



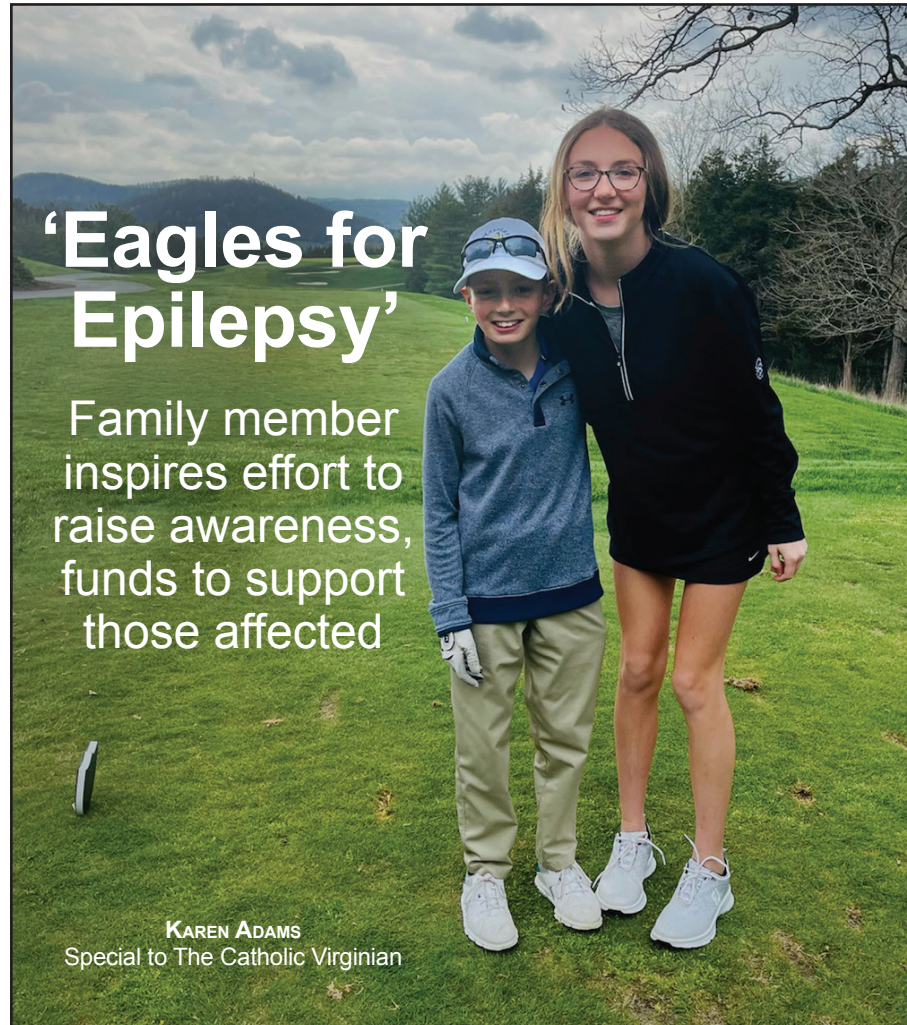
# The Catholic Virginian

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## ‘Eagles for Epilepsy’

Family member inspires effort to raise awareness, funds to support those affected

KAREN ADAMS  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Brother and sister James and Katherine Stewart regularly play golf together. Inspired by James, Katherine formed a charity, “Eagles for Epilepsy,” to raise funds to help support families of children with epilepsy. (Photo/Angela Stewart)

Roanoke Catholic School fourth grader James Stewart, 10, admires St. James not only for his name, but also for his courage and persistence. Likewise, James, who was diagnosed with epilepsy at age 2, has learned to be persistent in his own life, especially while playing his favorite sport: golf.

On May 1, a golf tournament created in his honor, Eagles for Epilepsy Charity Golf Tournament, will be held at Roanoke Country Club to raise money for local families facing the many challenges of epilepsy.

“I feel good about the chance to help other people with epilepsy, and to let them know they’re not alone,” James said.

Inspired by her younger

brother, Katherine, 14, came up with the idea of founding Eagles for Epilepsy, a non-profit designed to support local families of children living with epilepsy and to raise awareness about the illness. Katherine, who hopes to become a physician someday, knows firsthand how James’ illness has been a challenge for her family and presented her idea to her brother and parents, Jason and Angela, in late 2019.

“We want to help other families, and we want to inspire others to know that they can get through whatever they’re going through,” Katherine said.

According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy in his or her

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## Bishops to vaccine developers: ‘Stop using abortion-derived cell lines’

Asking faithful to contact pharmaceutical companies

JULIE ASHER  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities has launched a campaign urging Catholics to write letters to pharmaceutical companies urging them to stop the use of abortion-derived cell lines in the development and testing of vaccines.

Among the companies singled out are Pfizer, Moderna, Astra-Zeneca and Johnson & Johnson for their COVID-19 vaccines, GlaxoSmithKline for its Shingrix shingle vaccine, and Merck for its MMR, Chickenpox, and Hepatitis-A vaccines.

The secretariat provides sample letters on the USCCB website, <https://www.usccb.org/resources/letters-pharmaceutical-companies>. The letters include the names of top officials and the address for each company.

Each letter starts out with a thank-you to the company for developing its lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine, in this case Moderna, but goes on to say: “It is my understanding, however, that in testing this vaccine, Moderna made use of a cell line derived from an aborted baby.

“I am respectfully urging Moderna to stop relying on such cell lines. ... I believe it is immoral to use abortion-derived tissues and/or cell lines in the production, testing or manufacture of vaccines and other pharmaceutical products.”

In December, as the first COVID-19 vaccines developed by

Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the companies geared up to begin to distribute their two-shot vaccines around the country, concerns were raised over their testing and development and any connection they may have had to abortion-derived cell lines.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued a number of joint statements on these concerns.

They confirmed that “an abortion-derived cell line was used for testing” the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, but this cell line was “not used in their production.” They also noted that cell lines used were derived from fetuses aborted in the 1970s.

Later, after a third, one-shot COVID-19 vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson received FDA approval, the prelates said this vaccine had “additional moral concerns” because it was “developed, tested and is produced with abortion-derived cell lines.”

The prelates said the Pfizer and Moderna connection to these troubling cell lines was more remote than that of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, adding that “if one can choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion-derived

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The Catholic Virginian  
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# Evangelization is sharing what we receive



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

**D**uring spring and the Easter season, we look forward to newness. That is especially true this year as we step out of what has seemed to be a year-long Lent given the impact the pandemic has had upon us.

We welcome pleasant weather, take up activities that were curtailed due to COVID and personally reconnect with family and friends. We also embrace the return to our parishes where we can nurture our faith in communities of faith.

As trying as that long Lent was, one benefit was that it allowed more time for experiencing either familiar or newer forms of prayer and for deepening our relationship with Jesus. In doing so, we were preparing ourselves to help carry out the reason for our Church's existence — to evangelize.

Evangelization does not require one to have advanced theological degrees nor is it a responsibility exclusive to the ordained. As Pope Francis stated in his apostolic exhortation, "The Joy of the Gospel": "In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization" (119).

The pope continues, "The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged [emphasis added] in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love" (120).

In our prayer, worship and reception of the sacraments — all elements through which we deepen our faith — we receive the basic tools to hand on the faith. That is why the return to

our parish and faith communities is so vital to the life of our Church, for it is in these communities that we experience Christ in the Eucharist, in Scripture and in each other. What we receive, we share. That is evangelization.

Evangelization is not easy. We are being asked to step out of our comfort zones into a culture that is increasingly indifferent or even, at times, hostile to the Gospel. In evangelizing, we are following in the steps of Christ, thus we might be dismissed, misunderstood or ridiculed, verbally attacked and discriminated against.

As important as words are in evangelization, so, too, are deeds. How we act within our families, our places of employment, our encounters with the public. If we act with integrity, charity and holiness, these are moments of evangelization, of how a follower of Christ gives witness to the Gospel.

In our Church, evangelization is visible through works of charity in our nursing and care facilities, hospitals, St. Francis Home, Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul conferences. As Catholics, we are motivated by our mission to love those around us, especially those in need, to provide practical care and service for them. That care becomes another evangelizing moment.

At neither the diocesan nor parish level can evangelization be seen as just another "program" that takes time, energy and resources to carry out. Since evangelization is our calling, mission and purpose, it is embedded in all programs, in all forms of outreach.

Evangelization should be the lens through which we view all the activities of our Church. As Pope Francis said, it makes the kingdom of God present in our world.

Taking up the call to evangelize helps us answer this question: How are we bringing the Word of God not only to our families, friends and neighbors, but especially, as Pope Francis instructs, "above all the poor and the sick,

those who are usually despised and overlooked" ("The Joy of the Gospel," 48)?

During this Easter season, as we listen to the Acts of the Apostles and learn how Jesus' followers encountered Christ risen from the dead, drew encouragement from those encounters and were inspired to spread the Good News, let that fire and enthusiasm be instilled within our hearts. Let us recommit to evangelizing, to joyfully proclaiming the Good News of our Risen Lord.

## Bishop sends condolences to Archdiocese of Kampala

**B**ishop Barry C. Knestout has extended condolences to the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda, following the death of Archbishop Cyprian Kizito Lwanga on April 3.

Archbishop Lwanga, 68, was a priest for 42 years and a bishop for 24 years, including nearly 15 as head of the Kampala Archdiocese.

In an April 13 letter to Bishop Paul Ssemwogerere, apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, Bishop Knestout noted the relationship between the Archdiocese of Kampala and the Diocese of Richmond.

"For many years, through the kindness of Archbishop Lwanga, the Richmond Diocese has been blessed by the fruitful ministry and pastoral leadership of five priests of your archdiocese — Father Joseph Wamala, Father Anthony Mpungu, Father Gerald Musuubire, Father Alexander Muddu and Father David Martin Ssentamu. Our partnership has been one of mutual support and deep respect."

## Pope calls all Catholics to be missionaries of God's mercy

CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

ROME — Like the disciples, who experienced Jesus' divine mercy after the resurrection, all Christians are called to become missionaries, sharing the Gospel of God's love and mercy with others, Pope Francis said.

"Today Jesus tells us, too, 'Peace be with you! You are precious in my eyes. Peace be with you! You are important for me. Peace be with you! You have a mission. No one can take your place. You are irreplaceable. And I believe in you,'" the pope said April 11.

Pope Francis celebrated the Mass for Divine Mercy Sunday at the Rome Church of the Holy Spirit, just a block away from St. Peter's Square. The church is the Rome Shrine of Divine Mercy, a devotion begun by St. Faustina Kowalska and promoted by St. John Paul II.

Because of COVID-19 restric-

tions, fewer than 100 people were present for the Mass, wearing masks and seated only two people to a pew, except if they were members of the same family.

At the end of the Mass, Pope Francis thanked those invited: nurses and doctors from the hospital next door, refugees, people with disabilities, priests serving as "missionaries of mercy," inmates from several correctional institutes and representatives of Italy's

civil protection service. The pope told them they represent "realities where mercy becomes concrete, draws close and serves those in difficulty."

After reciting the "Regina Coeli" prayer with those present, the pope greeted each individual personally, shaking hands, blessing them and even posing for a few selfies.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Francis focused on how,

prior to the resurrection, the disciples misunderstood so much of what Jesus said and how they abandoned or even denied him at the hour of his passion and death.

But when the disciples are hovering in fear in the closed room, he noted, the Risen Lord appears to them and "raises them up with his mercy."

"Having received that mercy, they become merciful in turn," the pope said. "It's very difficult to be merciful if you have not been shown mercy."

Saying, "Peace be with you," Jesus sets their troubled hearts at ease and forgives their failings, he said, lifting them up and filling them with the courage they need to be his witnesses.

