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Newlyweds find, renew and celebrate faith

The journey of Mike and Shelly Calabrisi

JOSEPH STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Mike Calabrisi said he wanted to visit all 50 states before he was 50. A career in the Army and a 10,000-mile motorcycle trip for his honeymoon helped him reach that goal.

He and his wife, Shelly, would say marriage is an even better state, one they entered in Sept. 19, 2020, at Sacred Heart, Danville, two years to the day after they first met.

“Shelly’s now living out her newly found faith,” Mike said, “while I’m living out my newly renewed faith.”

Sitting in the breakfast nook of their home in Pittsylvania County, the couple reflected on the path to their marriage and Shelly’s conversion.

God at work

A cradle Catholic, Mike, 50, said he

practiced his faith during his years growing up in Binghamton, New York, in Danville and throughout his Army career. But one Sunday morning, he was ushering at church when a relative came by to tell him that his mother had just died. He stopped going to Mass.

“I tried to go back a few times. It just didn’t feel as good,” he said. “That feeling was gone. I tried to get it back...but it was hard.”

Raised on a farm in Oklahoma, Shelly, 46, belonged to an evangelical Christian church. She earned a master’s degree and taught physics and astronomy at a high school for science and the arts in Louisiana for 10 years. This was followed by work for the federal government that included a year of research and study at the South Pole.

Her first marriage, to a Catholic, ended in divorce after 18 years and was later

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Shelly and Mike Calabrisi following their marriage at Sacred Heart, Danville, on Sept. 19, 2020. (Submitted photo)

To grandparents, elderly, pope says, ‘You are needed’

Message marks celebration of Church’s first world day devoted to them

CINDY WOODEN

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Writing to his peers, Catholics who have reached a venerable age like he has, Pope Francis told older Catholics that God is close to them and still has plans for their lives.

“I was called to become the bishop of Rome when I had reached, so to speak, retirement age, and thought I would not be doing anything new,” said the pope, who is 84 now and was elected when he was 76.

“The Lord is always — always — close to us. He is close to us with new possibilities, new ideas, new consolations, but always close to us. You know that the Lord is eternal; he never, ever goes into retirement,” the pope wrote in his message for the Catholic Church’s first celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

The message was released at the Vatican June 22 in anticipation of the celebration July 25, the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joa-

chim and Anne, Jesus’ grandparents.

‘No retirement from proclaiming the Gospel’

Pope Francis’ message, which was distributed in writing and on video, acknowledged how much many older people around the world suffered and continue to suffer physically, emotionally and spiritually because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But he also insisted that the Christian call to share the Gospel is as pertinent now for all of them as it ever was.

“Think about it: what is our vocation today, at our age? To preserve our roots, to pass on the faith to the young and to care for the little ones,” he wrote. “Never forget this.”

“It makes no difference how old you are, whether you still work or not, whether you are alone or have a family, whether you became a grandmother or grandfather at a young age or later, whether you are still independent or need

assistance,” he said. “There is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel and handing down traditions to your grandchildren. You just need to set out and undertake something new.”

Why elderly are needed

Pope Francis said he knew many older people might wonder how they could be called to something new when their “energy is running out” or they cannot even leave the residence where they live. They may even ask, “Isn’t my solitude already a sufficiently heavy burden?”

“You are needed in order to help build, in fraternity and social friendship, the world of tomorrow: the world in which we, together with our children and grandchildren, will live once the storm has subsided,” the pope insisted.

A better future, he said, must be built on the pillars of “dreams, memory and prayer,” pillars that “even the frailest among us” can help erect

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Thank God for freedoms, ask for renewed energy



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

It is evident that people are in a more celebratory mood than they were a year ago. We see it each weekend as more people are returning to the celebration of Mass. We hear it in our neighborhoods as families are spending more time outdoors. And we certainly experience it on the roads as traffic is heavier than it was at this time in 2020.

In conversations regarding our plans for this summer, which for many often begins around July 4th weekend and goes through late August, there is usually a reference about some disappointment we experienced last summer or during 2020: “Well, a year ago, we couldn’t...” or “We had hoped to do this last year, but...” This is followed by optimism that this summer will be better, more enjoyable, now that COVID is subsiding.

In addition to the pandemic, there were other challenges — a flood of public debate, instances of civil unrest and the contentious election environment — all of which, even now, may have left us with an unsettled nature as we try to regain a sense of normalcy.

Despite the genuine health concerns and understandable fears that limited our full participation in the Mass and sacraments last year, during these coming weeks of summer, we are invited to reflect on our religious and other constitutionally protected liberties. We can give thanks that our freedom to worship, along with our other guaranteed freedoms, remain.

We recognize there are issues in our political and cultural landscape that are controversial, but our freedom of speech still allows us the opportunity to express our views and to work toward a resolution of our differences if the multiple sides wish to do so.

However, we do not — and cannot — take these freedoms for granted. While codified

in law, they are not exempt from challenges, especially when it comes to what can be expressed in the public sphere, including on social media. And they are always subject to interpretation in the civic environment.

Nonetheless, let us express our gratitude to God for these freedoms and let us resolve, as the U.S. bishops encouraged during the recently concluded Religious Liberty Week, “to have the courage to speak the truth with grace. And let us pray that the Lord will give us the prudence to be creative and compassionate in our witness.”

Because of how limited interactions were with family and friends last year, and because I welcome the peace and joy that comes from such gatherings, I am looking forward to re-connecting with them this summer.

Long ago, I heard that the best way to avoid arguments at family get-togethers during the holidays is to not discuss religion, politics and money. Polite, i.e., civil, conversations usually try to steer clear of those topics.

It is often better to concentrate on what

we have in common and what we’re able to do together. Vacations should provide a break from the intensity of work and the contentiousness that occasionally envelops our culture. They should be a time for catching our breath and listening to the ocean, crickets or cicadas; for recouping our physical and emotional energy and for rest and relaxation.

We know that once our vacations are over, we’ll have to re-enter that daily fray from which we sought respite. We’ll want to be at peace with ourselves and be able to address whatever challenges we encounter in ways that are fruitful and life-giving.

During your summer break, ask God for the grace that he will provide you with renewed energy and renewed optimism so that you can engage the world in a civil way. Come away with a mindset that allows you to hear what others say and that desires a peaceful and fruitful resolution to whatever issues you encounter.

May you have a blessed and refreshing summer!

Bishop: ‘Let Juneteenth further our communion’

Bishop Barry C. Knestout released the following statement on Saturday, June 19, regarding the establishment of Juneteenth as a federal holiday:

“The legislation signed by President Biden that establishes Juneteenth as a federal holiday is an occasion for all in our country to recognize the many people who sacrificed, suffered and fought to extend freedom in our country. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States. This recognition provides an opportunity for all to learn more about June 19, or Juneteenth, and its history.

“Let this holiday be one of further-

ing our communion with one another as members of the Body of Christ. As noted in the 2018 U.S. bishops’ pastoral letter on racism, ‘Open Wide Our Hearts’: ‘From revelation, we know that the one God who created the human race is Triune, a communion of truth and love, and so by faith we recognize all the more clearly that human beings are, by their very nature, made for communion.’

“It is with hope that this holiday, along with Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day and Fourth of July, is a reminder that we can progress as a people to ensure the promise of our nation to guarantee the blessings of liberty and justice for all.”

Faithful asked to pray as Communion document is drafted

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked the nation’s Catholics to pray for him and his brother bishops “as we continue our dialogues and reflections” in the process of drafting a document on the “meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.”

“I pray that this will be a time for all of us in the Church to reflect on our own faith and readiness to receive our Lord in the holy Eucharist,” Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez said in a statement released late June 21.

During their virtual spring general assembly June 16-18, the bishops approved in a 168-55 vote, with six abstentions, the drafting of this document.

The USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine will draft it and present the document for discussion when the bishops reconvene in

person in November for their fall general assembly.

“My brother bishops and I voted overwhelmingly to issue a teaching document on the beauty and power of the Eucharist,” Archbishop Gomez said.

As the committee begins drafting it, “in the months ahead the bishops will continue our prayer and discernment through a series of regional meetings and consultations,” he said, noting they’ll discuss the draft at their fall meeting.

