



# The Catholic Virginian



Serving the People of the Diocese of Richmond for 90 years

Vol. 96, No. 6

www.catholicvirginian.org

January 11, 2021

## Diocesan schools make in-person learning work Principals, teachers credited with providing quality education in safe environments

ROSE MORRISETTE  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

**O**n Aug. 24, 2020, all 23 of the Diocese of Richmond's Catholic schools began the 2020-2021 school year with in-person learning.

As the semester closed before Christmas, those involved in keeping the diocese's 6,837 students safe, healthy, happy, engaged, academically on target, and nurtured in a faith-filled environment were heartened by the diocese's success – no one more than Kelly Lazzara, superintendent of the diocese's Catholic schools.

"Students are doing well. They are happy to be in school. They are engaged in active learning. They are excelling," she said.

To open the doors of their schools and to keep them open, administrators, faculty and staff, students and families joined together in meeting an array of challenges.

Pulled out of their comfort zones, they faced days filled with a host of difficult tasks that included monitoring and managing exposures, finding new ways to provide lunch, rotating Mass attendance, incessantly cleaning and disinfecting, keeping some form of tradition alive, taking temperatures, and engaging in new forms of teaching and learning.

It wasn't easy, but because everyone worked so hard – with hyperawareness and hypervigilance – they managed to keep COVID-19 at bay and stay in school. Preparations began in the summer with physically preparing schools for children in accordance with their mitigation health plans.

"Numbers have been relatively low," Lazzara said. "I don't anticipate a change for next semes-



This sixth-grade social studies class at Charlottesville Catholic School, with students and teacher masked and desks at least six feet apart, was typical of in-class instruction during the fall semester at diocesan Catholic schools. In-class instruction is continuing this semester.

(Photo/Frank Murphy)

ter because mitigation plans have been working well."

### 'Lot of success'

Cases of students and employees having to quarantine mostly involved close contact with individuals outside of school.

"The semester was the best you could hope for," said Louis Goldberg, principal at St. Matthew Catholic School, Virginia Beach.

He reported that when his school of 469 students and 75 staff had been in session for 13 weeks, 0.7% of the school population had tested positive for COVID-19, and the number of close contacts was at 1.1%. There were no cases of student-to-student transmission and no cases of staff testing positive.

"We've had a lot of success," said Billie Schneider, principal of St. Anne Catholic School, Bristol. "We've had few direct and indirect exposures, which mostly involved quarantining out of caution."

At Christ the King Catholic School, Norfolk, principal Kim Callahan commandeered a herculean effort before and during the semester to keep her school clean and disinfected. She is especially proud of her investment in equipment to do this.

"Kids have been good," said Callahan. "Little ones are very compliant with masks," adding, "it's an effort with 2-year-olds. Teachers are always dealing with masks."

Teachers have done yeoman's work in un-

See Schools, Page 5

## Pope: 'Vaccine needed for our bodies, hearts'

CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — At the beginning of a year people hope will mark the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis urged them to create a "culture of care," including by sharing the gift of their time with others.

Despite suffering from a bout of sciatica, nerve pain, that left him unable to preside over Mass

Jan. 1 in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope sent a homily focused on God's blessings and on sharing those blessings with others.

Consecrating the new year to Mary, the pope prayed that she would "care for us, bless our time, and teach us to find time for God and for others."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, read the pope's homily as he celebrated the Mass

for the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and for the Catholic Church's celebration of World Peace Day.

Only about 100 people, all wearing masks, were in the socially distanced congregation for the Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's Basilica. Two dozen cardinals, also wearing masks, concelebrated.

In the homily he wrote, Pope Francis returned to themes from

his World Peace Day message — "A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace" — and a recent general audience talk about prayers of blessing.

"This year, while we hope for new beginnings and new cures, let us not neglect care," the pope wrote. "Together with a vaccine for our bodies, we need a vaccine for our hearts. That vaccine is care. This will be a good year if we take

See Pope, Page 12

### Inside This Edition

Veteran Catholic educator leads Hollins University  
Page 3

Endowment rooted in Prince of Peace couple's faith  
Page 5

What to expect when Jesus says, 'Come and see'  
Page 9

The Catholic Virginian  
7800 Carousell Lane  
Richmond, VA 23294



# Emulate John the Baptist in promoting sanctity of life



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

There are many times when we feel like the “voice crying out in the wilderness” — the words the prophet Isaiah uses to describe the role of John the Baptist in proclaiming the coming of Christ.

We are a voice crying out in the wilderness when it comes to sharing Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life — that *all* life is sacred from conception through natural death. Those at the center of the political realm have often not accepted that teaching. Our culture as a whole — aided by news, social and entertainment media — often ignores it.

Even when hundreds of thousands of us have gathered for the March for Life in Washington each year for 47 years, we are overlooked or even ignored. It’s as if hundreds of thousands of us were standing in the median on I-95 with traffic going past us at 65 miles per hour or more, and drivers didn’t notice us.

With each election year and change in government leadership, many new leaders do not embrace the sanctity of all life. So, we will need to be clear and focused with our advo-

cacy for life issues, emphasizing the fullness of our teachings and beliefs.

Because the culture can at times be hostile toward those who promote the sanctity of life, we might have a temptation to respond in kind. Rather than change votes and convert hearts, any hostility or anger we might express could have no impact on the former and harden the latter.

What drew people to John the Baptist? He certainly faced hostility, naysayers, those who portrayed him as a crazy man living in the desert eating locusts and honey, but the one preparing the way of our Lord did respond with truth and charity. He was firm and emphatic in what he proclaimed.

Those of us who promote the sanctity of life can emulate his approach and have a clear message: We respect *all* life. That respect begins with the child in the womb, but it doesn’t end there. It continues with our commitment to health care, adequate food and housing, and quality education. It requires stewardship of our environment and includes advocating for abolition of capital punishment and for dignity in dying a natural death.

Voicing support for only parts of that message dilutes it. We can’t say, “I’m pro-life

when it comes to...” but omit other elements. That not only weakens the witness to our Catholic beliefs, but it allows those who question our pro-life commitment to pick and choose what they wish to support and oppose, which can be contrary to what we support and oppose.

The obstacles we face with the culture and politics in defending the sanctity of life are frustrating, but personal attacks on those who disagree with us will not bring the change we long to have. Our goal is to change people from within, to work at convincing them of the truth that all life is sacred. We must believe that ourselves if we hope to change others.

That goal must be pursued with firmness and respect. We should not mistake politeness or civility for wimpiness. Respect and charity are the Christian manner of stating one’s case, listening to what others say and responding. If we are to have any success in promoting pro-life concerns, we must commit to engaging in charitable dialogue.

Neither our goal nor the method we need to employ in achieving it are easy. Like John the Baptist, we are in a wilderness. However, with prayer and perseverance, people will come to hear and embrace our message.

## FATHER JOSEPH HEWITT

1820 **TIME CAPSULE** 2020

### A RICHMOND PRIEST FOREVER YOUNG

*Throughout the Diocese of Richmond’s bicentennial year, a time capsule recalling a particular time in diocesan history has been published in each issue of The Catholic Virginian. The bicentennial time capsules, of which this is the final one, were researched and compiled by Father Anthony E. Marques, chair of the Diocese of Richmond’s Bicentennial Task Force.*

On the Feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 6, 1842, the first Catholic priest was ordained in Virginia. Tragically, Father Joseph Hewitt died six months later, but his ordination remains a momentous event in the history of the Diocese of Richmond.

Father Hewitt’s ordination was a hopeful sign because the diocese had been struggling since its creation in 1820. The archbishop of Baltimore administered the Richmond Diocese from 1822–1841 because it lacked financial and pastoral resources. The bishops of the United States, gathered at the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore (1833), recommended suppressing the Diocese of Richmond, but the Vatican rejected this proposal.

When Richard V. Whelan, the second bishop of Richmond (1841–1850), ordained Father Hewitt, in a small way this alleviated the diocese’s chronic shortage of priests. Father Hewitt became only the seventh priest in the diocese at that time, although several more were ordained in the following years.

Bishop Whelan was determined to increase the number of priests. He did so by first recruiting seminarians from outside the diocese.



**The remains of Father Joseph Hewitt, the first Catholic priest ordained in Virginia, are buried at Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Richmond.** (Photo provided)

Whelan also started his own seminary, as recommended by the Council of Trent (1563), and specifically for the United States, by the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore.

