



# The Catholic Virginian

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## It's still going to be Ash Wednesday

CAROL ZIMMERMANN  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Ash Wednesday, as with many other things right now, will have a different look at many Catholic parishes across the United States this year.

For starters, Catholic churches that are often standing-room only on this day — drawing crowds just short of the Easter and Christmas congregations — will be at their pandemic-restricted size limits with members of the congregation spread out in socially distanced seating.

Other Catholics will be watching the livestream Mass, as they have been for much of the pandemic, and will of course, not receive ashes.

Last year's Ash Wednesday Masses Feb. 26 were celebrated just weeks before the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States, so Church services and social media posts of people's ashes followed the usual tradition. It wasn't until the third week of Lent that dioceses began lifting Sunday Mass obligations and temporarily stopping public Masses.

Most churches are open now but are limiting congregation sizes and requiring parishioners to sign up for Masses. But parish life is not the same. This year, for example, there will likely be no parish pancake suppers on Mardi Gras, as there were just a year ago.

And during this year's celebration of Ash Wednesday Feb. 17, many dioceses, including the Diocese of Richmond, will be following the Vatican's recommendation of a modified method for distributing ashes: sprinkling them on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.

The note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published online in January by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

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Kate Carder and her son, Jesse, were among the 75 people protesting abortions outside the Planned Parenthood facility on Newton Road in Virginia Beach, Friday, Jan. 22, the 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade — the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. (Photo/Dan Shaughnessy)

## Remembering the unborn

While in-person commemorations of the 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade — the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion — were curtailed this year due to COVID, 75 people assembled Friday, Jan. 22, outside the Planned Parenthood facility on Newton Road in Virginia Beach to protest abortions and to pray for the unborn and their mothers.

The gathering drew par-

ticipants from St. Benedict Parish, Hope 4 Life and the Knights of Columbus, along with others not affiliated with any particular church or organization. The group prayed the Stations of the Cross, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the rosary.

During the event, Hope 4 Life noted that, due to its mobile ultrasound units, it has saved 730 babies at three local clinics since 2015 — the first year it provided the

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## Diocesan Appeal sets \$3.75M goal

Better use of technology key in this year's effort

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

The weekends of Feb. 20-21 and 27-28, worshippers at Masses celebrated throughout the Diocese of Richmond will hear something rarely heard in churches: "Please take out your phones."

Those are the weekends during which the fully digital in-pew process for giving to the Annual Diocesan Appeal will take place.

According to Alex Previtera, director of development and operations for the Catholic Community Foundation, as the 2020 appeal was concluding last fall, plans were already underway to focus on digital giving during the 2021 campaign.

"We did some capital campaigns with parishes and came up with digital in-pew processes for them," he said. "Father would talk about the impact of the capital campaign and then have a person walk parishioners through the process in real time on how to make a gift through Faith Direct."

Previtera noted that COVID has an impact upon how people give.

"In the past, all the people were in the pews. We'd pass out the cards, have people complete them and then collect them," he said.

This year, after the priest has spoken about the appeal, he will transition to what Previtera termed "an intentional five minutes to make their contributions online."

"This is something we do together. We want to capture that and maintain that," he said, noting that digital giving also makes it convenient for parishioners watching Mass via livestreams.

For those "really opposed" to online giving, Previtera said each parish will have a "very, very small box of pledge cards."

### More people online

When celebration of public Masses was suspended last March, the Catholic Community Foundation, with help from Prenger Solutions Group (PSG), aided parishes in setting up systems that allowed for members to contribute online.

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# 'Special mission' of religious gift to our diocese



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

In 1997, when St. Pope John Paul designated Candlemas Day, Feb. 2, as the World Day for Consecrated Life, he stated, "We should never forget that consecrated life, before being a commitment of men and women, is a gift which comes from on high, an initiative of the Father who draws his creatures to himself with a special love and for a special mission."

Indeed, consecrated religious — the priests, sisters and brothers who belong to religious communities — are one of the many gifts God has bestowed upon our diocese throughout its history. Whether or not you personally know or have known a religious, you may well have benefited from the "special mission" each has accepted.

That mission is based upon the service that religious exemplify in a number of ways. Among the many whose charism was health care were the Daughters of Charity who nursed the wounded during the Civil War. There were the Sisters of the Holy Ghost who administered Kings Daughters Hospital in Martinsburg. The Sisters of Bon Secours operate many of our hospitals, and completing more than 145 years, the Little Sisters of the Poor have cared for the aged in Richmond. For dozens of religious communities, past and present, quality health care has been a priority.

Our diocese and parishes have been strengthened by the presence and work of religious who have taught in our schools. Benedictines in education and parish ministry, Dominicans and Youth Apostles in campus ministry, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters and hundreds of other dedicated religious have formed thousands of youth and young adults in the Catholic faith.

Immigrants have been welcomed and become an integral part of our faith communities due to the outreach of the Comboni Sisters in Richmond and the Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph in Virginia Beach.

All of us benefit from the prayers offered by the cloistered communities such as the Visitation Sisters in Rockville, the Poor Clares in Barhamsville and the Trappist-Cistercian Sisters in Crozet.

Recognizing that our society is inundated with a gospel of consumerism that promotes consumption and possessions, that emphasizes acquisition of things, we welcome and appreciate the counter cultural commitment religious make. They embrace a life of poverty, simplicity and sharing all that they have with their community. Who they are and what they do is a total gift of self to God, the Church and all whom they serve.

Social media and entertainment media, along with a culture drowning in relativism, have led to objectifying the human person, seeing people as possessions, as another "thing" to be marketed and used. This has resulted in a disordered human sexuality void of dignity and love.

However, for religious, chastity is a vow and devotion whose fruitfulness, rooted in their marriage to the Lord, that focuses on the other and the eternal rather than on self and the immediate, respectively. Theirs is a life that espouses love for and dignity of the human person.

Another vow by which religious are guided, but which runs counter to what society values, is obedience. We live in a world of independence and being one's own person. Priority is given to doing something unique and individual, something that demonstrates you are not going along with the crowd.

Obedience is a hallmark of religious life. It involves sacrifice — another concept that is

fading from society's lexicon. In being obedient, a religious might have to put part of self aside in order to foster the cooperation that is at the heart of the community — the other religious with whom one lives, works, ministers and prays.

The example of consecrated religious life is particularly important for college students and other young adults who are considering who they want to be and what they want to do with their lives. I encourage them to open their hearts to the possibility that they are being called to this vocation.

Please join me in thanking God for the presence of the more than 25 religious communities in our diocese. Their immersion in the Gospel and service to our parishes, schools, institutions and communities at large are, in fact, that "gift from high" with which we have been blessed.

## CLERGY APPOINTMENT

The Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout, bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, has made the following clergy appointment, effective Friday, Jan. 15, 2021:

### OFFICIAL

**Father Eric J. Ayers**, dean of Deanery 1 and pastor of Blessed Sacrament, Norfolk, has been appointed as episcopal vicar of the Eastern Vicariate. He will continue in his role as dean until a new dean is named. He will remain pastor of Blessed Sacrament.

Father Ayers replaces **Msgr. Walter Barrett Jr.**, who has served as an episcopal vicar since 2004. Msgr. Barrett will continue to serve as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Hampton, and St. Mary Star of the Sea, Fort Monroe.

## Patience key virtue in religious life, pope says

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christian hope is rooted in the knowledge that God is patient with all his children, even when they stray from the path set before them, Pope Francis told consecrated men and women.

Celebrating the World Day for Consecrated Life Feb. 2, the pope told women and men religious that God's love is "not weighed in the balance of our human calculations, but unstintingly gives us the courage to start anew."

"This is the reason for our hope: that God never tires of waiting for us," he said. "When we turn away, he comes looking for us; when we fall, he lifts us to our feet; when we return to him after losing our way, he waits for us with open arms."

About 150 religious men and women, all wearing masks, were in the socially distanced congregation for the celebration of Candlemas — the feast of the Presentation of the Lord — which also marks the Vatican celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life.

Led by several candle-bearing acolytes, Pope Francis processed toward the Altar of the Chair in a darkened St. Peter's Basilica, faintly lit by the congregation's candles as the choir proclaimed in song, "O radiant light, eternal

*"Patience is not a sign of weakness, but the strength of spirit that enables us to 'carry the burden' of personal and community problems, to accept others as different from ourselves, to persevere in goodness when all seems lost, and to keep advancing even when overcome by fatigue and listlessness."*

— POPE FRANCIS

splendor of the father, Christ the Lord immortal."

In his homily at the Mass with religious, the pope reflected on the example of the elderly Simeon, who "patiently awaited the fulfillment of the Lord's promises" and the coming of the Messiah.

Simeon, he said, learned that God "does not come in extraordinary events," nor did he "grow weary with the passage of time" and lose hope.

"He trusted in the promise and did not let himself be consumed by regret for times past or by the sense of despondency that can come as we approach the twilight of our lives," the pope said.

This exemplary patience, he continued, was "born of prayer and the history of his people" who had always experienced a merciful God that remained patient for centuries, "even in the face of rejection and infidelity."

"The patience of Simeon is thus a mirror of God's own patience," the pope said. "From prayer and the history of his people, Simeon had learned that God is indeed patient."

Drawing from the example of God and Simeon's patience, the pope urged religious men and women to reflect on what role patience plays in their lives and to realize that "it is not simply about tolerating difficulties or showing grim determination in the face of hardship."

"Patience is not a sign of weakness, but the strength of spirit that enables us to 'carry the burden' of personal and community problems, to accept others as different from ourselves, to persevere in goodness when all seems lost, and

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# Diocese restructures two offices, establishes one

To strengthen and better support the Diocese of Richmond's parishes and ethnic and college communities, Bishop Barry C. Knestout announced the restructuring of two Pastoral Center offices and the establishment of a new office, effective Jan. 26, 2021.

The Office for Evangelization will now support youth, young adult and campus ministries, and the newly restructured ministries of marriage and family life. A new, stand-alone Office of Social Ministries and Respect Life has been established.

Andrew Waring, acting director of the Office for Evangelization, has been promoted to director. He joined the Office for Evangelization in 2014 as associate director for campus ministry.

Prior to working at the Pastoral Center, Waring served as the director of campus ministry at Old Dominion University and was employed by the Youth Apostles Institute. He has also served the Catholic Campus Ministry at George Mason University and Marymount University.

Waring earned a master's degree in religious education with a concentration in youth and young adult ministry from Fordham University. He also holds a bachelor's degree in history and religious studies from James Madison University.

The newly established Office of Social Ministries and Respect Life will support all aspects of social ministries, prison ministry and Respect Life ministries.

Rachael Laustrup, associate director of social ministries for the diocese, has been promoted to director of the Office of Social Ministries and Respect Life. She joined the diocese in 2018.

Laustrup holds a master's degree in international human rights from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of San Diego. She also holds certificates in international human rights law and restorative justice ministry. Laustrup has also worked with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Micronesia.



Andrew Waring



Rachael Laustrup

The Office of Christian Formation has been realigned to incorporate Hispanic Christian formation, previously overseen by the Office of Ethnic Ministries.

The Office of Ethnic Ministries will continue to focus on the pastoral, sacramental, devotional, linguistic, cultural and communal support

of ethnic groups within the diocese. These groups are the Asian, Hispanic and Native American communities. The diocese continues its search for a director of ethnic ministries.