“The Eucharist is the heart of the Church and the heart of our lives as Catholics,” he said. “In the holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ himself draws near to each one of us personally and gathers us together as one family of God and one body of Christ.”

“As bishops, our desire is to deepen our people’s awareness

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Answers to your questions

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has provided answers to commonly asked questions following its June 16-18 meeting.

Why are the bishops doing this now?

A major concern of the bishops has been the declining belief and understanding of the Eucharist among the Catholic faithful. This was a deep enough concern that the theme of the bishops’ strategic plan for 2021-2024 is “Created Anew by the Body and Blood of Christ: Source of Our Healing and Hope.”

This document on the Eucharist will serve as a foundation for the multi-year Eucharistic Revival Project, a major national effort to reignite eucharistic faith in our country. It was clear from the intensity and passion expressed in the individual interventions made by the bishops during the meeting that each bishop deeply loves the Eucharist.

Did the bishops vote to ban politicians from receiving Holy Communion?

No. This was not up for vote or debate. The bishops made no decision about barring anyone from receiving

holy Communion. Each Catholic — regardless of whether they hold public office or not — is called to continual conversion.

The U.S. bishops have repeatedly emphasized the obligation of all Catholics to support human life and dignity and other fundamental principles of Catholic moral and social teaching.

Are the bishops going to issue a national policy on withholding Communion from politicians?

No. There will be no national policy on withholding Communion from politicians. The intent is to present a clear understanding of the Church’s teachings to bring heightened awareness among the faithful of how the Eucharist can transform our lives and bring us closer to our creator and the life he wants for us.

Did the Vatican tell the bishops not to move forward on drafting the document?

No. The Holy See did encourage the bishops to engage in dialogue and broad consultation. The meeting was the first part of that process. Collaboration and consultation among the bishops will be key in the drafting of this document.

In priesthood, Msgr. Carr 'kept close to Christ'

Longtime pastor retiring, but 'not from God's work'

JANNA REYNOLDS
The Catholic Virginian

Msgr. William H. Carr has come full circle in his 52 years of priesthood.

His first parish assignment after being ordained for the Diocese of Richmond in 1969 was as associate pastor at St. Bridget, Richmond, where he served until 1974. He returned to St. Bridget as pastor in 2005 and served there for the last 16 years. He will officially retire from active ministry on July 5.

When he first went to St. Bridget, Msgr. Carr said the daily life of the priests assigned there revolved around the sacraments, the school and the few service groups.

"There was not a lot of downtime, but yet it seems to me it was more simple and the life of the priest was more simple in the '70s – here anyway," he said, noting that priests served a certain geographical area.

While parishes do have boundaries today, parishioners come from all over the metropolitan area and priests are called to hospitals and homes further away.



Msgr. William Carr

"That makes it a bit of a stretch to the fewer clergy there are," he said. "That's one of the dramatic differences, how many more parishioners there are in all the parishes and how few we are as priests."

Promises kept

While he feels the life of the priest has become more complex over the years, Msgr. Carr feels the opposite way about himself.

"I think that my life and my heart and my soul have become more simple over the years," he said. "I have had to keep close to

Jesus as the high priest and focus on him and what he wants me to do, and I figure that out in prayer and in discussion with other people."

Throughout his vocation, the promise Msgr. Carr made to God – like the promise made in a marriage – has gotten him through "many more good times, but some bad times and some challenging times."

"I made a promise to be respectful and obedient to the bishop and his successors, and I made a promise to be a priest," he said. "I made the promise to God, and sometimes we just fall back on the promise: I

gave my word, I'm going to keep it. And I've just asked God to help me to do that, and the Lord has done that for me all these years."

Looking back on his assignments, Msgr. Carr said his greatest successes were the moments in which he could see how the parish had grown and come together.

"It was really bringing people together, going through the hard work of developing consensus in prayer and discussion, and then there was that kind of 'aha' moment where I could stand back and say, 'Gosh, you know, thank God we did this,'" he said.

The priest said he has always looked to the parish committees and councils as opportunities for faith formation – and for learning about people's families and prayer intentions or discussing the faith.

"And so, particularly here, the parish council, the finance committee, the liturgy committee, the parish staff, have become centers of my spiritual life because we've grown together, and I love that, and I will miss that," he said.

Part of the family

Msgr. Carr said that people in the parishes have become family over the years.

"I find that God supplies what we need. And what I need, and I think maybe what everybody else needs, is a family," he said. "I found that God gave me families – that is people who care for me, who worry about me, who pray for me, who laugh with me – and I've found that in all the parishes and here at St. Bridget."

In addition to interacting with his parish family, Msgr. Carr said the beauty of St. Bridget School and the students' energy will be missed.

"And I'm going to miss standing in the commons and greeting people and saying goodbye to them. I've always enjoyed that," he added.

Seeing people grow in their faith has been a very rewarding part of Msgr. Carr's life as a priest.

"What has made me happy is seeing people who stood back, who felt insecure about ministry, who just were on the sidelines, grow in their love of the Lord and step forward to take up leadership positions over the years," he said. "And I'm very, very proud of having a little bit of a hand in that. I just want to call people closer to Christ, and I've seen that happen all the way back to my first pastorate, Holy Spirit, in the '70s."

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After 15 years, facilities director leaving 'funnest' job

John Murphy coordinated transition of diocesan offices from downtown to Pastoral Center

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

When Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo hired John Murphy to direct the Diocese of Richmond's Office of Facilities Management in June 2006, the hiree's department was responsible for four retreat centers and the buildings that comprised the diocesan offices.

A week before his June 25 retirement, Murphy looked back on his 15 years in that position with joy.

"The funnest thing is it always changes. You just go with what is needed by the bishop to help his leadership of the diocese. You find a way to make it happen," he said. "You have no clue what you're going to get each day because it involves people, it involves buildings, it involves operators. Whatever happens, you roll with it and take care of it — whether it is people, buildings, cars, logistics. Whatever you need to do, just take care of it."

The diocesan office building he managed when he retired was much different than what he oversaw when he started.

"I had been hired to manage eight houses — beautiful, old, three-story homes, interconnect-



In summer 2007, John Murphy, building services director, and Msgr. Thomas Shreve, vicar general of the Diocese of Richmond, attend an event for diocesan staff near the diocesan offices on Cathedral Place. In December of that year, the offices moved to the Pastoral Center, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond. (Photo/Diocese of Richmond Archives)

ed," he recalled of the structures across from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Cathedral Place. "They were over a hundred years old, and they were not built for the wear and tear of constant movement."

They also lacked meeting space and nearby parking. In fall 2006,

Bishop DiLorenzo decided the offices needed to move.

According to Murphy, "A committee was formed, John Barrett (the late diocesan CFO) found the building, we hired the architect, started construction in May 2007 and moved in right after Thanksgiving Day."

The committee of which Murphy was a part included Bishop DiLorenzo; Msgr. Thomas Shreve, vicar general and chairman of the committee; Msgr. Mark Richard Lane, vicar for clergy; Msgr. William V. Sullivan, rector of the cathedral who suggested that the new facility be called the Pastoral Center; Anne Edwards, assistant to the bishop; and Barrett.

Even though Murphy did not know at the time of his hiring that he would be part of this project, he welcomed it.

"This place was one of the funnest places in the world to do because the whole process was to figure out what the people needed here at the diocese and then transform it into what they thought would work," he said of the committee's work.

The 56,000-square-foot building, located at 7800 Carousel Lane, was built in 1982 and had been home to various businesses over the years. To make it usable for diocesan office needs, it was, with the exception of the elevator and the restrooms, gutted and built out.

"It was one of the biggest proj-

See Murphy, Page 4

Permanent deacons' service powerful witness, pope says

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — A permanent deacon whose ministry is focused on service to the poor and hurting is an antidote to clericalism within the Church because it illustrates that “to love is to serve and to serve is to reign,” Pope Francis said.

Meeting most of the Diocese of Rome’s 137 permanent deacons, their wives, children and grandchildren June 19, the pope said the liturgical role of deacons is important, but works of charity and outreach are at the heart of their identity.