Whelan asked his friend and seminary classmate, John Hughes, coadjutor bishop of

New York, to send him candidates (1841), and he later recruited seminarians from All Hallows College in Ireland (1846). Seminarians for the Diocese of Richmond were trained at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore until Bishop Whelan’s own seminary was completed.

In 1841, Whelan purchased land for a seminary that was then located just outside the city limits of Richmond, and he personally assisted in its construction. This short-lived institution was called St. Vincent’s Seminary (1841–1846), to which a college was later attached (1843–1846). Bishop Whelan served as the rector and taught most of the classes. His brother, Father David Whelan, also worked on the seminary staff.

Joseph Hewitt, originally from Ireland, was one of the recruits sent to the Diocese of Richmond by Bishop Hughes of New York. Hewitt is listed as a tutor of several subjects — arithmetic, Latin and geography — at St. Mary’s College (which was attached to the seminary) in Baltimore (1839–1841). This position suggests he had received training for the priesthood earlier, although he was not yet ordained.

Hewitt attended St. Vincent’s Seminary in Richmond before being ordained a priest. There, he likely heard Bishop Whelan speak about the ideal Richmond priest, who was to be a rugged and hard-working missionary, just as Whelan himself had been a zealous priest circuit-rider in northern Virginia (present-day West Virginia).

Hewitt received several grades of holy orders in quick succession. The “Religious

*See Time Capsule, Page 12*



# Veteran Catholic educator leads Hollins University

Mary Dana Hinton brings blend of religious experiences, insights to presidency

JOSEPH STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

The new president of Hollins University, Mary Dana Hinton, Ph.D., has deep roots in Baptist tradition, like the school she has led since August 2020. The first African American president in its history is also drawing upon her experiences in Catholic higher education as the leader of the secular women's college near Roanoke.

Born in Mt. Vernon, New York, and raised in North Carolina, Hinton said the historic Black church was a big part of her life.

"I may be in one of the last generations that had this experience," she said in a video interview from her home office, "but the church was just how you understood your humanity, how you understood the humanity of those around you. It was where you learned to protest injustice but to do so with a sense of hope and with a sense of humility and with a sense of respect."

## Journey in Catholic higher education

Before coming to Hollins, Hinton was president of the College of Saint Benedict, the nation's only Benedictine college for women, in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Her career in Catholic higher education began with earning a doctorate in religion and religious education from Fordham University.

The belief that faith and reason have no conflict seemed to be "something I'd been looking for...for a long time: how do I live a life of vibrant faith and a life of deep intellectual curiosity and not ever be made to feel that there's a competition between the two, that they enrich one's life when placed in dialogue with one another."

Hinton said her life was also enriched by teaching religious education and working as multicultural student coordinator at College Misericordia (now Misericordia University) and encountering the values of the Sisters of Mercy: service, justice, hospitality — values that she said also affirmed her experience in the historic Black church.

"It affirmed the humanity and worth of all people," she said. "It affirmed the fact that the deepest stirrings of your soul manifest themselves in all that you do in your private life and professional life."

## Impact of religious sisters

Those sisters also showed her the importance of having and following a mission.

"They taught me that your



Mary Dana Hinton talks to Hollins University students during her first campus visit in February 2020, soon after she was named the president and before mask and social distance rules took effect. (Photo courtesy of Hollins University)

mission is central to everything that you do, so any decision that we make at Hollins, we start by thinking about what is our mission and how do we go back to that," Hinton said.

The Sisters of Mercy, the Dominican sisters she met while vice president for academic affairs at Mount St. Mary College in New York, and the Benedictines of St. Ben's and their emphasis on community all "remind me of ways women in the historic Black church used their voice to battle racism and sexism, and here are these vowed religious women who were using their voice to do incredible work."

Being on Catholic campuses, living out that life of faith and reason, attending Mass frequently all led her to fully embrace the faith during her time at St. Ben's.

"There wasn't a single moment when I made the decision," she said. "I think it was the evolving recognition that I could be in communion with these communities of religious women with whom I had worked and dwelled, and that it didn't have to take away from or diminish my experience growing up in the historic Black church...And I'm grateful that I don't have to deny or forgo either of those experiences. I think they make me whole and they affirm one another in many ways."

## Inspired by Catholics — past, present

One of the saints she finds affirming is St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) an abbess, visionary, composer and poet — a woman, Hinton said, who was not always understood in her time.

"She called forth in herself and in those she encountered

their best selves," Hinton noted. "One author writes that she sung at a note that others couldn't always hear, but they felt the music that emanated from her."

Hinton takes inspiration, too, from the life of St. Julian of Norwich (1343-circa 1416), a theologian and mystic known for "Revelations of Divine Love," the first book written in English by a woman. Julian spent most of her life in seclusion, watching the

world deal with a plague. Hinton said she's been thinking a lot about her these days.

One of the most meaningful, recent developments in the Catholic Church for her is the naming of Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington as the first Black American cardinal.

"Everyone wants to see folks like them in these roles, and that's a good thing. That reflects the work that Cardinal Gregory has done," she said. "It's just an exciting moment to see someone do this work and get this recognition from Pope Francis. I also think it's further evidence of the inclusive way in which Pope Francis views Catholicism, and I find that to be really heartening and engaging."

Hinton; Robert Williams, her husband of 23 years; and their children, Hallela, Hillel and Hosanna, have not had a chance to get involved with a local parish because of the university's strict social distancing policies, but Hinton is looking forward to a return to more traditional fellowship once the pandemic subsides. That will be a time when, as Julian of Norwich wrote, "all shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father Michael J. Herbert



A funeral Mass was celebrated Thursday, Dec. 31, at St. Andrew, Roanoke, for Father Michael J. Herbert. Father Herbert, 68, died Wednesday, Dec. 23, at the Duke Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina.

A native of Orrville, Ohio, he graduated summa cum laude from John Carroll University in 1974 and the University of Michigan Law School in 1977. He practiced law in

Wisconsin and Ohio until 1983. That year he began a distinguished teaching career at the University of Richmond's T. C. Williams School of Law until he resigned to enter seminary at The Theological College (Catholic University of America).

After his 2005 ordination, Father Herbert served as parochial vicar for three months at St. Bridget, Richmond, followed by a year as parochial vicar at St. Joseph, Clintwood, and Holy Family, Tazewell. He also served as campus minister for Appalachian Law School in Tazewell.

Father Herbert served as pastor of St. Therese, St. Paul, St. Mary, Coeburn, and Good Shepherd, Lebanon, from June 2006 until November 2012, when he became vicar for health at St. John, Marion. He served as episcopal vicar for the Western Vicariate from June 2012 until October 2014.

Father Herbert was named pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Salem, in January 2013 and served until August when he was forced to retire due to a previously undiagnosed heart disease.

He is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, John and Susan Herbert of Columbus, Ohio, sister and brother-in-law, Ann and Patrick Rodgers of Tinley Park, Illinois, and by several nieces and nephews.



# Despite COVID, diocese had much to celebrate

## 2020 was a year of growth, adaptation

JANNA REYNOLDS  
The Catholic Virginian

Although the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in programs and events being altered or canceled within the Diocese of Richmond during 2020, parishes, schools and individuals still found much to celebrate.

Before the pandemic reached the diocese, the faithful rallied at the second annual Virginia March for Life on Feb. 13. A Mass for Life at the Richmond Convention Center concelebrated by Bishop Barry C. Knestout and Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington drew more than 1,500 worshippers. More than 2,500 people attended the rally at the Capitol which preceded the march.

### Growth

This was a year for growth and adaptation within the local Church of Richmond.

On Sunday, June 21, Bishop Knestout celebrated the patronal feast of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, dedicating the Mother Church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On Sept. 20, he dedicated St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish, Charlottesville. On Oct. 4, he named the Catholic community in Crozet Our Lady of the Rosary Mission and blessed the people of the mission at the site where they hope to build a church.

Four hundred catechumens – 150 adults and 250 children – representing 74 parishes became “the elect” during the Rite of Election during the weekend of Feb. 29 – March 1. On Oct. 4, Bishop Knestout commissioned 11 women as lay ecclesial ministers through the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, the Office of Christian Formation launched Pathways: *Delivered*, the diocese’s catechist certification program in an online format.

A new Catholic Virginian website was launched in October with a focus on providing more Catholic news in an engaging way. In addition to local, national and global news, the revamped website features book, video game and movie reviews; a kids’ section; photos and video galleries; and examples of faith being put into action.