The Office for Black Catholics remains unchanged as a stand-alone office supported managerially by the Office of Ethnic Ministries.

## Website offers support for small group ministries

Emphasizes building relationships, community among parishioners

WENDY KLESCH  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

The New Testament is filled with stories of how early Christians came together to see one another through difficult times. And so it is today, said Father Joe Goldsmith, administrator of the cluster parishes of Dinwiddie, Hopewell and Prince George, that many find spiritual nourishment and support in small group ministries.

In January, the Diocese of Richmond's Christian Formation Commission launched a website aimed at helping such small groups to fledge and to flourish.

"Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Encountering Jesus in Small Groups" is a free, online resource guide designed for anyone wondering how to start a group or for anyone endeavoring to keep a small group ministry together and thriving.

"The small group format is very life-giving," Father Goldsmith said. "It's all about building relationships – with Christ and with one another. There are certain conversations that just can't happen anywhere else."

The commission, composed of laity and clergy, began the project in the fall of 2019 with the support of the diocesan Office of Christian Formation.

"Back when we started, COVID wasn't even on the horizon," said Teresa Lee, director of evangelization at St. Mary, Richmond. "But now, small group ministry is more relevant than ever before – to help to build that sense of community we've all been looking for."

### A place to share ideas

The first step in creating the online guide, Lee said, was to look at how small groups are already working within our diocese.

Commission members interviewed representatives from more than 80 small groups —

including Bible study groups and young adult ministries, prayer circles and casual groups of retirees — from 35 parishes.

"We wanted to listen to people's experiences, to find out what worked for them and to give them a place to share their experiences with others," Lee said.

Interviewers asked the parish group leaders about the purpose of their small groups, how often they met and if they had any thoughts or suggestions to share.

"There was a lot of data," Lee said, "so we tried to identify some common threads."

The commission compiled the parishioners' tips, Lee said, into a "Words of Wisdom" page for the website, which contains advice on hospitality, meeting times and small group facilitation.

### Inspiration during isolation

Emily Filippi, diocesan director of Christian Formation, said that while interviewers gathered information from local parishes, others on the commission searched for the best resources available to feature in the online guide, including videos on how to moderate small group discussions, Zoom meeting tips, prayer guides and Bible study links.

The commission was especially grateful, she said, to Boston University and Ascension Press for allowing them to link some of their materials for free.

"We definitely put a lot of thought into how it all should be organized," Filippi said. "We wanted the site to be inviting and easy to use."

The guide places an emphasis on small suggestions that can make a big difference in keeping groups together, she said.

An environmental committee, for example, which gathers to iron, sweep and tend to plants in the sanctuary, might find inspiration and purpose by beginning their assembly with a prayer "to take a moment to identify their task,

and to reflect on how creating beauty is a way of helping others to see God's grace in the world," Filippi said.

She added that the rewards found in fostering a deeper sense of community in such groups are well worth the effort.

"There is an isolation in our times that can weigh heavily," Filippi said. "There's no real substitute for listening to one another, and laughing a little, and for sharing heartfelt thoughts."

### What seeds lay hidden?

When he was in college, Father Goldsmith had the opportunity to lead a men's Bible study group. It's an experience, he said, that has been an inspiration to him since.

"We started out as a group that didn't know one another, and we came to care about each other's lives," he said. "I was lifted up by it. I knew, even then, that I always wanted to be a part of a small group like that."

Father Goldsmith said that, while he's found a real longing among people of all ages for connection and for spiritual conversation, he also understands that the idea of facilitating a group can seem daunting.

"Some people may think that they aren't able to moderate a small group," he said, "but it's a skill you learn with practice, just like anything else."

The commission hopes the guide will help people to take that first step.

"When Jesus speaks about the kingdom of heaven, he often speaks in terms of the kneaded bread that rises, of the seed that is sown," Father Goldsmith said. "Often the work is a hidden process, and so the question is, 'What is there hidden in our own parishes that might bear fruit?'"

*Editor's note: Further information is available on the CFC website at <https://richmonddiocese.org/where-two-or-three-are-gathered/>*



# Making Catholic education reality for many

## McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation provides opportunities

**KRISTEN L. BYRD**  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

It's a familiar sight in Petersburg: dozens of children walking down the street in two straight lines. From a distance, they all look alike in their matching blue and gray clothes, but they are anything but uniform.

These are the students of St. Joseph Catholic School, one of the most diverse schools in the Diocese of Richmond. Here, the student population is roughly one-third black, one-third white, and one-third Hispanic.

Many students come from lower to middle income families who would normally be unable to afford Catholic school. However, thanks in large part to scholarships from the McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation, the majority of the students at St. Joseph received some form of financial aid.

"We do everything we can to ensure that cost never stands in the way of a student receiving a St. Joseph School education," said Kathryn McElheny, development and enrollment director of St. Joseph, "and this would not be possible without the McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation."

### Overcoming biggest obstacle

The MPSF, established by the late Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo in 2008, is named for Msgr. John J. McMahon and Francis Parater (see accompanying story). Equitable education was one of the bishop's top priorities, according to Joyce Schreiber, director of the foundation.

"He kept hearing the biggest obstacle for parents in sending their kids to Catholic school was the cost," she said, noting that Bishop DiLorenzo worked closely with advisors and the Virginia Catholic Conference to create the foundation and to get it approved by the state legislature.

MPSF functioned as an endowment until 2012 when the Virginia state legislature created the EISTC (Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits) program. The MPSF became one of the first foundations to be part of that program.

"This program is a quicker turnaround in the sense that the money people donate does not get put in an endowment. Instead, it's held for a limited amount of time. By law, scholarships have to be given out within a year of donation," Schreiber explained.

In addition, the state government gives 65% of the donation back to the donor in tax credits, which is a huge draw for potential donors. As Schreiber explained,

the average scholarship is \$5,000. With the EISTC program, donors get \$3,250 of that back in tax credits.

Scholarships go to individual students, not schools. For the



### McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation

2020-2021 school year, the MPSF provided \$3,554,696 in scholarships to 1,134 students through the EISTC program.

#### 'So much better'

After COVID-19 hit and public school was moved to all virtual learning, single mother-of-three Alison Devereaux-Smith was struggling to cope. Already on food stamps, she knew she couldn't afford to quit her job and stay home with her seven-year-old son, Benjamin.

She did some research online and found that the Diocese of Richmond was keeping its schools open for in-person learning. A product of Catholic school herself, she loved the idea of her son attending one, too. When she saw the cost of tuition, her heart sank, but a glimmer of hope followed when she saw that St. Joseph offered financial aid.

"I will never forget when I got the phone call," Devereaux-Smith said. "I literally started crying — because he could actually go! It's been unbelievable! Everything has gotten so much better."

She described her son as someone who now loves school so much that he gets upset on the weekends because school is closed. Not only is the rigorous academic program affecting her son, so is the renewed focus on faith.

"He gets a moral compass," Devereaux-Smith said. "Emotions are nurtured. I always tell him to be good and do good. To have that reiterated in the classroom on a spiritual level is invaluable."

She also values the St. Joseph community.

"I love the diversity, I love Petersburg, I love St. Joseph," Devereaux-Smith said. "It's a beautiful community with some of the nicest people I've ever met in my life. It's such a rewarding place to live."

Benjamin is one of 130 students at St. Joseph, where 55% of the students qualify for the MPSF EISTC program, meaning they are

at or below 300% of the poverty level.

For 2020, this means a family of four qualified for the program if their income was less than \$78,600. The 2020-2021 school year saw \$205,000 awarded in EISTC funds, a new record for the school.

"Catholic identity is at the center of everything we do at St. Joseph School, and I see first-hand the impact that has on the entire school community," said McElheny. "Parochial education meets the needs of the whole student — academically, emotionally, spiritually and physically. They are set up for lifelong success with a strong sense of values and discipline."

#### Providing a 'positive environment'

Jeannie McIntyre's youngest child, Jonathan ("Jack"), was struggling in public school. She and her husband were going through a divorce, and it impacted Jack's studies. Her older children went to public school, but Jack needed extra attention, patience and help. A friend suggested visiting Roanoke Catholic School, and Jeannie soon felt it was the right place for her son to be, if only she could afford it.

"The tuition was a huge obstacle," McIntyre said. "As a single mother, it would have been impossible to send Jack to RCS if I hadn't received financial aid."

The MPSF provided Jack the opportunity to attend RCS. Since then, he has thrived.

The smaller class sizes and individual attention made a huge impact on his academics, but

McIntyre credits the faith-based learning the most.

"We are a Catholic family and look to the school to provide a learning environment that supports and reinforces Catholic values," McIntyre said. "These days, parents need all the help they can get to keep their kids on track. Jack knows his Catholic faith and is growing in it every day."

Jack, now in seventh grade, concurs.

"I have made good friends, I am challenged and encouraged to learn, succeed and be a good person," he said. "It is a positive environment to grow and learn, the teachers are patient, caring and will always help you when you are struggling."

#### 'Powerful moment'

Nana Minayev was born in the Republic of Georgia before immigrating to New York as an exchange student in 2000. She soon met her husband, Mike, who is from Russia, and they married in 2001 shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Mike enlisted in the Navy and was stationed in Norfolk. He was deployed overseas when Nana gave birth to their first child, Alexander, in 2004. They relocated to Fort Lauderdale for a few years before returning to Norfolk.

Minayev said she was "shocked and devastated" after visiting public schools in the area. She then toured St. Pius X Catholic School and fell in love.

"We felt like we were home,"

*See Scholarships, Page 5*

## Who are McMahon and Parater?

When the McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation was established in 2008, it was named for Msgr. John J. McMahon and Francis J. Parater.

Ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond in 1950, Msgr. McMahon began his ministry in remote areas of the diocese using the diocesan mission trailer.

Besides his parish work, which included being the founding pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Chesterfield County, Msgr. McMahon served as diocesan director of Catholic Charities, moderator of the Catholic Interracial Council during the civil rights movement, vice president of the Richmond Community Senior Center, and board member of the Richmond Chaplaincy Association, Seton House and St. Joseph's Villa.

Prior to his death in 1982, Msgr. McMahon started an endowment to help fund Catholic schools.

Francis J. Parater was a seminarian of the Diocese of Richmond studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome in 1919. He developed rheumatic fever and died on Feb. 7, 1920.

Because his spirituality made a remarkable impression on many people during his brief life, in October 2021, the Vatican granted Bishop Walter F. Sullivan permission to go forward with the canonization process for Parater.

*Information from the McMahon Parater Scholarship Foundation*



## Appeal

*Continued from Page 1*

“This is no longer uncharted territory,” Previtiera said. “Because of all this good work we’ve done with the parishes, many are doing much better than they were, becoming more successful in getting more people online. That’s a good precursor to what we’re doing here.”

Ashley Winans, vice president of client services at PSG, noted that over the last 11 months, more parishioners have gotten accustomed to online giving.

“More and more parishes have created their own online giving forms; it’s not going to be foreign for most parishioners,” she said. “We just want to build upon that because we had such success with that. Now we’ve taken it to the next level with the appeal.”

While some people might have security concerns about online giving, Previtiera said it is a “safer, more secure” way to make a contribution.

“There’s no paperwork floating around, no checks floating around, no credit card numbers floating around,” he said.

