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Farewell for Little Sisters of the Poor

More than 147 years of service in Richmond ends

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

When a resident of a Little Sisters of the Poor home is nearing death, Little Sisters will gather at the bedside and sing “The Hail Mary,” a hymn.

“We still do that when we entrust them to Our Lady,” said Mother Jeanne Mary.

Thus, it was fitting that near the end of the farewell Mass for the Little Sisters at St. Joseph’s Home on Saturday, April 24, members of the religious community that have served the elderly poor for more than 147 years in Richmond sang the hymn.

The outdoor Mass of Thanksgiving, concelebrated by Bishop Barry C. Knestout and eight priests on the grounds of the home, drew more than 200 participants, including members of Little Sisters’ communities in Baltimore and Washington, residents, staff, volunteers and benefactors.

During his homily in which he detailed the history of the Little Sisters’ service in the diocese, the bishop, said, “Dear Little Sisters, we love you! We will miss you dearly! Thank you for your many kindnesses and generosity, for your example and devotion in consecration! We will remain with you in prayer and ask God’s blessing upon you now and in all the years to come.”

The Little Sisters announced in October 2019 that they would no longer be able to staff the home and that they were selling it. The onset of COVID-19 in March 2020 delayed those plans. In November, Accordious Health expressed interest in the facility, began its due diligence and agreed to purchase it this past March.

According to Sister Mary John, assistant administrator of St. Joseph’s Home since October 2019, the 12 Little Sisters who had been serving in Richmond will go to other homes operated by the religious order by June 1.

Three are going to Washington, four to Baltimore, two to Indianapolis and one each to Chicago, Mobile, Alabama and Pittsburgh.

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Members of the Filipino community re-enact the baptism of King Rajah Humabon and his queen, Humani, following the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines in 1521. Bishop Barry C. Knestout presided at the Vigil Mass celebrating the 500th anniversary of the event, Saturday, April 24, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. (Photo/Vy Barto)

‘Celebrating with gratitude to God’

Mass marks 500 years of Christianity in Philippines

JENNIFER NEVILLE
Special to The Catholic Virginian

With dance, prayer, songs and a dramatization, a Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond on Saturday, April 24 celebrated the 500th anniversary of Christianity in the Philippines and gave attendees a taste of the culture’s rich faith. It was a way for the Filipino community to celebrate and spread the Good News.

“Whenever people of other nationalities come to our events, they feel a sense of renewed faith because most of them have never seen faith so intense, faith so vibrant, faith so colorful, so expressive, so passionate,” said Niño “Nikki” Ballesteros, St. Joseph Parish, Richmond. “The joy of our faith is contagious. It is a way of evangelization.”

Nearly 150 people attended the Mass in-person, and people from around the world watched it livestreamed. Rey Bonjoc, a parishioner at Church of Redeemer, Mechanicsville and chair of the event’s planning committee,

said he received positive feedback from people as far as Germany and the Philippines.

Daniel Villar, associate director of the diocese’s Office of Christian Formation, overseeing the celebration for the Office of Ethnic Ministries, described the event as moving and captivating.

At the beginning of the Mass, a group of traditionally-dressed Filipinos danced to a drumbeat during a narrated dramatization of the birth of Christianity in Cebu, a region in south central Philippines, in 1521.

The re-enactment started with a brief description of pre-Colonial Cebu, and it portrayed Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan’s arrival in the Philippines in 1521 where he staked a cross and claimed the territory for Spain. The performance depicted the baptism of the king and queen who were baptized with 800 of their subjects, and it showed Magellan giving a statue of Santo Niño (the Infant Jesus) to the queen as a baptismal gift.

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As Christian disciples, work to transform the world



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

Throughout his pontificate, one of the places about which Pope Francis has often spoken and written is the periphery. This is most notable in the encyclical “Fratelli Tutti” (“Brothers All”) that he wrote last October.

In it he addresses multiple religious, cultural, economic and political concerns seen in the light of Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching. He views them through universal, local and personal lenses.

We might think of the periphery as something distant, a part of the human landscape where few reside and which is difficult to reach. What we often forget, and about which our Holy Father reminds us, is that the periphery is not necessarily physically or emotionally distant from us. It can be as near as our families, neighborhoods and parishes or as vast as the world.

Consider an example from our own diocese. During the pandemic, we have devout Catholics, fully immersed in the life of the Church living in care facilities where, for a time, they may have been isolated from close contact with their families or friends. In that experience, they were definitely on the periphery; in that isolation, they are distant and alone even though they are geographically close to us.

What are we, as a Church, doing to remain connected to them? How do we ensure that we are reaching them? How will we, once our parishes are fully opened again, immerse them once more, as we did in the past, in our faith communities?

Those are the kind of questions that “Fratelli Tutti” invites us to answer.

On the periphery, we will find immigrants seeking refuge. They are without jobs and homes, but they come with hope that this will be a better place for them. It may appear to be a dichotomy, but they are both in our midst and on the periphery in a very tangible way.

While the Church has done well in focusing on that periphery, in putting the message of “Fratelli Tutti” into practice, we need to ask: How do we build a community, environment and culture of charity everywhere — personal life, family life, community, Church, nationally and internationally?

That is the mindset Pope Francis invites us, individually and as a Church, to have — a pastoral perspective and approach steeped in charity. We are called to examine, here and now, how we respond in small ways to those who, for example, are isolated, anxious, suffering from addiction, sometimes from places and families far from us, but sometimes very close, from our own families. When we recognize the periphery, we will always find people there to whom we can express our love through presence, encounter and accompaniment.

Some may view Pope Francis’ universal perspective as too idealistic, too impractical. He is not idealistic; he is being very realistic. But he does provide us with the ideal to which to aspire: That we should be living as Christian disciples who are transforming the world in which we live.

That transformation requires us to embrace and practice solidarity which, along with the dignity of the human person, the common good and subsidiarity, are principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Solidarity is, as St. John Paul II wrote in his 1987 encyclical “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis” (“Social Care”), one’s commitment “to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (38).

Pope Francis sees solidarity as universal identification of each one’s dignity. All who are on the periphery are part of our human family, no matter what their circumstances — politically, economically, culturally. We are one with them and need to treat them as someone who is close to us, as we would someone in our own family. We are urged to welcome and engage them.

In “Fratelli Tutti,” the pope devotes the entire second chapter to the parable of the Good Samaritan. That parable was Jesus’ response to the scholar who asked, “Who is my neighbor?”

(Lk 10:30). As he finished telling the parable, Jesus asked the scholar, “Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” (Lk 10:37).

Pope Francis asks similar questions of us: “Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others? Will we bend down and help another to get up? This is today’s challenge, and we should not be afraid to face it” (70).

As we look at the peripheries and the people who occupy them, may we be inspired by these thoughts from “Fratelli Tutti”:

“Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes.

“Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people’s troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment” (77).

Editor’s note: The encyclical “Fratelli Tutti” can be found at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

CLERGY APPOINTMENT

The Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout, bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, has announced the following appointment, effective Thursday, July 1, 2021:

OFFICIAL

Dominican Father Walter Wagner, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas, Charlottesville.

Dominican Father David Mott will continue to serve as administrator of the parish until that date.

Why Church help is important in countering resistance to vaccines

ROME (CNS) — Members of the Catholic Church, especially religious working in health care and schools, have an important opportunity and duty to educate people about COVID-19 and to counter resistance to vaccinations, said an expert on the Vatican’s COVID-19 Commission.

Women religious and Catholic organizations who serve others every day and have people’s trust are “our best hope for safe and fair distribution of vaccines as well as the best tool for convincing people of the safety and importance of taking the vaccines,” said Sister Carol Keehan, a nurse and Daughter of Charity.

The Church also has clear teachings about the need for more ethical ways to produce and test vaccines, but it has said

that receiving vaccines is not participating or cooperating with the evil of abortion, she said during an online meeting April 27 sponsored by the Rome-based International Union of Superiors General.

The event, dedicated to how women religious can be leaders in bringing Gospel values to new models of the economy and health care, was part of a series of meetings looking at ways sisters can empower other women and accompany and support those most affected and marginalized by the pandemic.

Sister Keehan is the chair of the Vatican COVID-19 Commission’s health task force. She gave the more than 300 participants online an overview of the two main goals of the taskforce: an

equitable distribution of vaccines and treatments, and reducing the resistance to taking the vaccine.

People have been showing resistance to the vaccine for a number of reasons, she said, and so the taskforce created a “resource kit” for Church leaders and families, available in multiple languages on the commission’s website: humandevlopment.va/en/vatican-covid-19.html.

The first part of the kit is dedicated to explaining the Church’s teaching on vaccines, Sister Keehan said.

“For years we have known that most vaccines are made and/or tested using stem cells grown in a laboratory that originated from a fetus aborted over

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Prayers for children



As part of the diocese’s observance of Child Abuse Protection Month, Bishop Barry C. Knestout leads the livestreamed rosary for the protection of children and families, Wednesday, April 14, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. (Photo/Michael Mickle)



With a banner depicting their founder, St. Jeanne Jugan, at their side, the Little Sisters of the Poor sing the “Hail Mary” near the end of the Mass of Thanksgiving, Saturday, April 24, on the grounds of St. Joseph’s Home, Richmond. The Little Sisters are leaving Richmond after more than 147 years of service to the elderly poor. (Photos/Vy Barto)



Bishop Barry C. Knestout embraces Little Sisters’ provincial Mother Loraine Marie Claire after she addressed the congregation.

Farewell

Continued from Page 1

Gratitude for volunteers

Charles Johnston, a member of St. Mary, Richmond, recounted memories from being a volunteer at the home for 14 years.

“The French Food Festival, getting to know the residents, reading at Mass — these were the best memories,” he said.

Johnston said he understood why the decision was made, i.e., fewer Little Sisters available to staff their homes, but he called it “sad for all involved.”

Terry Massie, a parishioner at St. Bridget, Richmond, who has volunteered at the home for eight years helping make beds, working in the gift shop and assisting at special events, called the Little Sisters’ departure “a passing — a very sad passing.”

She noted that the presence of Sister Collette, who served at the home for 30 years covering three assignments including volunteer coordinator from 2005-2019, was “ever present.”

“I miss her ‘God bless you! God bless you!’” Massie said.

She cited the employees’ “phenomenal attitude in care” modeled by the Little Sisters.

“When you are in a loving atmosphere, it affects you,” Massie said. “It will never be the same.”