"The disciples were guilty; they had run away, they had abandoned the master," the pope said. "Sin brings torment; evil has its price. Our sin, as the psalmist says, is always before us."

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***"Let us not remain indifferent.  
Let us not live a one-way faith,  
a faith that receives but does not  
give, a faith that accepts the gift but  
does not give it in return."***

— Pope Francis



# ‘Eucharistic Miracles’ catechize parishioners

## Poster displays in Bedford, Moneta emphasize real presence

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

In a time of great hunger for Christ, the faith of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the Italian teenager who catalogued miracles of the Eucharist before his death in 2006, is alive in southwest Virginia. Two parishes recently created educational exhibits based on his life's work, “The Eucharistic Miracles of the World.”

Father Sal Anonuevo, pastor of Holy Name of Mary, Bedford, and Resurrection, Moneta, learned about Blessed Carlo last fall and wanted to share the eucharistic miracles project with his parishioners. He heard of a church that filled its empty “social distancing” spaces in pews with displays describing the miracles and thought Holy Name of Mary could do the same.

“Also during this pandemic, it seemed like a good time to focus on the Eucharist,” Father Anonuevo said.

Since the December installation of posters depicting 10 selected miracles, he has seen many people studying them – adults, teens and children, as well as students from nearby universities.

“People can hardly believe all those miracles around the world, and some of them are recent,” Father Anonuevo said. “I was surprised myself. There were some that I didn’t know.”

### Inspired by 15-year-old boy

Carlo Acutis (1991-2006), whom Pope Francis called “a 15-year-old boy in love with the Eucharist” and who was beatified in October 2020, was a devout Italian Catholic who used his computer skills to design a Vatican-approved website listing validated eucharistic miracles (“Miracoli Eucaristici”) around the world. The project, begun when he was 12, was completed one year before his death from leukemia.

Father Anonuevo approached Paul Roderique, evangelization chair at Holy Name of Mary, with his idea about an exhibit of eucharistic miracles using posters available on Blessed Carlo’s website. Roderique liked the idea, and so did the parish’s Brotherhood of Catholic Men, a group that gathers to pray and make rosaries.

“In one of our meetings, we had discussed what we could do to promote the real presence of Christ, because not enough Catholics understand or believe in it,” Roderique said. “So when this project presented itself, it was an answer to a prayer.”

Using about \$500 from both the evangelization budget and from sales of the group’s popular “St. Dominic’s Daggers” – “track-



ing” rosaries with moveable beads to mark one’s place in prayer – the parish selected posters to download, which Roderique formatted, printed and mounted on foam core for display.

Each miracle is described in detail and illustrated with full-color images. Roderique said the miracles chosen covered a range of dates, i.e., from the Middle Ages to 2013, and areas, e.g., Europe, South America and Central America.

### ‘Remember who you are’

Many of the miracles describe bread and wine becoming flesh and blood before people’s eyes, and in some cases, the evidence is still on display, many years or even centuries later.

People tend to have their favorite miracles, Roderique noted. One that struck him is the 1906 miracle of Tumaco, Colombia, when a priest held up a host on the beach as a tsunami rose and suddenly subsided.

“The confidence of that priest to walk down to the shore in the face of that tsunami,” he said. “I thought, ‘Whoa, how come I didn’t know about all this?’”

Two miracles often shared by parishioners involve animals. One is the miracle of Salzano, Italy, in 1517, in which a priest carrying the Eucharist to an invalid came upon two donkeys. They bowed, walked with him to the house, bowed again and walked back with him until they reached their pasture.

The other is the 1348 miracle of Alboraya-Almacera, Spain. A priest crossing a river by mule fell into the water and dropped the chalice holding three hosts. Moments later, a fisherman found three fish, each holding a host in its mouth. When the priest held the chalice down to them, they placed their hosts inside and swam away.

“Everybody loves the animal stories,” said Tony Rivera, who belongs to the evangelical team and men’s group at Holy Name of Mary. “Animals have a different sense than we do.”

He also said the timing of this information – during what have been difficult and painful months for so many – is remarkable.

“We need to be reminded of the Blessed Sacrament and what it can do for us, right now, and not just what it has done in the past,” Rivera said. “Maybe this is part of a great reawakening in the Church, a way of telling us, ‘Remember who you are.’”

### Teaching tool

Soon after the posters were installed, Tony and Sue Werner of Resurrection Parish attended Wednesday adoration at Holy Name of Mary. They were transfixed by the miracles.

“We read every one of them,” Tony Werner said, adding that even as a “cradle Catholic” he had not heard of many of them. “We thought this was something we needed to do at our parish, too.

We knew it would be a wonderful teaching tool for everyone, especially for our youth.”

He contacted Roderique for help in getting a set of posters made for Resurrection. That church now has its own exhibit of different miracles, which, because it has chairs instead of pews, are displayed around the nave on easels.

Tony Werner said he believes knowledge of these miracles will help increase respect for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It’s deepened his own faith as well. “I don’t normally do things like this, but I felt called to it,” he said, surprised at his involvement in the project. “The good Lord uses us to do his will.”

### More focus on Eucharist

The project is growing. Sue Werner’s brother, who lives in the Werners’ hometown of St. Marys, Pennsylvania, asked Roderique to help create posters for his parish, Sacred Heart.

Karen McCloskey, the evangelical chairperson at Resurrection, hopes that word will continue to spread about this exhibit, which she calls a “treasure of the Church.”

“It makes you wonder how many little miracles do we have every day in our own lives?” she said.

McCloskey noted that the local Smith Mountain Lake community, which draws scores of visitors, can benefit from seeing the posters.

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**Left: Holy Name of Mary parishioner Deirdre Stevens reads one of “The Eucharistic Miracles of the World” panels after Mass on Holy Thursday, April 1, in Bedford. Above: One of the 44 posters shared by Holy Name of Mary and Resurrection Parish, Moneta. (Photos/Paul Roderique)**



# Pro-life billboard encourages prayers for the unborn

Sign on I-95 in Richmond one of 24 across the South

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

The Diocese of Biloxi Pro-Life, Mississippi, is hoping to touch the hearts of thousands of people with its pro-life billboard erected in Richmond earlier this month. Karen Rhodes, ministry president, said, based upon information provided Lamar Advertising, it is expected that it will receive 327,000 impressions (views) as people drive by the sign depicting Mary cradling the infant Jesus in her arms. On it is written “Chose Life Pray Pray Pray.”

Standing on I-95 South at the Second St. exit, the billboard is one of 24 signs scattered across southern United States. Others are along highways in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Texas, South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina.

“We put up a very loving billboard. It doesn’t condemn anyone. It doesn’t show awful pictures,” Rhodes said.

“I think when people see it, it really touches them because it is a very simple billboard, but it’s very, very powerful. People just fall in love with it,” Rhodes continued. “When they see it at night when it is illuminated, it really touches people’s hearts.”

The billboards are placed in strategic locations on busy highways near abortion clinics, Rhodes said. The collective weekly views are 8.2 million.

Rhodes said a goal of the ministry is to put one billboard in each state and is next considering posting billboards in Tennessee and near the Missouri/Illinois border near Planned Parenthood mega-clinics.



A billboard like this one was recently erected along I-95 in Richmond. The signs appear in nine southern states and are part of an outreach started by the Diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi, Pro-Life. (Photo provided)

The pro-life initiative also has a banner with the image on a Gulfport, Mississippi city bus and placed one on a New Orleans bus during Mardi Gras in 2020. Youth from St. James Parish, Gulfport and St. Patrick Parish, Biloxi carried a banner and posters with the image at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. in January 2020.

In material submitted to The Catholic Virginian, Rhodes said “the most critical issue in the world today is protecting the life of the unborn.”

According to National Right to Life, since Roe v. Wade, the landmark case legalizing abortion in 1973, there have been an estimated 62,502,904 abortions in the United States. It estimates that this year there will be 862,320 abortions.

In January 2019, a group of 11

parishioners at St. James, Gulfport, , decided to create a pro-life billboard initiative. Penny Sullivan, who came up with the idea, designed the sign based on a popular statue sold in her Gulfport gift shop. Originally the ministry was a parish one called St. James Pro-Life Billboard Initiative, but Bishop Louis F. Kihneman III brought the ministry under the umbrella of the Diocese of Biloxi about three months ago because of the project’s widespread efforts and effectiveness, Rhodes said.

She hopes the billboards will convince women on their way to abortion clinics to change their minds and that the signs will inspire people to pray for the end of abortion.

“We have to be a voice for the unborn,” Rhodes said.

Like the other billboards, the Richmond sign will stay up for a limited time unless enough money is raised at the local level to extend the timeframe. For Richmond, that means raising \$6,000 to \$9,000.

The ministry relies heavily on local media, especially Catholic newspapers, to raise awareness of the signs and generate donations. There are smaller efforts such as special collections at Masses or baby bottle campaigns in Catholic schools wherein students fill bottles with money.

Pre-COVID, ministry members gave a short presentation at the end of Masses in localities with the billboards, and they were available for questions and discussion in the commons afterwards. At one visit, a woman approached them after Mass to say that a pregnant woman on the way to get an abortion saw the sign and instead went to the adoption agency the woman manages.

“We felt like that was a message for us, that what we’re doing was working and to keep doing it. That’s why we’ve kept going forward,” Rhodes said. “This mission is our Blessed Mother’s. We go forward, and she opens the doors.”

*Donations may be made by using the Venmo app: @dioceseofbiloxi or by check sent to Diocese of Biloxi Pro-Life, 1790 Popps Ferry Rd., Biloxi, Ms. 39532, Attn: Karen Rhodes. Write “pro- life” on the memo line. You may contact Rhodes at 228-297-7704 or Michele Pisciotto, MD, Biloxi Diocese’s director of Pro-Life Ministries at 228-697-1367.*

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# Plan to address abuse existed 30 years ago

## Chicago cardinal says its implementation would have spared 'many children'

MARK PATTISON  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — When Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago developed a comprehensive plan over a two-year period, in 1991 and 1992, to address clerical sexual abuse issues in the Illinois archdiocese, he provided a copy of those procedures to all his fellow U.S. bishops at their annual meeting.

"Their response was decidedly mixed," Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Chicago's current cardinal-archbishop, said in recounting these efforts by the late prelate.

"Imagine if all the bishops had taken those documents home and fully implemented them in their dioceses, how much further ahead we would be ... how many children might have been spared," he said.

Cardinal Cupich made his remarks as part of a quartet of clergy who delivered separate prerecorded messages during an April 9 session, "The Role of Faith and Faith Leaders in Preventing and Healing Child Sexual Abuse."

It was part of an international symposium, "Faith and Flourishing: Strategies for Preventing and Healing Child Sexual Abuse," presented April 8-10 by the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's Institute for Quantitative Social Science.

The event also was sponsored by numerous organizations, including the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and The Catholic Project at The Catholic University of America.

Cardinal Bernardin "submitted himself to the archdiocesan review process" when he was falsely accused of abuse, Cardinal Cupich said. "Cardinal Bernardin reached out to his accuser when he recanted, he prayed with the young man as he was dying and offered him pastoral care and reconciliation. His example speaks powerfully to me today."