Describing the purpose of diaconal ordination as “a ministry of service,” the Second Vatican Council restored the identity the ministry had for centuries before it was “reduced to an order of passage to the priesthood,” the pope told them.

Emphasizing the importance of service “helps to overcome the scourge of clericalism,” which at its core is to have “a priestly caste ‘above’ the people of God,” the pope said. “If this is not resolved, clericalism will continue in the Church.”

“Deacons, precisely because they are dedicated to the service of this people, are a reminder that in the ecclesial body no one can elevate himself above others,” the pope said.

Called to imitate Jesus, all Christians — but especially those who minister in his name — are called to humble themselves and make themselves the servants of all, he said. “Please remember that for the disciples of Jesus, to love is to serve and to serve is to reign. Power lies in service, not in anything else.”

Service is “the center of the mystery of the Church,” the pope said. “Indeed, if we do not live this dimension of service, every ministry is emptied from within, it becomes sterile, it does not bear fruit. And little by little, it becomes worldly.”

Pointing to the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who was a deacon but not a priest, Pope Francis said that deacons remind the whole Church of the

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Murphy

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ects and most involved with so many different people,” Murphy said. “Not only did you have the directors of the ministries, but you had the IT department, The Catholic Virginian, the bishop’s thoughts. Pulling everybody together was just a joy.”

What he described as “one of the funniest things that happened” with the project involved an important part of the building.

The committee presented the plans to Bishop DiLorenzo, according to Murphy, and the bishop said, “Are we done?” They assured him they were, and he said, “The project is locked down. No more changes.”

Msrgr. Shreve and Murphy took the plans to the diocesan Building and Renovation Committee to get their OK.

“The first thing to come out of one of the member’s mouths is, ‘Why is the chapel located at the end of the building and not in the middle?’” Murphy recalled. “So, we had to go back to the bishop and ask him if we could unlock the plan and move the chapel to its current spot. Of course, he said yes, and it turned out great.”

A Richmond native who went to St. Benedict School and Benedictine College Prep before earning a degree

in economics from Randolph-Macon College, Murphy worked in the oil industry for 27 years before going to work for the diocese.

He and his wife, Susan, have been married for 42 years and are the parents of four children. He said he enjoyed his job with the diocese and worked “with some very wonderful people in the facilities department.” So,

why the decision to retire?

“We have seven grandkids — all age 7 and under. They’re in Richmond, Maine and West Virginia,” he said. “It’s time for my wife and me to see them.”

He continued, “I have truly enjoyed every bit of my time here. If it wasn’t for seeing the grandkids, I wouldn’t have retired. This is an awesome place to be.”

WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Accomplishment: If John Wilson, a member of Ascension Parish, Virginia Beach, had a bucket list, he could cross swimming 5.25 miles from Willoughby Spit in Norfolk to the Paradise Ocean Club in Hampton in 4 hours 18 minutes off of it. He accomplished that feat on Saturday, June 5. However, with hopes of bettering that time, he will swim it again on Saturday, July 31.

Champions: The Catholic High School girls’ lacrosse team won the Tidewater Conference of Independent Schools’ tournament title on Friday, May 14, defeating The Steward School, 12-10. Junior midfielder Kendall Coss was tournament MVP and was later named to the VISAA Division I First Team All-State. Junior midfielder Josie Mazzeo was TCIS player of the year and VISAA Second Team All-State.

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.



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'Mission-first' administrator helped school thrive

Ken Soistman retiring after 25 years at All Saints

ROSE MORRISSETTE
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Kenneth Soistman, president of All Saints Catholic School in Richmond for the last eight years and school principal for 17 years prior, firmly believes everyone who wants a Catholic education should have one. He has worked to make that a reality for thousands of students during his time at All Saints.

"A school shouldn't be exclusive," he said. "A big part of the Catholic school mission nationwide and the diocesan mission should be to keep schools like All Saints open, educating students who normally wouldn't be able to go to Catholic and other private schools. We've been able to offer to anyone who wants a Catholic education that education — to make it affordable."

On June 30, Soistman will retire after 51 years in Catholic education, 25 of which have been in the Diocese of Richmond. Before coming to All Saints in 1996, he was a principal and teacher in the Diocese of Orlando, Florida.

"It's time," he said. "And I'm leaving very pleased."

'Something special'

Soistman grew up in the Orlando area, where he attended Catholic schools and graduated from Rollins College. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and master's degree in education with certifications in mathematics K-12 and administration/supervision K-12.

His career in Catholic education began in Sanford, Florida, where he taught middle school math and science and physical education at All Souls Catholic School for six years. He then became principal of St. Andrew Catholic School in Orlando.

After 20 years at St. Andrew, Soistman was ready for a change.

Upon the suggestion of his wife, Jennifer, who is from Virginia, he sent his résumé to the Diocese of Richmond. Closeness to family and familiarity with the area for Soistman, his wife and three young daughters made relocating an attractive possibility.

That's when All Saints came calling, and it was love at first sight.

Soistman stepped into another world when he arrived for his interview at the unassuming, small, mission-driven school nestled in a lovely residential area of north Richmond. He knew immediately he had found his niche.

"Some things you have a gut feeling about," he said. "After having been in Catholic education for 26 years, I had the feeling that All Saints was something special."

Unlike St. Andrew at the time — with its large Catholic, affluent, Caucasian population — All Saints was mostly African-American and non-Catholic, offering a Catholic education to all and welcoming and caring for those who couldn't afford it.

Soistman saw the school as a microcosm of society. Its inclusivity hit him hard.

'Gem of the Northside'

Over 25 years, he shepherded All Saints into a solvent, financially sustainable, vibrant and thriving institution, extending its reach and enhancing its reputation so much that it is now known as the "Gem of the Northside."

To achieve this distinction, he increased



Kenneth Soistman

the school's exposure; fostered diversity and equity by participating in the Segura Initiative; developed and nurtured a network of donors; and ramped up fundraising, all the while austere managing the school budget.

"Fiscally I ran a tight ship," said Soistman.

Widely opening All Saints' doors while remaining fiscally sound would appear to be a daunting task for the school, yet, somehow, Soistman found a way to do it.

The need for a strategy to improve school operations became evident in the late 2000s when a recession sent the school's enrollment numbers reeling and threatened not only its ability to provide financial assistance, but its very existence.

When Soistman came on board in 1996, enrollment hovered around 200 students, as it does now. During the crisis, he faced about a 50% drop in that number.

With help from the diocese and others, All Saints came back from the brink of closure.

Since implementing those changes, Soistman has kept the school viable, employing an ambitious strategy of marketing and development, donor engagement and fundraising.

"We've done a lot of marketing in the city in the last 10-12 years," he said. "Students now come from all over the greater Richmond area."

Efforts produce results

While Soistman has a long history of enlisting support for the school, he and Alyssa McBride, All Saints' director of development and marketing, have formalized and intensified the school's efforts over the last decade.

"We started building up a donor base together 10 years ago," he said, noting that donors make tuition assistance possible.

Currently students of color (Black and Hispanic) make up 80% of the student body, a majority of students are non-Catholic, and about three-quarters receive financial assistance. This includes a large majority of the school's Hispanic students.

"Compared with other Catholic schools,

our percentage of minority students is extremely high," said Soistman, "and the percentage of students receiving financial assistance is more than that of most schools."

Under Soistman's leadership, students have done well. The school boasts of an alumni high school graduation rate of 100%, and more than 90% go on to college.

Reaching out to the community and focusing on donors has paid off in a big way with the school's ability to add 6,800 square feet of space to better accommodate its needs.

Philanthropist Marcus Weinstein, who has supported the school with tuition assistance, was instrumental in financing the addition, dubbed the "carport build-out," with a \$1 million donation, jump-starting a capital campaign that completely funded the \$2.3 million project. Construction began in November 2019.

"I believe the two things Ken will be most remembered for, and should be proud of, are making sure that All Saints kept its identity over the years as a mission school and his carport build-out," said principal Michael Kelleher. "Ken was with the project from start to finish."

Legacy of 'love, compassion, dedication'

With the completion of the building project and with the school in good shape, Soistman is ready to go.

"I have loved everything. I have enjoyed every second of my 25 years at All Saints," said Soistman. "Every part of me believes in the school. I hope a high number of people know my heart. It hasn't been just a job for me. I've been in this for the sake of kids and families."