Prior to the Mass, past and present volunteers lined up to greet Sister Collette, now part of the Little Sisters’ Baltimore community. Her first year in Richmond was at what she termed “the old home” — St. Sophia’s on Harvie Street — from 1967-1968.

“I have gratitude for the children and grandchildren of the residents of the old home who came here and volunteered,” she said. “The benefactors and all

the people and the Benedictine priests, they were wonderful.”

Everyone was family

Rae Gerardi and her husband, members of St. Joseph, Richmond, have been residents at St. Joseph’s Home for nearly five years.

“The nuns have been wonderful. It’s heartbreaking just thinking about their leaving,” she said. “And the staff is wonderful. Just wonderful. Anytime you needed anything, they’re there.”

Sarah J. Hubbs recalled her first day of work at the home 12 years ago.

“A friend of mine recommended that I come here,” she said. “I was scared to death. I was a brand new nurse fresh out of school.”

What Hubbs experienced that day remained.

“The instant I walked into the home, it was nothing but comfort,” she said. “Our home has a spirit that no other home has. All of our staff care so much about our residents; they became our family, the sisters became part of our family. Every day when you come to work, they ask, ‘How are the kids? How’s your family?’”

Wiping away tears, Hubbs, a parishioner at St. Edward, North Chesterfield, added, “It’s been an experience like no other.”

Sister Mary John praised the employees for keeping the home safe during the pandemic.

“The sisters live here in the convent. We didn’t go out, and the residents stayed in,” she said. “The employees had to go home to their families, and they had to do the right thing on the outside. And then they had to come into work.”

Sister Mary John credited the activity staff for keeping the residents animated.

“That’s been a real crisis in the COVID situation. Our activity staff

really tried to keep them going, keep them happy and keep them in contact with their families through Zoom and FaceTime,” she said. “They went over and above to do that.”

Mother Loraine Marie Clare, speaking near the end of Mass, reiterated the family atmosphere that permeated the home.

“We have considered our associates and benefactors, along with our residents and staff, a major part of our extended family,” she said, noting gratitude for the Benedictine priests and Bon Secours. “Without you we could not have carried on this work in the diocese.”

Noting that the home would no longer bear the name of St.

Joseph, Mother Loraine Marie Clare said, “My deepest desire is that he will continue to watch over this little family for the many years to come.”

What made St. Joseph’s Home and all Little Sisters’ homes special, according to Sister Mary John, is that they “aren’t just facilities.”

“They have Jesus Christ in the center. He is in the chapel; he is the center of our home. There is the sense of him being the unifying factor of our family,” she said, noting that the Little Sisters’ love for residents is rooted in the Gospel mandate: “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me.”

Sister Mary John added, “We have a fourth vow — hospitality. We truly live that because Christ has given us that mandate.”

Dillon Bruce to be ordained a deacon

Bishop Barry C. Knestout will ordain Dillon Bruce, son of Brian and Jeannette Bruce and a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Staunton, a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Richmond, 10:30 a.m., Saturday, May 22, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond.



Dillion Bruce

Following graduation from Stuarts Draft High School in 2012, Bruce, 27, enrolled at Virginia Tech to study engineering. He left following his sophomore year and entered St. John Paul II Seminary, Washington, in fall 2014.

Bruce earned a bachelor’s

degree in philosophy from The Catholic University of America in 2017. Later that year, at the request of Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo, he entered the seminary at the Pontifical North American College. He is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

From the summer of 2019 through the summer of 2020, Bruce served his pastoral year at St. Bridget Parish, Richmond. This fall, he will serve as a campus minister for Christendom College’s study abroad program in Rome.

New parish center reflects 'where God is leading us'

St. Theresa, Farmville, celebrates blessing of \$1.5M project

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

In the past, visitors to the food pantry at St. Theresa Parish, Farmville, had to stand outside in all kinds of weather because the small space could admit only five clients at a time.

On Saturday, April 17, Bishop Barry C. Knestout blessed St. Theresa's new parish center, which was begun in 2017 and completed in January. The construction includes updated classrooms, administrative offices and meeting rooms, restrooms with showers, a kitchen, a spacious social hall with large windows, and a large food pantry and clothing closet with a seating area that can welcome up to 75 people comfortably.

"Everyone is so excited about the new building, especially the food pantry," said Father Stefan Migac, pastor of St. Theresa. "People are able to come inside now, and that's been the biggest blessing."

'Treating people with dignity'

Doreen Hines, director of the food pantry and clothing ministry, explained that the previous shed-like trailer forced people to wait outside in the cold, rain and wind, and the summer heat.

"We have some elderly clients who are in their 80s and some who are sick or disabled, and they should not have to stand outside in the cold," Hines said.

Now they can come inside, be seated, have a hot or cold drink and watch television or listen to the radio while they wait.

The building sends a message that the parish is committed to these ministries, Hines said.

"We always treat people with dignity," she said. "That's what God wants us to do."

St. Theresa's food pantry, which is open to the public on Wednesdays, complements the food pantry at Farmville Area Community Emergency Services (FACES), which serves clients on Saturdays.

"The food pantry is a great way to help us be present in the community," said Father Migac, noting that Catholics are minorities in the area. "This is the face of the Catholic Church in central Virginia."

During his visit, the bishop celebrated Mass and blessed the new center, sprinkling holy water on the walls and floors of each room.

"With perseverance, with much work and prayer, all this has been brought about," Bishop Knestout said. "The structure is the important underpinnings within which all the work of the Spirit can take place in terms of community and prayer, in teaching and in charity."

In the food pantry and clothing

closet area, he noted: "This is a place already blessed because of all the charity here."

'God's hands in this'

Director of religious education Karel Bailey spoke about the five classrooms, which are larger than the old ones. The previous classrooms doubled as storage areas and thus were unsafe as well as inconvenient and confining.

"Now teachers and students can move around, which makes for more creative teaching and learning," said Bailey, noting the program serves an average of 50 students a year. "The teachers are so excited to be able to teach better in these spaces."

Bailey added that students have been able to return to the larger classrooms and maintain social distancing during the pandemic, which would not have been possible in the small classrooms before.

"I see God's hands in all of this," she said. "And there's a renewed enthusiasm for religious education that makes me hopeful."

The classrooms and other gathering spaces also are used for RCIA and adult education, as well as campus ministries from nearby Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College.

The need for a new building was discussed as early as 2009, but it wasn't until 2017 that the campaign, "Alive in Christ," officially began.

Several other needs arose later, such as classroom equipment and more space for a parking lot.

The entire project cost about \$1.5 million. With \$600,000 already available, the parish raised another \$750,000 and received a \$200,000 loan from the diocese.

An existing building of about 5,000 square feet was renovated for offices and classrooms, and the two-level addition of about 9,000 square feet now houses the social hall, kitchen, food pantry, clothing closet, mechanical room and meeting rooms.

How it became a reality

Father Migac credits parishioners for their help to make the building a reality, especially the project leaders Adam and Jean Algeier.

"There were many things I do not know as a priest, such as what colors the bathrooms should be," Father Migac said with a laugh. "Jean and Adam were always there to answer those questions."

"It was amazing to see the building take shape and to finally fulfill the dreams of the parish through the gifts of God," Jean Algeier said.

Father Migac also noted that the diocese's Catholic Community Foundation staff members – Margaret Keightley, Alex Previtera and



Above: Bishop Barry C. Knestout greets St. Theresa, Farmville, parishioners following the blessing of the parish center, Saturday, April 17. From left: Father Patricio Alcantara, Father Stefan Migac, Robin McLane, Eniko Swanik, Deacon Emmett McLane, and Jean and Adam Algeier. Below: Parishioners pray during the event. (Photos/Doreen Hines)



Veronica Scholle – provided tremendous help and guidance with printed materials, meetings and fundraising.

A native of Slovakia, Father Migac also said that as a young priest shepherding his first parish, he is lucky to have such parishioners working with him.

The Farmville parish is diverse, with retirees from northern Virginia, students from area Catholic Campus Ministries, white- and blue-collar workers and middle-class families. But they all came together to make the building a reality, Father Migac said. "Now we just need to fill it up a little more to make it alive."

St. Theresa Parish is one of three in a cluster, all served by Father Migac. The other two parishes – Sacred Heart, Meherrin, and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Blackstone – have use of the center and have their offices there as well.

Father Migac said the project has created more than just a building: it has deepened his trust.

"You might start a project and not be sure how it will turn out, but God provides the right people in the right place at the right moment," he said. "I know that God is leading us."

Help

Continued from Page 2

40 years ago. Almost all of us have had a vaccine made in this way," she said.

"The Church has decades of theology and ethical teachings, asking that better ways of testing and producing vaccines should be a goal but that taking these vaccines, or administering them to children, is not participating or cooperating with the evil of abortion," she said.

"In spite of this, a number of voices immediately started refusing to take the vaccines that had been made and or tested this way. Some of them were bishops in various dioceses, as well as priests and other teachers of the faith," she said.

Several Vatican dicasteries stepped in again to clarify the Church's position on the acceptability of the vaccines when no others are available, and, she added, "Pope Francis has been very clear that it is a moral responsibility to take the vaccines to protect oneself, one's family and one's community from this deadly disease."

Agencies addressing children's mental health needs

CCEVA, Barry Robinson Center concerned about post-pandemic long-term effects

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

This year has been a struggle for many, and perhaps for no one more than children and adolescents, for whom one year can seem like two.

Or three.

"At that age, when they are isolated from their friends, when the highlight of their day is just doing schoolwork, it's difficult," said Kelle Watson, director of mental health services at Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia. "Especially if it begins to feel as if there is no light at the end of the tunnel."

There's been loneliness. Monotony. Struggles with online learning. Anxiety and missed milestones.

And for some children, especially those living in poverty, school can be a lifeline of security and care. A lifeline that's been severed for much of the past year.

"The pandemic has hit hard," said Chris Tan, CEO of Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia. "It's affected peer relationships, the ability to connect. And it's important to remember that children don't always have the coping mechanisms that adults have in place."

"We've seen an increase in the need for outpatient mental health care since the beginning of the pandemic," said Rob McCartney, CEO of the Barry Robinson Center. "It's been a stressful time for everyone, but particularly for the kids."

For the past year, McCartney said, CCEVA and the Barry Robinson Center have been working to meet the growing need for mental health care for the children of eastern Virginia — and will continue working to resolve long-term effects of the pandemic, even as the tide might be turning.