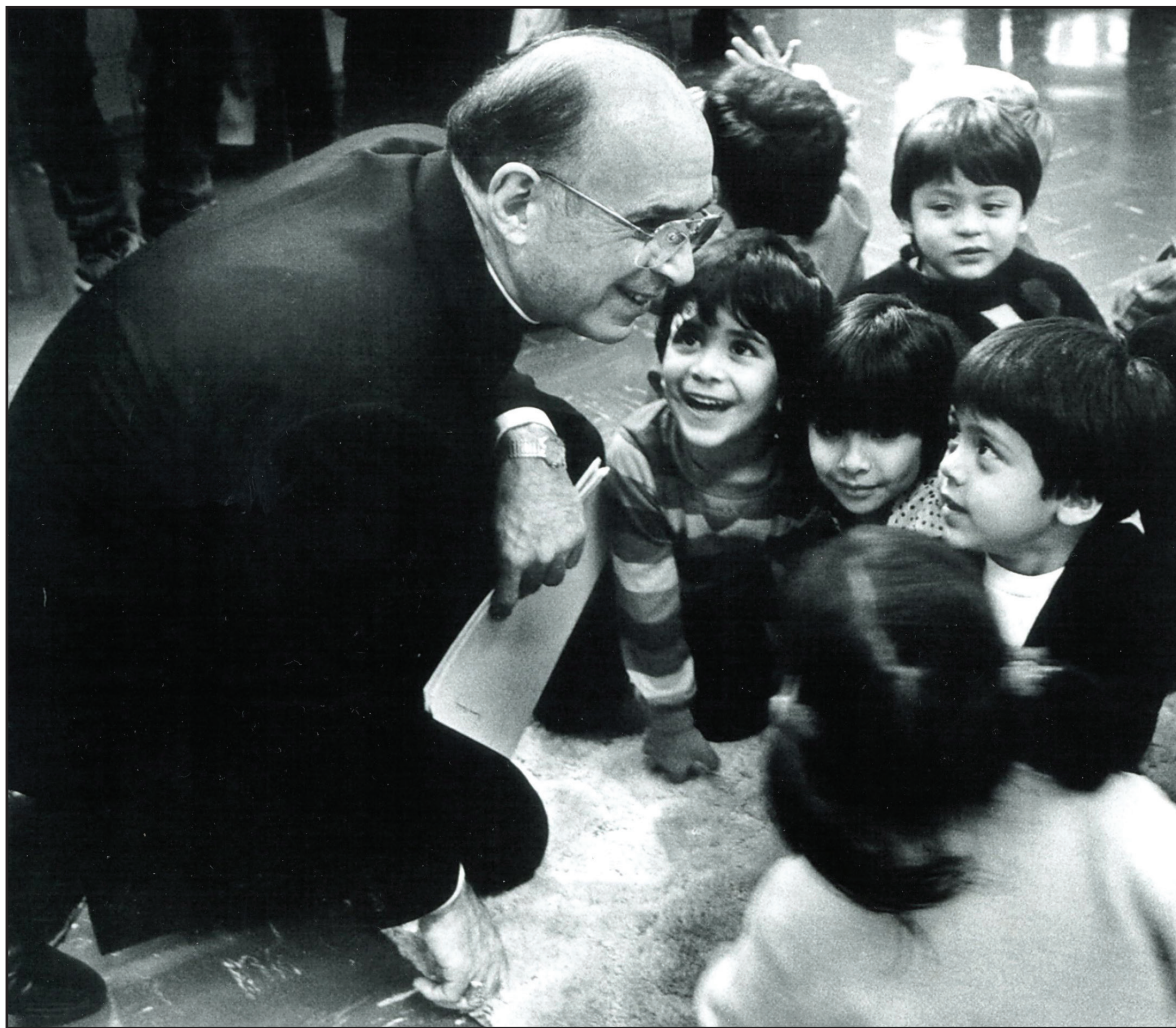
The framework of the Chicago Archdiocese's plan nearly 30 years ago "committed resources to put the child in the center of the room, figuratively," Cardinal Cupich said.

This framework included an Office of Victims Assistance — "we believe it is the first of its kind in the United States," Cardinal Cupich said — an independent Office of Child Abuse Investigations and Review, and a Safe Environment Office overseeing prevention efforts and training for adults and children.

"Archdiocesan policies have evolved over the past three decades ... but they are not a substitute for pastoral care. Faith, justice, compassion, recognition of the dignity of each person, recognition that we are all equal siblings children of God," Cardinal Cupich said.

The cardinal told the story of a successful businessman who came to him in his first episcopal assignment. Starting at age 9, he had been abused by the parish priest — who, after the abuse, often "walked with the boy, hand in hand," to his house to have dinner with the family.

According to Cardinal Cupich, when the



The late Chicago Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin is pictured with children in an undated photo. Over a two-year period, in 1991 and 1992, the cardinal developed a comprehensive plan to address clergy sexual abuse and shared the plan with his fellow bishops, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Chicago's current cardinal-archbishop, said in an April 9, 2021, address for an international symposium on clergy sex abuse.

(CNS photo/courtesy John H. White)

boy asked his mother if he had to do something the priest wanted him to do, even if he didn't want to do it, the mother replied — not knowing the nature of the priest's requests — "Whatever Father asks you to do, you have to do it."

"And so the child did, for four agonizing years," the cardinal said. "Then the child told the father, and the abuse ended."

When the businessman came forward, he asked then-Bishop Cupich permission to "confront the priest" about the abuse, and "the priest did not deny it," the cardinal said.

The prelate offered to go to the parish where the abuse had taken place, informed police and the Vatican, and notified other parishes where the priest had been assigned, asking other victims to come forward.

The episode "forced me to be an adult in a way I had never experienced," Cardinal Cupich said, and it gave him a fresh insight into "leaders who abuse power and expect privilege and protection because of their status in the Church."

Rabbi Diana Gerson, associate executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis, recalled that, as a newly ordained rabbi, she counseled a woman even though she did not belong to Rabbi Gerson's synagogue. "As a rabbi, I had a sacred obligation to help," but "I had never heard about these issues in the

classroom."

"I realized my voice could make a big difference" from this experience and so in 2002 for Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement Rabbi Gerson called "The Jewish Super Bowl" — she gave a sermon on family violence before 6,000.

"People were shocked. How could I talk about this? How could I talk about this on this most sacred day?" she said.

"For me it was about the forgiveness of self — finding a pathway toward healing," Rabbi Gerson added. "I decided religion was never going to be a roadblock for those who needed our help."

Following that sermon, "my congregation was shifted. My calendar was full," Rabbi Gerson said.

Three years ago, she received an email from a man who had heard that 2002 sermon.

"It was this sermon that changed his life. He finally had come to terms with the clergy sexual abuse he had endured in his youth. He sought out the help that he needed. He connected to other resources and survivors," Rabbi Gerson said.

"He shared his story, he sent me photos of his life: 'I would not be here today, I would not have this full and rich life if you had not had the courage to go on the pulpit and give this sermon that was so controversial.'"

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# Church challenge: Members decrease, ‘nones’ increase

**GUEST COMMENTARY**  
GREG ERLANDSON  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

As if the bishops needed anything more to worry about these days, Gallup released a poll just before Easter documenting a sharp decline in religious membership among Americans over the past two decades.

Unfortunately, the percentage decline for Americans belonging to the Catholic Church was one of the steepest. What this means for the future is a subject of growing concern in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the drop-off in Mass attendance that the pandemic forced.

Gallup, which has been monitoring Americans’ affiliation with churches, synagogues and mosques for more than 80 years, says that last year was the first time that the membership number has dropped below 50%.

According to the polling company, 47% of Americans belong to some house of worship, down from 50%

in 2018 and 70% in 1999. The third millennium, far from inspiring a religious revival, has seen a rapid shrinkage in religious practice in what has been one of the most religious countries in the developed world.

A growing number of Americans are not expressing any religious preference, and in all age groups, the number that are explicitly saying they are unaffiliated with any church is growing. This includes 31% of millennials and 33% of Generation Z — that is, the future.

When looked at in terms of religious groups, the largest decline is for Catholics. From 1999 until today, the percentage of Catholics has declined from 76% to 58%, double the percentage decline for Protestants. Other studies have noted a decline in sacramental marriages and baptisms among Catholics as well, also boding ill for the future.

For Catholics, the past two decades span the peak of the sexual abuse crisis. The corresponding lack of faith in the institution may be mirroring broader trends in society, however, including a decline across religious faiths and demographic

groups that suggests strong cultural forces at work.

While the United States remains a religious country compared to Europe, for example, the pace of decline in the past 20 years suggests no quick turnaround in the trend. Should the decline pick up speed in the wake of the pandemic, business as usual for many churches will not be an option.

One consequence of this decline may be an intensifying of political divisions. That is the conclusion of Shadi Hamid, writing in The Atlantic. He notes the sharp decline in church membership and the growth in “nones.” But contrary to what secularists may hope, he says society may be becoming more divided, not less.

“As Christianity’s hold, in particular, has weakened,” he writes, “ideological intensity and fragmentation have risen. American faith, it turns out, is as fervent as ever; it’s just that what was once religious belief has now been channeled into political belief. Political debates over what America is supposed to mean have taken

on the character of theological disputations. This is what religion without religion looks like.”

This has impacted the Catholic Church as well, where the melding of political ideology with ostensibly religious belief has meant that the fault lines in the Church increasingly mirror political fault lines.

The polarization of the faithful has been accompanied by an apocalyptic retreat to “a smaller and purer Church,” on the one hand, and a willingness to embrace unhesitatingly the trends and values of a larger culture increasingly unmoored from Christian teaching on the other.

How Church leaders will steer their dioceses between these twin temptations, what the Church of the future will look like and how Christians will bear witness in an increasingly fractious secular culture are the stark challenges of this millennium’s first century.

*Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at [gerlandson@catholicnews.com](mailto:gerlandson@catholicnews.com).*

## Does virtual school offer enough?

I read with interest, and increasing dismay, the article on the opening of St. Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy (Catholic Virginian, March 22). There is no doubt that it will be a good fit for a “student with a chronic illness” and other special cases, but for those regular students who may attend, does it offer enough?

Academics are important, but there is another side of education that is equally important — learning how to get along with other people. That is not learned sitting behind a desk at home.

I doubt that any of my four brothers would have grown into the fine, caring men they became if not for the discipline, training and camaraderie of the high school Cadet Corps to which they belonged. The young men with whom they marched became fast and forever friends, and they learned what it meant to work together and to help each other. And my very choice of “for pay” careers was fueled by editing my high school newspaper.

How many youths have kept going to high school and stayed to graduate because they wanted to diagram a sentence or conjugate a verb? Not many. But

some have stayed because they wanted to play basketball or a musical instrument, or perhaps even join the chess club. Extra-curricular activities of any kind — sports, music, art and especially social — play an important role in shaping and mentoring high school students.

Let’s not forget that helping students become productive adults is as important as academics. Knowing how to get along with others is crucial.

— Mary T. Atkinson  
Mechanicsville

## Pro-life stance includes ‘through natural death’

The life and dignity of the human person is one theme of Catholic Social Teaching. Our pro-life stance is the heart of it, but nearly all discussion surrounds life at the moment of conception.

Issue after issue of The Catholic Virginian has an extraordinary number of letters supporting this view. Many readers would like President Biden to have a more aggressive approach toward abortion. Others question why he should be able to receive Communion.

What I do not read often is the pro-life stance as it relates to “through natural death.” The life of a human person is valuable through-

out her or his lifespan. This is particularly true of those sitting on death row.

It is easier in a sense to take up the cause of the unborn than it is to take up the cause for someone whose behavior has been so egregious that it warrants said penalty. To Gov. Northam signing legislation ending capital punishment in Virginia I say, “Amen.”

Regarding Biden and others, I am looking for another theme of Catholic Social Teaching — that of rights and responsibilities. When it comes to examining conscience, are we recognizing and respecting the economic, social, political and cultural rights of all people?

He was not elected to be the president for just one fifth of the U.S. population, which Catholics represent. He was elected to be the leader for all people with a wide variety of perspectives, even those with which we do not agree.

Speaking to the issue of Communion, even Jesus offered bread as his body to Judas at the Last Supper — despite knowing that Judas would betray him.