### Seeking more donors

While the announcement weekend for the appeal is Feb. 13-14, parishioners have already heard about it at Mass or read about it on their parish websites because of bulletin inserts, homily helpers, prayers of the faithful and material for social media that PSG has provided. One reason for

the early communication is that while the average gift is increasing, the number of donors is decreasing — something is occurring in parishes and dioceses nationwide.

“The ultimate goal is to get people to participate in the appeal. We want more people to give,” Previtiera said. “In-pew is a great way to do that.”

Winans added, “The number one way to bring in new donors is in-pew.”

At a webinar for priests, Nic Prenger, founder and CEO of PSG, emphasized the importance of in-pew giving.

“Rarely do people make a first gift through the mail,” he said. “In-pew? They do it all the time.”

Prenger noted that nationally, charitable giving is up 7.5%, and that online giving is up 12% “and growing.”

“If in-pew isn’t good, then the pool of donors gets smaller,” he said.

### Pastors still the key

While emphasis will be placed on digital giving throughout the appeal and Previtiera believes that the strategies they’ve developed for a successful appeal are important, pastors “are the key to the appeal’s success.”

“There’s nothing that compares to a pastor looking at you and saying, ‘We need your help on this year’s appeal,’ and explaining how the money is used locally and for the larger Church,” he said. “Father’s role is so critical. The appeal would not be the same without our priests.”

# Appeal adapts to ‘new territory’

## Includes funding in two new areas

**BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI**  
The Catholic Virginian

**W**hen Bishop Barry C. Knestout spoke Thursday, Aug. 27, to the Pastors’ Advisory Committee (PAC) — the group that advises him in developing the case statement for the Annual Diocesan Appeal — he said, “This is new territory.”

They were familiar with that territory — parishes and a diocese impacted pastorally and financially by COVID-19. With that in mind, they listened as the first group of diocesan office directors spoke about the programs they oversee, the services they offer and the funds needed to provide them. A second group addressed the PAC on Tuesday, Sept. 22.

The \$3,749,911 goal for the appeal is only slightly higher than the 2020 goal. This, according to Alex Previtiera, director of development and operations for the Catholic Community Foundation, was possible because of the stewardship practiced by the office directors, as well as a \$63,000 decrease in the campaign’s administrative costs.

The largest amount in the case statement — \$1,275,000 under “Providing for Those in Need” — funds home mission grants, Saint Francis Home, retired priests, pastoral support and the Fuel and Hunger Fund.

When Deacon Bob Griffin, who oversees the Fuel and Hunger Fund, spoke on Aug. 27, he said that he had seen an increase in requests and had already allocated more than \$385,000 to 86 parishes and agencies.

Several members of the PAC noted that they anticipated needs would increase as the pandemic continued and advised that the Fuel and Hunger Fund receive \$475,000 from the appeal.

Previtiera said the increase of funding from \$400,000 last year was understandable.

“With everything being what it is, the Food and Hunger Fund needed a significant increase,” he said. “COVID has resulted in more people needing help, and,

in turn, has placed a greater responsibility on parish food banks and other Catholic organizations to address these needs. As the priests said, there’s going to be more need.”

The appeal, with a theme of “Building Our Family of Faith,” includes funding for two new projects.

Within the \$1,197,911 budgeted for “Building Catholic Communities,” \$50,000 will be allocated for patrimony restoration. This will assist parishes in restoring items significant to their history and culture, e.g., vestments, statues, sacred vessels, etc.

Money in “Building Catholic Communities” also supports parish sharing, international priests, clergy formation, developing lay leadership and liturgy and worship.

A commitment of \$796,000 to “Empowering the Next Generation” includes \$100,000 for “Reengagement with the Eucharist” — an initiative based upon the New Evangelization — is a follow-up to the diocese’s bicentennial and builds upon the 2014 diocesan pastoral plan, “Encounter the Joy of the Gospel: Set the World Ablaze.”

“Empowering the Next Generation” also includes funding for seminarian education, campus ministries, the Segura Educational Initiative for Children and the distance learning network.

At the PAC meeting on Friday, Nov. 13, during which the case statement was finalized, Bishop Knestout announced that for 2021 only, the diocesan/parish split of the targets for non-mission parishes would be 75/25 instead of 80/20. Money raised over the target is divided 50/50 between the parish and diocese.

*Editor’s note: Details about the Annual Diocesan Appeal, including an opportunity to donate, can be found at <https://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/>, or call 804-359-5661.*

Daily Catholic news and information at [www.catholicvirginian.org](http://www.catholicvirginian.org).

## Scholarships

*Continued from Page 4*

she said.

The only thing standing in their way was money, or lack thereof. She applied for financial aid and prayed. Soon after, she learned her family would be receiving assistance from the MPSE.

“I was jumping for joy!” she recalled. “It is such a powerful moment when you learn that someone who does not even know your child is willing to reward him with such a gift.”

The Minayev family was welcomed by the community. Alexander excelled in school, becoming an honor student and joining choir and the basketball team. All three of the Minayev children are now in Catholic school, each of them awarded some type of financial aid. Their daughter Vivien is in sixth grade and Letizia is in first grade.

“Paying for tuition is always an obstacle,” said Minayev. “Every year during re-enrollment, we trust God will be able to provide.”

Nana and Mike were members of the Eastern Orthodox Church but decided to convert to Catholicism after attending Mass and community events at church and school. After completing RCIA classes, they received confirmation as a family.

Alexander, a junior at Catholic High School, is thankful for the impact Catholic education has had on his life.

“I am blessed to have parents, CHS teachers, members and staff who support my decisions and allow me to continue my Catholic education. I love the way our faith unites so many different people regardless of their religious views and their ideas,” he said. “Being close to Christ not only by faith, prayer and attending Mass, but volunteer work that strengthens the very core of my beliefs and helps spread the message of Jesus Christ.”

### ‘Really make a difference’

Schreiber stated that while the need for aid

increased last year, so did the number of those willing to help.

“One thing we found during the pandemic is that people have become very generous and are thinking about their priorities,” she said. “My job is to help facilitate donors who want to figure out a way to make a difference with their donation, and this program is a way they can really make a tangible difference in a child’s life.”

The parents hope the scholarship support continues.

“I pray the funding stays. I really do,” said Devereaux-Smith. “This has been life-changing. I can’t imagine what it would be like now without it. I will always be grateful.”

*Editor’s note: For more information about the McMahan Parater Scholarship Foundation or to donate to it, call (804) 359-5661 or visit <https://richmonddiocese.org/office/mcmahan-parater-foundation/>.*



### Why shouldn't we speak out?

I am deeply disturbed by the letter "Don't publish political attacks" (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 11).

I feel blessed to be a Catholic and love my Catholic faith. I am a sinner and do not condemn or judge others. It saddens me, and I feel compelled to speak out when abortion is treated so lightly.

Abortion is an intrinsic evil against God's will. Abortion is a mortal sin as taught to us in the Catholic Church. My question is: Why should we not speak out to express our views in our Catholic paper of a politician running for office who believes in abortion?

– **Judy Jaworski**  
Virginia Beach

### Letter contained 'empty complaint'

A letter to the editor (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 25) complained that pro-lifers failed to condemn federal executions authorized by former Attorney General Bill Barr, a Catholic, and failed to recommend that he be refused Communion because of it. It's an empty complaint.

In 2004, the then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI said, "If a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment... he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion... There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about... applying the death penalty" ("Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles," July 2004).

The same letter of complaint to the CV also pointed out that Biden received no praise "...for saying that he would not approve executing people." When a man such as Joe Biden prefers the lives of hardened, blood-thirsty murderers to the lives of innocent, helpless unborn, that's just not praiseworthy.

– **Mary Jo Anger**  
Chester

### Letter elicited laughter

I actually laughed out loud just now when I read the letter from Marc A. Turner re: "Don't publish political attacks" (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 11).

After describing how "weary and profoundly disturbed" he is by the political attacks on Joe Biden's abortion stance and

how he "no longer wish(es) to read political attacks..." from CV readers, he proceeds to launch into an ugly attack on former President Trump and his supporters!

Some people still have no understanding that this kind of condescending intolerance is exactly why Trump was elected in the first place.

– **Cecilia Thomas**  
Mechanicsville

### Speak fearlessly about human life

In 1973, when the Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*, I was working in Washington for Msgr. James T. McHugh in the Family Life Bureau of the United States Catholic Conference.

He was the leading spokesman for the bishops on the *Roe* decision and critical of a concurrent government commission report which included the use of abortion as a means of population control. At the time, Msgr. McHugh said that we were now entering the "ideological valley of death."

The last 48 years have borne out that prophetic prediction, sadly, with over 62 million abortions in our country since then. Msgr. McHugh was a strong and steady voice for the unborn. Now, in our day, may the Church, through its leaders and faithful people of conviction, continue to speak out fearlessly, tirelessly about human life.

– **Mary Kay Williams**  
Richmond

### Don't misrepresent Church teaching

After reading the letters to the editor (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 11) regarding the publication of political criticism, I felt I must respond.

The vast majority of self-proclaimed Catholic politicians at the national level promote positions contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

By and large, Church leadership, especially at the bishop level, seems to have publicly ignored this hypocritical and scandalous pattern with only a few exceptions now and then. This has gone on for decades.

When the secular media praises a self-proclaimed Catholic politician saying, "Biden could redefine what it means to be a Catholic in good standing" (Washington Post, Dec 9), it is incumbent upon Catholic leadership to



push back.

If they do not, it is incumbent upon us to do so. We cannot be silent when someone who claims to be a Catholic has in fact worked against the Catholic Church, its teachings and priorities for almost 50 years.

We cannot allow these politicians to continue to publicly misrepresent the teachings of the Catholic Church. We need clarity on what the Church teaches about these different moral issues. These Catholic politicians must not be allowed to represent our voice. Every time they do this, and misrepresent the Church's teachings, it is incumbent upon good Catholics to speak out in opposition.

I would like to thank The Catholic Virginian for publishing these disagreements and maintaining our voice.

– **Laura Belchak**  
Hampton

### Wants ashes on her forehead

The article about sprinkling the ashes on people's heads (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 25) literally turned my stomach. Ashes on the forehead are a clear outward sign of proclaiming our faith and trust in Jesus that we are his faithful believers and that we will return to him.

The Catholic Church is more afraid of the virus than God?!? Where is the faith of our Church leaders? The Bible notes 365 times that we should not fear. It boggles my mind that the Catholic leaders want her parishioners to follow guidelines that are against God's teachings!

Why are the leaders of the Catholic Church supporting

actions that instill fear instead of having faith in Our Lord?

Stop the fear and start teaching and acting in faith of God!

– **Nancy Bobal**  
Virginia Beach

### Set limits on abortion, nuclear weapons

Jan. 22 has been an important date on our "social" calendars for decades. It is, of course, the anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion, and hence the Day of Prayer for Legal Protection for the Unborn.

This is now an additionally significant date on that same calendar. On Jan. 22, 2021, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

entered into force, outlawing nuclear weapons under International Law, weapons that target innocent children, women and men, weapons condemned by every pope since Pius XII and by the U.S. bishops.

None of the nine nuclear-armed states are interested in this treaty that has been ratified by 51 countries, with many more in the pipeline.

How great it would be if more Catholics joined forces on these two "human life and dignity" issues to exert pressure on the U.S. government and on state governments to set limits on abortion and on the abomination of nuclear weapons.