Two teams, one mission

Founded in 1932, CCEVA provides counseling for children and adults, including marriage and family counseling. Help is provided on a sliding fee scale, making certain that care is attainable for all. It serves people of all faiths and backgrounds, with more than 85% of its clients living at or below the poverty line.

The Barry Robinson Center opened in 1933. With a 32-acre wooded campus in Norfolk, the



According to Kelle Watson, director of mental health services at Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia, "There is a definite need for students to talk about all that is happening, in the world and in their lives. It's important to be honest with the children, but also to reassure them. The world may seem like a scary place right now, but it's going to get better." (iStock image)

center offers a residential treatment program for children and adolescents experiencing mental health issues, as well as outpatient services, including substance abuse counseling and a foster care program.

The two Catholic institutions have often worked side-by-side in serving the families of Hampton Roads.

"We have a long history of mutual respect for one another," Tan said. "I have documents of the two organizations working together even as far back as the '30s."

This May, the two are teaming up once more, taking their campaign for health and healing to the golf course in an effort to raise money for children's outpatient mental health services as they sponsor the third annual Catholic Cup Golf Tournament at Heron Ridge Golf Club in Virginia Beach.

Last year, the tournament raised \$23,000, providing 658 hours of counseling and care for children in need. This year, their goal is to raise \$50,000, a little more than double that amount.

"I'm not sure if we are going to get there, but we're getting close," McCartney said. "Everybody is excited to compete with one another. We are hoping that the real winner will be the kids who are in need."

Critical need

In addition to offering support in field offices throughout eastern Virginia from Norfolk to the Eastern Shore, CCEVA

provides seven Hampton Roads Catholic Schools — five on the Southside and two on the Peninsula — with student counseling services.

Since students returned to school last August, school counselors have seen a marked increase in students coming into their offices looking for help, Watson said.

"We've seen an increase in suicidal ideation, anxiety, cutting and depression," she said, adding that counselors work with parents to find the best course for each child, referring students to outpatient services when appropriate.

She added that counselors have also reported that more students have simply been staying behind after group presentations, hoping to talk — not just about the pandemic, but about other concerns as well.

"There is a definite need for students to talk about all that is happening, in the world and in their lives," she said. "It's important to be honest with the children, but also to reassure them. The world may seem like a scary place right now, but it's going to get better."

Finding comfort

Sister Emily Faubion, a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and spiritual life coordinator at the Barry Robinson Center, said that before she came to Virginia, she served as a teacher in the inner-city schools of Philadelphia for 20 years, an experience

that brought home to her just how many kids rely on school not only for academics and the chance to socialize, but even for basic needs.

"For a lot of young people, it's been far more than just being away from their friends. For many, school is a safe haven. It's a safe zone. It's where they are warm, where they are fed. Many students haven't had that this year," she said.

And then, too, there are the struggles that many children face beyond those worsened by the pandemic — difficulties that haven't come to a halt even though it sometimes seems that much of the world has.

"The young people I work with have had their year interrupted already, just by being away from home," she said.

Sister Faubion meets with students in discussion groups and helps them to organize Sunday prayer services. The students plan and lead the services, sharing their testimonies and musical talent to make the gatherings a special and reflective time.

"They struggle with many of the questions all young people struggle with," she said. "'Why are we here?' 'What is our purpose?'"

"I feel fortunate that I can serve in this role," Sister Faubion said. "I'm not their teacher. I'm not their therapist. It's nice just to be a companion. To be someone they can talk to, to walk with them on their journey."

Watson said that she and the counselors of CCEVA also feel that it's been a privilege to support the children of eastern Virginia — in both school counseling and outpatient program — during trying times.

"We consider it an honor to be an important part of their healing, safety and overall well-being. We have been serving in this capacity for decades and hope to continue to do so for decades to come," she said.

Watson added that she was proud of CCEVA's school counselors for going back to school last August, even when so much was still uncertain.

"In every case, they've been able to find a resolution to the situation," she said. "Every one of the stories had a happy ending."

Editor's note: For details about the Catholic Cup Golf Tournament call 757-456-2366 or email mdavis@cceva.org.

Read additional Catholic news and information daily at www.catholicvirginian.org.

General Assembly session yielded far-reaching outcomes

GUEST COMMENTARY

JEFF CARUSO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
VIRGINIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

This General Assembly session (Jan. 13 – March 1) was unique in form and substance. Public comment during committee hearings was only taken virtually. On a number of occasions, opportunities to testify for or against legislation were denied or limited considerably. Due to strict bill filing caps, legislators made careful decisions about which measures to propose in 2021 and which ones to save for a future year, and committees addressed far fewer bills than in prior years. Nevertheless, the consequences of this year's session were undeniably far-reaching.

What passed?

Abortion coverage expansion. Numerous longstanding protections for the unborn and pregnant women were dismantled during the 2020 session, and the erosion of life-affirming laws continued in 2021. Legislation enacted this year removes abortion coverage restrictions for plans participating in Virginia's health insurance exchange. The exchange is a virtual marketplace created under the federal Affordable Care Act through which an estimated 240,000 Virginians acquire their health plans. Beginning July 1, exchange-participating plans – many of which are subsidized with taxpayers' money – will be allowed to cover abortion without limits.

Death penalty repeal. Historically, more executions have been carried out in Virginia than in any other state in our country's history. Transformational legislation enacted this year, however, makes Virginia the first southern state and the 23rd nationally to end its death penalty.

Marijuana commercialization. Enacted legislation creates the framework for a commercial market for marijuana in Virginia, with retail sales to those 21 and older permitted beginning Jan. 1, 2024. The legislation also fast-tracks legal possession and home cultivation of marijuana, allowing those 21 and older to possess up to one ounce and allowing "households" to home-grow up to four plants beginning July 1 of this year.

Repeal of genetic counselor conscience protections. A law in place since 2014 ensures that Virginia law does not "require any genetic counselor to participate in counseling that conflicts with their deeply-held moral or religious beliefs." Though these conscience protections received overwhelming bipartisan support when they were approved seven years ago, they were repealed this session and will be erased from law beginning July 1.

First step against Virginia's Marriage Amendment. Virginia's constitution defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman – a definition approved by Virginia voters in November 2006. This year, however,

See Legislation, Page 13

Disheartened by articles

I was disheartened to read "Bishops to vaccine developers: 'Stop using abortion-derived cell lines'" (Catholic Virginian, April 19).

As a strong practicing Catholic, I would never approve of abortion as a means of obtaining these cells for vaccine testing. But in these cases, the abortions have already taken place. I see it as a means of turning a negative event into a positive one where this aborted fetus has the opportunity to provide life-saving research measures.

I was then more disheartened to further read that Cardinal Wilton Gregory of the Washington Archdiocese stated he would not deny the Eucharist to President Biden despite the president's deliberate, open stance on abortion.

How can the Church justify President Biden's receiving the Eucharist yet chastise vaccine developers for use of cells post abortion?

– Maryellen Coderoni
Midlothian

Column inspires living Catholic Social Teaching

In Light of Faith columnist Barbara Hughes is a gift to The Catholic Virginian! Her April 19 "Words of apology must be supported by action" has inspired me to keep learning and living the Catholic Social Teaching tenets of my faith that require me to work to promote a fundamental right to life and

a right to all things needed for human decency.

I want to continue to challenge myself as the Jesuits have done to take concrete steps to offer true reparations for the sins of buying and selling those that were enslaved to use the profits to build and expand Georgetown University.

I have a renewed sense of taking responsibility for learning more about Black prophets coming from Catholic roots like Tarana Burke, who was the actual founder of the MeToo movement, before it went viral when actress Alyssa Milano invited women to share their sexual harassment abuse on Twitter in 2017, and Olga Segura, author of "Birth of a Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church."

Segura reminds us that Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors founded Black Lives Matter not as a movement pushing an extremist agenda that contradicts our faith. The Black Lives Matter movement, like the teachings in the Catholic Church, places value on human beings, building community and working together to support one another against systems of racism and oppression, centering on those that are most vulnerable.

I am grateful for the challenge to keep evolving in my faith and backing that up with action in the world.

– Teresa Stanley
Virginia Beach

Dred Scott decision written by a Catholic

I read with interest Barbara Hughes' excellent column (Catholic Virginian, April 19) on reparation and reconciliation by the Jesuits for sins that involved buying and selling Black slaves.

Hughes also mentioned other Catholic groups who historically discriminated against Blacks, and she refers to the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court in February 1857. It is important to reflect that Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, who wrote the Court's majority opinion, was a Roman Catholic.

The fact that Taney freed his inherited slaves prior to his tenure as chief justice in no way mitigates his infamous decision.

– Michael Miskovsky
Mathews

Biden shouldn't be denied Communion

It's very disappointing to see some Catholics clamoring for holy Communion to be denied to President Joe Biden over a single issue.

It was also very sad to see so many Christians willing to give a "moral pass," as it were, to the president who preceded him. Donald Trump was easily the worst, most corrupt, most un-Christian president we've ever seen. He presided over an empire of lies and spewed out a daily supply of hatred, bigotry and division from the Oval Office.

Yet, because he claimed to be "pro-life," this was justified and rationalized by some. This was a man whose own history of sleazy dealings with women (accused of sexual harassment by dozens) presented a legitimate question: How many abortions did he pay for?

By contrast, Biden is a good and decent man whose Catholic faith defines him and has sustained him through many losses and tragedies.

Surely the beautiful teachings of our faith and

our Church do not come down to abortion, and abortion only. The Church has always recognized the right of its members to rely upon the dictates of our conscience on matters of all public policy questions.

The reception of holy Communion is at the very heart of what we believe. Let's not go down the road of denying it to people who don't comply with what is clearly an obsession with abortion among some.

– Rick Howell
Roanoke

CV letters policy

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

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At Holy Family, 'green' is celebrated, promoted

Va. Beach parish notes multiple ways environment affects lives

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

The Future is Now. And it is Good.

Those words, full of a promising message, were the theme of a celebration held at Holy Family, Virginia Beach, April 22, as parishioners gathered on the 51st observation of Earth Day for the dedication and blessing of the church's 645 newly-installed solar panels.

A crowd of around 85 assembled in the church parking lot, standing under a canopy of trees or sitting in socially-distanced folding chairs, to enjoy an evening of blue skies, music, prayer and reflection.

"We wanted to do something to celebrate the future and our efforts to protect our common home," Brian Alexander, Holy Family social justice coordinator, said.