— Sandy Wittig  
North Chesterfield

## Question about mortal sin

In the letters to the editor (Catholic Virginian,

Feb. 22), Charles Ruhl asked if President Biden would be denied Communion because of his scandalous actions on abortion. The editor’s response was that Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of the Archdiocese of Washington has already said he will not deny the Eucharist to President Biden.

I thought we were taught that we shouldn’t go to Communion if we had a mortal sin on our soul. Isn’t it a mortal sin to strongly advocate for and promote something that is itself a

mortal sin?

— Tom Trykowski  
Greenville

*Editor’s note: The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “Mortal sin requires full knowledge and complete consent. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God’s law. It also implies a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice. Feigned ignorance and hardness of heart do not diminish, but rather increase, the voluntary character of a sin” (1859).*

## CV letters policy

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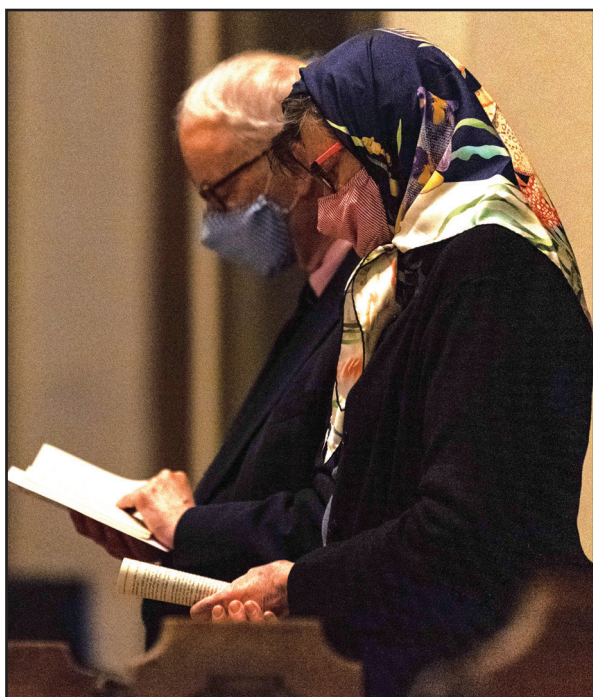
## Celebrating the Triduum



Parishioners at St. Bede, Williamsburg, gather for the lighting of the Easter fire at the start of the vigil on Holy Saturday, April 3. More than 1,900 parishioners and guests celebrated at the parish's nine Holy Week liturgies. (Photo provided)



While parishioners are returning to their churches for liturgies, many parishes, including the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, continue to livestream them. Above, Deacon Christopher Malone proclaims the Gospel at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.



Above: Justin Lapington watches as Bishop Barry C. Knestout extinguishes the paschal candle following celebration of the Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 3, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Left: Gerald and Frances Scott, members of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, participate in the liturgy of The Passion of Our Lord on Good Friday, April 2. (Photos/Michael Mickle)

## After long Lent, extend Easter beyond 50 days

CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — After what feels like “a truly trying Lent of 400-plus days” because of the coronavirus pandemic, Christians need to “envisage and embrace” a season of Easter faith and hope that goes beyond the traditional 50 days, said Cardinal Michael Czerny.

However, the cardinal wrote in the Vatican newspaper, “there must be no nostalgia for a blithe return to our pre-COVID existence with a sigh of relief that our long Lent is finally over.”

The newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, published the Canadian cardinal's article April 8 with the headline, “An Easter for rebirth after the long Lent of the pandemic.” Cardinal Czerny is undersecretary for migrants and refugees at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The ongoing pandemic with its deaths and sickness, its restrictions and economic devastation naturally have left people “disoriented and discouraged,” the cardinal wrote. Those sensations are reinforced by “the economic, health, political and environmental problems (and) the long-standing and worsening injustices” the pandemic “keeps uncovering and magnifying.”

And while the availability of vaccines is a cause for rejoicing, he said, part of the “sad and shameful ‘normal’ that we inherited from before COVID is the inability as a global community” to ensure an equitable distribution of the shots.

“Really,” Cardinal Czerny wrote, “‘back to normal’ is never the right path, and most emphatically not correct after what we have seen these past 16 months.”

“The poorest paid workers in suspended sectors of the economy — restaurants, hotels, cruise ships, tourist destinations, entertainment — are suddenly destitute and left to fend for themselves,” he said. “Migrant workers have faced restrictions that make it impossible to reach their place of employment, and then are unable to return home due to lack of money or closed borders.”

“Another global threat not suspended by the pandemic is climate change,” the cardinal wrote. While “the onset of COVID-19 was sudden and specific, climate change is a long-



# Openness to children essential part of Catholic marriage



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

**Q.** My boyfriend and I are starting to have conversations about marriage. I'm Catholic; he's Baptist. I have not felt called to have children and have health issues that will make it difficult to get pregnant. My boyfriend is not primarily interested in having kids.

I know that to be married in the Catholic Church, couples are expected to be open to having children. Is it possible to get married in the Church if you're not open to having kids? (City and state withheld)

**A.** Your understanding of the Church's view of marriage is correct. If a couple enters into marriage consciously intending never to have children, that would make the marriage, in the Church's eyes, invalid.

For the Church, being open to children is an essential part of what marriage is, and this is reflected in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring" (No. 1601).

This understanding is written

right into the ritual of the marriage ceremony itself, where the priest asks the couple, "Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?"

Why not talk over your situation with a priest whom you know? It may be that you are more open to the possibility of children than you might think.

Your preference, and that of your husband-to-be, may well be that you not get pregnant, especially given your health issues.

But if you did become pregnant, would you be willing to carry that child to term and be blessed with a new gift from God?

**Q.** I know a family who are originally from Jordan but are now U.S. citizens. They are members of the local Eastern-rite Catholic Church. They would like to get their 5-year-old grandson baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.

Also, they said that while a relative who is an Eastern-rite Catholic nun was visiting here from Jordan, she was refused holy Communion at a Latin-rite church.

What are the rules for receiving Communion if you are a Catholic of the Eastern rite? How should I advise her about her grandson's baptism? (Midlothian)

**A.** First, as to holy Communion, which is the easier part, Eastern Catholics are in full communion

with Rome and the Vatican and are, of course, welcome to receive the Eucharist in any Catholic church.

As to baptism, a valid baptism in the Latin Church is recognized as a valid baptism in the Eastern churches, and vice versa.

But I have a couple of questions: First, why is it the grandparents who are deciding about the baptism? Normally it is the parents of the child who make that determination, and in fact the Code of Canon Law provides that "for an infant to be baptized licitly, the parents or at least one of them or the person who legitimately takes their place must consent" (No. 868).

Second, in which church is the child going to be raised? If the boy is going to be raised and educated as an Eastern Catholic, doesn't it make sense to begin his sacramental path in that same church?

**Q.** I have recently volunteered to attend adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as a "guardian." What happens if the monstrance containing the Eucharist is stolen? The monstrance can be replaced, but I have heard that a priest may have to reconsecrate the church itself. (Baltimore)

**A.** Because of the Church's belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, desecration of the host is considered a grave sin. In fact, Canon 1367 of the Code of Canon Law says that a person who takes

or retains the consecrated species for a sacrilegious purpose incurs an excommunication that can only be lifted by the Holy See.

Unfortunately, this scenario is not hypothetical. In 2020, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Manhattan, a thief took from the parish's adoration chapel a small gold monstrance that contained the Blessed Sacrament. A few days later, an auxiliary bishop of New York led a prayer service at the church that included an act of reparation for the theft.

At the service, Bishop Edmund J. Whalen spoke of the centrality of the Eucharist, saying that "Jesus lives in us through the Eucharist, he nourishes the world with his presence. ... This is the realization of our faith."

The parish administrator noted, "We ask for forgiveness from the Lord for the person who has done this."

In 2019, at Holy Spirit Parish in El Paso, Texas, intruders broke into the church and stole items including the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament. The pastor of the parish, calling the theft "the desecration of the greatest gift possessed by the church," invited parishioners to make reparation by visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

With neither of the thefts was there mention of a ceremony to "reconsecrate" the church building, and I am not aware of any canonical mandate to that effect.

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

## Reflections on Marriage in Contemporary Culture

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION, FATHER TOCHI IWUJI OFFERS A SERIES OF SEMINARS REFLECTING ON THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE. PLEASE JOIN US ON WEDNESDAYS IN MAY, AT 7:30PM. QUESTIONS CAN BE DIRECTED TO [EVANGELIZATION@RICHMONDDIOCESE.ORG](mailto:EVANGELIZATION@RICHMONDDIOCESE.ORG).

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**MAY 12** IN SEARCH OF DIVERSITY: WHAT LIES AHEAD OF MARRIAGE?

**MAY 19** MARRIAGE: MORE THAN A CONTRACT - A COVENANT

**MAY 26** SAINT JOHN NEWMAN: IN DEFENSE OF THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

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# Words of apology must be supported by action



## IN LIGHT OF FAITH

BARBARA HUGHES

A legend about St. Peter handed down through the centuries is that there were deep grooves in the cheeks of the saint caused by the copious tears he shed whenever he remembered his denial of Jesus. Although Jesus forgave him, Peter found it difficult to forgive himself.

Sometimes self-forgiveness is more difficult than forgiving others, which may account for his request to be crucified upside down, not deeming himself worthy to die the same way Jesus died. Perhaps it was Peter's way of finally making reparation for his sin.

It may be what prompted the Jesuits to promise they would raise \$100 million in reparation for the sins of buying and selling African slaves. Until recently, the archives at Georgetown University had concealed this fact: the university was built on the backs of slaves.

In 1838, when the tobacco crops failed and money was in short supply, the priests sold 273 slaves to a wealthy landowner in Louisiana for \$115,000 — the equivalent of \$2,761,078 in today's economy. The reason for the sale was to pay for continued expansion of the university.

Jesuit Father Timothy P. Kesicki, president of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, lamented, "Our shameful history of Jesuit slaveholding in the United States has been taken off the dusty shelf, and it can never be put back."

He conceded, "this is an opportunity for Jesuits to begin a very serious process of truth

and reconciliation."

Part of the money will be used to finance scholarships for the descendants of slaves, and another fund will help pay for the care of ill and elderly descendants of the slaves who have been so identified.

As shocking as the buying and selling of human beings is to us today, consider that in 1856, the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision ruled that "people of African descent living in the United States were not "citizens" but merely members of a "subordinate and inferior class of human beings" with "no rights that the white man is bound to respect."

Only in 1868, with the adoption of the 14th Amendment, were all Blacks "born or naturalized in the United States" granted full citizenship. Far from putting the issue to rest, the amendment gave rise to the Klu Klux Klan, the practice of lynching and white supremacy groups. What began as discrimination against African Americans evolved to include Jews, Catholics, Asians, Latinos and all people of color.

It's not my intention to stir the political waters of dissent in this column, but the promise made by the Jesuits to make restitution for the abuse and disregard that their ancestors perpetrated on African American slaves sets a precedent and hopefully an example that others will follow.

Some might argue that the Jesuits were acting according to what the law allowed, but when man's laws conflict with God's laws, we are culpable. The Kingdom of God was established more than 2,000 years ago, long before the 14th Amendment confirmed the rights and human dignity that affords equal rights to every person. Yet, day after day, night after night, the atrocities continue.

Sins once perpetrated in darkness are now shouted from the roof tops via police body cams, video recordings and ultrasound images. We can no longer claim ignorance or try to justify our sins. The passion of Christ continues even during this holy Easter season whenever our sins tear into the flesh of the Body of Christ, for we are all God's people regardless of our age, where we were born or the color of our skin.

