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Above: A member of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Waynesboro, shares the sign of peace at the Mass during which the church was dedicated, Sunday, July 4. Right: Father Rolo Castillo, pastor, incenses one of the walls during the celebration.

(Photos/ Eichner Studios)

## Waynesboro parish dedicates church ‘built by God’

### Challenges, obstacles didn’t deter St. John the Evangelist community

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

The towering new stone church of St. John the Evangelist, Waynesboro, is located at 301 Sheppard Court, a symbolic address designed by God himself in the eyes of many parishioners. More than once did God’s hand seem present in building the new Romanesque-style church, which was dedicated by Bishop Barry C. Knestout on Sunday, July 4.

The “3-in-1” reference to the Holy Trinity and the “shepherd” echo in the address, located on ideal land that became available late in the planning process, has struck many parishioners as remarkable.

Numerous obstacles during the long planning and construction process, including the pandemic, always seemed to work out in unexpected ways. It is all evidence of God’s presence in times both good and challenging, said the church’s pastor, Father Rolo Castillo.

“The Holy Spirit provided everything,” he said.

#### ‘Miracles’ along the way

There were “eye-opening” miracles along the way, noted parishioner Mike McGinnis, who headed the architecture and construction committee.

“I was constantly amazed at how, with every

problem, the solution would just appear,” said McGinnis, a parish member since 1997.

For example, the land — a better site than the original plan — was not even on the market yet but was mentioned in a conversation.

“It was awesome and humbling; God built this church,” he said.

True to its name, the church is spreading the good news.

“This will be a welcoming and inviting space for everyone — even the curious may come in the doors and look around, and those who have stopped practicing their faith,” Father Castillo said, praising the “soaring vision” of architect Nicolas Charbonneau of Harrison Design in Washington, D.C. “The building itself is a tool for evangelization, a place to explore faith and discover God.”

Non-Catholics also have shown an interest in the church, and tours are being offered to the community.

Parishioner Phil Thorpe, the building committee chair, has a background in project planning and was married in the old church decades ago.

“Every time there was a need, a miracle would happen,” he said, noting that before the pandemic, the project was short \$2.5 million. “And then someone gave us \$2.5 million. This is a project of the Holy Spirit.”

While the old 1932 church on Maple Avenue downtown was full of fond memories, it could seat only 280 people and was too small for the growing parish. It also had limited parking and restrooms that were inconveniently far away.

The new church seats 600 and has two large parking lots and restrooms with easy access near the front entrance, as well as offices, classrooms and other public spaces that will enable greater participation in parish life.

#### ‘Living Our Mission’ had important role

Father Castillo credits not only the generosity of parishioners and other supporters but also the diocesan “Living Our Mission” capital campaign to obtain the financing needed to complete the \$12.5 million project. Discussions began in 2011, with the project fully underway in 2014.

“When the campaign for the diocese was initiated in 2011, we were told we could ‘piggyback’ on that to raise funds,” Father Castillo said. “The diocese’s willingness to do that was definitely a great help in enabling us to make our goal.”

The resulting generosity of donors “was a great testament to the people of this community,” he added.

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The Catholic Virginian  
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# Thrifty Sisters to benefit Saint Francis Home

Serving the elderly poor mission of both entities

KRISTEN L. BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

**T**hrifty Sisters, a not-for-profit thrift store in Richmond, was founded in 2012 to generate financial support for the Little Sisters of the Poor's operation of St. Joseph's Home. Until the sale of the home earlier this year, the Little Sisters had served in Richmond for more than 147 years. While the nuns were no longer here, Thrifty Sisters wanted to continue its work; it just needed a new beneficiary.

"We were terribly saddened by that news," said Beverly Binns, executive director of Thrifty Sisters. "We knew we wanted to continue, and our whole Thrifty Sisters family wanted to remain true to our roots with the elderly poor and the money staying locally."

Four months after the Little Sisters announced in October 2019 that they would be leaving, COVID arrived. The store was forced to close its doors for months. Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Saint Francis Home was grappling with the staggering effects of the pandemic.

Saint Francis Home was founded as an assisted living facility in 1973 by Bishop Walter F. Sullivan and the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Its mission is to provide quality care at an affordable price to the most vulnerable in the community. All of its residents are low-income.

"Our care is based on the fundamental Catholic belief that human life is sacred, and every person is precious," said Bruce Slough, the home's executive director. "Our goal is to enhance the life and dignity of each of our residents."