Holy Family is one of seven parishes in the Diocese of Richmond slated to go solar with the support of Catholic Energies, a service of the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit Catholic Climate Covenant that specializes in helping Catholic organizations to design, develop and fund energy-efficient projects.

"We will be saving money, but even more importantly, we will be saving energy," Alexander said. The church's new roof, he said, will spare approximately 7,100 metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere over the next 25 years.

At the start of the dedication, Ed Marroni, chairperson of the parish's environmental ministry, shared the story of the ministry's six-year journey in working to attain the solar panels, inspired, in part, he said, by Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical "Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home."

"As a faith community, we are heeding the call of the word of God to care for and preserve our Earth," he said. "We have gradually become a greener church, and this evening we celebrate a major step in obtaining that goal."

The care for creation

The dependence of human life on a clean Earth was a recurring theme of the evening, as representatives from several ministries spoke of how environmental issues affect their work. Ana Castellanos of the church's migrant ministry explained, for example, how environmental degradation is a significant factor in forcing families to migrate.

"Climate change — and the increased frequency of extreme weather, forest fires and intensified storms — is displacing more people than at any time in human history," she said. The resulting food scarcity and lack of access to clean water leave many with little choice but to look for a better life elsewhere, she said, despite the risks and lack of legal protection they might face.

A letter written for the occasion by Father Jean Ronel Bonnet, pastor of Holy Family's "twin" parish, St. Jude in the Diocese of Hinche, and read aloud by Kathy Dowdy of the parish's Haiti ministry, also emphasized how the Catholic Social Teaching of the care for creation is not a luxury, but rather a necessity for human life.

"Haiti has a tropical climate, dry, not humid, it was the pearl of the Antilles because of its natural beauty," Father Romel wrote. But over the past few decades, Haiti has become a cautionary tale, struggling with historic deforestation and soil degradation, problems wors-



Above left: During the solar panel blessing and dedication on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22, Father René Castillo, pastor of Holy Family, Virginia Beach, addresses members of the congregation. Above right: Parishioner Kristen Dowdy plants a sign in the parish garden. Left: Marie-Luise Nazar purchases a Bluebird Beach Bungalow from Susie Stefonowich, chairperson of The Chosen, a group for people experiencing disabilities. (Photos/Wendy Klesch)

ened by insufficient management of the country's natural resources.

Coffee production has sparked several grassroots movements aiming to restore the country's environment, Father Romel wrote, and it's to these efforts that we look for hope for the future.

A message of hope

Julie Touhey, who participates in The Chosen, a group for people who experience disabilities, spoke about the efforts of one such small organization working to make a big difference: Bluebird Beach Bungalows, based in Virginia Beach.

Touhey said that her friend Stephen Todd started the company when he lost his job after the nearby Farm Fresh closed in 2018. He began to build bluebird houses made of reclaimed wood and ornamented with sea glass, selling them for \$15 each and donating the profits to a different local charity each month.

"Their mission is to do good things," she said, "with an emphasis on enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and protecting the environment."

Since its founding, Touhey said, the organization has donated more than \$60,000 to charities throughout Hampton Roads.

And God saw that it was good

As part of the celebration, seven children of the parish took turns reading from the book Genesis, recounting the story of creation.

After each verse, the crowd responded with the refrain, "And God saw that it was good," a reminder that the Earth is good not only in what it gives to us, noted Xaverian Brother Charles Warthen, but in and of itself, as God's handiwork, a "sacred space where God reveals to us the immense beauty of the Divine."

"We continue to be thankful for the gift of the entire creation with which God has blessed all creatures," Father René Castillo, pastor of Holy Family, said, and for "above all, the magnificent sun ... providing light, heat and also illumination to our sometimes cloudy minds and spirits."

The celebration concluded with a rendition of "The Canticle of the Sun" as parishioners gathered to plant bright cardboard signs in the church garden, each bearing a word of hope and encouragement.

"The Earth is a gift from God, and it's worth celebrating," Alexander said. "The young kids understand it. Well. We all understand it, really."

What's your hurry? Stay until Mass ends



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. When is it proper to leave church at the end of Mass? Do you have to stay for the recessional hymn to end, or can we leave after the blessing, while the recessional is still being sung? (city and state withheld)

A. You should remain in church while the recessional hymn is being sung. Singing is a part of worship — particularly so if it is a hymn meant to be sung by the entire congregation.

It bothers me when I see people leaving church early — sometimes, alas, even right after Communion — in a rush to get to the parking lot.

What's the urgency? Isn't God worth the extra few minutes? I have read — and I understand — that technically the Mass finishes when the priest blesses us and the deacon or priest tells us that the Mass is ended.

But for the sake of simple politeness, one ought not distract others in the congregation by leaving before communal worship is concluded.

I find it helpful if the priest remains at the altar for the first verse or two of the recessional hymn and

structures it so that the procession of liturgical ministers reaches the back of church as that hymn is ending.

Ideally, of course, worshippers would then spend a few minutes in private, silent prayer of thanksgiving before leaving church.

On this side of heaven, we are never closer to the Lord than when we've just received him in the Eucharist.

Q. I am considering coming back to the Church after 50-plus years. In the meantime, though, I was married, divorced and remarried years later in a non-Catholic ceremony to a divorced man. Am I even eligible to receive the sacraments? (upstate New York)

A. Before answering, I would need to know more about your situation. Was your first marriage performed with the Catholic Church's approval, and is your first husband still alive? Next, are you at the present time living with your second husband?

Depending on your answers, the solution could be fairly easy, requiring that you simply go to confession — or it could be a bit more complicated, involving some annulment papers and the Church's "convalidation" of your present marriage.

Why not meet with a priest

whom you know or has been recommended to you and talk over your situation?

I am pleased that you are thinking about coming back to the sacraments, and please know that I will pray for you as you do so.

This is not an unfamiliar story; I've known others who had drifted away from Church attendance but who, in their later years, missed deeply the strength and peace that had come from the sacraments.

Q. I am an 80-year-old cradle Catholic, but the Mass doesn't speak to me now. The verbiage keeps changing — what the heck is "consubstantial"? I have belonged to my parish since its inception many years ago, but if I died the priest would not know me and has made no effort to do so.

I miss the Latin Mass more than ever; when I could go anywhere and hear the same words, it was so comforting. (city and state withheld)

A. Your question reflects a familiar lament from Catholics in your age group which, by the way, is my own age group. Let me separate your concerns in order to respond.

First, I agree with you on the word "consubstantial," which is technical, heavily philosophical and puzzling to many Catholics.

This is what happened: When

the current English text came into use (in 2011), the language of the Nicene Creed — which formerly had said "one in being with the Father" — was changed to "consubstantial with the Father."

This was thought by many theologians as well as the Vatican to be a more literal and accurate translation of the language from the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, which had defined that doctrine.

Next, on the matter of priests knowing their parishioners, the recent history of the Church, especially in the United States, has been marked by necessary parish mergers and consolidations — primarily due to the drop in priestly vocations.

Regrettably, a natural consequence is that priests are not able to know as many of their parishioners personally as they once were.

You might consider someday dropping by your rectory and simply saying hello to your parish priest, telling him that you miss the "old days" when priests had more chances to meet and get to know their parishioners.

As to the language of the Mass, I grew up in the days when it was comforting to be able to go anywhere in the world and hear the familiar sounds of the Latin Mass. However, I much prefer the present, when the Mass is said in the vernacular and everyone can understand what the priest is saying.

(Questions may be sent to 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.

MAY 5 MARITAL UNION IN AN AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM

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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Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:30 PM via Zoom

Join us on Thursday May 6, for an evening of hope, inspiration, and lots of fun, as we gather together virtually to support the mission of Catholic Campus Ministry at William & Mary.

Visit tribecatholic.org/forwardinfaithlive to register!

Free registration is available, as well as premium registrations, which include a VIP gift box.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Mary's human experience makes her real to us



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

Most Catholics associate the month of May with Mary, Mother of God, but few know that May was originally the month devoted to Maia, Greek goddess of fertility. In A.D. 313, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity. In A.D. 380, it became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

Along the way, many pagan holidays and symbols were converted to represent Christianity, and since Mary's motherhood extends to all people, changing May to represent Mary was a logical transition. For today's Catholics, this month has become synonymous with May altars, Marian hymns and May crowning.

It's also the month when the Church celebrates the feast of the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, causing me to wonder what was in Mary's heart when she watched her son lifted, knowing that she would not see him again until after she died.

What was her experience during the month that followed her son's death as she watched the apostles set forth to carry on the mission that Jesus had begun? What were her thoughts as she watched the Church experience growing pains that included persecutions and martyrdom? Almost overnight, her mission was expanded from being the mother of Jesus to mother of the entire world.

Having recently celebrated the Solemnity of the Resurrection of our Lord amid strains

of alleluias, these aren't typical questions that occupy the minds of most Catholics during May. And yet, I suspect that for many who have lost a loved one during these past months, Mary's sorrow is closer to their heart and their lived experience than rejoicing.

During the months following Jesus' death and his ascension into heaven, Mary's memories of Jesus' life on earth surely occupied her mind and heart. She knew that her son was in heaven and that she would see him again, yet she surely longed to embrace him just as everyone who mourns a dead son, mother, father, sister or brother does. Mary's human experience is what makes her real to us.

She was not God, and although she loved God with all her heart, she surely missed her son, savoring his every word. After Jesus' ascension, Mary was a woman wrapped in silence, pondering divine mysteries within the context of the human experience.

No longer an ordinary Jewish mother, Mary became mother to persons of every race and religion. She is esteemed by Muslims as mother of the greatest prophet next to Mohammed, and respected by Jews as mother of a wise teacher.

According to Roy Schoeman, Harvard professor and self-proclaimed atheist, Mary appeared to him and changed his life. He is now a Catholic, attends Mass daily and witnesses to the extraordinary beauty of the Mother of God.

During these times when there is so much tension and a lack of appreciation for diversity, we do well to remember that Mary is mother of all people.

I recall a mother of seven children was once asked if she had a favorite among her children. Her response was that on any given day, the one

who is suffering most was closest to her heart. I believe Mary would say the same of her children as she looks upon our broken world.

The poor, the suffering, victims and refugees of war and violence, those who have lost a loved one, are surely close to Mary's heart. Having suffered much in her life on earth, she is no stranger to pain. And yet, as any loving mother would, she binds wounds, soothes aching hearts and entrusts her children to Jesus, divine healer and redeemer of the world.