A parishioner at St. Mary Basilica, Norfolk, reminded me that the Knights of Peter Claver, modeled after the Knights of Columbus, was founded in 1909 in Mobile, Alabama, because Blacks were not permitted membership in the Knights of Columbus.

Sadly, they're not the only Catholic group that discriminated against Blacks. The admission of Blacks to seminaries or religious orders in the United States came about only after a hard-won battle.

In many ways, the thinking of Catholics has evolved through education and deep soul searching, but the process is not over. The Jesuits are to be lauded for the steps they are taking to make amends for past injustices. It sets a clear example that until words of apology are supported by action, little will change.

In the Diocese of Richmond, the "Sowers of Justice," a group of dedicated Catholics, is an active advocacy group in the Hampton Roads area working to promote justice and peace on many levels. To learn more about the group and the good work they do, contact Helen White at [dolfingal8@gmail.com](mailto:dolfingal8@gmail.com).

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

## Let the Holy Spirit transform your life



## BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY

DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

One of my favorite aspects of the Easter Season is hearing from the Acts of the Apostles and seeing how the apostles and the early followers of Jesus had been transformed, led by the boldness of Peter.

My sister, who lives in Florida, told me of the homily she heard on Easter and how the priest said that if he was Jesus (he assured them he isn't, and it's a good thing that he isn't), the first thing he probably would have done after the Resurrection was go knock on Pilate's door. I told her I completely understood his comment, and I would have gone to visit Caiaphas and ask him what he thought now.

In essence, this is what Peter does in his confrontation with the Jewish leaders in our reading from Acts. We hear Peter challenge the high priest and all the leaders and elders for

their part in the death of Jesus.

Speaking of how a cripple was healed, Peter says, "It was in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead..." Last week, he was just as bold speaking to the people and saying how they acted out of ignorance. Quite the change for Peter who denied knowing Jesus, not once but three times, on Good Friday.

Next week we hear about Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, who also boldly preached the faith. He became as bold in preaching the Gospel as he had been in persecuting the Church.

What was it that changed these men? Was it their encounter with the risen Christ? Was it the Spirit that now lived in them? It was both.

This is the story of the Church. Starting with the ministry of Jesus, through his saving work, to the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost and through the ages, we are a Church transformed by encounters with Jesus and the Spirit. Former lives are left behind to become followers of Jesus Christ and great advocates in the Church.

Two great examples are Augustine and Francis. Augustine was a man of the world;

some refer to him as a playboy of his time. He became one of the great doctors of the Church whose writings have inspired people throughout the centuries. The soldier Francis became the man of peace who continues to inspire the world with his message of peace.

These transformations give us great hope. No matter what our life has been like, the Spirit of God can transform us. No matter how we deny Jesus or how far we stray from him, he is the Good Shepherd who searches for us when we are lost and welcomes us home — the one who gave his life that we might live.

The presence of Jesus and the Spirit in our lives can create change, as it has done throughout history. In the sacraments, we have opportunities to experience Jesus and the Spirit in special ways. They enable us to change our lives just as they enabled saints throughout the ages. With those changes, we can be inspired by the Spirit to boldly proclaim Christ crucified, Christ risen from the dead, Christ who will come again.

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

**Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Cycle B  
Good Shepherd Sunday  
Acts 4:8-12; 1 John 3:1-2;  
John 10:11-18**



# Baby Fulton dies, but family thankful for 'miracle'

JENNIFER WILLEMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

PEORIA, Ill. — Fulton Joseph Hood has gone home to God.

In a post on [fultonjoseph.com](http://fultonjoseph.com), Royce and Elise Hood said a funeral service was celebrated Saturday, April 10, at St. Jude Church in Peoria.

Fulton had Potter's syndrome, which means he didn't have kidneys and there was very little, if any, amniotic fluid to surround him in the womb. Without that, the lungs don't develop either and there were other complications. (See Catholic Virginian, April 5 or [www.catholic-virginian.org](http://www.catholic-virginian.org)).

People around the world had been praying for a miracle for the unborn child, who only had a 5% chance of surviving after birth.

The Hoods discovered that Fulton's heart had stopped beating during an ultrasound on March 31, which was his due date. They went home to share the sad news with their children, Ava, 7, Gabriel, 6, Augustine, 4, Leo, 3, and Royce Aaron, 1, who had all been talking and singing to their little brother in the womb.

"Together as a family we cried, we prayed and we smiled thinking about all of the joy and blessings that Fulton had brought us," Royce wrote.



Royce Hood sings the song he wrote to his wife, Elise, and their unborn son, Fulton Joseph, in this undated photo. The baby, who had a 5% chance of survival after birth due to Potter's syndrome, was stillborn on Good Friday, April 2. (CNS photo/Handout via The Catholic Post)

Labor was induced on April 1, and Fulton was delivered at OSF Health-Care Saint Francis Medical Center at 12:50 a.m. on April 2, Good Friday. He weighed 2 pounds and 14.4 ounces and was 12.5 inches long.

"Fulton had the cutest little nose and chubby little cheeks. He was so precious," Royce said, adding that the nurses helped the Hoods get footprints and make a little clay cast from his feet.

Father Patrick Henehan, pastor of St. Jude, came to pray and talk to the Hoods shortly after Fulton was born, and "His words, his blessing and his compassion were exactly what Elise and I needed in that moment," Royce said. "We have been so blessed with such a wonderful faith community."

Fulton's older sister and brothers had a chance to meet him and spend some time together

at the hospital, along with Elise's parents and siblings, before it was time to say goodbye.

While the Hoods didn't get the miracle they were hoping for, they got the miracle they needed, Royce wrote: "Fulton went from the womb to the arms of the Lord."

They take comfort in knowing that God has a plan.

"Fulton's life has already had such an incredible impact on countless people," he wrote. "We pray his life and our story can lift up others and demonstrate the power of God's love."

That Fulton's story should be fulfilled during Holy Week was an opportunity for immense grace, according to Royce.

"You see, we are confident in the greatest promise and greatest gift of all time, which is the Resurrection. While we mourn the loss of a son, we give thanks for the time we had with Fulton. He was a miracle," Royce wrote.

"For every moment that we struggle, we find peace in our faith. I cannot stress enough how much prayer, fasting and love have helped us through this journey," he said. "We thank you for your prayers."

*Jennifer Willems is assistant editor of The Catholic Post, newspaper of the Diocese of Peoria.*

## In Observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month



*Together, may we always protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults in our homes, churches, schools and communities.*

To learn more about our child protection efforts in the Diocese of Richmond, visit:

<https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>



## Contact

*Continued from Page 1*

cell lines should be chosen."

However, "what's most important is that people get vaccinated," Bishop Rhoades said. "It can be an act of charity that serves the common good. At the same time ... it's really important for us to encourage development of vaccines that do not use abortion-derived cell lines. This is very important for the future."

The USCCB letter-writing campaign is aimed, then, at encouraging the development of vaccines that do not use these cell lines.

In promoting this campaign, Valerie Schmalz, director of the Office of Human Life & Dignity in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, urged Catholics there to participate in it because "we can never allow ourselves to become calloused to this gross violation of human dignity and life. We have an obligation to speak up for life and for a return to respect for all life in our society."

The list of companies provided by the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities on the USCCB website includes one that comes in for overall praise: Sanofi Pasteur, the largest biotech company in the world devoted entirely to vaccines.

Last fall, Sanofi Pasteur decided it would no longer use an aborted fetal cell line to produce

its polio combination vaccines Pentacel and Quadracel.

After the move was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Greg Schleppenbach, associate director of the pro-life secretariat sent an alert to diocesan pro-life directors about the development and asking them to in turn send a message of thanks to Sanofi Pasteur.

"One important step we can take to ensure the production of ethical vaccines is to recognize and thank drug companies, like Sanofi Pasteur, when they move away from unethical vaccine production," Schleppenbach said in his alert. "We can hope that, with some encouragement, other vaccine manufacturers may consider creating other morally acceptable vaccines."

Similarly, Archbishop Naumann and Bishop Rhoades wrote to all bishops to share this same news and asked them to in turn share the information with diocesan leaders and especially with Catholic health care leaders.

In his alert, Schleppenbach also noted that the Pontifical Academy for Life recommended in 2005 — and reiterated in its 2017 "Note on Italian Vaccine Issue" — that "a long-term solution lies in working to ensure that future vaccines and other medicines are not based on cooperation with practices that demean human life."



# Catholic agencies help minors at the border

RHINA GUIDOS  
Catholic News Service

SAN ANTONIO — As the U.S. took in almost 19,000 migrant children, labeled “unaccompanied minors,” in March, faith-based organizations such as Catholic Charities throughout the U.S. have been doing their part to help.

In Texas, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio set up over 2,000 cots for their guests at the Freeman Coliseum to “welcome and care for unaccompanied migrant children,” the organization said March 30 on its website.

Staff as well as volunteers from local churches have assembled hygiene kits of toothpaste and soap to give to minors who have been allowed into the country at its southern border with Mexico and are waiting to be reunited with family or who will soon go live with sponsors.

“It is a privilege to serve the community and an honor to help as much as we can these children who have been separated from their parents for some time, especially in a country that is not their own,” said Antonio Fernandez, president and CEO of San Antonio’s Catholic Charities.

“While I understand that this could be considered a political issue for many, it is strictly a humanitarian one to us at Catholic Charities,” he said.

Such scenes are not foreign to agencies such as Catholic Charities and other Catholic organizations that have engaged staff and volunteers to help in the past.

In 2018, when migrant children were separated from their families by Trump administration policies that were later reversed, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services, Catholic Charities USA and a network of other agencies from around the country stepped in during family reunification efforts.

In the case of Catholic Charities of San Antonio, the agency said it had extended its services after a conversation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department



Volunteers with Catholic Charities of San Antonio pass food supplies at the St. Stephen's CARE Center in San Antonio May 6, 2020, to be delivered to people in need. (CNS photo/courtesy Catholic Charities of San Antonio)

of Health and Human Services.

From advocacy, such as denouncing harmful policies in the halls of government, to providing basic food and care, Catholic organizations have long been sought out by administrations from both parties and actively participated in making sure migrants and their families have the best possible chance at staying together.

Both political parties, in fact, have sought the help of the Catholic Church, mostly because of its vast network of humanitarian agencies.

In 2018, MRS executive director Bill Canny, told Catholic News Service that the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement, which has the responsibility of releasing unaccompanied children from federal custody, reached out to the Catholic organizations, as well as the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and other agencies to help with family reunification.

It's a task the Catholic groups, along with other faith-based organizations, have been eager to take part in — in a bipartisan manner.

“Protection of families is a foundational element of Catholic social teaching and this moment calls on all people of goodwill to lend a hand to reunite these children with their parents,” MRS and Catholic Charities USA said in a

joint statement in 2018 during a crisis that year involving the separation of children from their families.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic leaders say that task has become even more important since the agencies aren't just trying to reunite families but also trying to keep them safe from the highly contagious coronavirus, which has changed their protocols for assisting migrants.

Because Border Patrol has not been screening incoming migrants, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in McAllen, Texas, has contracted health care workers to screen and test migrants, separating those who test positive from the rest and providing a place to quarantine for those who have the virus.

In San Antonio, incoming children have been received with the essentials, food and a place to sleep and shower, but also toys, soccer balls and stuffed animals, something to remind them that they're children, until they can find their families or someone else can care for them.

“Kids are kids regardless of where they live,” said Fernandez. “I can never stop thinking about my daughter in a place like this, and the thought moves me to try harder to be the best for these unaccompanied children.”

## Archbishop prays for an end to ‘virus’ of racism

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Decrying a rise in racial violence especially against Asian Americans, including in San Francisco, a city that he said has always offered “a welcoming and stable home” to newcomers, Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone led a prayer service for unity, healing and peace April 10.

