podrán celebrar las diferentes fiestas y celebraciones por razones de salud y precaución. Respondiendo a esta necesidad, le pedimos a los fieles de nuestra diócesis que se comuniquen con las parroquias en su área para ver si tienen celebración este año.



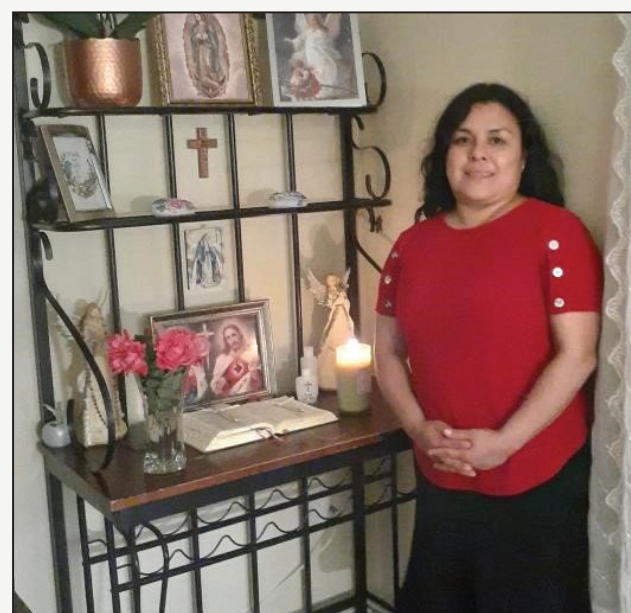
iStock

Testimonio de fe: Kenia Aguilar

Facilitadora de formación de la fe del adulto Blessed Sacrament | Harrisonburg

Me llamo Kenia Aguilar y llegué de México en el año 1996. Yo era una persona de fe que solo iba a la misa, pero viviendo la experiencia de ser una persona activa en los ministerios me llevó a otro nivel con el Señor. En el año 2012, empecé con el ministerio de lectores y en el transcurso del tiempo fui involucrándome como ministro extraordinario de la eucaristía, facilitadora de formación de la fe del adulto y en otras actividades de la parroquia. Cada día crezco más en mi fe espiritualmente. Dios me fortalece más y más y me enamoro más de Él, aprendiendo y conociendo más de la doctrina como cristiana católica.

Soy una feligresita activa y me encanta a instruirme por medio de diferentes talleres, conferencias diocesanas y movimientos eclesiales. Yo les invito a que se involucren en los diferentes ministerios y quiero motivarlos a que se preparen más en la fe para que den ejemplo con su testimonio de vida.



CCC concert



Due to COVID-19, only 50 people, including Bishop Barry C. Knestout, were able to attend Commonwealth Catholic Charities' 29th annual Holiday Festival of Music on Monday, Nov. 30, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. However, the fundraising concert featuring the Richmond Symphony was taped and presented virtually on Monday, Dec. 7. The encore performance featured choirs from St. Andrew, Roanoke, and Christ the King, Abingdon. The bishop welcomed and extended Christmas greetings to attendees and viewers. (Photo provided)

Phone

Continued from Page 4

"amplify" his voice as much as possible so that the absolution may be heard, he added.

Church law requires, in most cases, that the priest and penitent be physically present to each other. The penitent states his or her sins out loud and expresses contrition for them.

Recognizing the difficulties priests are facing regarding respecting health measures and mandates while being able to offer the sacrament, the cardinal said it is up to every bishop to indicate to their priests and the faithful "the cautious attentiveness that should be adopted" in the individual celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation in ways that maintain the physical presence of priest and penitent. Such guidance should be based on the local situation concerning the spread and risk of contagion, he added.

The cardinal's comments reiterated what the apostolic penitentiary said in mid-March when it released a note "On the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the present emergency of the coronavirus."

The sacrament must be administered according to canon law and other provisions, even during a global pandemic, it said, adding the

indications he mentioned in the interview about taking precautionary measures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

"Where individual faithful should be in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, loved above all else, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness — one which the penitent is able to express in that moment — and accompanied by the 'votum confessionis,' that is, by the firm resolution to receive sacramental confession as soon as possible, obtains the forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones," the mid-March note said.

Pope Francis repeated the same possibility during a livestreamed morning Mass March 20.

The pope said people should, "Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth. Say, 'Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,' and ask for pardon with all your heart."

Make an act of contrition, the pope said, and promise God, "I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now." And immediately you will return to a state of grace with God."

Help

Continued from Page 1

and therefore, peace in our relationships. And finally, that he may help us face temptation and free us from evil."

Asking or supplicating God "is very human," especially when someone can no longer hold on to the illusion that "we do not need anything, that we are enough for ourselves, and we live in total self-sufficiency," he explained.

"At times, it seems that everything collapses, that the life lived so far has been in vain. And in these situations, when it seems that everything is falling apart, there is only one way out: the cry, the prayer, 'Lord, help me!'" the pope said.

Prayers of petition go hand in hand with accepting one's limitations, he said, and while one may even reach the point of not believing in God, "it is difficult not to believe in prayer."

Prayer "simply exists; it presents itself to us as a cry," he said. "And we all know this inner voice that may remain silent for a long time, but one day awakens and cries out."

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to pray and not be ashamed to express the desires of their hearts. The season of Advent, he added, serves as a reminder that prayer is "always a question of patience, always, of withstanding the wait."

IT'S A Sweet DEAL

Save up to **\$3,400!**

Reserve your apartment by December 31, 2020 and save \$1,000 a month for the first 3 full months, plus we will cover moving expenses up to \$400.

New leases only.

Times change, but not our commitment to your loved ones.

Call us today to learn more about this limited-time offer and how our residents are still living the charmed life! **757-456-5018**

M MARIAN MANOR
ASSISTED LIVING

Marian-Manor.com
5345 Marian Lane • Virginia Beach



Coordinated Services Management, Inc.
Professional Management of Retirement Communities since 1981



Marian Manor is an assisted living community in Virginia Beach. We are sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond and open to people of all faiths.



Pet Friendly