Despite Mary's exalted position as the Mother of God, spiritual author Caryll Houselander reminds us that "Mary was not asked to do anything herself, but to let something be done to her. She was not asked to renounce anything, but to receive an incredible gift. She was not asked to lead a special kind of life, to retire to the temple and live as a nun, to cultivate suitable virtues or claim special privileges.

"She was simply to remain in the world, to go forward with her marriage to Joseph, to live the life of an artisan's wife, just what she had planned to do when she had no idea that anything out of the ordinary would ever happen to her."

Mary reminds us that it's not what we do that is important, but the love that accompanies ordinary tasks that are part of our life's vocation. Mary is more than mother; she is model, teacher and intercessor, and so we pray, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!"

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

There are no shortcuts; we must love one another



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY
MELANIE CODDINGTON

Today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells one happy episode in a much longer and more complicated tale. We cannot hope to understand the watershed quality of this event without a look at the entire chapter.

Acts 10 begins with Cornelius, the centurion, identified by the Luke-Acts evangelist as a "God-fearer." This designation applied to Gentiles attracted to Judaism, who attended the synagogue and accepted many of its beliefs and ethical practices.

Acts 10:2 calls Cornelius "devout," citing his generosity in giving alms and his constancy in prayer. The text also indicates that his household follows him in this God-fearing devotion, as well as one or more of his soldiers.

In verses 3-6, Cornelius experiences a mid-afternoon vision, a waking dream, wherein an angel of God affirms his faithfulness, then instructs him to seek Peter. The next day, even as the emissaries of Cornelius approach Joppa, the city where Peter is staying, Peter has his own vision.

According to Acts 10:9-20, it happens at

noon, when Peter, hungry and praying in the midday sun, falls into a trance. He sees a kind of picnic cloth laid out before him and hears the command, "Get up...slaughter and eat," but the cloth is crawling with critters a good Jew would never think of eating.

The voice of Peter's vision responds to his pious protest with, "What God has made clean, you are not to call profane." As usual with Peter, it takes three repetitions to drive the point home. While pondering the meaning of this strange vision, Peter gets word from the Spirit to go with the messengers (sent by Cornelius) who have come looking for him.

When he meets Cornelius, Peter connects the dots and draws a startling conclusion, saying, "You know that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with, or visit, a Gentile, but God has shown me that I should not call any person profane or unclean."

As the story unfolds, Cornelius, his family, and close friends listen to the Gospel with open hearts, accept it and experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, made manifest in ecstatic praise (speaking in tongues, as at Pentecost). Peter's companions, all faithful Jews, are stunned by this unthinkable event.

The Spirit of God has broken down the accepted boundaries of holiness, and they must adjust their religious vision or miss the boat. Peter then takes the final step, saying, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people,

who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?"

In a fitting response to this expansive action of the Spirit, Psalm 98 reminds us that God's salvation includes all lands and all peoples.

Today's Gospel from John 15 and the second reading from 1 John 4 emphasize, "love one another," as the essential commandment and the primary sign that one has been "begotten by God and knows God."

Examining these Johannine selections together, we can see a pattern, a kind of logic of love: Love comes from God, because God is love. God reveals his love by sending his Son. God loves Jesus Christ, who loves us.

To remain in the love of Christ and the Father, we must keep the commandment — "love one another." We cannot shortcut the process by trying to love God without loving others.

Considering this imperative in dialogue with the reading from Acts, critical questions arise: Who are we tempted to exclude from God's love and grace and from our exercise of this mandatum?

In what ways are we called to "love one another" amid the present maelstrom of conflict and division in our world, in our country, and yes, in our Church?

Are we willing to step beyond the comfort zone of our assumptions and certainties to embrace a new perspective — to see other persons as God sees them, as beloved, as bearers of the divine image?

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

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48;
Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4;
1 Jn 4:7-10;
Jn 15:9-17

Pope encourages Christian meditation

Sees it as a way to encounter Christ

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
Catholic News Service

Meditation is more than just a method of stress relief for the body, it is a way of encountering Christ in one's soul, Pope Francis said.

During his weekly general audience April 28, the pope said that although it has become a "widespread activity among people who do not have a religious view of life," meditation within the context of Christian prayer guides men and women "to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus."

"For us Christians, meditating is a way of encountering Jesus. And in this way, only in this way, can we find ourselves," he said.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope reflected on meditation as a form of prayer Christians use to "seek meaning" within the sacred mysteries and from God's word.

Meditation, however, is also practiced by nonbelievers as well "because it represents a high barrier against the daily stress and emptiness that is everywhere," he noted.

"Here, then, is the image of young people and adults sitting in meditation, in silence, with their eyes half-closed," he said. "What do these people do? They meditate. It is a phenomenon to be welcomed: we are not made to run all the time, we have an inner life that cannot always be neglected. Meditating is therefore a need for everyone."

Nevertheless, the pope said that for Christians, the use of meditation is not due

to an aspiration of "full self-transparency," but first and foremost "an encounter with the Other, with a capital O."

"If an experience of prayer gives us inner peace, or self-mastery, or clarity about the path to take, these results are, one might say, side effects of the grace of Christian prayer, which is the encounter with Jesus. That is, meditating means going forward — guided by a verse from Scripture, from a word — to the encounter with Jesus within us," he said.

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope said that while there are many methods that are "important and worthy of practice," Christian meditation "is not possible without the Holy Spirit."

"Jesus told us, 'I will send you the Holy Spirit; he will teach you and explain to you,'" the pope said. "In meditation as well, he is the guide to go forward in the encounter with Jesus Christ."

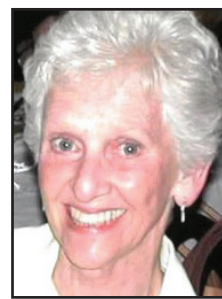
Pope Francis said that the grace of Christian prayer is the knowledge that "Christ is not far away but is always in a relationship with us."

He encouraged Christians to meditate on the Gospels so that the Holy Spirit "may guide us to be present there."

"This is not a withdrawal into ourselves, no, no," the pope said. Christian meditation involves "going to Jesus and from Jesus, to meet ourselves — healed, risen, strong — because of the grace of Jesus. And to encounter Jesus, the savior of all, including me. And this is thanks to the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

IN MEMORIAM

Patricia Twiford Golden



A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Holy Cross, Lynchburg, Tuesday, April 27 for Patricia Twiford Golden. Mrs. Golden, 84, passed away Friday, April 23, at her home in

Elon-Monroe, Amherst County.

A native of Columbia, N.C., Mrs. Golden was the daughter of Heckstall and Selma Brickhouse Twiford. She was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Thomas R. Golden, and by her parents and a sister, Rose Adams.

She is survived by six children: Thomas Barry Golden (Jackie) of Fresno, Calif., Vanessa Cooper (David), Teresa Marie Golden, Jennifer Bell (Ed), all of Amherst County, Msgr. Patrick Dupree Golden of Roanoke and Dr. Richard Kelly Golden (Wendy) of Amherst County.

Mrs. Golden is further survived by 10 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and two more on the way.

She was devoted to her faith and family, and was a longtime, faithful member of Holy Cross Parish. Mrs. Golden was also an avid gardener with a vast knowledge of horticulture — a person family and friends always knew would have the answer to any gardening questions.

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Celebrating military children



Portsmouth Catholic Regional School first grader Paula Kanter draws a flag during Purple Up Day, Friday, April 23. The school observed the day as a way of thanking military children for their strength and sacrifices. April is observed as the month of the military child. (Photo/Donna Henry)



EMPOWERING the NEXT GENERATION

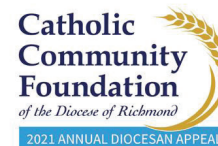
Spotlight on: Seminarian Education

On average, it takes a man 7 years to become a priest. In this time, the Office of Vocations is present with them throughout their journeys to become the future leaders of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

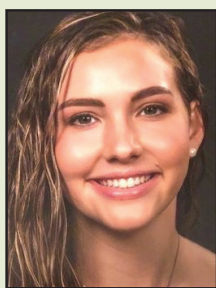
Each man entering the Seminary should be assured that he will not have to worry about the cost of this specialized education required to answer God's calling.

Because of your generous support of the Annual Appeal, you enable the Diocese to help fund the cost of tuition, room and board for both minor (college) and major (theology) seminary students.

To learn more about how you can make an impact through the 2021 Annual Diocesan Appeal, please visit RichmondCatholicFoundation.org/Appeal



WHAT WE'VE HEARD



Honored I: Anna Margaret Prest, daughter of April and Rich Prest — a recently retired active duty Navy captain, has received a full Naval ROTC scholarship at the University of Notre Dame. A senior at Hickory High School, Chesapeake, Anna Margaret will major in political science and minor in Middle Eastern studies. The family are members of St. Stephen Martyr Parish, Chesapeake.

Honored II: The Knights of Columbus Council at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart has awarded Excellence in Service scholarships of \$1,000 each to Evan Jenkins, a senior at Matoaca, and Isabella Daye, a senior at Monacan, for their contributions of time and talent to parish, school and community.

Evan has been involved in March for Life, youth group and assisting with children in the Christmas pageant. Isabella is an altar server, lector, catechist, usher and Vacation Bible School teacher.

Silver Rose: Members of Knights of Columbus Bristol Council 6695, along with people from three parishes and community members, prayed the rosary Thursday, April 15, in front of the Bristol Regional Women's Center, an abortion clinic, as part of the Silver Rose program that promotes unity among Knights in Canada, United States and Mexico.

In addition to praying for the sanctity of life, they prayed for spiritual renewal and advancement of the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Father Timothy Drake, pastor of St. Bernard, Gate City, was one of three priests leading the group in prayer.

Speaking of life...: Hope 4 Life tells The CV that during the five years of their pro-life outreach, they have saved 755 babies from abortion. They are present every Friday at noon in front of Planned Parenthood in Virginia Beach.

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. Include your name and phone number in case we need to follow up. Information cannot be taken over the phone.