The Diocese of Richmond responded to Pope Francis’ call to care for creation when Immaculate Conception Parish, Hampton, became the first parish in the diocese to convert to solar energy in 2019. Seven additional solar projects are underway or in the planning stages at diocesan entities, which will offset more than 45,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases over the next 25 years.

### Catholic Schools

Despite the presence of COVID-19, Catholic schools celebrated many achievements and new opportunities over the last year.

St. Mary Catholic School, Richmond, established its Future Full of Hope scholarship program thanks to an anonymous donor’s pledge of \$100,000 each year for 10 years. With the scholarship covering up to 50% of annual tuition, at least two dozen students could be helped through the program each year.

St. Gertrude High School and Benedictine College Preparatory announced on Jan. 17, 2020, that the two schools had established a formal partnership under the umbrella organization of the Benedictine Schools of Richmond. Planned for 2021, St. Gertrude’s move from Richmond to Goochland took place over the summer due to the pandemic. Both schools continue to maintain independent functions, programs and curricula.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, Newport News, became the first school in the diocese to be recognized as a Cardinal Newman Society Catholic Education Honor Roll School for shaping students spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally.

Staff and students rose to the challenge when diocesan Catholic schools moved to virtual learning on March 17 in response to the spread of COVID-19. They closed out the 2019-2020 academic year that way, and thanks to smaller class sizes, all 23 diocesan Catholic schools successfully opened for in-person instruction for the 2020-2021 academic year.

While learning from home, three students at St. Bridget Catholic School, Richmond, volunteered to manufacture “door grabbers” and “ear savers” for healthcare workers using the school’s 3-D printers.

### Parishes

Parishes worked to bring Masses to the masses by implementing livestreaming when the celebration of public Masses was suspended on March 16. The Catholic Community Foundation provided resources to help parishes livestream the liturgies to people in their homes until churches reopened the weekend of May 23-24. Additionally, CCF helped establish online giving through [offertory.richmonddiocese.org](http://offertory.richmonddiocese.org) so parishes could continue to accept donations while many parishioners remain at home.

Racism was a topic of much discussion within the Church. Deacon Charles Williams, director of the diocesan Office for Black Catholics, led a livestreamed Prayer Service for Racial Healing on June 11. Father Jonathan Goertz, pastor of Sacred



Brian Garrison, one of 41 volunteers with the Discipleship CHRIST Force at St. Nicholas, Virginia Beach, calls a senior from his home on Friday, July 24. Parishes used various means to keep in touch with their members during 2020. (Photo/Mellisa Garrison)

Heart, Danville, celebrated a Mass of Atonement on Aug. 28, the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington, and called for Catholics to be better witnesses of authentic love.

In August and September, Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, held a two-part forum on racism to help parishioners reflect on current events and brainstorm ways of combatting racism within the Church.

Volunteers from parishes across the diocese demonstrated Christian love and support by reaching out to preserve the sense of community with the homebound as COVID-19 remains a threat.

For example, the music ministry at Our Lady of Lourdes, Richmond, started Project HOPE to reach out to the homebound through songs, greeting cards and special videos. Parishioners at St. Nicholas, Virginia Beach, established Discipleship CHRIST Force to reach out to older parishioners during the pandemic to stay connected and provide support.

Food banks have become increasingly important as many struggle with unemployment and experience difficulty in providing food for their families. St. Francis House Food Pantry, Roanoke, a part of Commonwealth Catholic Charities, served hundreds of families each month. Four nearby Catholic parishes – Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Gerard, St. Andrew and Our Lady of Nazareth – support the initiative.

Throughout the pandemic, Church of the Redeemer’s Knights of Columbus Council 11042 in Mechanicsville has spent Tuesday evenings feeding 60-70 families in need through a partnership with Hanover Evangelical Friends Church Food Bank.

Some ministries, like the sewing ministry at St. John the Evangelist, Waynesboro, supported the fight against COVID-19 directly when

members made more than 2,100 facemasks for a local medical center.

### Bicentennial

The bicentennial jubilee of the Diocese of Richmond was the theme for many of the year’s events.

Bishop Knestout opened the bicentennial year with a regional Mass in the Eastern Vicariate at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Norfolk, on Jan. 19, which commemorated the arrival in Virginia of Bishop Patrick Kelly, first bishop of Richmond.

The regional Mass in the Central Vicariate commemorating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the diocese was celebrated in conjunction with the ordinations of Father Anthony Ferguson, Father Julio Reyes and Deacon Thomas Lawrence at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, on July 11.

A Western Vicariate Mass marking the feast day of the diocesan patron, St. Vincent de Paul, was celebrated at St. Andrew, Roanoke, on Sept. 26.

An Octave of Service in honor of St. Vincent de Paul was held from Sept. 27 - Oct. 4. Parishes, schools, ministries and individuals from all vicariates were invited to serve their communities during this special week designated to the good work that is customary of our Catholic faith.

The diocese’s first Eucharistic Congress was held Nov. 6-7. Keynote presentations were given virtually by Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Washington (English), and Bishop Luis R. Zarama of Raleigh (Spanish). Saturday began with Mass at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Peter, Richmond, the first cathedral of the diocese. A Holy Hour for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was then held at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. It included a procession on the street circling the cathedral.



# Endowment rooted in Prince of Peace couple's faith

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Nicholas Vacca is leading the way for what he calls “a different avenue” of giving which may allow his parish, Prince of Peace in Chesapeake (POP), and its ministries to operate forever. He heads a committee to establish a parish endowment fund through which an individual or couple makes a bequest in their will for POP.

In general, an endowment fund can be used to support an entity such as a parish, Catholic school or ministry, said Maggie Keenan, director of planned giving for the Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond. She noted that legacy gifts are an “expression of the meaning and significance of an individual’s faith.”

“It’s something that people deeply care about,” she said.

Nicholas and his wife Betty, both passionate about their parish’s perpetuity, made a provision in their will to support the parish.

“I felt that this is my Church. This is where I come, and I pray to the Lord,” he said. “The Church is sacred ground.”

Betty said that parishes in the Pennsylvania cities where they grew up are closing, and she didn’t want that happen to POP.

Keenan said the bequest is usually larger than what one could give during one’s lifetime, and because of the way the endowment fund is han-



Nicholas and Betty Vacca

dled, it enables parishes and ministries to continue for generations.

“It’s a gift that keeps on gifting,” Nicholas said.

While some people think that contributing to an endowment fund is for the well-off, POP pastoral associate Sister Dolores Sabisky, a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, said no increment is too small.

All of the bequests for POP are combined and only the income is used, thus creating a “stream” of money and securing the future of the parish and its ministries, Keenan said.

“In giving a gift to your parish, you are leaving a legacy for yourself, for a charity and specifically for our faith,” said Karen Pacomio, parish bookkeeper.

She said the parish’s response to the endowment fund has been “positive and wonderful.” About a dozen individuals and couples have com-

mitted to making provisions in their wills for the parish.

Nicholas and Betty said their parents, parish and Catholic schools instilled and nurtured Christian values in them. Betty said some of those values are “kindness, giving and loving.” Nicholas added that through the years he learned that “knowing the values wasn’t sufficient;” he needed to live by them. Through example, he and his wife strove to show their seven children how to live their faith.

The Vaccas moved to Chesapeake in 1998 after he retired from working 38 years with the Boy Scouts of America as an administrator. Nicholas said the scouting organization meshed with his own values.

Because of his job, the family lived in Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Betty, a medical technologist, worked in a hospital at each location and is now retired.

Nicholas said POP is the most “loving, giving and thoughtful parish” to which he has belonged, and parishioners “understand what the Lord means when he says ‘love and be the light in the community.’”

In addition to his work with the endowment fund, Nicholas served on the parish’s finance committee and parish council. He led the establishment of a parish food pantry 10 years ago and continues to be its coordinator. Last year he started an endowment fund specifically for the food pantry, and several memorial

donations have already been placed in the fund.

Betty is also involved in the parish. She helps with the food pantry, taught religious education and was a eucharistic minister.

Before COVID, the food pantry served about 45 people each week. Now the pantry is a “drive through” and serves many more people, peaking at 76 one week in November, Nicholas said.

Historically, the pantry has been more than food distribution. Pre-COVID, recipients socialized with volunteers and other guests over coffee and pastries when they came each week, Nicholas said.