His dedication to Catholic education and compassion for his students is evident to those he has encountered at All Saints.

"We love Ken," said McBride. "We're sad to see him go."

Chastity Rodriguez-Hise, school advisory board member and PTO president, said Soistman has always been "welcoming, kind and generous" and that her children, who attend All Saints, will miss him next year.

"His legacy will undoubtedly be one of love, compassion and dedication," she added.

Superintendent of Schools Kelly Lazzara said that Soistman "has had a positive impact on the thousands of students and co-workers he has supported" and that the many years he has devoted to Catholic education "speaks to his dedication and belief in how providing children with a faith-based education truly changes their lives."

Although he is retiring, Soistman will continue to be part of the All Saints community, as the school advisory board has established the Ken Soistman Tuition Assistance Fund in his honor.

"Despite being the administrator with 'big picture' concerns, he has been rooted in the Gospel ... His stories are always about bringing one more family into the fold or not letting a student slip away," said board member Edward Gerardo. "The fund is appropriately established in his honor, though the assistance he provided goes well beyond tuition. All Saints School is fundamentally a mission enterprise, and Ken Soistman has been mission-first from the beginning."

Catholic perspective must be voiced in public square

GUEST COMMENTARY

STEPHEN G. REARDON

In 1962, the Archbishop of New Orleans excommunicated a politician who opposed racial integration; subsequently, the politician retracted his position, and the ban was lifted.

In a May 18 National Catholic Reporter website posting, U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine challenged Archbishop Jose Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, for turning up the heat on politicians who oppose the Church's teaching on "abortion, contraception, marriage and gender."

Kaine mischaracterized the archbishop's letter on the inauguration of President Biden as an "ad hominem" rebuke. Ironically, he then launches a personal attack, suggesting Gomez has "four preoccupations...abortion, contraception, marriage and gender;" collectively referred to by Kaine as "Church doctrine on human sexuality" — ignoring that the origin of life is transcendent and generative of an immortal soul, not merely an act of human sexuality.

The senator deceptively misrepresents Gomez's reference to "gender" as opposition to equality and accuses the bishops of redefining the Sacrament of Unity by calling him

to union with the Church.

Kaine asserts that American pluralism requires that he advocate free of the influence of Church doctrine. Pluralism means that each group brings its perspective on important issues; if Catholics do not bring a Catholic perspective, who will?

He asserts that the First Amendment prohibits him from opposing abortion on religious grounds, but such a position prevents every religious group from advocating their position. If only secular, materialistic voices are allowed, then we will become a completely secularistic and materialistic nation.

The First Amendment protects citizens from government action; it does not mean that Catholics cannot bring their perspectives to the public square. Kaine seems to calculate: if I support abortion rights, I can be elected so I can — what? — have power and position to advance policies I think are good?

It is a Faustian bargain to trade evil for good. All positions are not equal; would Kaine have contended to the New Orleans archbishop that he must represent segregationists?

The senator contends that Christ put the poor above all; that his politics is for the poor and so justifies his dismissiveness of the "preoccupations of the bishops." But Kaine sees the poor only in terms of economic disadvantage. Addressing the economic needs of the poor is a prudential judgment of which there

are multiple valid approaches.

Kaine elevates his politics above even the Church's teaching on the nature and origin of human life. Christ mostly taught in parables, and most are not about the poor, but rather are about judgment, e.g., unwise virgins, sheep and goats, talents, servants working for the master and the harvest.

Contrary to the senator's accusation of the bishops as "self-elevated clergy," it is to the bishops, the successors to the apostles, that Christ gives the power to "bind on earth." The Church has consistently taught its doctrine on "abortion, contraception, marriage and gender" to which Kaine refuses to be bound.

An English convert, Robert Hugh Benson, remarked that as the Blessed Mother gave Christ his bodily presence in the world, the Church gives Christ his physical presence in the world.

Christ lives and speaks through his Church as constituted through the successor of his apostles, not the calculations of politicians. We all would do well, considering our own impending time in the dock, to heed her judgment.

Stephen G. Reardon is an attorney in Richmond, and a member of St. Bridget Parish.

Let Communion remain a healing moment

It's apparent that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops chooses this moment in history to be political rather than spiritual.

At a time when Church membership is declining, and when young people in particular are leaving the Church in droves, what is uppermost in the minds of far too many bishops? They want to draft a document punishing President Joe Biden, other politicians and, presumably, perhaps inevitably, the laity, too, for not being sufficiently "pro-life."

The message would be: Get in line with the culture war obsession over abortion or — guess what? — you're not "worthy" to receive holy Communion.

Our Church needs healing from the sexual abuse crisis, a renewal of devotion to God and to others, a serious effort to draw back into the fold those who have left, and a heartfelt approach to the needs of the young. We do not need a right-wing, culture war assault on the rights of our members to follow the dictates of our own consciences.

Who, indeed, is truly worthy of Communion? U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine put it this way in a May 18 National Catholic

Reporter website posting: "Every priest or bishop celebrating Mass anywhere in the world, and every Catholic parishioner attending Mass, says these profound words immediately before receiving Communion: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.'"

If we believe the words we say as we receive Communion, why would we transform the spiritually healing moment into yet another earthly and divisive one?

— Rick Howell
Roanoke

Grateful that bishops are addressing Eucharist

I applaud the bishops who overwhelmingly voted to draft guidance on how to minister to those who are specifically and promiscuously in contradiction with our faith, yet present themselves for Communion.

The motivation for this is prominent, pro-abortion politicians who present for the Eucharist on Sunday then advocate vigorously and repeatedly for killing the unborn the following weeks. This document is far too long in coming.

Those who support offering Communion to outspoken pro-abortion advocates offer only straw-man arguments in its defense. Bishop Robert W. McElroy, writing in *America* magazine, recognizes that withholding Communion from pro-abortion politicians punishes members of one party more than another and asks if any politician is really pure enough to receive Communion.

The first is undoubtedly true, but irrelevant. The issue is individual actions and beliefs, not party ideology. Besides, withholding Communion is not a punishment but a pastoral corrective. The second is a canard which excuses extreme wickedness because we are all sinners.

No one suggests that a known murderer should receive Communion without true repentance. Those who advocate, fund and devise legal cover for killing another are as guilty as the murderer who did it with his own hands.

Love of our brother as ourselves compels our Church to offer correction to save them from eternal damnation.

— Steven Mains
Williamsburg

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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Building beds for raising produce

Members of Life Teen, the high school ministry at Holy Trinity, Norfolk, build raised garden beds for the parish's community garden as part of the Diocesan Work Camp on Monday, June 21. The garden beds will be used to grow fresh vegetables, which will help support the parish's food pantry. Look for more photos in the July 12 Catholic Virginian. (Submitted photo)



Deacons

Continued from Page 4

missionary power of love and service, bringing “God’s closeness to others without imposing themselves, serving with humility and joy.”

“The generosity of a deacon who gives of himself without seeking the top ranks has about him the perfume of the Gospel,” the pope said. “He tells of the greatness of God’s humility in taking the first step — always, God always takes the first step — to meet even those who have turned their backs on him.”

Pope Francis also asked the deacons to be good husbands, fathers and grandfathers, which can “give hope and consolation to couples who are going through difficult times and who will find in your genuine simplicity an outstretched hand. They will be able to think: ‘Look at our deacon! He is happy to be with the poor, but also with the parish priest and as well as with his children and his wife. Even with his mother-in-law.’”

Self-righteous disturb Christian community, pope says

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Those who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ are humble and trust in God, they do not heap conditions upon others or promote themselves as the only “keepers of the truth,” Pope Francis said.

The path of evangelization, the essential characteristics of an evangelist and the risks posed by the self-proclaimed righteous are illustrated in the Letter to the Galatians, the pope said June 23 as he announced the letter would be the topic of a new series of talks at his weekly general audience.

In his main audience talk, Pope Francis said St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians is important, “I would even say decisive, not only for getting to know the apostle better, but above all in considering some topics that he addresses in depth, showing the beauty of the Gospel.”