– **Chris Barrett**  
Henrico

### CV letters policy

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

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# Diocese reviewing allegations against Jesuit

## Has concluded a separate inquiry regarding former diocesan priest

On Monday, Jan. 25, the Diocese of Richmond announced that it has begun a review into allegations of child sexual abuse made against Jesuit Father Thomas P. McDonnell during his time at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Henrico County, where he served from 1996 to 2003. Father McDonnell denies the allegations.

According to the provincial for the USA East Province of Jesuits, Father McDonnell, 83, is not currently serving in ministry and has not been in public ministry since October 2020, which is prior to the time the allegation was received.

The diocese has not reached any conclusions regarding the allegations. Until this inquiry concludes, the accused is given a presumption of innocence unless the preponderance of evidence from the investigation would indicate otherwise. The diocese has also notified the civil authorities.

Jesuit Father Joseph M. O'Keefe, provincial of the USA East Province of the Jesuits, has prohibited Father McDonnell from any public

ministry while the allegations are being reviewed.

As part of the Church inquiry into the allegations, the Diocesan Review Board will make recommendations to Bishop Barry C. Knestout. Based upon its findings, the Diocesan Review Board's recommendations will assist the bishop with an appropriate response to the allegations. Then, he will make a final determination and advise the provincial of the same.

Questions related to Father McDonnell's other assignments should be directed to the USA East Province of Jesuits' director of communications at [mgabriele@jesuits.org](mailto:mgabriele@jesuits.org).

On Thursday, Jan. 28, the diocese announced that, following a lengthy investigation by the Diocesan Review Board, Bishop Knestout has determined that the allegations of child sexual abuse made against Thomas Long, a former priest of the diocese, are not credible.

For this reason, Long will not have his name added to the diocesan list of clergy against whom credible and substantiated allegations of child sexual abuse have been made.

Long voluntarily left active ministry in 1988.

On June 8, 2020, the Catholic Diocese of Richmond announced it had received a report of allegations of child sexual abuse against the former priest. The allegations were reported to civil authorities.

In accordance with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the diocese conducted an internal investigation of the allegations involving Long. The information gathered was presented to the Diocesan Review Board, which reported its findings and recommendations to Bishop Knestout. The bishop accepted their recommendations and concluded that the allegations were not credible.

Just as the diocese strives to remain transparent when child sexual abuse allegations are brought forward, the diocese will also publicly clear the accused of any wrongdoing when an accused is subjected to unsupported allegations.

*The diocesan Child Protection Policy can be viewed online at: <https://richmonddiocese.org/diocesan-policies/>.*

## Pope: Clergy must be united with faithful

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Members of the clergy should always remember they are part of the people of God and not an elite group that stands above the faithful, Pope Francis said.

In a video message sent Jan. 24 to Peruvian Bishop Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte of Trujillo, president of the Latin American bishops' council, also known as CELAM, the pope said the council's upcoming meeting with the laity highlights the importance of remaining "together with the people of God."

"This ecclesial assembly should not be a gathering of the elite, separated from the holy, faithful people of God," he said. "Do not forget that we are part of the people of God."

The message was sent to participants of a virtual meeting at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City in preparation for the Nov. 21-28 Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to CELAM, the weeklong assembly will be "an experience of listening, dialogue and encounter" that seeks to address the "challenge, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to revive our pastoral commitment and to look for new paths so that we may all have life in abundance."

In his message, the pope noted the unique nature of the assembly, which is "not a conference of the Latin American bishops as was done in past years, the last one being in Aparecida."

"No, it is something else," he said. "It is a meeting of the people of God: lay women and men, consecrated women and men, priests, bishops — the whole people of God walking together. They pray, they talk, they think, they discuss, they look for the will of God."

To ensure the assembly "opens new horizons of hope," Pope Francis said the preparation must emphasize unity because anything else would give rise to "elites enlightened by one ideology, by another, and that is not the Church."

"The Church offers itself to everyone, without exclusion. And the ecclesial assembly is a sign of this: a Church without exclusion," the pope said.

Pope Francis said another essential aspect of preparation is prayer, which serves as a reminder that "the Lord is among us."

### LENTEN MENU

## HEALTHIER THAN A FISH FRY

Every Friday during Lent, The Catholic Virginian is offering two healthy servings of spiritual nourishment at [www.catholicvirginian.org](http://www.catholicvirginian.org). Prepared by Catholic News Service's finest writers, we invite you to try one or all of the following.

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Much about which to think and pray as you journey through each week of Lent. Plenty here, so you'll want to share.

### Ash Wednesday Special!

Get your Lent off to a good start with what we're offering on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17.

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SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT THROUGHOUT LENT



# What 'descended into hell' means in the Apostles' Creed



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

**Q.** What does it mean when we say in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus "descended into hell"? That statement is not used in the Nicene Creed. It bothers me so much that when I say the rosary, I substitute "limbo" for "hell." (Charlottesville)

**A.** Since Advent in 2011, when the third edition of the Roman Missal was put into use in the United States, parishes have had the option at Sunday Mass of using the Nicene Creed or the (shorter) Apostles' Creed. I am not surprised that the words in the Apostles' Creed about Christ's descent into hell bother you, because the common understanding of Catholics has been that the word "hell" denotes the permanent abode of the devil and the damned, a place of eternal punishment from which there is no escape.

I'm not sure, though, that you'd want to substitute "limbo," since limbo has a different meaning, has never been a fixed article of belief in the Church and is even more questionable today. (In years past, it was thought by most Catholics that children who died without being baptized went, not to be with God in heaven, but to a state of natural happiness called limbo. But in 2007,

with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, the Church's International Theological Commission concluded that "there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved.")

As to the phrase "descended into hell," in early Christian times, the Hebrew word for hell ("Sheol") was ambiguous; it could mean the place of the damned, but it was also used to include the place where the righteous awaited redemption.

Until Jesus had completed his death and resurrection, the just could not yet know the joy of being in God's presence. So when the Apostles' Creed says that Jesus "descended into hell," it means that he went to rescue the just who had already died, to take them with him to heaven.

**Q.** I have often heard in church the prayer which goes, "May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace."

Shouldn't we also pray for the souls of those who may have struggled with their faith or who may never have had the opportunity to learn about God? Could we pray instead for "the souls of all the departed children of God," rather than focusing only on those who were faithful? (Indianapolis)

**A.** I couldn't agree more: We should pray for all those who have passed from this life into eternity. And we do. Prompted by your ques-

tion, I took a closer look at the four eucharistic prayers for the Mass, one of which is commonly selected for use at parish Masses. You might be comforted by the language.

In each of the four prayers, there is a section that commemorates the deceased. The first eucharistic prayer, I would agree, could be used to bolster your contention; that text says, "Remember also, Lord, your servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace."

But the other three eucharistic prayers are more clear that the prayer is universal in scope. The second one says, "Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection and all who have died in your mercy; welcome them into the light of your face."

The third reads, "To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom." And the fourth eucharistic prayer is even more specific: "Remember also those who have died in the peace of your Christ and all the dead whose faith you alone have known."

**Q.** In reading Luke 2:39-40 and Matthew 2:13-15 during the Christmas season, it appears that

there is a difference as to what happened after Jesus was born: Did the Holy Family flee to Egypt or did they return to Nazareth? (Indianapolis)

**A.** Both. Following the birth of the Christ Child and the visit of the Magi, the Holy Family fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's persecution, and then they eventually returned to Nazareth, which was their family's home.

Attempts to find a contradiction in Luke's and Matthew's infancy accounts are based on a false understanding of the Gospels. None of the evangelists claimed to have written an exhaustive chronological account of every event in the life of Christ; they wrote for different audiences (Jewish Christians and gentile Christians) and highlighted different things.

My view — and this seems to harmonize the Gospel accounts of both Matthew and Luke — is that Jesus was presented in the Temple a few weeks after his birth; then the Holy Family fled to Egypt and, after the death of Herod, returned to Palestine and settled in Nazareth.

Nowhere does Luke say that they returned to Nazareth "immediately" after the birth of Jesus. Luke 2:39 simply says of Jesus, Mary and Joseph: "When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth."

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

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# Let 'Our Lady of the Highways' be your guide



**IN LIGHT OF FAITH**

BARBARA HUGHES

**O**ur Lady of the Highways may not be one of the Church's official titles for our Blessed Mother, but anyone who's attended Sister Brenda Query's adult education sessions knows that the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the community to which she belongs, never begin a journey without invoking Mary's protection under the title of Our Lady of the Highways.

In keeping with the tradition, Sister Brenda ends every session by leading attendees to pray: "Our Lady of the Highways, be with us on our journey, for all your paths are beautiful, and all your paths are at peace." It's a fitting title and prayer since whenever Mary is cited in Scripture, she is almost always en route to one place or another.

Following the Annunciation, Mary traveled to the hill country surrounding Jerusalem to assist Elizabeth where she remained until after John's birth. No sooner had she returned to Nazareth, then once again she was traveling, this time with Joseph to Bethlehem.

Following the birth of Jesus, there was the trip to the temple in Jerusalem, the flight by the Holy Family to Egypt, and their eventual return to Nazareth. According to Scripture, the Holy Family traveled to Jerusalem every year for the feast of Passover, a practice that we can assume Mary and Jesus continued after Joseph's death.

During Jesus' public ministry, Mary was in Cana for the wedding celebration where Jesus performed his first miracle, and later she was in the company of relatives when they asked to speak to Jesus because they were concerned for his safety.

As Jesus' first disciple, Mary followed her son along the road to Calvary, and after his death and resurrection, she remained in Jerusalem until John took her to Ephesus where the apostle felt she would be safe.

Given her many travels, it's clear that Mary was fully engaged in life. She was never a passive bystander nor a distant observer of events. Although Mary's contemplative disposition is most often associated with her pondering the ways of God in her heart, it's her apostolic involvement in the service of others that testifies to the fruits of her contemplation.

Mary never used prayer or viewed the contemplative life as an escape from life's responsibilities. In fact, we do Mary a great disservice if we separate her contemplative spirit from her active life. Such dichotomies contradict the purpose of contemplation, which is union with the will of God, manifested in our thoughts, words and actions.

In "Interior Castle," St. Teresa of Avila, mystic and doctor of the Church, wrote, "Let us desire and be occupied in prayer, not for the sake of our enjoyment, but so as to have the strength to serve."

Mary's every impulse, movement and action were a direct response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not for her own sake but for the well-being of others.

Clearly, Mary's penchant for travel didn't end

with her life on earth. Throughout the history of the Church, Mary has come from heaven to instruct her children. Her many apparitions include visits to Guadalupe, Fatima, Lourdes, La Salette, Akita in Japan and Kibeho in Africa, to name a few. All remain sights that draw pilgrims from around the globe.

Neither distance nor time are too remote for Mary to travel when it comes to aiding her children on their journey to her son, but then who is more qualified than this seasoned traveler to guide us safely home, be it to our home on earth or to our home in heaven?

On Feb. 11, the Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette and revealed a spring of healing water that has become the site of countless miracles. As the pandemic continues to rage around the world, what better time to turn to our Blessed Mother and ask her to intercede for healing — not only physically, but spiritually for the many ills that plague our world?

We turn to Mary in prayer, but we can't stop there. Like Mary, we must be fully engaged in life in whatever way God is calling us. As pilgrims on the journey, we have no better example than Mary, who never gave in to cynicism, bitterness or divisive rhetoric.