Paid Obituary

Mary Ann D'Aurora DeLuca



Mary Ann D'Aurora DeLuca, 82, of Chesapeake, VA, passed away peacefully in her sleep on March 23, 2021. She was preceded in death by her parents

Mino and Mary (Macre) D'Aurora and stepmother, Pauline (Rhodes) D'Aurora. She is survived by her loving husband of 60+ years, Dick; children, Angela Hedrick (Jim) and Richard Jr. (Shana); grandchildren, Zachary (Hayley), Austin, Ryan and Emily; brothers, John, Father Joe D'Aurora, Robert and Paul; special daughter, Patti DiLustro, and granddaughter, Adrienne; and a host of nieces, nephews and godchildren. Mary Ann grew up in a large Italian family in Follansbee, WV, and was affectionately known as Honey. She fell in love with Dick their senior year at Catholic Central High School in Steubenville, OH. Following their very large Italian wedding in September 1960, they moved across Ohio with Dick's career with Kroger. They met many friends along the way by being active in church, choir, Marriage Encounter and Cursillo to name a few. Once they settled in Virginia Beach, VA, in 1975, the family became active in Church of the Ascension Catholic Church. Mary Ann served on the Parish Council Ways and Means Committee, Youth confirmation

sponsor and chairman of the program, and chairman of the Italian booth for the annual International Dinner. She was also very dedicated to the wedding ministry. She and her volunteers coordinated all the activities associated with weddings at the church. Mary Ann was appointed by various pastors to serve on several building enhancement and expansion committees. Mary Ann was the one person people turned to as the master motivator and delegator to get the job done! Once her kids were in high school, Mama D worked full time as the office manager for Dr. Jim Bukovac, DDS, for 25 years and called the staff "her girls." She and Dick were enthusiastically active in the Kempsville High School Marching Band Parents Association. After retirement in 2002, she worked with dear friends running their Kempsville self-storage business. Since 1983, one of her greatest joys was vacationing at the beach with family and friends every July in Kitty Hawk, NC. Mary Ann was a faith-filled angel on earth, shared her love of the Lord with many, and was a loyal friend who never met a stranger. She will be greatly missed. A private Mass of Christian Burial for Mary Ann was celebrated Friday, April 16. A celebration of her life has also been held. Please consider making a donation to social ministry, Church of the Ascension, 4853 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, VA, 23462 or the charity of your choice.



After separately blessing the crown and the Santo Niño, Bishop Barry C. Knestout places the crown upon his head. (Photos/Vy Barto)



The congregation at the Vigil Mass celebrating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines, Saturday, April 24, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, waves white handkerchiefs after the crowning of the Santo Niño. The waving of the white handkerchiefs is a formal cultural tradition of the Philippines in honor of the Santo Niño.

Gratitude

Continued from Page 1

Honoring Santo Niño

After the re-enactment, a replica of the Santo Niño was carried high as the cast exited. The congregation waved white handkerchiefs as three men carried the statue, now on a pedestal, down the aisle and placed it near the altar.

During his homily, Bishop Barry C. Knestout noted that 500 years ago, the Filipino people received the Gospel with joy.

“Since that foundational moment, the Filipino Catholics, with steady, often quiet and unseen devotion, have shared faith in Christ, the cornerstone, with the world,” he said. “Now, moving forward, we all have a significant role in sharing that same Gospel and its blessings of peace and joy.”

After the homily, the bishop blessed the statue’s crown and placed it upon the image. The congregation also waved handkerchiefs during a song after the enthronement.

Narrator Rosario Igharas, a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes, Richmond, said waving the handkerchiefs was “a sign to the holy child that we are calling for his blessings and hoping for a favorable answer.”

Ballesteros, a collector of sacred art, loaned the replica of the Santo Niño for the celebra-



Therese Igharas, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes, Richmond, reads the first reading during the Mass. (Photo/Vy Barto)

tion. The statue is decorated with diamonds, rubies and gold-dipped silver threads embroidered in the red cloak the infant wears. Ballesteros said in the past he has seen people cry and fall on their knees in prayer when they saw the Infant Jesus statue.

He said religious artwork is a norm in the Philippines, so much so that sometimes the images are treated as “family members” and placed in a separate prayer room or chapel in the home.

“I always believed that these images, these icons of the holy people, are one’s windows to heaven, meaning when you look at them, you think of God, you think of Our Lady, you think of Christ – that is the reason why they have to be beautiful – because the main purpose of these things is to invoke the people to pray,” Ballesteros said.

‘Gifted to give’

The Mass was celebrated in English and Tagalog, a language spoken in the Philippines. Eight of about 21 Filipino priests in the diocese were concelebrants with Bishop Knestout, as were the cathedral rector, Father Anthony Marques, and the diocesan vicar for clergy, Father Tim Kuhneman.

Upbeat music added to the joy of the celebration, yet the Mass remained solemn. The congregation, peppered with Filipinos in traditional garb, was in quiet reverence during the liturgy. Afterward, they were outwardly joyous with conversations and laughter as they waited in line to take their photo with the statue. Some kissed the image, and some made the sign of the cross after touching it.

After Masses for big celebrations, it is an informal cultural practice to sing, dance and pray in front of the “statue image” and to take one’s picture with it, Villar said.

Luz Rayel-Straub, parishioner of Church of the Sacred Heart, Prince George, who served on the event planning committee, said pre-COVID, Filipinos had “fellowship” after Masses and events. She and Ballesteros said the Filipino community welcomes everyone.

“Hospitality is one of our traits,” Rayel-Straub said.

The theme of the worldwide celebration of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines is “Gifted to Give.”

Rayel-Straub found that fitting. She said the

Spaniards shared a gift of faith that Filipinos continue to share with others. She added that evangelization occurs when cultures share their customs and traditions.

Describing the 500th anniversary as “a huge milestone for us,” Bojoc said it was an opportunity to show how steadfast the Filipino community has been in its faith.

“We have been gifted with Christianity, and then in return, we are now gifting it back and never ceased since we were Christianized,” Bojoc said. “It just brings back the whole thing about why Magellan came over, why did he bring the cross, the image of Mother Mary and the Infant Jesus statue and why after 500 years, we are still devotees praying to the same image.... It just speaks faith to me.”

Ballesteros said he hopes the 500-year celebration will make Filipinos “proud that we can share such a beautiful faith with the whole Catholic community.”

“This is part of who we are. Therefore, we are celebrating it with upmost joy and ceremony and sense of gratitude to God” he said. “I hope that they (the Filipinos) would feel proud because this is an intangible treasure for us.”

Inspiration, enrichment

Ballesteros, who immigrated from the Philippines as a teen in 2006, said “leaving our home country to go to a foreign land is not easy” but continuing religious traditions can make it easier for Filipinos to do so.

In addition to the Feast of the Infant Jesus, two of the other Filipino traditions celebrated in parishes in the diocese are the Flores de Mayo in May and Simbang Gabi in December.

Villar said it is enriching when groups share their customs.

“Seeing the beauty in the traditions of the other Catholic cultural groups may inspire and encourage other cultures to revisit their traditions and revitalize them,” he said.

The 500th anniversary celebration was one such venue to showcase Filipino faith to the world.

“This is something that will help you no matter what culture you are from, no matter what background, no matter what language you speak,” Villar said. “This celebration unites all Catholics as one universal Church.”

You can watch a recording of the Mass on the Diocese of Richmond’s YouTube channel.

'God, give us strength to save lives'

Priest details helplessness caused by COVID-19 in India

ANTO AKKARA
Catholic News Service

THRISSUR, India — Catholic hospital directors in India told Catholic News Service they did not have enough facilities to treat patients as India set records for the number of COVID-19 deaths — numbers many people believe were underreported.

"The situation is very bad. No beds available anywhere in the hospital. Patients are on the corridors and many are dying because no beds, no oxygen," Father P.A. George, director of the Holy Family Hospital in New Delhi, told CNS.

"I have no place even in emergency (area) to give oxygen. Patients are just dying in front of my eyes. Feeling so distressed and frustrated and helpless. It is horrible, and the disaster is beyond the imagination. Please pray to God (to) give us strength to save some lives," said the priest, who heads the largest Catholic hospital in New Delhi.

Though the hospital has a limit of 340 beds, it is accommodating nearly 400 patients, he added.

In Gujarat state, Syro-Malabar Father Thomas Nadackalan, director of Christ Hospital in Rajkot, told Catholic News Service April 26, "We have to turn away around 600 cases daily."

"We are struggling to get oxygen in time to save the lives of those admitted," he said. Of the 70 beds in the hospital, he added, 40 are set apart for those needing oxygen treatment.

The inadequate care and treatment in government hospitals in Ahmedabad, commercial



A health care worker wearing personal protective equipment walks past the bodies of COVID-19 victims prepared for a mass cremation at a crematorium in New Delhi April 26, 2021. (CNS photo/Adnan Abidi, Reuters)

capital of Gujarat, drew national attention as even the widespread deaths were underreported by the state government.

The National English daily The Hindu carried an investigative story exposing the hollowness of the government claim of only 78 deaths April 16, citing cremation of 689 bodies in seven cities alone under COVID-19 protocol in the state.

"We have lost a dozen members of our community here," P.T. Chacko, president of Gujarat Syro-Malabar Catholic Association, told CNS April 26. He, his wife and daughter were recovering from COVID-19.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, offered

the Church's full support in "the war against the dreadful COVID-19 situation in the country."

"There was lack of planning and lack of foresight. Otherwise, we would not have been in the awful situation we are in now," Cardinal Gracias, archbishop of Mumbai, told Catholic News Service April 25. That day, India's health ministry recorded nearly 354,000 new infections and more than 2,800 deaths. In the week of April 18-25, India witnessed exponential spread of the pandemic across the country.

"The world is concerned about the situation in India, and I am getting several calls," said Cardinal Gracias, endorsing widespread criticism in India against the federal government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for its laxity and failure to prepare for the second surge.

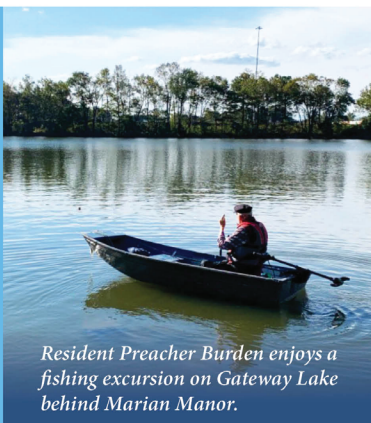
COVID-19 infections had peaked at 93,000 cases in mid-September in India, with 1.38 billion people. The infections declined steadily to 11,000 cases by February with daily death toll below 100. However, the fresh infections soon started rising with daily counts reaching 52,000 on April 1.