The cost of care per resident is around \$3,300 per month, but 70% of residents pay only \$1,350 per month, according to Slough. Because of this, Saint Francis Home seeks to raise more than \$1.4 million in grants and support annually to close the gap between how much money its residents pay and the cost of running the facility.

## Answer to prayers

For nearly a year, the facility's admission process was put on hold because of the pandemic. Instead of the 135 residents Saint Francis Home is licensed to serve, they currently have only 78 residents. There is also a food shortage and staffing shortage.



Becky Combs, one of more than 50 volunteers at Thrifty Sisters in Richmond, straightens a chair. Proceeds from the sale of items at the store benefit Saint Francis Home. (Photo/Kristen Byrd)



Claire Biggers, director of social services at Saint Francis Home, shows resident Elsie Jones flowers that she had picked from the home's garden. Saint Francis Home provides the elderly poor a place to live. (Photo/Christy Heinen, Saint Francis Home)

"At the onset of COVID, we lost our donated food sources, which resulted in increased food costs of \$10,000-\$20,000 per month," Slough said.

Staff was greatly reduced due to workers needing to stay home with their children, being wary of working in a health care setting during a pandemic and other reasons. Faced with these challenges, a partnership with Thrifty Sisters seemed like the answer to the home's prayers.

"It became clear the missions of the two organizations were so closely aligned, I think all of us began to see that it made sense," Slough said. "Thrifty Sisters has been supporting a charity providing for the care of the elderly poor since it began more than 100 years ago, and through this new partnership with Saint Francis, they can continue supporting that same, very real need right here in Richmond."

## Generous donors, dedicated volunteers

While Saint Francis Home was struggling to find support, Thrifty Sisters was experiencing a surge of it. Once COVID subsided and they reopened their store, not only was there an increase in donations, but there was also an increase in customers looking for bargains.

"Donations are overflowing. A lot of people decided to make a lot of different life decisions based on what the world experienced with COVID," said Binns.

Sometimes there are so many donations that Thrifty Sisters can't keep everything – but they try not to waste anything. Extra donations are passed on to other organizations, such as CARITAS and The King's Daughters.

"One of the things that sets us apart are the type of donations we get in," said Binns. "Our donors are incredibly generous. We get fine artwork, high quality clothing and beautiful jewelry."

The store carries everything from cookware to couches, blouses to books. Some items are still sitting in unopened packages.

Thrifty Sisters has an eclectic group of vol-

unteers, spanning ages, genders and socioeconomic backgrounds, though most volunteers are retired. There are gardeners, accountants, seamstresses, woodworkers, among others. Their unique talents are utilized in interesting and inspiring ways. One woman fixes broken sewing machines and donates them to various groups across the country, such as Native American reservations and areas ravaged by natural disasters.

"They are very invested in what they're doing," Binns said of the more than 50 volunteers. "They don't just give us their time; they give us themselves. They give us everything, and that's rare."

Ninety-five percent of the volunteers returned to work after the store reopened.

"They care. Their action backs it up. That keeps me moving forward," said Binns.

## Exciting possibilities

Binns is one of two paid employees. She started as a volunteer with a background in antiques and estate sales; her experience has been an asset in running the store.

She recognizes that there is a story behind each item that gets brought to the store. A donor may bring in something that belonged to their deceased parent. A family may bring in items because they have been forced to downsize their home due to financial troubles. What may seem like a simple act of handing over a box of clothes is really a handing over of a box of memories. There is often an emotional attachment to the donations, and donors are in return given respect, empathy and gratitude.

"It's less about the objects. The objects are a conduit. It's always really been about human

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

Bishop Knestout's column is scheduled to return in September

# Priest not sure what to expect in retirement

## Father Griffin plans to help where needed, visit Haiti

**BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI**  
The Catholic Virginian

Last month, as he was in the midst of moving from St. Paul Parish, Richmond, where he had been pastor for nearly six years, to his house in Norfolk, Father James “Jim” Griffin, was certain of one thing.

“I’m retiring and it’s going to be new for me. Keep me in your prayers because I don’t know what this entails yet except I won’t be pastor,” he said. “I know I’ll still celebrate Mass and be on standby for (helping out in parishes), but I won’t be a pastor anymore and I’m going to have to learn about how to do that.”

Following graduation from Norfolk Catholic in 1969, Father Griffin was a history major at Old Dominion University for a year.

“Summarily, I flunked out. I don’t know what my GPA was. I think I passed wrestling and volleyball. In all the other ones I didn’t do too well,” he said with a laugh.

He spent the next two years in the Navy and then enrolled at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in speech communication/theater.