In a recent Angelus address, Pope Francis said, "Mary is the road we travel to Jesus," which leads me to believe he would approve of the title "Our Lady of the Highways," even though it's not an official Marian title.

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

## Meet people where they are with respect, kindness



**BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY**

MELANIE CODDINGTON

**I**n today's Gospel, Jesus encounters a leper, an individual separated from community life and worship, because of a skin condition that marked him as unclean. Scholars agree that true leprosy did not exist in the time and locale of Jesus' ministry.

Instead, any malady that manifested as scabby, flaky skin resulted in revulsion and expulsion.

The first reading explains this circumstance. In the purity laws of

Leviticus 11-15, the human body functions as a metaphor for Jewish society, and its boundaries symbolize those of the community. Thus, rules for the body replicate rules for the community.

Whatever enters/exits the body affects the purity of the body, just as those who enter/exit the community affect its integrity. Firm boundaries for body/society are critical to preserving the purity/integrity of the Jewish community as the chosen people of the covenant. Blurred boundaries of body (flaky skin) or society (marriage outside of tribe) put the covenant at risk.

To be fair, this obsession with boundaries came to the fore after the trauma of captivity in Babylon. In their efforts to rebuild Jewish society once Cyrus of Persia sent the people home, the priest-leaders called for a return to purity.

Non-Jewish wives were dismissed, along with their children, to restore the purity and holiness of Israel.

In the Gospel, Jesus challenges these societal boundaries and the religious traditions underlying them. He does not avoid persons deemed unclean, but instead heals these outcasts and restores them to life in community.

Thus, he embodies the saving love of God portrayed in Psalm 32. With God-eyes that look into the heart, Jesus pierces the barrier-between, sees the person created in the image of

God, and restores that one's dignity and wholeness. Not surprisingly, the leper-now-healed cannot contain his joy.

St. Paul also weighs in on boundaries. He exhorts the Corinthians, "Be

imitators of me, as I am of Christ." This "do as I do" imperative reveals Paul's confidence in his pastoral approach. To 21st century ears, he sounds awfully bold. Yet his recommendation of himself as an example comes from a humble, that is, other-centered heart.

The behavior Paul promotes has consequences for effective evangelization: "Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the Church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit, but that of the many, that they may be saved." In contemporary language, we might say: For best results, meet people where they are with respect and kindness.

Corinth's Christian community included diverse members: Jews, God-fearers (Gentiles

with a special relationship to Judaism and some involvement in the synagogue), and Gentiles at large. Conflicts arose around how much of the Mosaic Law still applied. Paul preached freedom from the law but also issued correctives on the free-for-all mentality that sometimes arose in the wake of his preaching.

In the verses preceding today's selection, we read, "Everything is lawful," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is lawful," but not everything builds up" (1 Cor 10:23). Paul puts "Everything is lawful" in quotes both times, indicating that members cited these words to justify actions that harmed the community.

For example, those who still observed the Jewish dietary laws took offense when others ignored them. Others, coming into the community from Gentile origins, did not feel compelled to embrace these regulations and took offense if others refused to share food at their table. Inhospitality reigned on both sides of the argument.

Paul calls them to other-centered and community-centered thinking. In a nutshell, they are free to eat whatever comes forth from the earth with a clear conscience, unless doing so will offend the host or scandalize the community.

With this pastoral directive, Paul moves day-to-day moral decision-making into the realm of relationship — to other persons and to community. For Paul, relationships, not just rules, deserve consideration as people of faith make choices.

*Melanie holds a master's in pastoral studies from Loyola University, New Orleans.*

### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Lv 13:1-2, 44-46; Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11;**

**1 Cor 10:31—11:1;**

**Mk 1:40-45**



## Blessing of Petersburg, Emporia hospitals



Left: With a special blessing from Bishop Barry C. Knestout on Tuesday, Jan. 26, Southside Medical Center, Petersburg, and Southern Virginia Medical Center, Emporia, officially joined the Catholic tradition of Bon Secours. (Photos/Doug Buerlein)

Right: The bishop met with hospital leaders and various care teams that have served on the front-lines during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic at both hospitals. In addition, Bishop Knestout blessed crucifixes that will be hung in each hospital. All who attended the events in person or who watched via livestream also received a blessing.



## Ash Wednesday

Continued from Page 1

It said priests should bless the ashes with holy water at the altar and then address the entire congregation with the words in the Roman Missal that are used when marking individual's foreheads with ashes: Either "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return."

The sprinkling of ashes on individual heads would take place without any words said to each person.

Dioceses will respond to this adaptation based on the effects of the pandemic in their respective regions, said Father Andrew Menke, executive director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

Jesuit Father Bruce Morrill, the Edward A. Malloy professor of Catholic studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee, said a change in the way ashes are imposed might disappoint many Catholics who are accustomed to the look and feel of Ash Wednesday.

But he pointed out, as have others, that sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads is not something new but is a customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. It also has historical roots linking back to the penitent aspect of ashes.

Ashes' symbolism comes from Old Testament descriptions of wearing sackcloth and ashes as signs of penance. The Catholic Church incorporated this practice in the eighth century when those who committed grave sins known to the public had to do public penance and were sprinkled with ashes. By the 12th century, the practice of penance and either sprinkling or marking of ashes became something for the whole Church at the start of Lent.

The change for many parishes this year — where the words used prior to the distribution of ashes are just said once before the entire congregation — might also be hard for many people who would prefer to have that message told to them individually, Father Morrill said.

But he also noted that the practice of address-

ing the communal body, not just individuals, also could be important this year when many are in this very different experience together.

The priest told Catholic News Service Feb. 1 he knows that doing something different is "hard for people especially when so many are already stressed out and tired. I get that, but such are the circumstances we are in," he said, noting that amid the pandemic, Church officials are looking at ways to prevent speaking in close proximity to others or being in direct contact with them.

The choice of words prior to the imposition of ashes also is key this year because the reminder of one's mortality "to dust you shall return" is almost unavoidable with the daily increase of deaths from COVID-19, but the call to "repent and believe in the Gospel" leaves the congregation with something they have to do.

Father Morrill said other denominations have similarly been looking at ways to modify their Ash Wednesday practice. Some churches are forgoing their "Ashes to Go" traditions of giving out ashes in public sites. Others plan to hand out small Ziploc bags of ashes or to leave them at the church for members of their congregations to pick up, or they are doing away with ashes altogether.

One Episcopal leader said not having ashes was another loss of this year, while another said it might enable people to focus on the true meaning of the day.

Online Ash Wednesday resource materials provided by the Catholic Health Association for Catholic hospital and health care workers put the potential changes to Ash Wednesday in perspective.

"While Lent itself remains the same, with the global pandemic, some of our activities will have to be nuanced to fit the needs of this time — particularly Ash Wednesday," said the group.

"As we come together by staying apart, we know our celebration of Ash Wednesday this year will look very different. For many of us, this marks a full year of managing and planning around the coronavirus."

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# Bishop warns against ‘weaponization of Eucharist’

MARK PATTISON  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Bishop Robert W. McElroy of the Diocese of San Diego warned against the “weaponization of Eucharist” as a way to get Catholic elected officials, President Joe Biden among them, to adhere to the Church’s stance on abortion.

“I do not see how depriving the president or other political leaders of Eucharist based on their public policy stance can be interpreted in our society as anything other than the weaponization of Eucharist and an effort not to convince people by argument and by dialogue and by reason, but, rather, to pummel them into submission on the issue,” Bishop McElroy said.

“It would be very destructive. It would also cast the (U.S. bishops’) conference more significantly into the role of being partisan, as being associated with one party rather than the other.”

Bishop McElroy made the comments during a Feb. 1 online forum, “President Biden, U.S. Bishops and Pope Francis: How to Promote Catholic Principles in a Divided Church and Nation,” sponsored by the Georgetown Initiative on Catholic Social Thought.

Other forum panelists issued their own cautions on the issue.

## ‘Persuade, don’t condemn’

“We should try to persuade others to join us, not just condemn. We need to spend a lot more time talking about the humanity of the unborn child than whether Joe Biden can go to Communion,” said John Carr, the initiative’s co-director.

“Denying Communion — there is a reason why throughout history the Church hasn’t done this. Why it isn’t done around the world. Why almost no Catholic dioceses do this. It seems to me to be logically inappropriate, a disaster and counterproductive,” Carr said.

He illustrated a situation: “You try to keep your kids close to the Church your whole life, you try to get them to Mass and Communion and (they) say, ‘If President Biden can’t go to Communion because he’s pro-choice, I can’t go to Communion. ... I’m not going to Church.’ This is not where we want to draw this line.”

Anne Thompson, a reporter for NBC News and a Catholic who graduated from the University of Notre Dame, recalled doing “this piece that I did for the ‘Today’ show on Biden’s faith (and) was looking at what John F. Kennedy said in 1960 when he spoke to that convention of Baptist ministers at the Rice Hotel in Houston. He said, ‘I do not speak for my Church on public matters, and the Church does not speak for me.’ Fast-forward 61 years,” she said, “and that seems not to be enough anymore.”

## Reducing common good to a single issue

“Some bishops want to recast the presence and tone of the (bishops’) conference in the public order,” Bishop McElroy said.

“They argue that abortion is not merely a preeminent issue in Catholic social teaching, but rather constitutes the de facto litmus test for determining whether a Catholic public official is a faithful Catholic and for determining whether the overall policy stances of non-Catholic officials can be considered morally legitimate,” he added. “If adopted, such a position will reduce the common good to a single issue.”

Helen Alvare, a professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University in Virginia, and the first public information director for the bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life

*“I do not see how depriving the president or other political leaders of Eucharist based on their public policy stance can be interpreted in our society as anything other than the weaponization of Eucharist and an effort not to convince people by argument and by dialogue and by reason, but, rather, to pummel them into submission on the issue.”*

— BISHOP ROBERT W. MCELROY

Activities when she was hired in 1990, did not dismiss the possibility of sanctions.

“We know that bishops have excommunicated folks for failure to integrate schools, etc. We know this is the case. But there is something different” about abortion, Alvare said. “The Church has 2,000 years of theology it can bring this to bear on what is a theological question.”

“Whether not just allowing it, but say, President Biden’s statement, ‘Gee, if Roe (v. Wade) is overturned, I’m going to make sure the states cannot protect human life because I’m going to codify it at the national level. I’m going to make sure you’re not able to protect them,’ that is really amazing,” she continued.

“So many issues are questions of differences of opinion of how to protect the common good. This is different,” she said.

## ‘Missing opportunities’

“Abortion is different. So is racism. That’s a fundamental and that’s a big part of why I could not support Trump and why I ended up supporting Biden in spite of his position on embracing the extremism of his party,” Carr said. “Separating children from their parents at the border is different and demands a response.”

He added, “The reason why Catholics in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and Michigan supported Biden, it’s not because he was gonna repeal the Hyde Amendment (which bans feder-

al funding for abortions with some exceptions), but he was gonna lead with some empathy and try and heal the country.”

By focusing on abortion, “you miss the opportunities” to find common ground, Thompson said.

One example was Pope Francis’ dialogue with then-President Barack Obama. Observers, she noted, dwelt on Church objections to the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act only to be surprised to learn of the pope’s role in brokering regularized relations between the United States and Cuba.