The themes of “freedom, grace and the Christian way of life” in the Letter to the Galatians, he said, are “extremely topical since they touch on many aspects of the life of the Church in our days. It is a very relevant letter. It seems written for our times.”

The letter shows St. Paul’s “fiery” concern for the new communities of Christians who were Gen-

tiles but were being pressured by some preachers to adopt Jewish practices such as circumcision.

St. Paul was a pastor, who, “like a father or mother, immediately notices the dangers his children face” as they grow in faith, the pope said.

The preachers not only were insisting on things that St. Paul did not insist upon, but they were “even denigrating his person,” the pope said. “They began with doctrine — ‘this no, this yes’ — and then they denigrated the apostle.”

“As we can see,” the pope said, “it is the ancient practice of presenting themselves on certain occasions as the sole possessors of the truth — the pure ones — and trying to belittle the work of others with slander.”

The new Christians were confused and worried, the pope said.

“This situation is not far removed from the experience of many Christians today,” he said. “Indeed, today too there is no shortage of preachers who, especially through the new means of communication, can disturb the community. They present themselves not primarily to proclaim the Gospel of God who loves humanity in Jesus, crucified and risen, but to insist, as true ‘keepers of the truth’ — that’s what they call themselves — on the best way to be Christians.”

Msgr. Carr

Continued from Page 3

Msgr. Carr served as pastor of Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach, from 1975-1983. He has also been pastor of St. Augustine, Richmond (1983-1993), and St. Bede, Williamsburg (1993-2005).

Guided by Scripture

Two Scripture passages have guided Msgr. Carr’s priesthood. The first is when John the Baptist said, “He must increase; I must decrease.” The second comes from the Gospel of Luke when two disciples realized that it was Jesus who had accompanied them all day and broke the bread. They said, “Were not our hearts burning within us?”

“Those two passages kind of look into my life, you know,” he said. “I’ve tried to share that idea so that the Mass, the Eucharist, could be celebrated in such a way and I could be presenting Jesus, sharing Jesus, in such a way that people’s hearts would be burning.”

Msgr. Carr said he has tried to show the

seminarians and young priests of the diocese — 25 of whom have lived at St. Bridget during his 16 years as pastor — that he truly believes he must decrease and that his heart is burning within him when he celebrates Mass and the sacraments.

“I want to listen to the young priests and the seminarians because they’re bright people and they’re dedicated people and prayerful people, and I don’t have all the answers, and I’ve tried to make that evident to them,” he said. “I’m not their boss that dictates to them what they need to do, but I’m a fellow worker in the vineyard who wants to listen to them. And I hope, I hope, I’ve been able to achieve that in some way.”

‘Not retiring from God’s work’

Msgr. Carr celebrated his retirement at St. Bridget during the weekend of June 26-27 by celebrating the 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday and the 5 p.m. Mass on Sunday. Following both Masses, parishioners gathered on the parish terrace to wish their pastor well.

Although it is fitting that Msgr. Carr celebrated his retirement on the weekend that the faithful returned to Mass, i.e., the weekend that the general dispensation from attending Mass was officially lifted, that is not why the priest made his decision to retire.

“It’s a matter of my physical health, my stamina, and also because I think that as a pastor, I really served long enough in one place,” he said. “I think that it’s time for a new pastor to come here. I think a new pastor will bring a different vision and a different set of skills, and I know the one who’s been named here (Father Ken Shuping), and I have every confidence in him. I just think it’s time.”

Msgr. Carr said that he is unsure exactly what his future will look like, but he hopes to volunteer and celebrate Mass at different parishes in the area.

“I am retiring as a pastor, not as a priest. I’m retiring from administrative and sacramental duties in a parish,” he said. “I’m not retiring from God’s work.”

Be at peace, even when your children leave the Church



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. I am a cradle Catholic, as are my children. My concern is that, since they reached adulthood, they started going to nondenominational Christian churches instead of to a Catholic church. When they visit me, they go to Mass with me, but otherwise they don't. They are, however, very close to Jesus and read their Bibles regularly. But I can't help being concerned because I have always learned that not going to Mass is a mortal sin.

It breaks my heart that only one of my grandchildren was baptized in the Catholic Church. One was baptized a Lutheran, three were "dedicated" to the Lord, and one was not baptized at all until she became a teenager and chose to be baptized as a Baptist. Most of them are active Christians in adulthood, but there is not a practicing Catholic among them.

I keep wondering what I did wrong and what I can do now, yet their faith is strong and active. Are my daughters living in mortal sin because they abandoned the Catholic Church? I am so worried about this and keep praying about it. (Kailua, Hawaii)

A. I, too, am saddened and disappointed that your children are no longer practicing Catholics. I believe that the Catholic Church offers the strongest and surest path to salvation

— especially with the strength that comes from regularly receiving the Eucharist — and it bothers me a lot when people abandon that path.

You can be at peace and leave it to the Lord to judge the state of your children's souls. From the circumstances you indicate, it's doubtful that they are living in mortal sin. (Remember that for something to be seriously sinful, it demands that the person realize that it is.)

It's much more likely that your children are sincere in their faith journey — reading the Bible, praying, attending religious services — and seeking to do what God wants.

Maybe what you might do is ask them sometime, in a quiet conversation, "Do you ever miss receiving Jesus in holy Communion?" But don't be forceful or confrontational, lest you drive them farther away. Meanwhile, I will pray for them, too.

Q. As I have reached old age (82), my thoughts have been on Jesus and the apostles being poor and humble. By contrast, I see priests, bishops and cardinals attired at Mass with gold-embazoned apparel and celebrating the consecration using chalices of gold.

Yet the statuary of Christ and the saints depicts them as people of poverty. Why this obvious imbalance in celebrating our faith? (Derby, Indiana)

A. I agree in substance with your observation. It's probable that Jesus at the Last Supper used a humble clay cup in blessing the wine, and

I don't think we should stray far from that simplicity.

At the same time, though, the Church does want to highlight the "specialness" of the Eucharist. What we receive in holy Communion is the greatest gift of all, and sacred vessels denote the preciousness of the contents in a way that common and profane containers do not. The sacrifice of the Mass brings us into contact with the divine and "lifts us up" to heaven.

And so, the guidance the Church offers us on this is contained in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which is the Church's "rule book" on liturgical matters.

There we read, "Sacred vessels should be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, they should generally be gilded on the inside.

"In the dioceses of the United States of America, sacred vessels may also be made from other solid materials which in the common estimation in each region are considered precious or noble, for example, ebony or other harder woods, provided that such materials are suitable for sacred use" (Nos. 328-329).

In a section on sacred furnishings, the general instruction says that "noble simplicity" should be the governing goal in matters liturgical (No. 325). As applied to vestments, this would mean that "it is fitting that the beauty and nobility of each vestment not be sought in an abundance of overlaid ornamentation, but rather in

the material used and in the design" (No. 344).

I have noticed over the years a tendency toward greater simplicity in liturgical vestments, and that trend is consistent with the Church's goal.

Q. Jesus tells us to love our enemies. Satan is our enemy. Should we love Satan, perhaps by praying for his redemption? Is it possible that, through our prayers, Satan could repent and be reunited with God? (Woodbridge)

A. There is no reason to believe that Satan would ever change his ways, and I believe it would be a waste of time to pray that he will. The Gospel of Matthew speaks of "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church expands on this: "It is the irrevocable character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable" (No. 393).

That same section of the Catechism goes on to quote St. John Damascene: "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death."

So it seems to me that our time should be spent praying not for the salvation of Satan, but of living human beings. No matter how sinful or how far from God someone may seem, every person still on this earth can be brought into God's eternal family through repentance for sin.

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

UPCOMING

Foster the GOOD

A LUNCH SPEAKER SERIES

AUGUST 24, 2021

Deacon Frank Nelson, Holy Rosary-Richmond
"A Christian Response to Suicide Prevention and Intervention"

This talk will identify suicide information and statistics among various groups in the United States and explore pastoral responses toward prevention and intervention.

OCTOBER 26, 2021

Chris West, Catholic Relief Services
"Understanding Migration: Push & Pull Factors & the Catholic Response"

This talk will look at some of the factors that compel people to leave their homes, the impact of migration on families, and how the Church through CRS is intervening to improve the lives of our sisters and brothers. We will also look at how participation in CRS' Lead the Way on Migration campaign will offer actions that we can take to have a positive impact for people on the move.