Following the deadly second surge, India media has been witnessing an unprecedented avalanche of criticism for the severe shortage of medicines, vaccines and even oxygen that the government had been exporting to other countries. The newspaper India Today reported the government failed to act on a February parliamentary committee report that had urged it to augment its oxygen production and supply

See India, Page 14

Beat the Heat

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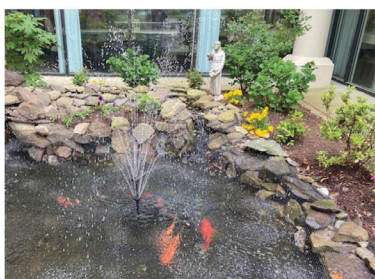


Resident Preacher Burden enjoys a fishing excursion on Gateway Lake behind Marian Manor.

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Legislation

Continued from Page 6

a resolution to remove this provision from Virginia's constitution and to replace it with language to "recognize marriages ... regardless of the sex or gender of the parties to the marriage" passed the General Assembly. If the resolution passes next year, it will appear on the ballot in November 2022.

What did not pass?

Repeal of adoption conscience protections. For the second consecutive year, legislation sought to end a conscience law that ensures Catholic Charities and other faith-based adoption and foster care agencies can provide services consistent with their beliefs. This year, the House passed the bill, and a Senate committee approved an amended version of it. The full Senate, however, sent the highly contentious measure back to the committee, where it died when no further action was taken.

Parental consent. Legislation prohibiting state and local health officials from initiating communication with minors about sex-related

topics without parental consent passed the Senate by one vote before being defeated in a House committee. The bill was introduced in response to a previous Virginia Department of Health initiative (the "BrdsNBz" program) encouraging kids and teens to text questions about sex, relationships and contraception to a "sexual health textline."

Repeal of minimum wage exemption for farm workers.

Last year, the General Assembly raised Virginia's minimum wage, but the bill did not apply to agricultural workers. Legislation introduced this year to include farm workers passed the House but was defeated in a Senate committee.

How did your legislators vote?

View the full VCC vote report at www.vacatholic.org (see the "See how your legislators voted" banner).

The Virginia Catholic Conference is the public-policy agency representing Virginia's Catholic bishops and their two dioceses. To sign up for VCC email alerts and updates, please visit www.vacatholic.org.

OPPORTUNITIES

Benedictine College Preparatory has an opening for a full-time math teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. Applications and resumes are being accepted immediately, and interviews will be scheduled for competitive candidates on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Benedictine offers very competitive salary and benefits for full-time teachers.

When applying, please indicate if you are applying as an "Advanced/AP Math Teacher" or "General Math Teacher." Please see the preferred qualifications for each below:

Advanced/AP Math Teacher:

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in mathematics.
- The capability & proficiency to teach college preparatory math at the highest level, including AP Calculus AB/BC.
- If not College Board certified for AP Calculus AB/BC, must be willing and able to attend an AP Institute this summer prior to the fall.
- Experience teaching at the AP level strongly preferred but not required.
- Advanced degree in mathematics preferred but not required.
- Experience teaching at the high school level preferred but not required.
- Virginia state teaching license preferred but not required.

General Math Teacher:

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in mathematics, science or a related field with sufficient emphasis on college preparatory math.
 - Ability to teach algebra I, geometry and algebra II at a college preparatory and honors level.
 - Ability to teach up to pre-calculus, statistics or calculus is preferred but not required.
 - Experience teaching at the high school level preferred but not required.
- To apply, please submit a résumé, a completed application and an essay titled "My View of America" to Michael Bussman at mbussman@benedictinecollegeprep.org. A cover letter is optional. The application can be found on our website at <http://www.benedictinecollegeprep.org/about-bcp/employment>.

Immaculate Conception Church, Hampton, invites candidates to apply for the pastoral musician opportunity, a full-time benefits eligible position. The pastoral musician will support the Gospel message and develop a prayerful, singing assembly through organization, preparation and evaluation of liturgical celebrations and through education and personal ministry. The person will oversee the preparation of choir, instrumentalists and cantors for all liturgies, including funerals, weddings, baptisms and special celebrations. All inquiries should be directed to searchcommittee@icchampton.org.

The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, is looking for a full-time (40 hours/week) maintenance technician. Some duties required are cleaning and sanitizing the church and office area, assist director of facilities and staff members as needed and perform scheduled preventative maintenance and general repairs when needed. Physical requirements include the ability to lift 50 pounds, the ability to work flexible hours, to walk extensively throughout the workday and to climb ladders and navigate heights such as the roof areas. This position requires a successful clearance by Social Services, criminal background check and certificate of VIRTUS training, all of which are provided through the parish. Salary is based on diocesan scale and demonstrated experience in the maintenance field.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and résumé to tbaham@richmondcathedral.org.

St. Bridget Catholic Church, Richmond, is seeking a full-time director of social ministry. The director of social ministry will be empowered to discern and respond to the needs of St. Bridget parishioners and surrounding communities, and promote the dignity of all human persons through direct service, legislative advocacy, parish and community organizing. The director of social ministry, guided by continued formation and prayer, will strive to put faith into action throughout our community. The director of social ministry will interface with clergy, staff, parishioners, outside communities and charitable organizations on a daily basis. Under the direction of the pastor, the director of social ministry, in collaboration with the parish clergy, parish staff and volunteers, will lead in the design, development, implementation and success of St. Bridget Catholic Church's social ministries. A combination of a bachelor's degree in pastoral ministry, theology, non-profit or related field and 3-5 years of social ministry experience in a parish or related work is preferred. The director of social ministry must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and diocesan application to Joyce Romito at jromito@saintbridgetchurch.org.

St. Mary Star of the Sea School is seeking applications for teaching and staff positions. Our mission is to educate and form the whole child — body, mind and soul — developing their talents with Christian virtues. Teacher qualifications are: 1) Be an enthusiastic and creative teacher with a minimum of two years of experience teaching; 2) preference is given to active, practicing Catholics committed to joyfully witnessing the faith to young people; 3) possess excellent speaking and writing skills and have the same high expectations of students; 4) have an up-to-date/in-process teaching license.

Openings:

Kindergarten Teacher (full time)
Middle School History and Language Arts Teacher (full time)
Cafeteria Manager (part time)
Custodian Assistant (part time)
Substitute Teachers

Application: <http://www.saintmarystarofthesea.com/about/employment-opportunities.cfm>

Send résumé to: admin@saintmarystarofthesea.com

Director of Facilities Management

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is seeking a director of facilities management.

The director of facilities management oversees all facilities maintenance and operations for the central administrative office (Pastoral Center) for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. General oversight includes office administration, maintenance, capital projects, planning and project management, purchasing, and the health, safety and security of employees in the workplace. Maintenance includes, but is not limited to, building structures, permanent interiors and exteriors, ground maintenance and all building systems (mechanical, electrical, fire/life safety, plumbing and waste management, etc.). The director ensures the building operations comply with all local zoning laws and regulations. The director oversees maintenance technicians, a receptionist, a diocesan retreat center and the maintenance needs of other diocesan properties. The director is responsible for preparing and monitoring related budgets and longer-range facilities plans.

Qualifications: Requirements include a bachelor's degree in business administration or related field and related work experience at the supervisory level. Designation as a facilities management professional (FMP) or certified facility manager (CFM) is desirable. Working knowledge of contract negotiations, maintenance and capital project management, workplace safety and security, and purchasing procedures is required. Abilities include strong interpersonal skills, project management skills, customer service orientation, computer proficiency in Microsoft Office software, strong time management and analytical skills, leadership skills and detail orientation to projects and tasks. Must possess ability to lift and move objects up to 75 lbs. with heavier weight necessary at times and to walk long distances daily around a 56,000 square foot facility. Ability to drive vans or other diocesan vehicles is required.

This is a full-time position with some evening and weekend work required, along with overnight travel. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and completed Diocese of Richmond Employment Application to jobs@richmonddiocese.org

SHORTTAKES

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 AMA-Lyra 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. Full itinerary and registration are available at <https://tourplaninternational.com/parisnormandy>.

St. Paul Catholic Church, Richmond, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020. In conjunction with the anniversary celebration, the parish published a 100-page book — "St. Paul's Catholic Church: First Hundred Years." The book, detailing the history of the parish, contains over 200 photographs. Copies of the book can be obtained by sending a check, payable to St. Paul's, to St. Paul Catholic Church, 909 Rennie Ave., Richmond, VA 23222. The cost is \$29 per copy (\$25 for the book and \$4 for shipping).

India

Continued from Page 13

system in preparation for a second surge.

The oxygen shortage has become the scourge of the nation, with hundreds of breathless COVID-19 victims dying even in hospitals struggling to get adequate oxygen supply.

Responding to reports of states blocking and even hijacking trucks carrying liquid oxygen to various hospitals, Cardinal Gracias said, "When traffic signal fails and there are no policemen at crossroads, there will be chaos."

"The government has to increase oxygen supply and set up strict monitoring to ensure each hospital gets enough oxygen so that people do not die in hospitals," he added.

"The nation has to fight against this pandemic on war footing. We have already opened ... centers and (are) ready to extend all our support with our personnel and institutions in this fight," he said.

On April 25, Cardinal George Alencherry, major archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, urged federal and state governments "to treat the availability of medical oxygen as a basic human right."

Catequesis del Papa: “La oración es la fuerza de la Iglesia y de nuestra fe”

El Santo Padre reflexionó esta mañana, en la catequesis de su Audiencia General, sobre la “Iglesia como escuela de oración” y destacó la importancia transmitir, de generación en generación, “la lámpara de la fe con el aceite de la oración”. “Esta es la tarea esencial de la Iglesia: rezar y educar a rezar”, dijo Francisco.

SOFÍA LOBOS - CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

El miércoles 14 de abril, el Papa Francisco celebró su Audiencia General en la Biblioteca del Palacio Apostólico del Vaticano, sin presencia de fieles a causa de las restricciones de la actual pandemia.

Iglesia “escuela de oración”

En su catequesis pronunciada en italiano, el Santo Padre reflexionó sobre la Iglesia como “escuela de oración”, ese don que en la infancia “hemos recibido con sencillez” -dijo Francisco- “nos damos cuenta de que es un patrimonio grande y muy rico, y que la experiencia de la oración merece ser profundizada cada vez más” (cfr *ibid.*, 2688).

En este contexto, el Pontífice recordó que es precisamente en la infancia cuando muchos de los fieles aprenden “a silabear las primeras oraciones” junto con los padres o los abuelos.