He said he sees each client as “a child of God,” and Betty said she sees Christ in them.

“If you really want to see Christ and be able to touch him, you work in a food pantry, and that will happen,” Nicholas said.

His work with the food pantry has shown him how to love his neighbors, he said, adding that as a child he learned about religion through a book. As an adult, he learned about faith by living it.

“Values aren’t just poured into you. You have to learn these things,” he said. “In the food pantry you are living what you were taught in books.”

*Editor’s note: Further information about endowments is available by contacting Maggie Keenan at 804-622-5221 or mkeenan@richmonddiocese.org.*

## Schools

Continued from Page 1

familiar territory since March, not the least of which has been providing synchronous learning to allow them and students in the classroom and at home to interact in real time.

### Ready to go virtual, if needed

Even with in-person learning, all diocesan schools have some form of virtual capability they use on an as-needed basis that may or may not include synchronous learning.

“I can’t stress how much work it takes to pull this off,” said Charlottesville Catholic School principal Michael Riley of the school’s synchronous component. “Doing both in-person and on-screen learning is a challenge. We need to thank teachers when we see them. They are really working hard.”

“For teachers and administrators, this has been one of the hardest years they’ve had in education, but they also feel blessed to have provided in-person instruction,” Lazzara said, adding that she is confident that diocesan schools are prepared to revert to virtual learning if the need arises.

She noted that technology upgrades and schools investing in “a significant amount of equipment” will help with meeting student needs if virtual learning becomes necessary.

All schools are acutely aware of the importance of preparing for what’s to come.

For several years, Peninsula Catholic High School, Newport News, has used Distance Learn-

ing Days to help students and teachers practice virtual learning. This year, parents were required to select either an in-person or virtual option for the first semester. The school had both in-person and virtual students five days a week.

Principal Janine Franklin is even more committed to a well-functioning virtual program since experiencing the abrupt change to online learning last March.

“It taught us a lot of lessons, so we invested in new platforms,” she said.

### Enrollments fluctuate

Many diocesan Catholic schools experienced enrollment fluctuations as a result of COVID-19 because parents sought in-person learning or better virtual learning for their children, which may not have been available at public schools.

St. Matthew Catholic School gained a lot of new families but lost students, ending up with a 12% decrease in enrollment.

“Ninety-five percent of those who opted not to come back weren’t feeling comfortable with in-person learning,” said Goldberg.

Charlottesville Catholic School lost 52 students but gained 63, with the majority of losses COVID-related.

“Of the new people, those who came were mostly those who wanted the in-person learning,” Riley said.

Blessed Sacrament-Huguenot School, Powhatan, experienced a 20% increase in enrollment, adding 156 new students.

According to Lazzara, there are a number of diocesan schools at capacity and a number of

schools that have room for additional students as long as they adhere to guidelines for classroom capacity so they don’t over-enroll.

### Quality education, safe environment

The diocesan Office of Catholic Schools provided principals and teachers with professional development opportunities so they could receive any needed support associated with their school’s new normal.

Principals strengthened bonds with colleagues in their respective regions and around the diocese, which enabled them to exchange ideas, find new approaches and solutions, and feel supported.

“We may be far removed geographically, but we are not far from the support,” said Schneider, whose school is in the southwest region of the diocese.

Lazzara is in close contact with principals and feels well connected to them. She wants them to know “they are not alone.” She also regularly confers with other Catholic school superintendents in surrounding areas.

“Making sure we continue to provide quality education in a safe environment for faculty, staff and students is my biggest challenge as well as my biggest success,” said Lazzara.

In addition to supporting one another, principals also kept parents updated with communication and transparency, and parents regularly showed their appreciation and gratitude.

“We’re all doing the best we can,” said Goldberg. “We’ve proven what we did worked. We didn’t know that it would.”



# VCC vigilant as unique 2021 session begins

## GUEST COMMENTARY

JEFF CARUSO

The 2021 session of the Virginia General Assembly begins Jan. 13. This session will be unique in form and substance. Due to COVID-19 precautions, all public input during committee hearings will be virtual. Also, committees will be addressing far fewer bills than they typically do.

Legislators have been given unusually tight limits on the number of bills they can file. Senators and Delegates are in the process of making difficult decisions about which measures they will propose in 2021 and which ones they may save for a future year. Given these deliberations, very few bills had been filed as of Jan. 4 — the date this article was written.

The Virginia Catholic Conference is monitoring this evolving situation closely. We do know legislation to abolish Virginia's death

penalty will be considered, as will legislation to legalize the recreational use of marijuana by adults. We will advocate in support of death penalty abolition and in opposition to marijuana legalization.

We also know more proposals are coming soon, though it remains to be seen what exact form they will take. Based upon debates last year, we anticipate efforts to further erode longstanding protections for the unborn and for those who object to paying for abortions. We also expect to see — for the third straight year — legislation attempting to legalize assisted suicide.

In debates on these topics, we will take strong stands for life, conscience and protection for the vulnerable. We will also be deeply involved in discussions on any measures that threaten to roll back hard-fought, broadly supported policies that protect faith-based organizations' freedom to provide services consistent with their beliefs.

As bills continue to be filed impacting

key areas of VCC advocacy such as education, poverty reduction, marriage and family life, access to health care and immigration, we will be on the lookout for emerging opportunities and challenges.

People often ask, "How can I make a difference?" Here are a few ways:

**Connect.** Visit [www.vacatholic.org](http://www.vacatholic.org), where you can click "Join us!" to sign up to receive VCC email alerts, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. Each of these platforms will provide action alerts throughout the session — easy and effective ways for you to contact your legislators before they vote on key bills.

**Engage.** Act on VCC action alerts. Also, seek additional opportunities for "virtual involvement." As committee hearings are scheduled, we will let members of our email network know of opportunities to testify.

*Caruso is executive director of the Virginia Catholic Conference.*

### Use opportunities to show hope, love,

Having celebrated the arrival of the blessed Savior, we have the opportunity to show hope and love to people impacted by COVID-19 — parishioners and neighbors experiencing illness, death, job loss, hunger, eviction and homelessness.

"After seeing the wounds of the city in which we live, mercy invites us to have 'imagination' in our hands. This is what you have done in this time of the pandemic," Pope Francis reflected in September with members of St. Peter's Circle, a charity of the diocese of Rome.

Our parish, St. Elizabeth, Richmond, has adapted our social ministry for social distancing and seen the demand for assistance double during the pandemic. Like COVID-19, housing and food insecurity are disproportionately impacting communities of color.

I have spent the last 17 years working with people experiencing homelessness witnessing the effects of historic injustices and racism. After living on the street for more than a decade, one of our residents — Kevin — found "peace and serenity" exclaiming, "God told me that he was going to 'make my mess a message.'"

There has never been a greater opportunity for us to acknowledge inequities and create a more just future. Over the past year we all have faced challenges we could not have foreseen; yet, we have also witnessed a surge of resilience and compassion that demonstrate our collective power to change and care.

Please support organizations serving our neighbors in need — your donations will save lives and provide hope.

— Allison Bogdanovic  
Richmond

### Don't publish political attacks

I am a regular reader of The Catholic Virginian, including letters to the editor. However, I am growing weary and profoundly disturbed by the use of our diocesan newspaper as a forum for political attacks on President-elect Joseph Biden on the singular issue of abortion.

While I yearn for a secular world in which the sanctity of all life is secured and respected, I no longer wish to read political attacks on the religious faith of state and national politicians, especially from readers whose own politics allow them to endorse or support a politician without any faith or moral belief or character but who

nevertheless seem to pass the single issue abortion litmus test by reversing 50 years of public statements.

Lumen Christi.

— Marc A. Turner  
Charlottesville

### Stop rejecting others; work for betterment

After reading the letters to the editor (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 14), I asked myself how can we as brothers and sisters in God's family work together for the betterment of all of us if we insist on rejecting one another as we try to achieve positive influence in our country?

Cardinal Wilton Gregory's hopes to work with President Biden (Catholic Virginian, Nov. 30) are attitudes Jesus Christ would hold while working with our incomplete and growing selves.

Another letter to the editor in the Dec. 14 issue, which criticizes other bishops for their Christ-like outreach, sounds hurtful to me as we come together to rebuild our American community. I am proud of the many bishops who have recognized their roles as shepherds guiding the flock and not closing the gate to those who need assistance.