“Our city has always been known as a place that welcomes the foreigner, a place of harmonization of diverse cultures where all can be who they are and thrive in community with others,” the archbishop said in his homily at the afternoon prayer service at Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption.

It's “a place where no one has to wander anymore to find a welcoming and stable home,” he added, drawing on the opening lyrics of the city's official song: “San Francisco, open your Golden Gate/You'll let no stranger wait

outside your door/San Francisco, here is your wanderin' one/Saying I'll wander no more.”

The prayer service, attended by about 100 people, was open to Catholics and people of other faiths. It was organized by Father Peter Zhai, director of the archdiocese's Chinese ministry.

“San Francisco has always been a major destination of immigration,” the archbishop said, welcoming “large waves of Irish and Italian immigrants” in the city's early history, and the city now teams with immigrants from Mexico, Central America and other parts of Latin America seeking freedom from oppression and a better life.

“The one constant of immigration in our city, though, from the very beginning down to the present time, is immigrants coming from China” and for many years it has received from many other

countries in Asia, Archbishop Cordileone said.

“That racial violence would rear its ugly head here, then — especially against Asians who have been such a vital part of this city's life and culture from the beginning down to the present time — is very disturbing indeed,” the San Francisco prelate said.

“This alarming rise in racial violence, even here in San Francisco,” he added, “justifies the words of Pope Francis on this topic just three weeks ago.”

He referred to a tweet March 21 — International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination — in which the pope “compared racism to a ‘virus’ that doesn't go away, but changes and adapts.”

“Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show

that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think,” Archbishop Cordileone said, quoting Pope Francis.

“Very sobering words indeed,” Archbishop Cordileone continued. “We are not as accomplished as we thought when it comes to welcome, inclusion, and living in peace among a diverse population. What, then, are we to do?”

He noted that the vaccine rollout well underway to inoculate people against COVID-19, calling it “very welcome relief,” though there is still much to be known about the coronavirus, its variants and “how long the inoculation will last.”

The virus of racism is a lot like the coronavirus, the archbishop said. “It never goes away, but there are ways to inoculate oneself against it, even if one has to be always vigilant to protect

See Virus, Page 12



# Pope: Prayer is everything

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Without prayer, everything crumbles and any initiatives for Church reform will just be proposals by some group and not the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis said.

"Everything in the Church originates in prayer and everything grows thanks to prayer," the pope said April 14 during his weekly general audience.

If there is no prayer, the Church becomes "like an empty shell" that has lost its bearings and "no longer possesses its source of warmth and love," he said, and it ends up being made up of groups of "entrepreneurs of faith" that are well organized and busy with charitable activities but lack faith.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope reflected on the role of the Church as a school of faith and prayer.

"The breath of faith is prayer," the pope said. "We grow in faith inasmuch as we learn to pray," and over time, especially after crises or difficult periods in life, "we become aware that without faith, we could not have made it through and that our strength was prayer."

That is why groups or communities that are dedicated to prayer "flourish in the Church" and can become "centers of spiritual light, small oases in which intense prayer is shared and fraternal communion is constructed day by day," breathing life into the Church and society itself, he said.

"Praying and working in community keeps the world going," Pope Francis said.

When the devil wants to attack the Church, he starts with sapping its strength by hindering prayer, he said.

For example, he said, "we see this in certain groups who agree to promote Church reforms, changes in the life of the Church" and they may be very well organized and have wide media outreach, "but you don't see any prayer."

The groups may have interesting ideas and proposals, but these only emerged from talking and through the media, not prayer, the pope said.

"Prayer is what opens the door to the Holy Spirit," who inspires the path forward, he said. "Changes in the Church without prayer are not changes made by the Church, they are changes made by groups."

Prayer gives people strength, he said, leading one's life "securely forward" no matter how lowly, imperfect or weak one's life may be.

"Holy women and men do not have easier lives than other people" since they have problems, too, and face opposition, he said. But with prayer, the saints "nourish the flame of their faith" and even though they often "count for little in the eyes of the world, they are in reality the ones who sustain it, not with the weapons of money and power, of the communications media and so on, but with the weapon of prayer."

Do people pray with the Church or "do I pray a bit according to my ideas and then make my ideas become prayer? This is a pagan prayer, not Christian," he added.

## Virus

*Continued from Page 11*

oneself from being infected. But what is our inoculation against racism?"

To find the answer, "we need look no further" than the day's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, he said.

"The reading gives a good start in answering that question," Archbishop Cordileone said. "In its description of the life of the first Christian community, we heard: 'The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.'"

"There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, ... and they were distributed to each according to need."

This passage shows "the qualities that make such a peaceful and harmonious common life possible," he explained.

"Each one looked out first and foremost for the good of the other, not what they were going to get out of

it. Everyone shared generously, indeed, everything they had in order to contribute to the common good of the community," he said.

"And the apostles were entrusted with the distribution of these goods, because they were worthy of the trust of the community members — as were the members themselves, in sharing generously of all they had," he added. "Everyone put the good of the other first, and that requires a lot of humility."

Archbishop Cordileone said the inoculation against racism "can be summed up in one word: virtue."

Drawing on the readings for the next day, which was Divine Mercy Sunday, he said these virtues are delineated as generosity, selflessness, trust and trustworthiness, humility, courage, conviction, forgiveness "and, of course, mercy itself."

He urged the people of San Francisco to lead the way by example.

"Let us make our Golden Gate an authentic symbol of a city that will let no stranger wait outside its door," Archbishop Cordileone said, "and where the wandering one will say, 'I'll wander no more.'"

# Foster the

# GOOD

## A LUNCH SPEAKER SERIES

Realizing that ministry has radically shifted in the past year, the Office for Evangelization and the Office of Social Ministries are presenting a new monthly speaker series: Foster the Good. Those that serve the church: Youth Ministers, Social Ministers, Campus Ministers, and Volunteers, have found themselves pushed in new directions, and this series looks to build up the skills needed to truly serve the Church in this particular period of time.

**APRIL 27, 2021**  
**12:30-1:30PM**

Featuring Jen Settle, Director of Programs at the Theology of the Body Institute. She will share an overview of Saint John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* and provide insight into the desires and dignity of the human person.






**Register for FREE at: [Bit.ly/FosterTheGoodApril](https://bit.ly/FosterTheGoodApril)**



# SPRING *into* ACTION



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## Awareness

*Continued from Page 1*

lifetime.

Most people don't realize how common epilepsy is, Jason said. "It can be anything from an annoyance to life-changing to life-threatening."

Even among those who do know about epilepsy, Jason explained, most people don't understand how many expenses there can be, such as prescription drugs, tests, monitoring devices, occupational therapy, camps, visits to specialists and travel. The Stewarts have faced all of that, including past travel to specialists in Charlotte and Winchester, as well as Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. James now sees Dr. Nebrata Daba, a pediatric neurologist in Roanoke.

"A lot of other children have this," Angela said. "One good thing to come out of this stressful experience is that you bond with other families, especially the mothers. I've met the strongest people."

Knowing that there are other local children with epilepsy whose parents may not have adequate resources was behind the family effort to form the charity.

James has what are called absence seizures— sometimes called "petit mal" seizures. "It's when he just blanks out," said Jason. He used to have as many as 60 seizures a day but now, thanks to medication, he has only one or two.

James' classmates at RCS are aware of his condition and support him if he has a seizure.

"Everyone at Roanoke Catholic has been great through the years, from kindergarten on, and his current teacher, Jessica Humphrey, is incredible," Jason said. "And with the other students, James is making them more cognizant of others' needs."

Education is essential to keeping children with epilepsy safe and healthy, Angela said.

"One of our goals is to help people understand it."

Because of the danger of absence seizures, contact sports have not been an option for James. But golf is the perfect game for him – fortunately the whole family enjoys playing. The Eagles for Epilepsy Charity Golf Tournament was a natural choice for the Stewarts to attain their goal of helping other families dealing with epilepsy.

"James has really good hand-eye coordination," Jason said.

When James was 5, he met golf instructor Steve Prater at Roanoke Country Club, who continues to work with him.

"James has a lot of natural ability and he swings like the pros; his potential is huge," Prater said. "And he's a great example of how to not feel bad about something that's challenging you; he just works through it."

James, who dreams of being a professional golfer someday, is eagerly looking forward to playing in the tournament. He was also happy to learn that professional golfer Lanto Griffin, who grew up in nearby Blacksburg and also worked with Steve Prater, will play at the event.

The inaugural tournament had been planned for spring 2020 but was canceled due to the pandemic. The year's delay was frustrating, Jason said, but it also

allowed for more publicity, interest and support to grow.

"I've been amazed at the sponsorships and donations; people have been very generous," he said.

Like James, Katherine is an avid golfer, and they especially like to play together. In fact, Katherine said, the two have become closer because of James' illness.

"We've both grown up with James' epilepsy, and I'm definitely proud of him," she said, "and our whole family has learned that we are a team together."

That team is strengthened by prayer.

The Stewarts, members of St. Andrew Parish, pray together a lot.

"I pray a zillion times a day," Angela said. "This experience really humbles you, but it makes you stronger, too."

Jason noted that James can be an inspiration to others facing epilepsy – or anything – in their lives.

"When we see other successful people with challenges, it helps us," he said.

James says that above all, he would simply like to tell people: "Be brave and don't give up."

*For more information, visit Eagles for Epilepsy on Facebook or email [eagles4epilepsy@gmail.com](mailto:eagles4epilepsy@gmail.com).*



**Golf instructor Steve Prater watches James Stewart practice driving. Despite James' epilepsy, "his potential is huge," Prater said.**  
(Photo/Angela Stewart)

## Pope

*Continued from Page 2*

"Like those disciples, we need to let ourselves be forgiven," the pope said. "Let us ask for the grace to accept that gift, to embrace the sacrament of forgiveness. And to understand that confession is not about ourselves and our sins, but about God and his mercy."

"We do not confess to abase ourselves, but to be raised up," he said, and "we — all of us — need this badly."

Speaking to priests, Pope Francis said that anytime they hear someone's confession, they "ought to convey the sweetness of mercy ... the sweetness of Jesus, who forgives everything. God forgives everything."

When Jesus showed the disciples the wounds of his crucifixion, the pope said, he was not simply proving he had risen, but also made it possible for them to see and touch "the fact that God has loved us to the end. He has made our wounds his own and borne our weaknesses in his own body."

The day's first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, recounted how the early Christian community shared everything they had in common. "This is not communism, but pure Christianity," the pope said.

The disciples "discovered that they shared the mission, the forgiveness and the body of Jesus, and so it seemed natural to share their earthly possessions," he said. "Their fears had been dispelled by touching the Lord's wounds, and now they are unafraid to heal the wounds of those in need, because there they see Jesus. Because Jesus is there in the wounds of the needy."

Catholics today, he said, need to ask themselves if they show others the mercy they have been shown by God and if they feed the hungry like Jesus feeds them in the Eucharist.

"Let us not remain indifferent," Pope Francis said. "Let us not live a one-way faith, a faith that receives but does not give, a faith that accepts the gift but does not give it in return."

## Miracles

*Continued from Page 3*

"I hope that lots of people, Catholics and non-Catholics, will come to see and learn about these miracles," she said.

At Resurrection, she has noticed a change in behavior during Holy Communion.

"People seem more focused when receiving the Eucharist, more solemn," McCloskey said. "When you're surrounded by all these saints and miracles, it does have an effect."

Resurrection's director of youth ministry and education Melissa Murtagh plans to use the miracles with her catechism students to strengthen their relationship with Christ.

She recalled one third-grade girl who stood before a poster and turned to her older brother and said, "Wow, it's real!"

"Her little face was all lit up," Murtagh said. "This display is evangelizing by itself."