“There’s a big difference. I went to college the second time and I was on the dean’s list. I was a little bit more mature,” he said, adding that he appeared in four plays during that time.

Following graduation he enrolled in the Theological College at the Catholic University of America from which he earned a Master of Divinity degree.

He and eight other men were ordained by Bishop Walter F. Sullivan on May 8, 1982. Due to the number of ordinands, the Mass was celebrated in the Mosque Theatre instead of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, which would not have been able to accommodate the 2,000 people who attended.

“I must admit that one of the things I missed as a priest was not getting ordained either as a deacon or as a priest in the cathedral,” he said. “I sort of missed that, but what the heck? I guess it worked because 39 years later I’m retiring. (Father Griffin was ordained to the diaconate at Immaculate Conception, Hampton, on June 6, 1981).

Following ordination in 1982, he served as associate pastor of the cathedral and as secretary to Bishop Sullivan.

“I drove the car and was the emcee for confirmations,” he recalled. “I loved the man. It was a great two years.”

In 1984-1985, Father Griffin served 17 months as parochial vicar at St. Mary, Richmond.

A pastor or campus minister for more than 35 of the 39 years he’s been a priest, Father Griffin termed all of his assignments “life-giving.”

“I’ve always had good assignments and I’ve loved every one of them,” he said. “They’ve all been totally different — different parts of the state, different ministries, some inner city, some suburbs. Some college campuses. I’ve had a variety of them.”

Father Griffin received his first

pastorates in 1985 when he was named to Good Shepherd, South Hill, and St. Catherine of Siena, Clarksville. Two years later he was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul, Newport News, and in 1992, St. Therese, Chesapeake.

His sole campus ministry assignment was from 1998-2002 at VPI and SU, Blacksburg. This was followed by pastorates at St. Mark, Virginia Beach (2002-2015) and then St. Paul, Richmond, starting in 2015.

With all of his assignments, Father Griffin said, being present to people was critical.

“You’ve got to be there,” he said. “It sounds real simple, it sounds like everyone would know that but you have to be able to be there and return calls and have times for people to come see you.”

He also noted the importance of being a good preacher.

“Because that’s what you do. You have the privilege of telling people what you believe in your own terms and with your own words,” the priest said.

Father Griffin said that each parish priest “needs to have something on your own.” For some, he said, it is music or pursuing doctoral studies; for him, it has been Haiti ministry — a country he has visited more than 40 times.

“Ever since 1987, every parish or campus ministry I’ve been in has twinned with someone in Haiti,” he said, noting that in twinning with Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Poulie, over the last three years, parishioners at St. Paul have contributed \$20,000 to the support of that parish.

In retirement, he hopes to return to Haiti “a few more times,”

visiting Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, as well as Maison Fortuene, an orphanage in Hinche that St. Mark Parish supported during his 13 years there.

Something that goes back to being present to people, Father Griffin said, was his death row ministry.

“I was a minister on death row and witnessed 11 executions. I walked with men from when they were jailed on death row and some of them when they died,” he said. “It sounds counter-intuitive that it’s life giving, because not many people do that. I think they appreciated it. I’m not one of the greatest spiritualists in the world but they knew that I didn’t have to be there and I was there.”

Father Griffin said his death row ministry “cemented” his knowledge of the value of human life.

“It’s hard to uphold human life of people who do things that disgust you. Human life is a lot more than anti-abortion, though it’s that and rightfully so, but it’s also people who are murderers and people who do things that are evil. Their lives are still created in goodness by God.”

Reflecting on his priesthood, Father Griffin expressed gratitude to the priests and lay people who helped him be the priest he was.

“I’m not the most reverent, holy or academic or whatever a priest needs to be, but I’ve been able to be myself and be a priest, and that’s been the joy of priesthood, he said, adding, “It’s been interesting and very life giving. I’d do it again”



Father James Griffin

## Catholic clergy offer comfort at Miami collapse site

SURFSIDE, Fla. (CNS) — After spending time at Surfside’s informal Wall of Remembrance memorial for the victims of the Champlain Towers South collapse, Miami Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski told CBS4 Miami July 2, “It’s quite shocking to see.”

He made the comments during his visit to the memorial with Boston Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley and Father Juan Sosa, pastor of St. Joseph Church, which is close to the site.

“The people in the building represent so many different religious and cultural backgrounds. ... One of the things that struck me really is when I’ve been reading the names of the families, survivors and the missing of how much this building represents a microcosm of all of South Florida,” the archbishop said.