— Maureen Marroni  
Norfolk

### 'Do real journalism'

I was horrified at the "COVID-19 vaccine 'act of charity'" article (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 28). True journalism is no longer a thing.

Anthony Fauci himself has stated that the vaccine will not stop transmission, lasts for about two months and only protects the receiver by reducing their symp-

toms which might actually make them an asymptomatic carrier.

Do some real journalism please and stop spouting the official narrative. You have a moral responsibility to do the right thing regardless if it's popular or not.

— Jennifer M. Anderson  
Norfolk

## 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](http://www.catholicvirginian.org)  
**Circulation changes to:** [akrebs@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:akrebs@catholicvirginian.org)

**Publisher:** Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout

**Editor:** Brian T. Olszewski (804) 622-5225 [bolszewski@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:bolszewski@catholicvirginian.org)

**Creative Director:** Stephen Previtera (804) 622-5229 [sprevitera@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:sprevitera@catholicvirginian.org)

**Circulation:** Ashly Krebs (804) 622-5226 [akrebs@catholicvirginian.org](mailto: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.



# Shine like Stars

THIRTEEN IN THE WORLD JANUARY 2021



## A VAST COUNTRY: THE TERRITORY OF THE RICHMOND DIOCESE

FATHER ANTHONY E. MARQUES  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Throughout the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's bicentennial year, *The Catholic Virginian* has published the history of the diocese in the *Shine Like Stars in the World*. This is the final installment. The content of this section was provided by the Bicentennial Task Force.

FATHER ANTHONY E. MARQUES  
Chair, Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
Bicentennial Task Force

### *Branching Out Toward Modernity: World War II, Vatican II and Beyond (1935–2019)*

The Diocese of Richmond changed significantly as a result of World War II (1939–1945). In Virginia, as throughout the country, there was a population explosion followed by social upheavals as the “baby boomer” generation came of age.

Around the same time, a momentous event brought change within the Church: the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The implementation of Vatican II took place amid the convulsion of Western society and became intertwined with the sense of optimism, the eagerness to break with the past and the realization of personal autonomy that characterized a stormy decade (ca. 1963–ca. 1974).

A key result of these trends was that the Catholic Church in Richmond, as in the rest of the United States, faced an increasingly secular culture in the second half of the 20th century. At the beginning of the new millennium, a crisis emerged: the scandal of clerical abuse (2002–2019).

### **Bishop Barry C. Knestout: Preparing for the Diocesan Bicentennial (2018–2019)**

Barry C. Knestout (b. 1962) of Cheverly, Maryland — a priest and auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C. — became the 13th bishop of Richmond in 2018.

The bishop began his tenure by crisscrossing the diocese to learn about its people, parishes and other institutions. The regions of the diocese were reorganized into deaneries (groups of parishes) in order to foster priestly fraternity and to aid the bishop in his task of governing (2018).

As the bicentennial of the



Two priests and one transitional deacon were ordained on July 11, 2020, during the Mass marking the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Richmond. (Photo/Vy Barto)

local Church approached, a commemoration was planned to strengthen the bonds of fellowship within it and to revitalize its evangelizing mission, inspired by the exhortation of St. Paul: “Shine like stars in the world, as you hold fast to the word of life” (Phil 2:15–16).

Numerous bicentennial activities were organized: a year-long program of spiritual preparation; Masses in historic churches to recognize key events in diocesan history; pilgrimages; service projects; and, as the culmination, the diocese's first Eucharistic Congress.

The clerical abuse scandal reemerged six months into Knestout's tenure. The bishop responded to the crisis by meeting with victims of abuse. During 2018 he wrote a pastoral letter on the calamity, celebrated Masses of atonement and conducted listening sessions throughout the diocese.

Like many bishops in the United States, he published a list of all priests in the diocese against whom a credible and substantiated accusation of sexual abuse of a minor had been made (2019). These were steps toward rebuilding trust in the Church.

### *Reaping the Fruit: Diocese's Bicentennial (2020)*

With advances and setbacks, the Catholic Church in Virginia spread gradually across an expansive, uneven terrain. The 200th anniversary of the Diocese of Richmond (July 11, 2020) was a vantage

point from which to survey how Catholics in this commonwealth have practiced and transmitted their faith over that period. The Church has grown since the arrival of the first missionaries. There are now 200,000 Catholics in the Richmond Diocese, 5% of the total population. The diocese has 191 priests, 161 deacons, 139 parishes and 30 schools.

An assessment of the prospects of the Church in Virginia, written around the time of the first Catholic mission (1570–1571), is instructive. Six months after the martyrdom of his fellow Spanish Jesuits, Father Juan Rogel sensed the challenges that the Church would face in this land: “I truly fear that there will be the same hardness in them [the indigenous people] regarding conversion as in the other places we have been; and if there is to be any fruit, it will come about over time, as when they are softened by water dripping on rock.”

Perseverance has borne fruit over time, as the Catholic Church cultivated the Gospel in all types of Virginia soil, ranging from barren to fertile (Mt 13:19–23). That story of struggle, failure and modest growth is the parable of the grain of wheat: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn 12:24).

Catholics in Virginia have overcome adversity, they have committed errors, and they have bettered society in their continuing effort to serve God.

“Since now for a long time it has been implored of Us that the State of Virginia in North America, which was enclosed in the Diocese of Baltimore, be erected into a new Diocese separated from it... We... have established and decreed that... a new Episcopal Church, suffragan of Baltimore, should be erected at Richmond, which is the capital city of Virginia, and that it should embrace the whole State of Virginia, not including [the District of] Columbia.”

This excerpt from the founding document of the Diocese of Richmond specified its extensive territory. The Richmond Diocese would encompass Virginia, which at that time stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ohio River, including what later became West Virginia. (The founding document expressly excluded “Columbia” because at one point the Vatican had considered including Washington, D.C. within the territory of the Richmond Diocese.)

The United States was 44 years old, and James Monroe occupied the White House (1817–1825) when the Richmond Diocese was established.

The political organization of American territory at that time revolved around the question of slavery. The Missouri Compromise became law four months before the founding of the Diocese of Richmond. It prescribed that Maine would be admitted to the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state, and that slavery would be prohibited in territories north of Missouri's southern border — except in Missouri itself.

In Virginia, slavery was legal. Most Catholics were too poor to own slaves but supported the right of others to do so. The issue of slavery did not figure in the establishment of the Diocese of Richmond. (Several popes had condemned racial slavery, or at least aspects of it, as early as 1435, but their teachings were mostly ignored.)

With the establishment of the Diocese of Richmond, together with the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, on the same day, the Catholic Church in the United States was organized into eight dioceses that spanned the 22 states and three organized territories. Catholics were a small minority at that time in Virginia and in the country as a whole.

In 1820, there were approximately 240,000 Catholics in the United States — 2.5% of the population, and 1,000 Catholics in Virginia — 1% of the population. The Church only grew prodigiously once large-scale immigration from Europe began in the mid-1840s. The Vatican officially considered the United States to be a mission country until 1908.

The territory of the Diocese of Richmond has been changed four times in its 200-year history. In 1850, the Diocese of Wheeling was created to encompass the portion of Virginia west of the Allegheny Mountains. Richard V. Whelan, second bishop of Richmond (1841–1850), had recommended this change because he considered the diocese's existing territory too extensive.

Whelan himself had moved from Rich-

See *Bicentennial*, Page 12



# Nothing in Scripture negates the divinity of Jesus



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

**Q.** Something I heard recently at Mass bothered me. The priest, reading from the Scriptures, said: “God raised Jesus from the dead.” While this statement doesn’t exactly dispute Jesus’ divinity, it certainly doesn’t affirm it — and it could easily be construed as a denial of Christ’s divine nature. (Marietta, Georgia)

**A.** You heard the priest correctly. He may have been quoting from Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (2:23-24): “This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it.”

Neither this quote — nor any scriptural passage — negates the divinity of Jesus. The belief of the Church is that the resurrection of Jesus involved all three persons of the Trinity.

Galatians 1:1 speaks of “God the Father who raised him (Jesus) from the dead”; Romans 8:11 attributes the resurrection to the Holy Spirit; and in the Gospel of John (2:19), Jesus — speaking of his

body — says: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” So the act of raising Jesus from the dead was not accomplished by only one person of the Trinity but was the work of all three.

**Q.** I recently learned that my ex-wife is going to remarry in a ceremony to be officiated by her sister, who is a minister of the Universal Life Church. My children and I have many questions as to how this affects us and our souls regarding heaven.