LEARN MORE AT EVANGELIZERICHMOND.ORG

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

Jay Brown, CEO, Commonwealth Catholic Charities
"Housing to Respect Life and Protect the Family"

Learn about how Commonwealth Catholic Charities innovative Seton Housing Project promotes life affirming decisions for women facing crisis or unintended pregnancies. Using an evidence-based intervention, CCC supports women making the decision to parent or adopt through permanent housing and supportive services.

DECEMBER 2, 2021

Dr. Ed Sri, theologian, author and well-known Catholic speaker
"How to Defend the Faith without Losing People & How to Teach Others to Do So"

As parish staff members & volunteers, we are often put into positions of being asked hot-button questions about why the Church believes, teaches, or acts a certain way. It can be hard to know how to balance truth & pastoral sensitivity in the moment! In this presentation, we will consider techniques for how to answer these tough questions without losing people as well as how to help teach others how to do so.

Church is home for community of believers



IN LIGHT OF FAITH

BARBARA HUGHES



CV Archives

With church pews beginning to fill, restaurants accommodating more diners and masks becoming optional for the fully vaccinated, life is beginning to return to normal. In celebration of the relaxed protocols, feelings of relief and gratitude are all but palpable.

This past week, family members whom we hadn't see for almost 18 months came for a reunion, and at no time had their visit felt more like a celebration. So much so that we had a photographer come to the house and take pictures.

Having gone so long without seeing one another made us realize how precious time spent together can be. In anticipation of the gathering, the celebratory mood of community spilled over even to our neighbors.

Prior to our family gathering, one neighbor contributed 10 pounds of ribs; another brought over a honey baked ham and thoroughly enjoyed watching the family portraits being photographed in our backyard.

Catching up on all that had transpired in everyone's life during the past year and a half gives credence to the fact that despite COVID restrictions, life continues to move with time, changing people and events that surround us.

Hearing in person all that had transpired in the interim was a reminder that phone calls and social media will never replace personal encounters. The same can be said about our relationship with the Body of Christ.

While livestreaming liturgies and parish meetings provided an avenue of inclusion for those who were reticent to attend in person, it

can never replace the blessings received when we are present and able to actively participate at Mass and receive the precious Body and Blood of Christ. Hopefully all will welcome the return, especially those who have been absent.

While it's true that God can be found in nature, in our neighbor and in service to others, only during a liturgical assembly can our voice be added to the voices of the saints and angels that gather around the altar of God. Only in the Eucharist does God, whom the entire universe cannot contain, allow himself to be contained in a piece of bread and a drop of wine. And only in the consecrated bread and wine are we able to taste and experience God who became man so that we may become like God.

Church brings people together so that when we leave, we do not leave alone. When we're dismissed, we leave the church as a new Exodus undertaken by the people of God, assured that God is accompanying us both in the deserts of life and on the mountaintops.

Church is a place where we can stumble and fall, forgive and seek forgiveness. It's a place where we grow in faith, learn to hope and respond in love during good times and in bad.

The word "church" means convocation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church proclaims that

the Church is "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic." It refers to it as the "Body of Christ" and "Temple of the Holy Spirit," but nowhere is it referred to as a building.

And yet, church buildings are important. They provide space where people can gather to pray as a community and where they encounter Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Churches are a visible testimony to the secular world that God is real, and that only when we enter a space dedicated to quiet prayer and communal worship can our deepest hunger be satisfied.

God doesn't need our church buildings. We do. We are physical beings, and just as we provide a home for our family to reside in comfort and safety, so it is perfectly natural to provide a place where our spiritual family can gather and call home. Just as we don't confuse a house with a home, so we shouldn't mistake a church building for the Church.

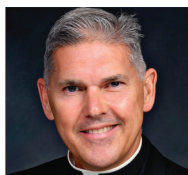
Absent a community of believers, the church building, no matter how lovely, is only a façade that portends to have spiritual significance. Without a vibrant community that gathers regularly to worship, the tabernacle light remains the only evidence of Christ's light. Jesus reminded us that we are the light of the world.

The Gospels tell us that the people who followed Jesus often left their towns and villages, gathered in an open space to hear the Word of God, and were fed. When we enter a church, we leave behind our solitary existence to gather as a community of believers.

As members of the Body of Christ, we are a movement called to evangelize, mobilized to serve while remaining steadfast in hope, holding fast to the belief that one day, all the world will be Church.

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

Be vigilant in fulfilling your prophetic responsibilities



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY

MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

The last line of the reading from Ezekiel shouts from the page, "They shall know that a prophet has been among them." It is a shout of the Lord that is meant to wake up the hard-hearted and rebellious people to which Ezekiel is sent.

Ezekiel is in a long line of prophets that stretches from Adam to Moses and from Elijah to John the Baptist. Adam was given a prophetic task when he was asked to name the creatures of the Earth. Naming was God's job, and he shares it with Adam who speaks on behalf of God.

Moses is the one who saw God face to face and shared God's word with the people of Israel. Each of the prophets of the Old Covenant is called to do the same, to speak the word that the Lord had given them to the people of Israel — specifically to prepare God's people for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ.

Yet, the prophetic task is not completed

with the coming of Jesus. Jesus in himself is the embodiment of the prophetic task. He who is the Word of God, speaks the Word of God.

He proclaims the word as life-giving to those who would hear him with open hearts like our Blessed Mother and the disciples. But he also speaks to those who were hard-hearted like those who lived in his native place and found him too much for them.

Even those who tried to evade his words recognized the power in them.

Remember the Samaritan woman at the well. When Jesus asks a question that is a little too close to home for comfort, she responds, "Sir, I see you are a prophet."

That prophetic task is passed on to his apostles in the great commission of Mark, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned."

That prophetic task was not an easy one and was opposed. All of the apostles died a martyr's death — except John, who was sentenced to be killed for the faith but miraculously survived the torture.

So far, so safe. Because the job of a being a prophet is a noble, admirable and brave one — when somebody else has the job! But there is an inconvenient truth: the job of prophet does not

end with the prophets of the Old Testament, or with Jesus, or even with his apostles and their successors. It is given to all the baptized.

Immediately after our baptism, we are anointed with the sacred chrism as the following words are prayed over us: "He now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation, so that you may remain as a member of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, unto eternal life."

Being a prophet is our job as well. We fulfill this prophetic calling every time we share some of God's truth with another person. When God brings someone into your day and makes it clear they are struggling with something, go out of your way to assist them, even if it is in a small way. Sometimes the only truth a person needs preached is that they are loved and valuable.

Spend intentional time with God in prayer every day. It is impossible to be a prophet and share God's word with others if we fail to know God's word ourselves!

For parents raising children, read Scripture and other virtuous stories with them, explain feast days, live liturgically. Instruct the young in goodness, truth and beauty and be intentional about it. Don't just hope it rubs off on them!

We are called to listen to God's word and to speak it, whether it is comfortable to do so or not, so that those around us will know that there has been a prophet among them.

Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ez 2:2-5;

Ps 123:1-2, 2, 3-4;

2 Cor 12:7-10;

Mk 6:1-6a

OPPORTUNITIES

The Benedictine Schools of Richmond is seeking full-time teachers in English, math, science and Spanish.

With a view toward their history and a desire to strengthen Catholic education, Benedictine College Preparatory and Saint Gertrude High School unified under a single new corporation, The Benedictine Schools of Richmond, in January 2020. The Benedictine Schools of Richmond operate Saint Gertrude High School and Benedictine College Preparatory as separate, single-sex, Catholic high schools.

The two schools share the Benedictine Abbey campus, including some important facilities such as the campus church, auditorium, athletic fields and a state-of-the-art gymnasium. For 90 years, the two schools operated just 400 feet apart in the Museum District of Richmond. In 2013, Benedictine College Preparatory relocated to the 50-acre Benedictine Abbey campus. In the summer of 2020, Saint Gertrude High School also relocated to the Benedictine Abbey campus. In 2022, Saint Gertrude High School will move into their state-of-the-art school building currently under construction.