Pope Francis does not want to get involved in a nation’s politics, but “somebody’s always trying to reel him into that,” she added, taking note of the encounter during the pope’s 2015 U.S. visit with Kim Davis, the county clerk from Kentucky who had refused to issue marriage licenses for same-sex couples.

Davis “had a brief meeting with the pope, and it was blown up to be a 30-minute private audience, and then it was pulled back and pulled back, and the Vatican put out two press releases saying it was nothing more than a quick meet and greet. And then finally, the pope released the video of him meeting with his former student, who is a gay man, and his partner. And so you see that pushback,” Thompson said.

“And I think you saw that pushback” again, she added, “when Pope Francis very publicly said he met with Cardinal (Blase J.) Cupich (of Chicago) the day after he (the cardinal) opposed President Biden’s letter (written by Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the U.S. bishops’ conference) on the day of his inauguration.”

## ‘Many threats to human dignity’

In his Inauguration Day statement, Archbishop Gomez expressed hope the Biden administration would work with the Church “and others of goodwill” to “address the complicated cultural and economic factors that are driving abortion and discouraging families.”

For the U.S. bishops, he said, the “continued injustice of abortion” remains the “preeminent priority,” he said, but “‘preeminent’ does not mean ‘only.’ We have deep concerns about many threats to human life and dignity in our society.”

“Many people, many Catholics and leaders like Archbishop Gomez, like Bishop McElroy, like Pope Francis,” Carr added. “A friend of mine said, ‘If you ever got your act together, you’d be dangerous.’ My fear is we don’t have our act together.”

## Bishops support Biden’s racial equity orders

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairmen of two U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committees welcomed recent executive actions by President Joe Biden to address racial equity in housing and the use of private prisons by the federal government. The orders will reduce discrimination in federal policies, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, head of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, head of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said in a Feb. 1 statement.

One order directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development to review the Trump administration’s repeal of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule,

a plan to tackle housing discrimination and segregation. Put in place by President Barack Obama’s administration, the rule required cities and towns to examine their housing patterns for racial bias, report the findings and set goals for addressing segregation.

The second order directs the Department of Justice to phase out the use of private prisons, which hold about 14,000 of the 2 million people incarcerated in the U.S.

“To decrease incarceration levels, we must reduce profit-based incentives to incarcerate by phasing out the federal government’s reliance on privately operated criminal detention facilities,” Biden’s order said.



## 'No longer the Inquisition' Congregation promotes doctrine of the faith

CAROL GLATZ  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Established almost 500 years ago, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is no longer “the Inquisition” — rather, its main focus is handing down the teachings of the apostles, said the office’s prefect.

“Our mission is to promote and protect the doctrine of the faith. It is a task that will always be necessary for the Church, which has the duty to transmit the teaching of the apostles to the next generation,” Cardinal Luis Ladaria Ferrer, congregation prefect, told Vatican News Feb. 1.

Called the Sacred Roman and Universal Inquisition when it was instituted in 1542, the congregation was initially a tribunal exclusively for cases of heresy and schism, but soon its responsibilities were expanded to include “everything relating directly or indirectly to faith and morals,” according to the congregation’s website.

Of the many people examined in the early days, the one mentioned most often is Italian scientist Galileo Galilei, who was found “vehemently suspect of heresy.” St. John Paul II issued a declaration in 1992, recognizing the error of Galileo’s trial.

The Index of Forbidden Books was originally entrusted to the Inquisition until it became its own congregation for three centuries until 1917 when its duties were again handed back to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office — the Inquisition’s new name after it was reorganized by Pope Pius X in 1908.

It was again reformed in 1965 by St. Paul VI and renamed the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Index of Prohibited Books was also abrogated.

Cardinal Ladaria told Vatican News, “The past of our congregation still weighs heavily, since we have not always acknowledged the profound changes that have taken place in the Church and in the Roman Curia in recent times.”

“We are no longer the Inquisition; the index no longer exists,” he said.

“What was called the ‘concern for correct doctrine’ came about before the Holy Office, it already existed in the New Testament” and it can be seen in the many councils and synods held since, he added.

“Certainly, the concrete way of carrying out this task has changed over the course of the centuries and we can imagine that it will continue to change,” the cardinal said. “But the concern for fidelity to the doctrine of the apostles will always remain.”

According to the office’s website, the methods used for doctrinal examination were updated in the 1965 reforms, emphasizing that “over the punitive tendency of condemnation, the positive disposition of correcting from the errors, together with protection, preservation and promotion of the faith, prevailed.”

In 2001, St. John Paul II charged the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the authority to handle cases of accusations of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy and an updated version of these norms was promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010.

The changes allowed the Vatican to identify and judge reported cases and issue sanctions more rapidly than had been the case before.

Regarding this aspect of the congregation’s work, Cardinal Ladaria said, “We must study and resolve the many cases of abuse of which we become aware.”

“And in dealing with these cases, we raise awareness, we support trust in the Church, of the people involved, showing that in the Church there is no impunity,” he said.

He said the “ad limina visits,” which bishops from around the world make periodically to the Vatican to report on the state of their dioceses, “are fundamental to raising awareness of the problem among the episcopates of the various countries. Unfortunately, in recent months, because of the pandemic, we have had to suspend these meetings.”

Even with its focus on “doctrine,” he said the congregation still seeks to respond to Pope Francis’ call to reach out and respond to modern-day “peripheries” and to be close to the poor and marginalized.

“There are peripheries of many kinds. The people we must listen to, the problems we must solve touch real peripheries, perhaps not as visible as others, but no less real and painful. Let us not forget that in not a few circumstances the victims of abuse are among the poorest of the poor,” he said.

## Archbishop: ‘Biden doesn’t define Catholic doctrine’

MARK PATTISON  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The head of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities called President Joe Biden’s stance on abortion “religiously and ethically incoherent” during his homily at the opening Mass of the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life Jan. 28.

Biden “proudly professes to be a devout Catholic even as he promises to codify Roe v. Wade, seeks to force American taxpayers to fund abortions ... and desires to force the Little Sisters of the Poor to provide contraceptives and abortifacients in their employee health plans,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas.

“Sadly, President Biden is the perfect example of the religiously and ethically incoherent straddle: claiming to believe that human life begins at conception and personally opposing abortion, while doing everything within his power to promote and institutionalize abortion not only in the U.S.A. but also around the world.”

He added, “The people of the United States have entrusted enormous power and responsibility to President Biden. However, the presidency does not empower him to define Catholic doctrine and moral teaching.”

Archbishop Naumann made his remarks in a startlingly empty Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington as coronavirus restrictions capped the number of those in attendance at 250.

What’s more, March for Life organizers, because of the pandemic and security issues arising from the rioting at the Capitol three weeks earlier, decided on an all-virtual march, except for a small contingent of pro-life leaders making speeches on the National Mall, followed by a walk up to the U.S. Supreme Court Jan. 29.

Archbishop Naumann called the seating of Amy Coney Barrett on the Supreme Court “one of the unanticipated blessings of the past year.”

“The makeup of the court has vastly improved in the last four years,” he added. “There is legitimate hope that the U.S. Supreme Court could modify or even reverse the decisions that we commemorate each year,” a reference to the Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions in 1973 that legalized abortion throughout the country.

As Barrett noted during her confir-

mation hearings, Archbishop Naumann said, “the Roe and Doe decisions are far from having the features of settled law as evidenced by the many statutes passed in state legislatures annually testing and challenging the assumptions of Roe and Doe.”

He offered a refutation of the notion held by some Christians that the Bible is “silent on the morality of abortion.”

“What these Christians ignore is how frequently the Scriptures speak about the wonder, awe and beauty of life in the womb. The Bible speaks of children as a blessing. In fact, fruitfulness is recognized as a great gift from God,” Archbishop Naumann said.

He cited passages from the Scripture readings used at the Mass: Isaiah’s declaration that “for now the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb”; the psalmist’s proclamation that “truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb”; and Luke’s Gospel account of Mary meeting her kinswoman Elizabeth, who tells the Blessed Mother, “For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant of my womb leaped for joy.”

The number of those watching the Mass on the basilica’s YouTube channel topped out at 1,189 at the end of Archbishop Naumann’s homily -- a far cry from the 10,000-plus who would ordinarily cram into the nation’s largest Catholic church for the vigil’s opening Mass. But by 8 the following morning, YouTube had recorded 9,540 views.

District of Columbia restrictions for attendance at religious services call for a maximum of 25% of capacity or a limit of 250, whichever number is smaller.

The Archdiocese of Washington sued the city Dec. 11 over what was then a cap of 50 on attendance. Five days later, Mayor Muriel Bowser, in response to the suit, increased the limit to 250 and by Dec. 22, city and archdiocesan officials announced the suit was settled.

The entrance procession alone at past vigil Masses would itself feature more than 250 bishops, priests, deacons and seminarians and last 30 minutes; this year, there was just Archbishop Naumann and three altar servers.

The usual overnight activities at the Basilica -- which in years past have had thousands of young people packed into the church’s lower level for hourly Holy Hours and around-the-clock confessions, and perhaps a bit of sleep — were either canceled or done online.

## Bishops say relief bill must promote dignity

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Six U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committee chairmen urged each member of Congress to support much-needed pandemic relief legislation that promotes “the dignity and value of all human life” and protects “poor and vulnerable people who are most at risk.”

In a Feb. 3 letter to legislators, the chairmen said relief measures are necessary to assist struggling families, businesses, charities, schools and hospitals and other entities.

The prelates also stressed “in the strongest possible terms” that the funds and policies included in any legislation be used to “promote life-affirming policies and not to advance the destruction of innocent unborn human life. We similarly express the importance of strengthening and upholding families to our national recovery and of avoiding policies that may erode their integrity or well-being,” they said.



## Religious

Continued from Page 2

to keep advancing even when overcome by fatigue and listlessness," he said.

Pope Francis also proposed "three settings" in religious life where patience can become a concrete reality, beginning with one's personal life.

While religious men and women at one point responded to God's call by offering their lives "with enthusiasm and generosity," the pope said there are times when hard work fails and eventually, "the ardor of our prayer cools and we are no longer immune to spiritual aridity."

"We have to be patient with ourselves and await in hope God's own times and places, for he remains ever faithful to his promises," the pope said. "Remembering this can help us retrace our steps and revive our dreams, rather than yielding to interior sadness and discouragement."

Community life, he continued, is another area where patience is needed, especially when conflicts arise with "no immediate solution" and only time can help "to pre-

serve peace and to wait for a better time to resolve situations in charity and in truth."

"Let us keep in mind that the Lord does not call us to be soloists, but to be part of a choir that can sometimes miss a note or two, but must always try to sing in unison," the pope said.

Lastly, religious men and women must show patience in their relationship with the world. The pope called on those in consecrated life to follow the example of Simeon and Anna, who "did not complain about how wrong things are, but patiently looked for the light shining in the darkness of history."

"We, too, need that kind of patience, so as not to fall into the trap of lamenting that 'the world no longer listens to us,' or 'we have no more vocations,' 'these are not easy times,'" Pope Francis said.

"These are real challenges for our consecrated life: We cannot remain stuck in nostalgia for the past or simply keep repeating the same old things. We need patience and courage in order to keep advancing, exploring new paths and responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit," he said.