If we became one during our Catholic marriage ceremony, were later divorced and the marriage was never annulled by the Church, how will this affect our chances for paradise, and what scandal is brought about by this type of behavior?

Also, will my wife be considered in good standing by the Catholic Church, and can she receive holy Communion? I certainly understand the legal and civil consequences of all this, but it is the sacramental effects that concern me and my children. (Baltimore)

**A.** I appreciate your question and your concern, but please put your mind (and especially your children’s minds) at ease. Your wife’s decision to remarry will have no effect on your children’s chances for heaven — or on yours. We are morally responsible only

for our own behavior, and neither you nor your children will have prompted your ex-wife’s decision to remarry.

As you correctly understand, the Catholic Church’s view is that marriage is a lifelong commitment and covenant. Since your marriage was never annulled by the Church, your former spouse is not eligible in the Church’s eyes to remarry.

If she does so, her new marriage will not be recognized by the Catholic Church; therefore, she will not be in good standing in the Church and will no longer be eligible to receive holy Communion at a Catholic Mass.

You and your children do have a continuing obligation to your former wife and your children’s mother — and that is to continue to pray for her, that God will bless her with his grace and draw her more closely to himself.

**Q.** I lost a close friend of mine in an accident. He was an Anglican; I don’t know his views about the Catholic teaching on purgatory, but I’ve been praying for him. I want to offer a Mass for him, just in case he is not yet in heaven. Will he benefit from that? (Uganda, Africa)

**A.** Yes, he will certainly benefit — and if he’s already in heaven, the limitless fruits of the Mass will be applied to someone

else who needs it. So you are right — and generous — to request a Mass for his intentions.

The Church’s Code of Canon Law says that “a priest is free to apply the Mass for anyone, living or dead” (Canon 901). That means a Mass can be requested for a person of any religion or none at all. (My own experience has been that people of many faiths are grateful when a Mass is celebrated for a deceased member of their family.)

Anglicans — along with most Protestants — generally do not believe in purgatory as a place of waiting and punishment for our sins. They feel this would mean that the sacrifice of Jesus was insufficient and inadequate for salvation. But many Anglicans do believe in a continuing process of growth and development after death.

The Episcopal Church’s 1979 Book of Common Prayer includes prayer for the dead, and the prayers during the Sunday eucharistic liturgy include intercessions for the repose of the faithful departed. (The Episcopal Church, based in the United States, is a branch of the worldwide Anglican Communion.)

The catechism in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer states: “We pray for (the dead) because we still hold them in our love, and because we trust that in God’s presence those who have chosen to serve him will grow in his love, until they see him as he is.”

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

## TOM HEGNA PRESENTS: DON'T WORRY, RETIRE HAPPY!

### We Will Cover:









1. Have a PLAN for Retirement
2. Maximize Social Security Benefits
3. Consider a Hybrid Retirement
4. Protect your Savings from Inflation
5. Secure More Retirement Income
6. Have a Plan for Long Term Care
7. Use your Home Equity Wisely



Sponsored by:  
Knights of Columbus



The Abbate Agency

AS SEEN ON:        

## Live Webinar: Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

Registration is free, but required.  
Reserve your spot at [abbatekofc.com/hegna](http://abbatekofc.com/hegna)



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

**THE ABBATE AGENCY**

[www.abbatekofc.com](http://www.abbatekofc.com)

Questions? 1-866-868-1492 [AbbateAgencyMail@kofc.org](mailto:AbbateAgencyMail@kofc.org)

In this presentation, Tom Hegna will simplify the retirement journey with his seven steps to retirement security. Learn how to make a trouble-free plan for retirement with a solid foundation to build on for future generations. Avoid living a just-in-case retirement and enjoy the fruits of your labor! Whether you are a late starter with your retirement planning or you have significant savings, this presentation outlines how to make the most from the least with the smallest amount of risk.





# God never tires of bestowing gifts on us



**IN LIGHT OF FAITH**  
BARBARA HUGHES

**D**uring the winter months, my home office, which also serves as my prayer room, is transformed into a summerlike garden. Bringing climate sensitive plants indoors during the cold weather has become an annual ritual that adds new life to the interior space. With the sun having free range through two large windows, my green friends continue to thrive, their new leaves offering a reprieve from winter's barren landscape.

Although some plant lovers claim that talking to plants contributes to a plant's vitality, I find that when my plants talk to me, they revitalize my spiritual life. They remind me that growth can take place all year round, even during the most unlikely times.

Inevitably, my leafy roommates turn their faces toward the sun, reminding me that the Son of God never ceases drawing us to himself, regardless of how we respond. Unlike plants that instinctively seek light, I'm not always so well disposed. When I turn my face from God, I fall short of the person God is calling me to be, and my life lacks luster.

When it comes to caring for plants, observation is key. Drooping leaves signal the need for water, whereas yellow leaves mean I've overwatered the plant. Similarly, seeds planted at baptism need to be tended. They cannot thrive without the sacraments.

If we take Jesus at his word and believe that

he is living water, then every encounter with Jesus through the sacraments is necessary for spiritual growth. Eucharist is the life stream for Catholics, but if we receive Eucharist without a proper disposition, or flood our soul with mundane concerns and distractions when we receive him, our souls are like leaves on a plant that turn yellow.

God's grace is not diminished by our lack of attention, but our soul is unable to absorb all that God has to give us. Until we are thirsting for living water, we may be taking the life-saving gift of Eucharist for granted.

Being deprived of frequent holy Communion during the pandemic has caused many to realize how much they miss it. However, thirsting for Eucharist is actually a grace working deep within the soul.

Spiritual deserts are nothing new. When David was in the wilderness of Judah, his thirst caused him to cry out: "O God, you are the God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth parched and lifeless without water" (Ps 63:2).

Current conditions, external and internal, have left many unable to receive holy Communion as frequently as in times past. Rather than lament what is beyond our control, it should prompt us to make frequent Spiritual Communions and search for ways to be Eucharist to others.

Like plants, our soul also requires more than living water. Jesus said, "Not everyone who cries 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of God but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21).

Although fertilizer boosts the growth of

plants, similarly not every good work looks or smells appealing. Caring for a sick friend or family member, setting aside personal agendas to help a person in need or holding back an unkind remark are ways to be Eucharist to others. When our actions go unnoticed or unappreciated by all except by the one who never takes his eyes off of us, so much the better.

I admit that while plants teach me about God and the hidden work of grace, they do not make very good prayer partners. I am easily distracted by their beauty when my monkey mind leaps from leaf to leaf. Therefore, closing my eyes to outside distractions helps me focus on the indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity.

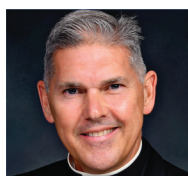
Making adjustments to limit distractions is not so different than bringing plants indoors during winter. We will never rid ourselves of distractions entirely, which also keeps us humble.

If, and when, God decides to possess our mind and heart completely, it will happen, but only when God deems that it's in our best interest. In the meantime, we put forth our best effort by doing our part and then leaving the dispensing of divine gifts to God.

Although the season of gift giving has passed, God never tires of bestowing his gifts on us. There could be no greater reassurance as we embark upon another year, amid a myriad of uncertainties, because the Light of the World continues to draw us even during the darkest of times.

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

## What to expect when Jesus says, 'Come and see'



**BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY**  
MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

**W**hen I started thinking about priesthood and after I had had some significant conversations with the

vocation director, I was invited to go to a "Come and See" weekend at two of the seminaries used by the diocese. The diocese makes the decision about which seminary you might attend, but the purpose was also to help the potential seminarian decide whether to begin the path that might lead to priesthood.

In both places, the first words I heard were, "Welcome to ..., before I give you a tour of the rest of the seminary, let me show you the chapel first." I remember thinking that this was a good sign, because obviously Jesus was the first thing of importance there.

First words are important. They set the tone for everything that follows. Jesus' first recorded words in the Gospel of John are, "What are you looking for?" These are important words, challenging words.

What am I looking for? Do I even know? Because it is only when we are looking for the answer to that question that we can come to really know who Jesus is.

We don't even have to be looking for Jesus by name, but we do have to be looking for what and who really will give meaning to my life. Maybe the question needs to be a little more nuanced.

We need to be at the stage of our life when the most important question for us is not, "What do I want?"

We need to be able to take one step more and ask, "O Lord, what do you want for me?" Or if that is too hard a leap maybe, "O Lord, where do you want me to find my happiness?"