This posting is for the purpose of creating a pool of qualified applicants for teacher positions for the 2021-2022 academic year.

To apply for a non-advertised or open position, please complete all supporting documentation, including an application, résumé, cover letter and essay titled: "My View of America" must be included as part of the application. Please submit applications to Jaime Harmeyer at jharmeyer@benedictine-schools.org. Our application as well as more information on our application process may be found on our schools' websites: www.benedictine-collegeprep.org or www.saintgertrude.org.

St. Francis Home, Richmond, is seeking part-time financial leadership with a compelling opportunity to serve the less fortunate. Responsibilities include organization and management of finance and accounting func-

tions for a \$3M+ non-profit with staff of 50. Will manage cash, track performance, supervise payroll, provide reports, develop budget, advise management and board, and other functions. Must have considerable financial leadership and hands-on experience, including QuickBooks. Flexible schedule with expected 20 to 30 hours per week may appeal to retired individual. Inquiries should be sent to employment@saintfrancishome.com.

Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Palmyra, is seeking a part-time Coordinator of religious education and youth ministry.

Bachelor's degree in religious studies or related field, Pathways certification and ongoing formation preferred.

The successful applicant must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. This position is responsible for overseeing the faith formation programs for preschool through adult, sacramental preparation, RCIA and youth ministry.

This is an 18-hour per week position with regular weekend events and occasional evening meetings, including every Sunday morning.

Please submit a completed Diocese of Richmond employment application and a cover letter to pastor@saintspeterpaul.org.

SHORTTAKES

"Walking with Jesus" trip to the Holy Land. Join Father Kevin J. O'Brien, pastor at Church of St. Therese, Chesapeake, as the spiritual director for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (with an optional two-day excursion to Petra and Jordan) Nov. 30 – Dec. 10, 2021. Walk in the footsteps of Jesus as you explore Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem and other important biblical sites. Cost is \$3,695 (double occupancy) with an additional \$1,045 for the excursion to Petra and Jordan. To register or for more information, contact Megan Malhiot mmalhiot@sttheresechesva.org; 757-488-2553 as soon as possible.

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El Papa: quien no reconoce a los pobres traiciona a Jesús. No sólo limosna, sino justicia

En su Mensaje para la Jornada Mundial de los Pobres del 14 de noviembre próximo, el Papa lanza un fuerte llamamiento a los cristianos y a los gobiernos de todo el mundo para que intervengan con urgencia y de una manera nueva, porque los pobres, también a causa de la pandemia, han aumentado de manera desproporcionada. Es necesario cambiar los estilos de vida, porque es el egoísmo el que causa la pobreza.

“Los creyentes, cuando quieren ver y palpar a Jesús en persona, saben a dónde dirigirse, los pobres son sacramento de Cristo, representan su persona y remiten a él”. Es lo que escribe el Papa en su Mensaje para la V Jornada Mundial de los Pobres que se celebrará el 14 de noviembre sobre el tema: **«A los pobres los tienen siempre con ustedes» (Mc 14,7)**

En el texto, el Papa recuerda las críticas de Judas por el hecho de que una mujer derramara sobre Su cabeza un perfume muy valioso, que valía unos 300 denarios, una suma -dice el apóstol traidor- que se podía dar a los pobres. En realidad, señala el evangelista Juan, «Esto no lo dijo porque le importaran los pobres, sino porque era ladrón y, como tenía la bolsa del dinero en común, robaba de lo que echaban en ella» (12,5-6). Francisco subraya con fuerza: “quienes no reconocen a los pobres traicionan la enseñanza de Jesús y no pueden ser sus discípulos”. Los pobres - observa - están “en el centro del camino de la Iglesia”.

El año pasado, además, - observa - se añadió otra plaga que produjo ulteriormente más pobres: la pandemia. Esta sigue tocando a las puertas de millones de personas y, cuando no trae consigo el sufrimiento y la muerte, es de todas maneras portadora de pobreza. “Algunos países, a causa de la pandemia, están sufriendo gravísimas consecuencias, de modo que las personas más vulnerables están privadas de los bienes de primera necesidad. Las largas filas frente a los comedores para los pobres son el signo tangible de este deterioro”. Es necesario encontrar “las soluciones más adecuadas para combatir el virus a nivel mundial, sin apuntar a intereses partidistas”. En particular, “es urgente dar respuestas concretas a quienes padecen el desempleo, que golpea dramáticamente a muchos padres de familia, mujeres y jóvenes”. Se necesitan solidaridad y “proyectos de promoción humana a largo plazo”.

El Papa advierte: “Un estilo de vida individualista es cómplice en la generación de pobreza, y a menudo descarga sobre los pobres



toda la responsabilidad de su condición. Sin embargo, la pobreza no es fruto del destino sino consecuencia del egoísmo”. El llamamiento de Francisco es contundente: “se requiere un enfoque diferente de la pobreza. Es un reto que los gobiernos y las instituciones mundiales deben afrontar con un modelo social previsor, capaz de responder a las nuevas formas de pobreza que afectan al mundo y que marcarán las próximas décadas de forma decisiva. Si se margina a los pobres, como si fueran los culpables de su condición, entonces el concepto mismo de democracia se pone en crisis y toda política social se vuelve un fracaso. Con gran humildad deberíamos confesar que en lo referente a los pobres somos a menudo incompetentes. Se habla de ellos en abstracto, nos detenemos en las estadísticas y se piensa en provocar conmoción con algún documental. La pobreza, por el contrario, debería suscitar una planificación creativa”.

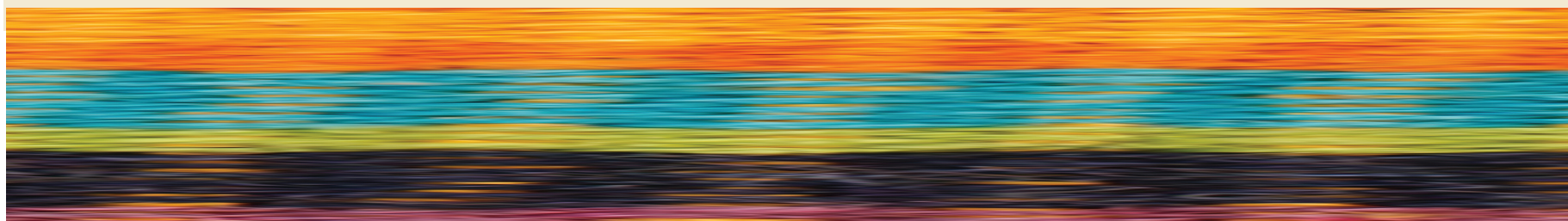
Lo que dice Jesús: «A los pobres los tienen siempre con ustedes» (Mc 14,7) -afirma el Papa- “es una invitación a no perder nunca de vista la oportunidad que se ofrece de hacer el bien”, pero “no se trata de aliviar nuestra conciencia dando alguna limosna, sino más bien de contrastar la cultura de la indiferencia y la injusticia con la que tratamos a los pobres”. De hecho, “la limosna es ocasional, mientras que el compartir es duradero”. “La primera corre el riesgo de gratificar a quien la realiza y humillar a quien la recibe; el segundo refuerza la solidaridad y sienta las bases necesarias para alcanzar la justicia”.

Francisco parafrasea lo escrito en la Evangelii gaudium donde dice “no a una economía de la exclusión y la inequidad”, “no” a una economía que mata: “para un sistema económico que pone en el centro los intereses de algunas categorías privilegiadas” los pobres,

de hecho, “constituyen una carga intolerable”. Y “un mercado que ignora o selecciona los principios éticos crea condiciones inhumanas que se abaten sobre las personas que ya viven en condiciones precarias. Se asiste así a la creación de trampas siempre nuevas de indigencia y exclusión, producidas por actores económicos y financieros sin escrúpulos, carentes de sentido humanitario y de responsabilidad social”.