She has felt it, too.

"It's been part of my Lenten journey, when going up to receive holy Communion, and these miracles are right in front of your eyes," she said.

Her daughter, Catherine, 11, agreed.

"I felt that all the miracles really prove that Jesus really is in the Blessed Sacrament," she said. "And that God definitely wants us to believe because in some of them, the people in the stories had doubts, and he shows us that it is really his flesh and blood."

So far, there are 27 miracles mounted on 44 panels between the two churches.

Many are from Europe: Austria (Fiecht, 1310), Belgium (Liege, 1374), Croatia (Ludbreg, 1411), France (Avignon, 1433; Bordeaux, 1822; Faverney, 1608; Lourdes, 1888; Pressac, 1643), Holland (Boxmeer, 1400), Italy (Bolsena, 1264; Cava dei Tirreni, 1656; Lanciano, 750; Rome, 595 and 1610; Salzano, 1517; Siena, 1730),

Poland (Sokolka, 2008; Legnica, 2013), Portugal (Santarem, 1247) and Spain (Alboraya-Almacera, 1348; Daroca, 1239; Ivorra, 1010; Onil, 1824).

Others are from South and Central America: Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1992), Colombia (Tumaco, 1906), Mexico (Tixtla, 2006) and Venezuela (Betania, 1991).

The parishes swap their posters monthly so parishioners have new material to read. As there are more than 150 miracles listed on Blessed Carlo's website, both parishes plan to add to their displays.

"I hope and pray this will help strengthen people's belief in the real presence of Christ," Father Anonuevo said. "The Lord is working miracles everywhere."

*For more information, visit <http://www.miracolieuucaristici.org/> or contact Holy Name of Mary, Bedford, at (540) 586-8988.*



## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond** has an immediate opening for a payroll and HR specialist. This non-exempt position is located in Richmond, and based out of the diocesan Pastoral Center. The payroll and HR specialist is part of a team responsible for monitoring and auditing payroll submissions on a biweekly basis in accordance with diocesan policies and state/federal regulations for approximately 2,700 diocesan priests, religious and lay employees.

This team oversees approximately \$100MM+ in payroll and benefit related transactions for 175 employing locations throughout the Diocese of Richmond. The specialist supports the payroll supervisor and director of human resources. The position will also support the Office of Human Resources for about 15-20% of the time in ongoing administrative functions and projects.

A minimum of three years of payroll experience and a working knowledge of payroll policies and procedures, federal and state statutes pertaining to FLSA, tax status and wage reduction programs is necessary. Strong customer service, communication, follow-up skills and attention to detail are critical. The ability to apply modern accounting principles and procedures in a non-profit setting; to multi-task and to handle multiple projects simultaneously; think analytically to identify discrepancies and errors in payroll reports; communicate effectively both in verbal and written form; and to create effective working relationships with employees and other departments is crucial. General experience as an administrative assistant to include organization, project support and administrative support preferred.

To view the job description, please visit [www.richmonddiocese.org](http://www.richmonddiocese.org).

To apply for this position, please send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application to Kelly Shumate, recruiting assistant, via email at [jobs@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmonddiocese.org). Applications will be reviewed immediately, and the position will be open until filled.

**Peninsula Catholic**, a college preparatory high school in Newport News, will continue to offer both in-person and virtual learning for 2021-2022. Unique to PCHS, in-person and virtual students take classes together, experiencing the same high-quality instruction and engaging learning activities for which we have become known. We are seeking qualified, innovative instructors in the following areas: **Math** (Algebra I and above); **Science** (Earth, Chemistry and Physics); **Computer Science and/or Engineering**; **Social Studies**, **Personal Finance/Economics**, **Spanish**,

**English, Theater and Health/PE.** Candidates should have experience in teaching (preferred), enthusiasm for youth, effective integration of technology, and a desire to be part of a community with a 118-year history of excellence in Catholic education.

**Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred. Experience in directing theater productions preferred. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teaching license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas.

**Please send cover letter, résumé, diocesan application and references to:**

Peninsula Catholic High School, Attn: Principal, 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 or email [jfranklin@peninsulacatholic.org](mailto:jfranklin@peninsulacatholic.org)

Applications for employment can be downloaded from the Diocese of Richmond's website (Human Relations tab). Application deadline is **April 30, 2021**, or until the position is filled.

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond** is seeking a program coordinator for the Offices of the Vicar General and Vicar for Clergy.

The program coordinator provides a wide range of administrative and coordination support on behalf of the Office of the Vicar for Clergy, Office of the Vicar General and Office of the Bishop to include the coordination of the International Clergy Visa and Immigration Program, the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC), Diocesan Deanery Program and the Bishop's Parish Visitation Program. The coordinator assists with general office duties.

**Qualifications:** A minimum of three to five years' prior administrative assistant/coordinator experience is required, and a related associate degree is preferred. Requirements include initiative, strong interpersonal skills; customer service orientation with consistent professionalism; discretion and confidentiality; strong planning and organizational abilities; detail orientation; proficiency in MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook) and MS Windows and other computer programs. Working knowledge of Church governance and Catholic Church Teaching is required. The selected candidate must be a Catholic in good standing.

This is a full-time position, Monday - Friday, with some limited evening and weekend work required, along with overnight travel on a limited basis.

Interested candidates should please send a cover letter, résumé and completed Diocese of Richmond Employment Application to [jobs@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmonddiocese.org)

**Saint Ann, Colonial Heights** is seeking a part time **coordinator of elementary Christian formation** (CECF) 28-hour per week position.

The CECF coordinates Christian formation for children aged pre-K to fifth grade. Duties include establishing

curricula and calendars, recruiting and training volunteer catechists, implementing First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation, and recruiting and training Vacation Bible School and children's Liturgy of the Word coordinators. The CECF reports to the director of religious education and the pastor.

Candidate must be a practicing Catholic. Bachelor's degree and one to three years of parish experience preferred, experience working with preschool and elementary-aged children highly recommended. Must have basic technology skills, interpersonal skills, ability to communicate well orally and in writing.

Please send a résumé and diocesan application to Linda Mings, 17111 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Colonial Heights, VA 23834 or [lmings@stancc.com](mailto:lmings@stancc.com).

## SHORTAKES

**Trinity Organ Concert:** Join organists Aaron Renninger and Carina Sturdy for a concert of music celebrating Cinco de Mayo with selections from Mexican and Latin American composers and hymn tunes loved by our Hispanic community. The free concert will be held on Wednesday, May 5, noon, at St. Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road in Williamsburg and will be available in-person in the Nave and online at [www.facebook.com/MusicofSaintBede](http://www.facebook.com/MusicofSaintBede). For more information, call 757-229-3631 or visit [www.bedeva.org/concerts](http://www.bedeva.org/concerts).

**Join Father James Arsenault**, pastor of St. Elizabeth, Richmond, on an amazing Seine River cruise through Paris and Normandy, April 28 – May 5, 2022. Seven-night bucket list trip on AMA Waterway's AMALyra starts at \$4,005 per person and includes accommodations, meals, beverages during meals, choice of daily excursions, wreath laying ceremony in Normandy, taxes and gratuities during the cruise. There is also a pre-cruise optional Paris land package available that features a private Mass at Sacré-Coeur Basilica. Group airfare quotes available upon request. For more information, contact Stella Capocelli Carter at 804-359-3217 x310 or [s.capocelli@tourplaninternational.com](mailto:s.capocelli@tourplaninternational.com). Full itinerary and registration are available at <https://tourplaninternational.com/parisnormandy>.

**World-Famous Oberammergau Passion Play!** St. Therese, Chesapeake, has a few spaces left for a special journey, June 13-23, 2022, to the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play, as well as Budapest, Vienna, Prague and Munich. Due to the pandemic, the Passion Play, which is held only every 10 years, was moved from 2020 to 2022. Save \$300 if reservation and down payment are made before Friday, April 30. To register or for more information, contact Megan Malhiot at [mmalhiot@sttheresechesva.org](mailto:mmalhiot@sttheresechesva.org); 757 488-2553.

## WHAT WE'VE HEARD



**Scholarly success:** Xavier Nelson, a graduating eighth grader at Our Lady of Lourdes School, Richmond, has been named the winner of the Debbie Robson Merit Scholarship which covers four years of high school tuition at The Steward School.

An OLL student since the fourth grade, Xavier noted that what OLL "has taught me in and out of the classroom, is to put God before anything else. God has helped me through so many challenging and hard times during my career at Lourdes, but it was because of him that I got through it all. We've prayed the rosary, gone to Mass and have had very meaningful religion classes."

**Invested:** The Richmond Region of the Order of Malta hosted the Solemn Liturgy of Investment of John McCulla into the Order of Malta on Saturday, March 13, at St. Bridget, Richmond. Bishop Barry C. Knestout presided, assisted by Msgr. William H. Carr and Father Stefan Migac. Gregory J. Granitto and Louise D. Hartz conducted the convocation.

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



# Francisco en Urbi et Orbi: la Pascua da esperanza y no defrauda

La mañana del Domingo de Resurrección el Papa Francisco ha celebrado la Santa Misa y seguidamente ha impartido la bendición Urbi et Orbi. “Jesús, el crucificado, ha resucitado, como había dicho. Aleluya”.

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

Este Domingo de Resurrección, en una mañana soleada y fresca y en medio del cierre casi total de las actividades en Italia a causa de la pandemia, el Papa Francisco dice: “Hoy resuena en cada lugar del mundo el anuncio de la Iglesia: *“Jesús, el crucificado, ha resucitado, como había dicho. Aleluya”*”.

## El anuncio de la Pascua no es un espejismo o una vía de escape

Francisco, en el mensaje con motivo de la bendición Urbi et Orbi, insistió en que el anuncio de la Pascua no muestra un espejismo o una fórmula de escape ante la situación que estamos viviendo: “La pandemia todavía está en pleno curso, la crisis social y económica es muy grave, especialmente para los más pobres; y a pesar de todo —y es escandaloso— los conflictos armados no cesan y los arsenales militares se refuerzan. Este es el escándalo de hoy”.

“El anuncio de Pascua recoge en pocas palabras un acontecimiento que da esperanza y no defrauda: “Jesús, el crucificado, ha resucitado”. No nos habla de ángeles o de fantasmas, sino de un hombre, un hombre de carne y hueso, con un rostro y un nombre: Jesús”, afirmó el Obispo de Roma.

## Dios resucitó a su hijo porque cumplió su voluntad de salvación

“Dios Padre resucitó a su Hijo Jesús porque cumplió plenamente su voluntad de salvación: asumió nuestra debilidad, nuestras dolencias, nuestra misma muerte; sufrió nuestros dolores, llevó el peso de nuestras iniquidades. Por eso Dios Padre lo exaltó y ahora Jesucristo vive para siempre, es el Señor”, afirmó el Romano Pontífice.

## Cristo resucitado es esperanza

Francisco prosiguió afirmando que las llagas en las manos, pies y costado de Jesús, “estas heridas son el sello perpetuo de su amor por nosotros”.

El resucitado, subraya Francisco, es esperanza para todos los que sufren a causa de la pandemia, para los enfermos y para los que han perdido un ser querido. “Que el Señor dé consuelo y sostenga las fatigas de los médicos y enfermeros. Todas las personas, especialmente las más frágiles, precisan asistencia y tienen derecho a acceder a los tratamientos necesarios”. Seguidamente el Pontífice llamó a continuar con el proceso de vacunación: “en el espíritu de un “internacionalismo de las vacunas”, insto a toda la comunidad internacional a un compromiso común para superar los retrasos en su distribución y para promover su reparto, especialmente en los países más pobres”.