Only when we can ask that sort of question will we hear Jesus say, "Come and you will see."

What are we invited to see if we accept

this invitation of Jesus? We will see how Jesus is in relationship with his Father. We will see how Jesus remains in the Father and how the Father remains in him. We are drawn into a relationship with Jesus who is the God/man in love and in union with the Father.

The Gospel for this Sunday says that the disciples saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. The word used to say that the disciples "stayed" with Jesus is the same word that is used to say that Jesus "remained" with the Father and the Father "remained" with him.

When we ask our question of Jesus and he invites us to come and see, he is inviting us into an intimate loving union with him that will allow us to also be in union with the Father and the Spirit.

When Jesus invites us into that union, he gives us a new identity and purpose, just as he gave to Peter. This year, take the risk taken by the two disciples. Put yourself in his presence so that he can ask you, "What are you looking for?" And if you take even one step in his direction, don't be surprised if he says to you, "Come and see."

*Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.*

### Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19**

**Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10**

**1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20**

**Jn 1:35-42**

**MORE**  
catholicvirginian.org

Information • Instruction • Inspiration





Brothers David and Paul Moore Jr. place a wreath at the grave of their father, a Pearl Harbor survivor and a Knight of Columbus, during the Wreaths Across America ceremony at All Saints Cemetery, Portsmouth, Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020. (Photo provided)

## Portsmouth Knights honor veterans

The St. Paul Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Assembly 1166 of Portsmouth honored deceased veterans with a wreath laying ceremony, Saturday, Dec. 19, at All Saints Cemetery, Portsmouth.

The Assembly partnered with Wreaths Across America in this inaugural ceremony, placing wreaths at the graves of 20 veterans, many who had been members of the Assembly and St. Paul Council 418. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participation was limited to specific participants and invited guests. According to organizers, it is the

first time a Wreaths Across America event was held at a Catholic cemetery in Virginia.

Father Daniel Molochko, parochial vicar at St. Mary Star of the Sea, led participants in prayer and blessed the 20 wreaths as well as the seven ceremonial wreaths that represented the country, all branches of military service and POW-MIAs.

Also in attendance was Stephen P. Raschke Sr., Virginia District Fourth Degree Master, who praised veterans for their service while noting the patriotic mission of Fourth Degree members.

## Guaranteed return for you. Guaranteed generosity for the Diocese.

Charitable Gift Annuity Rates	
Age (Single Life)	Annual Payout Rate
65-69	4.2 – 4.6%
70-74	4.7 – 5.2%
75-79	5.4 – 6.2%
80-84	6.5 – 7.4%
85-89	7.6 – 8.4%
90+	8.6%

Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA) offer better rates than many CDs, give you a tax deduction, and are excellent ways to pass on our Catholic heritage. A minimum contribution of \$10,000 is required to establish a CGA through the Foundation. Joint Annuity Rates differ and are available upon request. To learn more about the benefits of a CGA visit [www.richmondcatholicfoundation.org](http://www.richmondcatholicfoundation.org) or contact Maggie F. Keenan, Ed.D., Director of Planned Giving at (804) 622-5221.



# Reason to Smile!

## The COVID-19 Vaccine is Coming to Our Community

We are thrilled our residents will be among the first with the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Now is the time to join the Marian Manor family so that you, too, will have priority access to the COVID-19 vaccine.**

The vaccine will take us one step closer to returning to normal. **We look forward to the day when masks can be removed and we can see our residents' smiling faces once again—we hope that yours will be among them!**



Marian-Manor.com  Pet Friendly  
5345 Marian Lane • Virginia Beach

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



**Call 757-456-5018 today.**

Start the New Year with a smile thanks to the peace of mind that comes with a safe, new home and **significant savings up to \$3,400\*!**

\*New leases only through 1/31/2021. Restrictions apply.



Marian Manor is sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. We are open to people of all faiths.



# Los catequistas son clave para la edificación del Cuerpo de Cristo

OBISPO BARRY C. KNESTOUT

La pandemia nos ha traído muchos desafíos en como adoramos, en como recibimos los sacramentos, y en como participamos en los diferentes eventos diocesanos y parroquiales. De la misma manera, esta pandemia también nos ha presentado oportunidades para emplear nuevas estrategias de servicio a los feligreses y comunicación general con nuestra comunidad de fe.

Entre esas nuevas oportunidades está nuestro uso de la tecnología. Desde el comienzo de la pandemia, muchas parroquias han transmitido las misas en vivo a los fieles en cuarentena. Por Zoom, las personas que no han podido asistir a las reuniones de los diferentes ministerios en sus parroquias lo han podido hacer desde sus casas. Con la ayuda de la tecnología, los líderes han podido tener sesiones virtuales con los feligreses sin la necesidad de reunirse en persona.

En agosto, la Oficina de Formación Cristiana lanzó *Pathways: Delivered* (Pathways en línea), un programa en línea cuyo contenido proporciona capacitación para catequistas.

Los catequistas no son simplemente voluntarios. Son personas arraigadas en su fe que han respondido al llamado de Dios para trabajar en colaboración conmigo y con los párrocos. Ellos dan formación en la fe a los niños, a los catecúmenos del RICA, a los jóvenes y a los adultos. Como la formación en la fe es una responsabilidad enorme, los catequistas deben de estar formados y tener un buen conocimiento de



nuestra fe católica. Esto requiere un compromiso a la educación continua.

*Pathways: Delivered* (Pathways en línea) proporciona esa formación continua. A través de un proceso que ha sido desarrollado profesionalmente, el programa provee a los catequistas las herramientas y la información necesaria para dar la mejor formación posible a quienes catequizaran.

También, es importante mencionar a aquellos que son fundamentales en la vida espiritual de los niños, guiándolos hacia “un encuentro vivo con Cristo”: **SUS PADRES**. El nuevo *Directorio para la catequesis* dice: “Los padres creyentes, con su ejemplo diario de vida, tienen la capacidad más atractiva de transmitir a sus hijos la belleza de la fe cristiana”.

La catequesis de niños es más eficaz cuando

se hace en un pastoral de conjunto entre los catequistas de la parroquia y los padres que participan activamente en la formación de la fe de sus hijos. Comienza en casa con la palabra y el ejemplo y se complementa con la enseñanza formal proporcionada en los programas de educación religiosa. La formación de los niños en la fe no es algo que los padres puedan delegar por completo; debe de ser una parte integral de la vida familiar.

Si usted es catequista y aún no se ha inscrito en *Pathways: Delivered* (Pathways en línea), comuníquese con su párroco y recibe esta certificación. Gracias por responder a su llamado de catequizar a las personas en su parroquia y de darles lo que el nuevo *Directorio para la catequesis*, aprobado por el Papa Francisco en marzo del 2020 y publicado en junio, declara “un encuentro vivo con Cristo”.

Para cualquier persona que no sea catequista, los invito a participar en el programa *Pathways: Delivered* (Pathways en línea). En mi experiencia como párroco, sé que es posible que esté siendo llamado a este ministerio, pero no esté seguro de cómo responder. ¡Aquí tiene su oportunidad!

Como parroquia y como feligrés, ore por nuestros catequistas y todos los que están involucrados en la formación de la fe. Son clave en el llamado de evangelizar y edificar el Cuerpo de Cristo.

Nota: Para obtener más información sobre *Pathways: Delivered* (Pathways en línea), comuníquese con Daniel Villar: [dvillar@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:dvillar@richmonddiocese.org).

## Reembolso de pago para Pathways en línea (por tiempo limitado)

Los catequistas son los “Guardianes de la memoria de Dios” y su formación continua es una prioridad para la diócesis de Richmond.

Por tiempo limitado, la Oficina de Formación Cristiana está ofreciendo un reembolso a las parroquias que inscriben a sus catequistas para Pathways en línea. Es importante que los catequistas inscritos completen los tres cursos: Vocación del catequista, Creencias Básicas e Introducción a la Sagrada Escritura (\$35 por cada catequista). La fecha límite para el reembolso es el 4 de abril del 2021.

Las directrices para este programa de reembolso son las siguientes:

- Las parroquias deben de inscribir a sus catequistas en el LEARN portal y enviar un correo electrónico a [learn@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:learn@richmonddiocese.org) antes del 31 de enero con la lista de los nombres que participaran en este programa.

- Los catequistas deben completar los tres cursos antes del **4 de abril (Pascua)**. Si un catequista no los completa, no calificará para el reembolso.