Para los cristianos -insiste el Papa- existe un “vínculo inseparable” entre “Jesús, los pobres y el anuncio del Evangelio”. “El rostro de Dios que Él revela, de hecho, es el de un Padre para los pobres y cercano a los pobres. Toda la obra de Jesús afirma que la pobreza no es fruto de la fatalidad, sino un signo concreto de su presencia entre nosotros. No lo encontramos cuando y donde quisiéramos, sino que lo reconocemos en la vida de los pobres, en su sufrimiento e indigencia, en las condiciones a veces inhumanas en las que se ven obligados a vivir. No me canso de repetir que los pobres son verdaderos evangelizadores porque fueron los primeros en ser evangelizados y llamados a compartir la bienaventuranza del Señor y su Reino (cf. Mt 5,3). Los pobres de cualquier condición y de cualquier latitud *nos evangelizan*, porque nos permiten redescubrir de manera siempre nueva los rasgos más genuinos del rostro del Padre”.

El Papa concluye su Mensaje citando las palabras de don Primo Mazzolari: “Quisiera pedirles que no me pregunten si hay pobres, quiénes son y cuántos son, porque temo que tales preguntas representen una distracción o el pretexto para apartarse de una indicación precisa de la conciencia y del corazón. [...] Nunca he contado a los pobres, porque no se pueden contar: a los pobres se les abraza, no se les cuenta» (“Adesso” n. 7 – 15 abril 1949)”.



Needed

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with God's help.

While it is true that the energy and enthusiasm of the young is needed to help set the global society on a new path, "our dreams of justice, of peace, of solidarity can make it possible for our young people to have new visions," the pope wrote. "You need to show that it is possible to emerge renewed from an experience of hardship. I am sure that you have had more than one such experience: in your life you have faced any number of troubles and yet were able to pull through. Use those experiences to learn how to pull through now."

Build upon memories

While many people, young and old, act as if the reminiscences of the elderly are boring, Pope Francis said that "without memory, however, we will never be able to build; without a foundation, we can never build a house. Never. And the foundation of life is memory."

As examples, the pope cited the experience many older people have had of war or of needing to emigrate.

Sharing "the painful memory of war," he said, is important "for helping the young to learn the value of peace."

"I also think of my own grandparents, and those among you who had to emigrate and know how hard it is to leave everything behind, as so many people continue to do today, in hope of a future," he said. "Some of those people may even now be at our side, caring for us. These kinds of memory can help to build a more humane and welcoming world."

'Prayer is precious resource'

Turning to the importance of prayer,

Pope Francis cited "my predecessor, Pope Benedict, himself a saintly elderly person who continues to pray and work for the Church" at the age of 94.

"The prayer of the elderly can protect the world, helping it perhaps more effectively than the frenetic activity of many others," the pope quoted his predecessor as saying. "He spoke those words in 2012, toward the end of his pontificate. There is something beautiful here."

"Your prayer is a very precious resource: a deep breath that the Church and the world urgently need," Pope Francis told the elderly. "Especially in these difficult times for our human family, as we continue to sail in the same boat across the stormy sea of the pandemic, your intercession for the world and for the Church has great value: it inspires in everyone the serene trust that we will soon come to shore."

The Vatican also announced that people who attend a Mass or other celebration for the day, "devote adequate time to actually or virtually visiting their elderly brothers and sisters in need or in difficulty" or join in prayers for the elderly July 25 can receive a plenary indulgence as long as they fulfill the usual requirements of also going to confession, receiving the Eucharist and praying for the intentions of the pope.

The indulgence also is available to "the elderly sick and all those who, unable to leave their homes for a serious reason, will unite themselves spiritually to the sacred functions of the world day, offering to the merciful God their prayers, pains or sufferings of their lives," the Vatican said.

Editor's note: The pope's entire message is available at <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2021/6/22/mes-saggio-giornata-nonni.html>

Communion

Continued from Page 2

of this great mystery of faith, and to awaken their amazement at this divine gift, in which we have communion with the living God," Archbishop Gomez added. "That is our pastoral purpose in writing this document."

Before they voted on June 17, debate lasted for over two hours, and 43 bishops expressed differing views about drafting such a document. Some stressed the document was necessary to provide clarity about the significance of the Eucharist, while others questioned its timing and if it could be perceived as fracturing the unity of a Church already faced with numerous challenges.

Although the bishops reached no consensus during the discussion, most of those who spoke during the comments' session welcomed the idea of strengthening teaching about the Eucharist.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the doctrine committee, presented a proposed outline to the bishops June 17 in a prerecorded message. It would include three parts, subtitled "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Believed," "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Celebrated" and "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Lived."

As proposed, each part includes three topics that would be addressed including, respectively, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in Communion; unity, beauty and identity as the "fount and apex of the whole Christian life"; and moral transformation, eucharistic consistency and missionary discipleship.

Bishop Rhoades said this was developed in light of the decline in Catholics' belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist as well as the long absences from regular Mass attendance, which may have led to people placing less significance on the Eucharist in their lives.

He also said the document was never intended to present national norms for the reception of the Eucharist, but to serve as a teaching tool for Catholics about the reception of holy Communion as a grace-filled gift.

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Journey

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annulled. She said she'd been agnostic since college, but she and her husband did go to church often.

"It wasn't a bad experience," she said. "More often than not, I reminded him to go to church, to go to Mass and holy days of obligation, and his family was very devout. But it just never felt right."

The father of two daughters, Mike was married for 27 years before losing his wife to ALS. A friend pushed him to try online dating, where he met Shelly.

"I believe God brought her into my life," he said.

Once again, Shelly was in a relationship with a Catholic who wanted her to come to church with him, and she would.

One Easter after they met, that feeling of peace and joy that Mike had lost returned.

"Maybe I needed that person that showed interest that could bring that life back into me, and she did," he said.

'Rooted in reality'

After losing her job in Norman, Oklahoma, in April 2020, Shelly moved to Danville, where Mike was living. They eventually started Pre-Cana sessions with Father Jonathan Goertz. He recalled that Mike and Shelly put their hearts into the program, eager to pursue a theme or a topic in depth, to challenge each other.

"Some couples come in with romance and idealism about marriage," he said. "I saw them

rooted in reality and understanding the importance in growing closer together and seeking God's help, never taking their relationship for granted."

Even before marriage preparation, Shelly said she had been thinking that "I really need to take the time to figure out: Do I believe in God? Do I believe in Jesus? Or not."

She did.

"We finished Pre-Cana, got married, and I felt I was ready," she said. "It felt right, it finally felt right. I couldn't have asked for a better group of people to work with. It was perfect, absolutely perfect."

Her scientific training came into play, too, prompting her to question some of the things she was asked to believe, and realizing that reason complements faith.

"I really felt and understood that it required me to take the first step," she said of entering the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) in order to prepare for baptism, confirmation and reception of the Eucharist at the April 3, 2021, Easter Vigil. "God requires me to do the seeking. And once I started to actually seek, then I understood. Do I still have doubts? Yes. I think that's healthy and natural and normal. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But as long as I continue to seek and look for answers, then God will provide them, help me understand and ease my doubts."

'Seek God'

Shelly took a rigorous approach to choosing a patron saint name, reading about all the

female saints in the Church.

"There are a lot of women who are sainted who dedicated themselves to God and were martyred at 13 as virgins," she said. "Can't relate to that. Sorry!"

In the end, she chose St. Mary Magdalen, but also found inspiration in the life of St. Zita, a poor woman who became a housekeeper to a rich family in 13th century Italy. She is the patron saint of domestic workers.

"What I admire about her is her humility," Shelly said. "You do your job well, no matter what that job is; you're dedicated to it, and you don't waver in that. And you realize that's part of God's plan. This is your job, and yes, it may, in the grand scheme of things, not be important in the eyes of the world, but it's important to God and how you perform it is important to God."

Her sponsor was a former colleague, Ben Lasseter, who on occasion had urged Shelly to consider converting to Catholicism.

"Shelly was filled with this great love for everyone, and a great exuberance for life," he said in an email interview. "I thought that her agnosticism was not any kind of militant atheism. It seemed to me that she was already more than halfway along the trip toward being Catholic."

Life brings episodes of joy, moments of glory and pain, he said. "I knew that Shelly — like everybody else — would endure all three kinds of episodes, and I was glad she would be able to do so consciously, knowing that she was giving it all to Christ."

"You as an individual have to seek out God," Shelly said. "You've got to take that first step and knock on the door, and then he'll open it."