“Quizá custodiamos el recuerdo de la madre y del padre que nos enseñaban a recitar las oraciones antes de ir a dormir. Esos momentos de recogimiento son a menudo aquellos en los que los padres escuchan de los hijos alguna confianza íntima y pueden dar su consejo inspirado en el Evangelio. Hace bien recordarlos”

El hábito de la fe no es inmediato, crece con nosotros

Por otra parte, el Santo Padre subrayó que el hábito de la fe no es inmediato, sino que se desarrolla con nosotros, “también a través de momentos de crisis y resurrecciones” y en este sentido, la respiración de la fe es la oración:

“Crecemos en la fe tanto como aprendemos a orar. Después de ciertos pasajes de la vida, nos damos cuenta de que sin la fe no hubiéramos podido lograrlo y que la oración ha sido nuestra fuerza. No solo la oración personal, sino también

la de los hermanos y de las hermanas, y de la comunidad que nos ha acompañado y sostenido”

Asimismo, el Papa hizo hincapié en que todo en la Iglesia nace en la oración, y todo crece gracias a la oración:

“Cuando el Enemigo, el Maligno, quiere combatir la Iglesia, lo hace primero tratando de secar sus fuentes, impidiéndoles rezar. Si cesa la oración, por un momento parece que todo pueda ir adelante como siempre, pero poco después la Iglesia se da cuenta de haberse convertido en un envoltorio vacío, de haber perdido el eje de apoyo, de no poseer más la fuente del calor y del amor”

“Sin la fe todo cae”

Profundizando sobre las mujeres y los hombres santos de la Iglesia, el Santo Padre reiteró que estas personas, “no tienen una vida más fácil que los otros”, es más, “también tienen sus problemas que afrontar y, a menudo, son objeto de oposiciones”; pero su fuerza es la oración, que sacan siempre del “pozo” inagotable de la madre Iglesia

El Papa: Santa Teresa de Ávila supo trasladar el cielo a la tierra

El ejemplo de Santa Teresa de Jesús no es solo para aquellos que sienten la llamada a la vida religiosa, sino “para todos los que desean progresar en el camino de purificación de toda mundanidad”: así, el Papa Francisco, en su Mensaje dirigido al Congreso Internacional “Mujer Excepcional” con motivo de los 50 años del Doctorado de la Santa de Ávila, se refiere a la Santa andariega, de quien afirma que “tenerla como amiga, compañera y guía en nuestro peregrinaje terrenal confiere seguridad y sosiego en el alma”.

“Es hermoso recordar que todas las gracias místicas que recibía la trasladaban al cielo; pero ella supo trasladar el cielo a la tierra, haciendo de su vida una morada de Dios en la que todos tenían cabida”: son palabras del Papa Francisco referidas a Santa Teresa de Jesús en un Mensaje dirigido al Obispo de Ávila, Monseñor José María Gil Tamayo, con el que habló a los participantes en el Congreso Internacional que se lleva a cabo desde el 12 y hasta el jueves 15 de abril en la Universidad Católica Santa Teresa de Jesús de Ávila en España, con motivo de los 50 años del Doctorado de la Santa abulense. Firmado en la Solemnidad de san José, y leído en la apertura del Congreso, el Sucesor de Pedro recorre la figura de la santa de Ávila, que recibió de san Pablo VI el 27 de setiembre de 1970 el título de Doctora de la Iglesia, siendo la primera mujer en recibir el título que, tal como escribe el Santo Padre, “reconoce el precioso magisterio que Dios nos ha regalado en sus escritos y en el testimonio de su vida”.

Una llama que sigue brillando

Con las palabras de Pablo VI, Francisco recuerda la excepcionalidad de esta mujer, cuyo arrojo, inteligencia, tenacidad, a los que unió “una sensibilidad para lo bello y una maternidad espiritual hacia todos aquellos que se aproximaban a su obra”, son “un ejemplo eximio del papel extraordinario que la mujer ha ejercido a lo largo de la historia en la Iglesia y la sociedad”.

A pesar de los cinco siglos que nos separan de su existencia terrenal, - dice el Pontífice - la llama que Jesús encendió en Teresa sigue



Una estatua de Santa Teresa de Ávila se encuentra en el santuario de la Capilla Serra en la Misión San Juan Capistrano en San Juan Capistrano, California, el 27 de julio de 2015. En un mensaje de video de 2021, marcando el 50 aniversario de la proclamación de Santa Teresa como doctora de la iglesia, el papa Francisco dijo que la santa española es un ejemplo para todos los cristianos de la importancia y necesidad de la oración. (Foto CNS/Nancy Wiechec)

brillando en este mundo siempre necesitado de testigos valientes, capaces de romper cualquier muralla, sea física, existencial o cultural.

Ejemplo para quien quiere progresar en la purificación

El Santo Padre afirma que Santa Teresa “nos sigue hablando hoy a través de sus escritos”. Su mensaje - añade - está abierto a todos, para que al conocerlo y contemplarlo nos dejemos seducir por la belleza de la palabra y por la verdad del contenido, y pueda hacer brotar dentro el deseo de avanzar en el camino hacia la perfección.

Tenerla como amiga, compañera y guía en nuestro peregrinaje terrenal confiere seguridad y sosiego en el alma. Su ejemplo no es solo para aquellos hermanos y hermanas nuestros que sienten la llamada a la vida religiosa, sino para todos los que desean progresar en el camino de purificación de toda mundanidad, y que conduce al desposorio con Dios, a las elevadas moradas del castillo interior.

Santa Teresa supo trasladar el cielo a la tierra

Alentando a todos los miembros de esa Iglesia particular y a los organizadores y participantes en el Congreso a seguir profundizando

en el mensaje de la Santa abulense, escribe:

Es hermoso recordar que todas las gracias místicas que recibía la trasladaban al cielo; pero ella supo trasladar el cielo a la tierra, haciendo de su vida una morada de Dios en la que todos tenían cabida. Para que nuestra sociedad sea cada vez más humana, y todos podamos vivir en la fraternidad que viene de un mismo Padre, es todo un programa escuchar su invitación a “entrar en nosotros” para encontrar al Señor, y así testimoniar que “sólo Dios basta”.

La devoción de santa Teresa por san José

Finalmente, se despide recordando la gran devoción de santa Teresa por san José, a quien la Santa andariega “tomó como maestro, abogado e intercesor”: “a él se encomendaba, - recuerda el Papa - teniendo la certeza de que recibiría las gracias que le pedía. De su experiencia animaba a otros a que hicieran lo mismo. Tal fue su devoción que, con motivo de sus fundaciones, recorría las tierras de Castilla y de Andalucía acompañada por la imagen de san José”.

“Los santos siempre van de la mano, y nos sostienen por la confianza puesta en su intercesión. Que ellos intercedan por ustedes.”

El mensaje está firmado en la Basílica de San Juan de Letrán, el 19 de marzo de 2021, en la Solemnidad de san José, Patrono de la Iglesia Universal.

Cardinal confronted communism without compromise

JONATHAN LUXMOORE
Catholic News Service

OXFORD, England — Polish Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, scheduled to be beatified Sept. 12, was ready to seek agreements in a Christian spirit but also firmly believed “certain boundaries could not be crossed,” said a leading theologian and political scientist.

Father Piotr Mazurkiewicz, former secretary-general of the Brussels-based Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union, COMECE, told Catholic News Service April 27 the beatification would remind Catholics everywhere of the Church’s challenges under communist rule in Eastern Europe.

“In an age when it’s generally assumed any leadership role requires a compromise of conscience, he showed, like the English St. Thomas More, this wasn’t so,” the theologian said.

Beatification is a step toward sainthood, and Poland’s Catholic information agency, KAI, said 37 volumes on the cardinal’s sanctity had been amassed during his 1989-2001 diocesan process for canonization.

In October 2019, the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes said the inexplicable recovery of a dying 19-year-old cancer patient from the Szczecin-Kamien Archdiocese in 1988 had been confirmed as a miracle attributed to Cardinal Wyszyński’s intercession. His beatification, originally scheduled for 2020, was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mother Elisabeth Rosa Czacka, who founded the Franciscan Sister Servants of the Cross in 1918 and a pioneering center for blind children, will be beatified alongside Cardinal Wyszyński. She died in Poland in 1961.

The late Catholic historian Andrzej Mice-



St. John Paul II and Polish Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński embrace at the Vatican in this 1978 photo. Cardinal Wyszyński is scheduled to be beatified in Warsaw Sept. 12, 2021. (CNS photo/Arturo Mari)

wski told Catholic News Service in 2001 that Cardinal Wyszyński’s leadership had resulted in a victory that was not only political, but also had taught important lessons about securing Church freedoms under hostile conditions.

“Wyszyński criticized the communist state but also compelled communist rulers to deal with him, in this way ensuring his Church became Eastern Europe’s strongest,” Micewski said.

Born in Zuzela, Poland, Aug. 3, 1901, Stefan Wyszyński was ordained at Włocławek in 1924, later serving as a chaplain to Poland’s underground home army under wartime German occupation.

Pope Pius XII named him bishop of Lublin in 1946 and archbishop of Warsaw-Gniezno two years later. In 1950, despite Vatican misgivings, then-Archbishop Wyszyński signed the first

Church accord with a communist government, which promised the Church institutional protection in return for encouraging “respect for state authorities.”

The deal was swiftly violated by the communist side, and Cardinal Wyszyński was arrested with hundreds of priests in September 1953. He was held until October 1956, when a new communist leader, Władysław Gomułka, sought his help in calming industrial unrest.

“When he was arrested, he didn’t know what awaited him — although it turned out to be three years’ detention, it could just as easily have been a show trial and death sentence,” Father Mazurkiewicz told CNS.

“When we read his detailed notes today, it’s striking how the communist rulers also treated Cardinal Wyszyński as an authority and felt morally inferior beside him, as they tried to present their own perspectives and interests,” he said.

Having reached a new deal with Gomułka to allow freer church appointments, some religious teaching and 10 Catholic seats in Poland’s State Assembly, Cardinal Wyszyński headed the Archdiocese of Warsaw-Gniezno until his death May 28, 1981.

Among his proteges was the future St. John Paul II. When then-Father Karol Wojtyła was appointed auxiliary bishop of Krakow in 1958, the cardinal presented him to a group of priests, saying “Habemus papam” (“We have a pope”).

Father Mazurkiewicz told CNS Cardinal Wyszyński’s beatification would be a “form of penance” against recent Church scandals by recalling “good and saintly aspects” of Christian life. He also said the cardinal’s role in rebuilding Polish ties with Germany, through a reconciliatory letter to German bishops during the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, had been important for post-war Europe.



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