Seventy-five pro-life advocates, including members of St. Benedict Parish, Hope 4 Life and the Knights of Columbus, pray in front of the Planned Parenthood facility on Newton Road in Virginia Beach, Friday, Jan. 22 — the 48th anniversary of the Supreme Court legalizing abortion. (Photo/Dan Shaughnessy)

## Unborn

Continued from Page 1

mobile service.

Knights of Columbus councils represented at the protest/

prayer service included Father Habets 4632, San Lorenzo 12378, Immaculate Conception 16226, St. Matthew 10601 and St. Benedict 9056.

# Pope establishes World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly

## Will coincide with feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis announced the establishment of a World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly as a reminder of the important role they play as a link between generations.

During his Sunday Angelus address Jan. 31, the pope said the day will be celebrated every year on the fourth Sunday of July to coincide with the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, Jesus' grandparents. The first celebration of this day will be July 25.

"It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents because — as the prophet Joel says — grandparents, before their grandchildren, will

*"It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents because — as the prophet Joel says — grandparents, before their grandchildren, will dream and have great desires, and young people — taking strength from their grandparents — will go forward and prophesy."*

— POPE FRANCIS

dream and have great desires, and young people — taking strength from their grandparents — will go forward and prophesy," he said.

Highlighting the Feb. 2 feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the pope said the recognition of Christ as the Messiah by the elderly Simeon and Anna is a reminder that "the Holy Spirit still stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today."

"Their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and safeguards the roots of peoples," he said. "They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young."

"Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on," he added.

In a statement published shortly after the pope's announcement, Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, said the yearly event was "a gift to the whole Church" that emphasizes the pastoral care of the

elderly as "a priority that can no longer be postponed by any Christian community."

"In the encyclical, 'Fratelli Tutti,' the Holy Father reminds us that no one is saved alone. With this in mind, we must treasure the spiritual and human wealth that has been handed down from generation to generation," he said.

Cardinal Farrell added that "today, more than ever, we are committed to making every effort to dismantle the throwaway culture and to enhance the charisms of grandparents and the elderly."

The dicastery said Pope Francis will mark the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly July 25 with an evening Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. However, the Mass will be "subject to sanitary regulations in place at the time."

"Closer to the world day, the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life will announce any further initiatives that will mark the event," the statement said. "As of now, the dicastery is inviting parishes and dioceses around the world to celebrate this world day at the local level in ways that are suited to their pastoral context."

## Mary, Lazarus join Martha on calendar

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Recognizing their welcome of and witness to Christ, Pope Francis has approved changing the liturgical feast of St. Martha to include her sister and brother, Mary and Lazarus, on the Church's universal calendar of feast days. The names of Mary and Lazarus will be added to the July 29 feast on the General Roman Calendar, the universal schedule of holy days and feast days for the Latin rite of the Catholic Church.

The Vatican Feb. 2 published the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments' decree ordering the change in calendars.

Signed by Cardinal Robert Sarah, the con-

gregation's prefect, the decree said Pope Francis approved the memorial for Martha, Mary and Lazarus after "considering the important evangelical witness they offered in welcoming the Lord Jesus into their home, in listening to him attentively, (and) in believing that he is the resurrection and the life. In the household of Bethany, the Lord Jesus experienced the family spirit and friendship of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and for this reason the Gospel of John states that he loved them," it said. "Martha generously offered him hospitality, Mary listened attentively to his words and Lazarus promptly emerged from the tomb at the command of the one who humiliated death."



## OPPORTUNITIES

**Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School** (grades Pre-K-8), seeks a dynamic and highly qualified candidates for the position of principal beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

The successful candidate will be committed to fostering and maintaining a Catholic environment that is an authentic expression of Catholic faith, with the goal of producing faithful graduates where everything done in and through the school expresses love for and obedience to Jesus Christ and his body, the Church.

Must have working knowledge of the Church's teachings regarding Catholic identity and the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools; and, will possess a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence, with an emphasis on innovative learning skills, teaching methods and curricula.

**Responsibilities:** Enable the spiritual growth of students, faculty and the school community; work collaboratively with the pastor, school advisory board, faculty and parents to foster a learning environment deeply rooted in the Church's teaching on Catholic identity, where Christ's principles guide every dimension of the school's life and activity; assess and oversee the school's academic programs and faculty effectiveness; communicate effectively with students, families and the community; represent the school in the parish community and greater community; and oversee non-academic matters including, but not limited to, enrollment management, planning, budgets, development and marketing.

**Qualifications:** A practicing Catholic who possesses a master's degree in education administration and supervision or a related field and five years teaching and/or administrative experience, holds a Virginia license in administration and supervision, and possesses excellent organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.

**Salary:** Commensurate with experience. Submit an introductory letter summarizing qualifications, a résumé and a completed diocesan application to Principal Search Committee at [lourdesprincipalsearch@richmonddioocese.org](mailto:lourdesprincipalsearch@richmonddioocese.org). Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until filled. The new principal is expected to begin Thursday, July 1, 2021.

For more information about Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, visit <http://lourdesrva.org>

**Catholic Diocese of Richmond is seeking an associate director for campus ministry.** The associate director for campus ministry will supervise, support and oversee all campus ministry activities for the 68 colleges and universities within the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Focus will be on the development and support of all campus ministry staff members, creation of resources and programs for college students, and the formation and implementation of a comprehensive vision for campus ministry across the diocese.

**Qualifications:** A minimum of a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in a field related to theology or pastoral ministry as well as a minimum of five years of prior professional experience in campus ministry is required. Must have strong managerial, organizational and people skills in order to support the many staff members that they supervise. A practicing Catholic in good standing, a thorough knowledge of Church teachings and fluency in relevant Church documents on evangelization are required.

This is a full-time position with night and weekend work occasionally occurring, primarily during the academic year. Interested candidates should please send a cover letter, résumé and completed Diocese of Richmond employment application to [jobs@richmonddioocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmonddioocese.org).

**Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Virginia Beach,** is seeking a parish secretary.

The parish secretary will be responsible for answering calls and receiving visitors with Christian hospitality. The parish secretary will work closely with the clergy and staff to serve a large parish as we strive to grow as disciples of Jesus while navigating unprecedented circumstances. As such, a welcoming disposition and collaborative spirit are essential.

Primary duties include: answering phone calls and email correspondence to the parish office; creating and transmitting the weekly bulletin and other notices; recording and maintaining parishioner census records; posting collection data to our online system; recording Mass intentions; providing administrative support to the ministerial staff.

Candidate should be an active Catholic in good standing; effective communicator and team player, willing to demonstrate creativity in problem solving and promoting the mission of the parish; high school diploma or equivalent (with college education preferred); possess computer skills and be proficient with word processing software. Literacy in graphic design and social

media is desirable.

This is a full-time position (40 hours per week) and non-exempt. Previous experience, particularly in a parish setting, is highly desirable. Interested applicants should submit the Diocese of Richmond application along with a cover letter and résumé to Father Matt Kiehl via email: [FatherMatt@holyspiritvb.org](mailto:FatherMatt@holyspiritvb.org).

**St. Pius X School, Norfolk,** is seeking an administrative assistant for the current school year. Ideal candidate must have office experience, attention to detail, ability to multitask and provide great customer service. The ability to communicate fluently in Spanish is a plus. Interested applicants should send a cover letter, résumé, two current letters of reference and diocesan application to: Mark Zafra, principal, St. Pius X Catholic School, 7800 Halprin Drive, Norfolk, VA 23518 or email materials to: [mzafra@piusxparish.org](mailto:mzafra@piusxparish.org).

## SHORTTAKES

**Join Msgr. Patrick Golden,** pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke, on a **Pilgrimage to Poland, Prague and Budapest,** Sept. 18-30, 2021. We will reflect on the lives of St. Faustina and St. Pope John Paul II. In addition, experience scenic and historic Central Europe. 13-day tour for \$4,299 including airfare, hotels, tours, meals, Mass every day in holy places, including at Our Lady Victorious, home of the Infant Jesus of Prague, and much more.

For further information, please contact: Alba Kim: 804-298-4035 or email: [tours@albastours.com](mailto:tours@albastours.com) or visit [www.albastours.com](http://www.albastours.com). Reservations are available now. Space is limited. COVID policies available upon request.

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6 roses \$25  
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# El Papa: no a la información fotocopiada sin desgastar las suelas de los zapatos

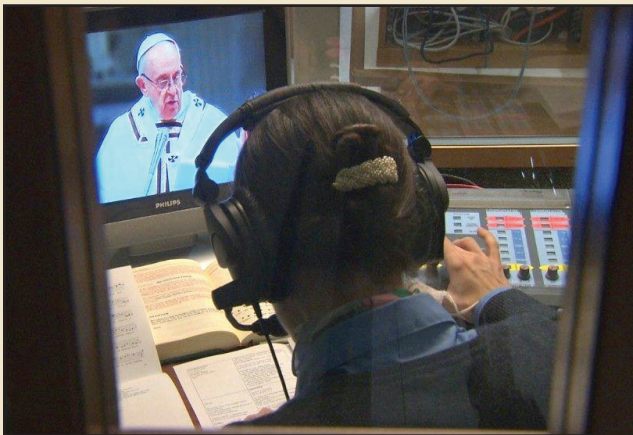
En su Mensaje para la 55ª Jornada Mundial de las Comunicaciones Sociales sobre el tema “Ven y verás” (Jn. 1, 46). Comunicar encontrando a la gente donde y como está”, Francisco advierte del riesgo de una información siempre igual, exhortando a ir “donde nadie va” y a no contar la pandemia sólo con los ojos del mundo más rico.

DEBORA DONNINI  
Ciudad del Vaticano

La llamada a “venir y ver” es también “el método de toda auténtica comunicación humana”. Este es el corazón del Mensaje del Papa Francisco para la 55ª Jornada Mundial de las Comunicaciones Sociales sobre el tema “Ven y verás” (Jn. 1, 46). Comunicar encontrando a la gente donde y como está”, publicado hoy, en vísperas de la memoria de San Francisco de Sales, patrón de los periodistas.

## “Ven y mira”, así se comunica la fe cristiana

El Mensaje del día contiene, por tanto, esa invitación que Felipe dirige a Natanael - “Ven y verás”, como narra el pasaje del Evangelio de Juan que inspira el tema-, que no consiste en ofrecer un razonamiento, sino un “conocimiento directo”. “Desde hace más de dos mil años -subraya el Papa- es una cadena de encuentros que comunican la fascinación de la aventura cristiana”. Por otro lado, “en la comunicación, nada puede sustituir completamente a la visión en persona”. Para cada “expresión comunicativa” que quiera ser honesta, el Papa sugiere, por tanto, la invitación a “venir a ver” la galaxia comunicativa actual, desde los periódicos a la web, pero



Archivo. Radio – estudio de grabación. (Vatican News)

también la “predicación ordinaria de la Iglesia”, así como la “comunicación política o social”.

## Fuera de la presunción de “ya conocido”

En su discurso tiene un gran peso la dinámica de ponerse en marcha con pasión y curiosidad, de salir “de la cómoda presunción de lo ‘ya conocido’”. En cuanto a la actualidad, el Papa advierte del riesgo de verse aplastado por “periódicos fotocopiados” o “por teleradios y páginas web sustancialmente iguales”, en los que las investigaciones pierden espacio en beneficio de la “información preempaquetada y ‘de palacio’”. Esta información, recuerda, “es cada vez menos capaz de interceptar la verdad de las cosas y la vida concreta

de las personas, y ya no es capaz de captar ni los fenómenos sociales más graves ni las energías positivas que se liberan desde la base de la sociedad”. Para Francisco, por tanto, “la crisis de la industria editorial corre el riesgo de llevar a la información a construirse en las redacciones, frente al ordenador”, “sin ‘gastar las suelas de los zapatos’”.