- *Catholic Faith Technologies* les mandará a las parroquias una factura cobrando \$35 por cada catequista y es la responsabilidad de las parroquias pagar esta factura. Es importante que las parroquias apoyen la formación de sus catequistas. Si es necesario, las parroquias pueden facturar a los catequistas individuales en caso de que no completen los cursos.

- Una vez que todos los catequistas hayan completado los cursos y hayan recibido sus certificados, el líder parroquial enviará una copia de la factura del LEARN portal a [learn@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:learn@richmonddiocese.org).

- Después de que hemos recibido la factura y hemos confirmado que los catequistas han completado los cursos, la Oficina de Formación Cristiana enviará el reembolso de \$35 por cada catequista a la parroquia.





## Pope

Continued from Page 1

care of others, as Our Lady does with us.”

“The Lord knows how much we need to be blessed,” the pope wrote. “The first thing he did after creating the world was to say that everything was good and to say of us that that we were very good.”

But with the birth of Jesus, he said, “we receive not only words of blessing, but the blessing itself: Jesus is himself the blessing of the Father.”

“Every time we open our hearts to Jesus, God’s blessing enters our lives,” he said.

The example of Mary, blessed in a special way, he wrote, “teaches us that blessings are received in order to be given.”

Referring to the Latin roots of the word “benediction” — to speak well — Pope Francis wrote that “we, too, are called to bless, to ‘speak well’ in God’s name.”

“Our world is gravely polluted by the way we speak and think badly of others, of society, of ourselves,” he said. But complaining and denigrating others “corrupts and decays, whereas blessing restores life and gives the strength needed to begin anew.”

The blessing of Jesus’ birth, he wrote, is all the more amazing because God sent the savior into the world as a baby, who was formed in the flesh within the womb of Mary.

“The heart of the Lord began to beat within Mary; the God of life drew oxygen from her,” the pope wrote. “Through Mary, we encounter God the way he wants us to: in tender love, in intimacy, in the flesh.”

As 2021 begins, he said, people should make a commitment to finding time for others.

“Time is a treasure that all of us possess, yet we guard it jealously, since we want to use it only for ourselves,” he wrote. “Let us ask for the grace to find time for God and for our neighbor — for those who are alone or suffering, for those who need someone to listen and show concern for them.”

On Jan. 1, the pope offered prayers for the people of war-torn Yemen. Highlighting the connection between the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day, Pope Francis prayed that Mary, “who gave birth to the Prince of Peace and cuddled him with such tenderness in her arms, obtain for us from heaven the precious gift of peace, which cannot be fully pursued with human strength alone.”

## WHAT WE’VE HEARD



**Honored:** Dr. Lenis Echterling, a member of Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg, has been awarded the Magis Medal by Alpha Sigma Nu, the honor society

of Jesuit universities. According to the society, “The Magis Medal is awarded annually to members who best exemplify scholarship, loyalty, and service in their work to better the world.”

Among the ways he has done that is as an intervener, consultant and trainer following many traumatic events, including tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, the tsunami in India, the 9/11 attacks at the Pentagon, the shootings at Virginia Tech and landmine explosions in the Middle East.

**Good people doing good things:** While the stockings were hung by the chimney with care during the Christmas season, the staffs and residents of St Mary’s Woods Retirement Center and Our Lady of Hope Health Center collected 736 pairs of socks that Commonwealth Catholic Charities distributed to seniors they serve.

**What have you heard?** The CV would like to know what you’ve heard — or read — regarding Catholics in your community receiving honors and awards, as well as achievements, accomplishments and other good stuff. We’ll try to publish a selection of submissions in each issue of The CV. Put “What we’ve heard” in the subject line and email your item to [akrebs@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:akrebs@catholicvirginian.org). Include your name and phone number in case we need to follow up. Information cannot be taken over the phone.

## BICENTENNIAL

Continued from Page 7

mond to Wheeling in 1846, partly in the hopes of establishing a Catholic colony there. The construction of the National Road, which reached Wheeling in 1818, had made the city a gateway to the Midwest.

Later, many Italian and Irish immigrants, most of whom were Catholics, came to build the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1848–1852). The Vatican granted Whelan’s request that he be named the first bishop of Wheeling.

In 1858, the Archdiocese of Baltimore transferred control of the city of Alexandria, Virginia, to the Diocese of Richmond. This move belatedly followed a change in the city’s political status.

Alexandria had been ceded by Virginia to the new federal capital of Washington, D.C. in 1790 but was retroceded to the commonwealth in 1847. Alexandria, along with Norfolk, was home to the oldest organized Catholic community in Virginia (St. Mary’s parish, ca. 1794).

During the Civil War once Virginia seceded from the Union in 1861, numerous western counties themselves seceded from the commonwealth. Fifty counties then formed the new state of West Virginia (originally called Kanawha), which was admitted to the Union in 1863.

This political development caused civil and ecclesiastical boundaries to overlap: the Richmond Diocese now included the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, and the Wheeling Diocese encompassed southwest Virginia.

The next territorial change to the Richmond Diocese took place in 1868, when the Diocese of Wilmington was founded. This diocese encompassed Delaware and the Eastern Shores of Maryland and Virginia. Father Thomas A. Becker, a priest of the Diocese of Richmond, was named Wilmington’s first bishop.

The present territory of the Richmond Diocese was settled upon in 1974 when three changes took effect simultaneously. First, the Diocese of Arlington was created to encompass northern Virginia. As a suburb of Washington, D.C., this area had become a distinct region of the commonwealth, growing significantly after World War I and then exponentially after World War II.

Second, state and ecclesiastical boundaries between the Diocese of Richmond and the Diocese of Wheeling (soon renamed Wheeling-Charleston) were realigned, with Richmond ceding the eastern panhandle of West Virginia to Wheeling and receiving southwest Virginia in return.

Third, the Diocese of Wilmington ceded to the Diocese of Richmond the Eastern Shore of Virginia, which had been made more accessible owing to the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in 1964.

With the 1974 loss of the Catholic population of northern Virginia, and the acquisition of regions with few Catholics, the Diocese of Richmond became even more missionary than it had been for some time. Today in its territory there are 200,000 Catholics, 5% of the population. The approximately 33,000 square miles of territory in the Richmond Diocese make it the 25th largest out of 176 dioceses in the United States.



## TIME CAPSULE

Continued from Page 2

Cabinet,” a national Catholic magazine (vol. 1, February 1842), reported that he was ordained a subdeacon on Jan. 1, 1842, a deacon the following day, and a priest four days after that. The same issue also noted his death, when he was 31 years old. According to the periodical, “He was a young clergyman of unassuming manners and exemplary piety.”

The diary of James Gibbons, the fourth bishop of Richmond (1872–1877), lists Hewitt among the deceased priests buried in the first Catholic cemetery in Richmond, commonly known as the Bishop’s Cemetery:

*Priests buried in Cath. [Catholic] Cemetery Richmond*

*Nov. 19th 1875 marble slabs*

*with name were placed on the graves of the four priests buried in the Catholic Cemetery in Richmond. ...*

*Rev. Jos. [Joseph] Hewitt a young priest ordained by Rt. Rev. Bp. [Richard V.] Whelan, educated at the [St. Vincent’s] College, built by said Bishop, near our present Cemetery. (This College was burnt [in] 1856, and the property sold in 1873). Rev. Hewitt died not long after his ordination [in] July 1842. He was first buried in front of St. Peter’s Cathedral. By order of the City council his remains had to be taken up, and were buried in the College grounds, and from there removed to our Cemetery [in] August 1875.*

A misreading of the abbreviation of Father Hewitt’s name in Gibbons’ diary — “Jas.” rather than “Jos.” — probably led to his being referred to as “James” in

many subsequent sources.

The Bishop’s Cemetery was the third of four burial places for Hewitt. On Nov. 2, 1887, his remains were finally laid to rest at newly-opened Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Richmond. John J. Keane, the fifth bishop of Richmond (1878–1888), recorded in his diary the transfer of Hewitt’s remains:

*1887*

*Transfer of deceased Priests.*

*Nov. 2nd. This day, after solemn High Mass of requiem for our dead, translated to our new cemetery, with a grand funeral cortege of an immense multitude of our people, the mortal remains of the four priests whose bodies have rested in the old cemetery, as named on p. 20 of this Record [i.e., Bishop James Gibbons’s diary].*