## Cristo resucitado es consuelo

El Papa recogió las duras condiciones de vida que viven quienes han perdido el trabajo o están en problemas económicos. “Que el Señor inspire la acción de las autoridades públicas para que todos, especialmente las familias más necesitadas, reciban la ayuda imprescindible para un sustento adecuado. Desgraciadamente, la pandemia ha aumentado dramáticamente el número de pobres y la desesperación de miles de personas”.



(Photo/CNS)

Seguidamente, pidió por Haití: “Y precisamente al querido pueblo haitiano se dirige en este día mi pensamiento y mi aliento, para que no se vea abrumado por las dificultades, sino que mire al futuro con confianza y esperanza”. A continuación, el Papa dijo: “Y les digo que mi pensamiento va especialmente a ustedes, queridos hermanos y hermanas haitianos: estoy cerca de ustedes, estoy cerca de ustedes, y quisiera que los problemas se resolvieran definitivamente para ustedes. Rezo por ello, queridos hermanos y hermanas haitianos”.

## El resucitado, esperanza para los jóvenes

Francisco expresó: “Jesús resucitado es esperanza también para tantos jóvenes que se han visto obligados a pasar largas temporadas sin asistir a la escuela o a la universidad, y sin poder compartir el tiempo con los amigos. Todos necesitamos experimentar relaciones humanas reales y no sólo virtuales, especialmente en la edad en que se forman el carácter y la personalidad”.

Igualmente, el Papa expresó su cercanía a todos los jóvenes del mundo, particularmente a “los de Myanmar, que están comprometidos con la democracia, haciendo oír su voz de forma pacífica, sabiendo que el odio sólo puede disiparse con el amor”.

## El Resucitado, fuente de renacimiento para los emigrantes

“Que la luz del Señor resucitado sea fuente de renacimiento para los emigrantes que huyen de la guerra y la miseria. En sus rostros reconocemos el rostro desfigurado y sufriente del Señor que camina hacia el Calvario. Que no les falten signos concretos de solidaridad y fraternidad humana, garantía de la victoria de la vida sobre la muerte que celebramos en este día” afirmó el Papa. A continuación, agradeció la solidaridad de Líbano y Jordania porque reciben a tantos refugiados que han huido del conflicto sirio.

## Agradecimiento a los pueblos que acogen a migrantes

El Papa también pidió por el pueblo del Líbano y dijo: “Que el pueblo libanés, que atraviesa un período de dificultades e incertidumbres, experimente el consuelo del Señor resucitado y sea apoyado por la comunidad internacional en su vocación de ser una tierra de encuentro, convivencia y pluralismo”.

## Acallar las armas

El Papa pidió por Siria, “donde millones de personas viven actualmente en condiciones inhumanas”. También pidió por Yemen: “cuyas

vicisitudes están rodeadas de un silencio ensordecedor y escandaloso y por Libia: “donde finalmente se vislumbra la salida a una década de contiendas y enfrentamientos sangrientos”. Francisco llama a todas las partes involucradas a cesar el sufrimiento de estos pueblos y a permitir que “los pueblos devastados por la guerra vivan en paz”.

Francisco expresó sus deseos para que los Palestinos e israelíes “vuelvan a encontrar la fuerza del diálogo para alcanzar una solución estable, que permita la convivencia de dos Estados en paz y prosperidad”.

El Obispo de Roma hizo memoria de Iraq, país que visitó recientemente y dijo: “pido pueda continuar por el camino de pacificación que ha emprendido, para que se realice el sueño de Dios de una familia humana hospitalaria y acogedora para todos sus hijos”.[1]

Francisco también dirigió su mirada hacia África, donde algunos países “ven su futuro amenazado por la violencia interna y el terrorismo internacional” y citó a Sahel y Nigeria, la región de Tigray y Cabo Delgado. Pidió que se continúen los esfuerzos por encontrar soluciones pacíficas a los conflictos, respetando los derechos humanos y la sacralidad de la vida.

## “Todavía hay demasiadas guerras, demasiada violencia en el mundo”

“Que el Señor, que es nuestra paz, nos ayude a *vencer la mentalidad de la guerra*”, dijo Francisco y pidió para que los prisioneros de los conflictos en Ucrania oriental y en Nagorno-Karabaj, que puedan volver sanos y salvos con sus familias. También pidió para al Señor que “inspire a los líderes de todo el mundo para que se frene la carrera armamentista”.

El Obispo de Roma recordó que el 4 de abril se celebra el Día Mundial contra las minas anti-persona, artefactos que calificó como “artefactos arteros y horribles que matan o mutilan a muchos inocentes cada año (...) ¡Cuánto mejor sería un mundo sin esos instrumentos de muerte!”

El Papa expresó sus deseos “para todas las restricciones a la libertad de culto y de religión en el mundo, sean eliminadas y que cada uno pueda rezar y alabar a Dios libremente”.

Francisco terminó su alocución con las siguientes palabras: A la luz del Señor resucitado, nuestros sufrimientos se transfiguran. Donde había muerte ahora hay vida; donde había luto ahora hay consuelo. Al abrazar la Cruz, Jesús ha dado sentido a nuestros sufrimientos. Y ahora recemos para que los efectos beneficiosos de esta curación se extiendan a todo el mundo. ¡Feliz Pascua, serena y santa a todos!

[1] Cf. *Encuentro Interreligioso en Ur* (6 marzo 2021).



# Advocate with Down syndrome helps ‘friends like me’

NATALIE HOFER  
Catholic News Service

NEW ALBANY, Ind. — Mark Hublar is a people person. The fact radiates in his greeting — the friendly smile, the extended hand, the confident eye contact and the chatter.

“There are two things you should know about me,” said Hublar, 56. “I love people and I love to talk.”

The member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany combined those traits to develop a career he is passionate about: as a motivational speaker advocating for employment of those with disabilities.

Which leads to a third fact about him that people should know: Hublar has Down syndrome.

“He never let his disability hold him back,” said Mark’s brother and fellow parishioner, Greg Hublar. “Everything he’s accomplished is a miracle.”

Accomplishments like graduating from high school, living and supporting himself independently, earning a degree in public speaking and, with the help of his family, creating his own business called Mark Hublar Speaks.

His job has taken him around the country. He has spoken with corporate and non-profit leaders, employers, and members of a congressional committee in Washington. He has met a long list of politicians, athletes and celebrities.

“I want to see my people go into communities and get real jobs with real pay, equal pay,” Mark said.

He also wants people to know that those with and without disabilities “are different, but the same.”

Mark does not take his mission lightly.

“God wants me to work for him,” he said.

“God wants me to be a speaker for him.”

It’s a role made possible through faith, a loving family — and a crucial decision Mark’s parents made after his birth.

## Depending on God

When Mark was born in 1964, his parents were told he had mongolism — the term then used for Down syndrome. The doctor said their son would live a vegetative life. As most doctors did in such cases then, he advised them to send Mark to an institution.

Al and Linda Hublar’s response was immediate. They were not putting him in an institution. They were taking him home.

While they were firm in their decision, Al and Linda, both now 80 and members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, knew they would have to depend on God to make it work.

Al remembered praying: “God, I don’t know what’s going to happen. Please just allow him to have enough intelligence to know and love and serve you.”

One day years later, Mark heard his father swear and told him: “You know God can hear every word you say. It’s not worth it,” Al re-



**Mark Hublar of New Albany, Ind., poses in front of a podium as he would at any of his public speaking events to advocate for employment of those with disabilities and to share the message that “we’re all different, but the same.”** (CNS photo/The Marketing Company via The Criterion)

called, saying he knew then that his prayer had been answered.

The Hublars decided to raise Mark no differently than their toddler, Mike, and two other sons, Greg and Todd, born after Mark.

“He had his chores like us, he was expected to behave,” said Greg, 52. “There were no special passes because he had a disability.

“And we played as hard with him as we did each other,” from tackle football to wrestling to “parachuting” from a window — one of many tales shared by Greg in his recently published book, “A Miracle Named Mark” about his brother’s challenges and accomplishments.

“Because of the way we were raised, I didn’t even know he had Down syndrome until I was in fifth grade,” Greg told The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

## ‘Just like my brothers’

Mark wanted to do everything his brothers did. Being “just like my brothers” became a source of motivation that drove him to graduate from high school, find work and live on his own.

In 2016, he earned a three-year degree in public speaking from a community college.

A series of unrelated events that followed led to Mark’s true calling.

First, he was asked to speak about having Down syndrome with students at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School during Disabilities Awareness Week, and he was a natural.

A few years later, Mark took a job stocking shelves at Walmart. After only three months, Mark’s boss called Al to say the job wasn’t working out — Mark spent too much time talking.

“I was only kidding when I asked him, ‘Well, can you find him a job where he gets paid to talk?’” Al recalled asking, and the boss said yes.

Mark became a Walmart greeter and was so good at this job for five years that a local TV news station did a story on him when he had to retire for health reasons.

At one point during this time, his dad asked Mark what he thought his purpose was in life. His son thought about this and about two weeks later said it was “to help friends like me to have a full life and real jobs.”

But it would still be years before Mark’s gifts of public speaking and love of people would merge into his career as an advocate and public speaker. Once this happened, he was on a mission to share his message that those with disabilities and those without “may be different, but we’re the same.”

## Help for his friends

Since 2012, Mark has helped with initiatives led by The Arc of Indiana. The mission on its website aligns with his: to help “all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities realize their goals of living, learning, working and fully participating in the community.”

Susan Rinne heard one of Mark’s talks and was impressed years before she became co-director of Indianapolis-based group called Work to Include.

When the group launched in 2018 to promote employment for people in Indiana with disabilities, Rinne remembered Mark and hired him.

She supports him as he leads a team helping local people with disabilities identify their strengths. He and his team reach out to employers to share information about the benefits of hiring those with disabilities and to help them find such workers.

He is passionate about his vision for “my friends” who, like him, have some form of disability and wants people to understand that people with disabilities can be anything they want.

Al is a member of his son’s Work to Include team. He says after parents of children with Down syndrome hear Mark speak, they are more confident about what their children could do.

Mark’s recognition for what he has done is demonstrated in the long list of scholarships, awards and accolades he has received.

His face is on the Work to Include billboards in southern Indiana and was on the big screen in New York City’s Time’s Square, where his was one of 500 photos chosen from 3,000 worldwide submissions to appear as part of the National Down Syndrome Society’s annual video presentation in 2019.

But fame has not gone to Mark’s head. For him, it’s all part of his work to promote employment for those with disabilities and to spread his message of “different, but the same.”

“God is happy with what I’m doing,” he said, adding: “He works in heaven and I work down here.”

*Editor’s note: “A Miracle Named Mark” costs \$20, 10% of which is donated to a disabilities-related charity the purchaser selects from list. To purchase a copy, go to [www.markjhublarspeaks.com](http://www.markjhublarspeaks.com).*

## Easter

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term affair that began its modern course with the Industrial Revolution. Despite the differences, they combine in their ethical, social, economic, political and global relevance: They affect everyone on earth, and above all the life of the poorest and most fragile.”

But, Cardinal Czerny said, “veritable sanctuaries and schools of solidarity” have been formed

and blossomed during the pandemic, whether taking the form of online gatherings or rallying volunteers to shop for the elderly or distribute food aid to those in need.

“Our hope, though battered during the pandemic, is not lost,” he said.

Christians can live and spread their Easter joy by undergoing “an effective conversion which could decelerate, arrest and eventually reverse the climate crisis,” by advocating for a fair and

speedy distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and by “welcoming new members into our communities and parishes, into our schools and economy, into our culture and society.”

Especially after a Lent that seems to have begun in February 2020 and just kept going, Cardinal Czerny said, “what Easter should bring — should always bring but should especially bring this year — is a ringing and life-changing boost in faith and hope: ‘Do not be afraid!’ The Risen Lord is with us.”