## Escollos y oportunidades de la web

La web con los medios sociales puede, pues, multiplicar la capacidad y la velocidad de difusión de las noticias -por ejemplo, para las emergencias en los primeros servicios de comunicación a las poblaciones- y ser así “una herramienta formidable”. “Todo el mundo”, dice el Papa, “puede convertirse en testigo de acontecimientos que de otro modo serían pasados por alto por los medios de comunicación tradicionales” y hacer que “sur-

jan más historias, incluso positivas”. Por otro lado, existe el riesgo de una comunicación social “sin verificación”. Por tanto, no debemos demonizar la herramienta, sino tener una mayor capacidad de discernimiento asumiendo la responsabilidad a la hora de difundir contenidos.

## Pandemia y doble contabilidad

El horizonte de la pandemia, que se extiende por el mundo desde principios de 2020, marca de forma decisiva este Mensaje. El Papa advierte que se corre el riesgo de contarla, al igual que todas las crisis, “sólo con los ojos del mundo más rico”, de llevar una “doble contabilidad”. La reflexión de Francisco se dirige, en este sentido, a la cuestión de las vacunas y la atención médica, al riesgo de exclusión de las poblaciones más pobres. “¿Quién nos hablará -pregunta- sobre la espera de la curación en los pueblos más pobres de Asia, América Latina y África?”. Se trata de un peligro que también afecta al “mundo de los más afortunados”, donde “el drama social de las familias que han caído rápidamente en la pobreza permanece en gran medida oculto”. Así pues, las diferencias económicas corren el riesgo de marcar el orden de distribución de la vacuna anti Covid, con los pobres siempre en último lugar y “en principio, el derecho a la salud afirmado” pero “vaciado de su valor real”.

## Gracias a los periodistas que informan de las guerras olvidadas

Desde el corazón del Papa viene un agradecimiento por el valor de tantos trabajadores de la comunicación. Es gracias a los periodistas, a los camarógrafos, a los editores, que a menudo se arriesgan en su trabajo, “si hoy -dice- conocemos, por ejemplo, la difícil condición de las minorías perseguidas en diversas partes del mundo; si se han denunciado muchos abusos e injusticias contra los pobres y contra la creación; si se han denunciado muchas guerras olvidadas”. Sería un empobrecimiento, señala, que estas voces se perdieran.

# Francisco: Jesús es el único “maestro de vida”

MICHELE RAVIART  
Ciudad del Vaticano

Los santos y el hilo rojo de la fe que se convierte en sustancia y materia de estudio y enseñanza. El Papa los evocó durante su saludo a los grupos lingüísticos tras la catequesis de la audiencia general. A los fieles de lengua polaca, Francisco les recordó que hoy la Iglesia celebra la memoria litúrgica de Santa Ángela Merici, fundadora de la Compañía de Santa Úrsula. Retomando el tema de la catequesis que acababa de impartir -la importancia de acercarse a la Biblia dejándose sorprender y acompañando la lectura con la oración-, Francisco subrayó cómo Santa Ángela, “inspirada por la Palabra de Dios”, “deseaba que las religiosas, dedicadas sin reservas a Dios y a los pobres, asumieran con valentía el trabajo educativo entre los niños y los jóvenes”, y les recomendaba que se mantuvieran en “el antiguo camino” y vivieran una “vida nueva”.

## La Palabra es cercanía de Dios

La atención del Pontífice a la relación entre el creyente y la Escritura le ha llevado, como es sabido, a proclamar cada año una jornada dedicada a ella, en el tercer domingo del tiem-



En sus saludos durante la audiencia general, el Papa recordó las figuras de Santo Tomás de Aquino, patrón de las escuelas católicas, y de Santa Ángela Merici, una vida dedicada a la “educación en el signo de la Palabra de Dios”.

po ordinario. Y en el segundo “Domingo de la Palabra” que acaba de celebrar la Iglesia hace tres días, el Papa recordó cómo la Escritura nos permite tocar con nuestras manos la cercanía de Dios, una cercanía “que no puede alejar al prójimo, no puede alejarlo en la indiferencia”.

## Santa Angela Merici y la educación

A partir de la espiritualidad de Santa Ángela

Merici, reiteró el Papa, han florecido numerosas congregaciones de Ursulinas, en las que la educación y la instrucción de las jóvenes ha sido esencial desde la fundación. De hecho, el Papa, que lanzó el Pacto Educativo Global, ha sostenido a menudo que la educación es la vía fundamental para construir un mundo más fraterno y más justo y el camino principal para todo cambio.

## Santo Tomás, sabiduría que infunde valor

De una maestra de formación, al “maestro” por excelencia, el “Doctor Angelicus”, Santo Tomás de Aquino, cuya fiesta litúrgica es mañana y a quien Francisco recordó con su título de patrono de las escuelas católicas. Fue el Papa León XIII quien otorgó este título al dominico, teólogo y doctor de la Iglesia en 1880 con el breve Cum hoc sit, que reconocía su sabiduría, “la perfecta coincidencia entre razón y fe”, la virtud y la santidad. Que el ejemplo de Tomás de Aquino dijo el Papa en su saludo a los peregrinos de lengua italiana, “anime a todos, especialmente a los estudiantes, a ver en Jesús el único maestro de vida; mientras que su doctrina los anime a encomendarse a la sabiduría del corazón para cumplir su misión”.



# Youth poet laureate the pride of her parish

Members see Amanda Gorman 'in a very endearing way'

CAROL ZIMMERMANN  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Long before she burst into the public spotlight delivering her inauguration poem, Amanda Gorman got a standing ovation from fellow parishioners of St. Brigid Church in Los Angeles for reciting a poem she wrote about the parish.

And on Jan. 20, at the inauguration ceremony of President Joe Biden, parishioners watching this young woman on their TV screens — addressing political leaders and the nation at large about courageously rebuilding the country — applauded her all the more.

Floy Hawkins, former director of religious education at the parish for over 20 years, said her phone did not stop ringing after the inauguration, with friends asking if she saw, heard or knew about Gorman's role.

"You see her? Look at that little girl!" fellow parishioners were saying because as Hawkins put it: "We still see her in a very endearing way."

There also were plenty of Facebook and Instagram posts about this, but Hawkins said her generation doesn't use social media as much, though they're fine with texting.

And even though they were thrilled for Gorman, parishioners of the historically Black church didn't see her performance as a "solo act," because Gorman has always been at the parish with her twin sister, Gabrielle, and her mom. Hawkins felt that sense of family when cameras followed Gorman joining her mother when she finished her delivery.

St. Brigid pastor Josephite Father Kenneth Keke also didn't just see Gorman in that moment but felt she represented the entire parish in South Central Los Angeles — which is predominantly African American but now also has a growing number of Latinos, Filipinos and white parishioners too.

"We are a community; everyone here is important," the priest said. "Whatever belongs to the parish belongs to everyone; in our parish, the success of anyone is the success of all."

It's also the pride of all.

"Parishioners are very much proud of her," the priest, from Nigeria, told Catholic News Service Jan. 22, adding that he personally knew she would go far. "She is a very, very intelligent young lady. The first time I saw her, I knew that one day she was going to be very important."

This pride is displayed on the parish website with photos of Gorman and the words: "We celebrate and congratulate Amanda Gorman: 2021 inauguration poet. Youngest in history." Similarly, the parish Facebook and Instagram accounts posted a single photo of Gorman at the inauguration with the words: "Our very own Amanda Gorman."

Hawkins recorded that part of the inauguration and plans to watch it again. She told CNS that when she saw Gorman approach the podium and begin speaking, she was "in awe ... to see such a young African American female be at such a pinnacle point of the world." She also said it humbled her "from a spiritual perspective of God's graces and mercies," since she knew the national youth poet laureate from Gorman's middle school days.

As adolescents, Gorman and her sister went through a two-year training program at the parish and then received the sacraments of baptism, first Communion and confirmation on the same day.

When she graduated from high school to



Youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman reads a poem during the inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States at the Capitol in Washington, Jan. 20, 2021. She is a parishioner at St. Brigid Catholic Church in Los Angeles. (CNS photo/Patrick Semansky, pool via Reuters)

attend Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gorman received a scholarship donation from the parish. The pastor said she always returned to the church when she visited home.

In recent months, he hasn't seen Gorman, who graduated last year, but he also hasn't seen many of his parishioners due to coronavirus Mass restrictions.

Hawkins, in her role at the parish which numbered 750 families prior to the pandemic, was impressed by the Gorman sisters from the start, saying they were brilliant intellectually and socially with quiet but confident personalities.

She also remembered Amanda's speech impairment that caused difficulty in saying certain letters, which the poet has overcome and spoken about. Hawkins once overheard a student asking Amanda why she talked the way she did, and Amanda replied that it was just her East Coast accent.

"I was so happy when I learned she had acknowledged publicly that she had a speech impediment, what a release for her," Hawkins said.

Gorman, who had been writing and developing her own style since she was a young girl, was named the Youth Poet Laureate of Los Angeles at 16, and it was around that time she wrote the St. Brigid's poem that she recited at the end of a Mass commemorating the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The parish assistant choir director, knowing of Gorman's work, had asked her to consider doing it.

That Gorman stepped up to the plate, then and now, is something Hawkins admires. When she saw her on the Capitol stage in her yellow coat and red headband, she knew Gorman had taken "ownership of the opportunity."

"Sometimes people ask you to do something and you say: 'Oh, I don't know if I could do it,'" she said.

"I don't get the sense that was her response when the first lady invited her to speak at the inauguration," Hawkins added. "I believe she immediately said yes, as we are encouraged to say: 'Yes Lord.'"

Hawkins prayed for Gorman before the poet introduced herself to the country as the "skinny

Black girl, descended from slaves and raised by a single mother" who can "dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one."

But as she listened to the 22-year-old's strong, clear voice she said to herself: "Glory be to God. ... Look what you have done in the world!" And she felt the strong connection too — that the poet's description of finding light in dark times was something the people of St. Brigid's knew all too well.

What a time for our Catholic faith and our African American culture, she thought.

She also was pleased that Gorman, named the National Youth Poet Laureate in 2017, "didn't minimize or dismiss" the insurrection at the Capitol just two weeks before but spoke of not losing hope when terrible things happen.

Her poem, "The Hill We Climb," speaks in part of a country "bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free" and adds: "We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation."

It ends with the promise of rebirth and reconciliation, saying: "Our people diverse and beautiful will emerge, battered and beautiful ... For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

Father Keke said the poem reflected "what we preach here at St. Brigid's" about liberation and redemption, which he said also is emphasized in the parish's music and art. Her words on unity had a strong spiritual connection, the priest added.

The parish is planning to celebrate Gorman's achievement in some small way soon and in a bigger way once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

And the country at large is already celebrating her. Just hours after the inauguration, Gorman's books jumped to the top of best-seller lists.

"She is definitely a light, an inspiration to us all," said Hawkins, who said the current buzz around Gorman simply validates who she is and will take her further than she ever imagined.

She also has no doubt Gorman will continue to courageously move forward, but not alone.

"She takes God with her," she said.