The memorial sprung up following the tragic partial collapse of the Champlain Towers South condo building near Miami Beach, Florida. It has been so popular that at one point local law enforcement had to close the area due to hundreds

gathering on the streets there.

As of July 6, 32 people were confirmed dead; 113 others remained unaccounted for since the collapse early June 24. The evening of July 4, crews demolished the remaining part of the building.

Officials were concerned the outer bands of Tropical Storm Elsa could affect what was left of the building in Surfside. By midday July 6, Elsa was expected to head toward Florida’s west coast after whipping parts of the Florida Keys.

“This has certainly been a very difficult and emotional moment for the whole community. But even in these times of great challenge, we see how so much good comes out of people — in their generosity, courage and desire to help those in need,” Cardinal O’Malley wrote in a post for his blog, <http://cardinalsblog.org>.

He said he headed to Miami July 1 to spend time with friends and relatives for the Independence Day holiday and Archbishop Wenski extended an invitation to join him in visiting the

site of the building collapse in Surfside, “where so many people perished.”

“We prayed for those affected by the tragedy and met some of the relatives of those who are still missing,” Cardinal O’Malley wrote.

“It was a very moving experience,” he said of the visit, “but it was encouraging to see how the community has come together to help in the search for the missing and to try to bring comfort and solace to those who have lost family and friends.”

“We were also able to speak with a number of the rescue workers from around the country and from Israel who were working at the site of the collapse. I even met a firefighter from Newton (Massachusetts) who was there helping out,” he added.

Cardinal O’Malley noted that Father Chris Marino, a Miami archdiocesan priest, who is a chaplain with the Miami Fire Department, is a good friend of his and was with the firefighter

# Rower raises awareness for Alzheimer's caregivers

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

It wasn't breaking the world record for rowing distance of which John Musser was the most proud.

Nor was it that he rowed on a rowing machine for 24 hours at his parish, St. Joan of Arc, Yorktown, at the beginning of its Service Week June 21.

Musser felt proudest about raising awareness for Alzheimer's caregivers and \$57,500 for the Alzheimer's Association. He achieved these feats as part of the Alzheimer's Association's "The Longest Day" fundraising campaign in which people from across the world do fundraisers on or near June 20, the summer solstice. Musser's fundraiser placed in the top five for the participant division at the national level.

Musser's father, mother-in-law and three grandparents suffered dementia, and he is now the caregiver for his wife Robin, 56, who has young onset Alzheimer's.

Through this difficult chapter in his life, he said his faith has grown.

"As much as I thought I had this powerful, mature faith, here's a place where it needed some serious growth," he said, adding that he realized that part of faith is allowing others the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ by assisting him.

The Compassio Row, Latin for "to suffer together," drew most of its funds through outright donations, but parishioners and friends from across the country paid \$100 to row for one hour by him on one of other three machines in the church commons, and many congregated around him for support. He said one of his

objectives was to suffer vicariously with Alzheimer's caregivers.

Parishioner Peter Romeo, who rowed for an hour with Musser, said, "We are all in this together whether life is good or bad. If someone is hurting or has a need, we respond. I think that is part of our great commission — to make disciples of the world... to join in the suffering of others to show that they aren't in this alone."

More than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's. Eighty-three percent of the help provided to older adults in the United States is from family members, friends or other unpaid caregivers. Of those, nearly half assist adults with dementia, according to the Alzheimer's Association website.

"As a husband, you can't feel worse than watching something slowly kill your wife, and you have to just sit there and try to distract her from it. And you can't do anything to take it away. And it's terribly sad to see them lose their independence," Musser said.

Musser rowed 282,981 meters (175.8 miles), topping the world record by 8,865 meters (5.5 miles) in the lightweight division. He suffered an adverse physical condition due to the intensity of his workout and was in the hospital overnight. Nevertheless, Musser said he is "so glad" he did the row because it allowed him to "take a swing at Alzheimer's."

"I've got a wife suffering, and I can't fight this thing. I can't alter it. I can't change what she is going through, but I can do something for others," he said. "I can try to make a difference in the future, and this is my way. It's my way of staring Alzheimer's in the face and saying, 'I'm going to make a difference.'"

His next goal: to be as successful caring for his wife as he was in the row.

*Editor's note: People may continue to make donations to the Compassio Row until Aug. 1 through <http://act.alz.org/goto/compassio>. The 24/7 Alzheimer's Association helpline is 800-272-3900.*



John Musser rows during the St. Joan of Arc Parish Service Week in Yorktown. Musser rowed for 24 hours in order to raise money for the Alzheimer's Association and to raise awareness for Alzheimer's caregivers. (Photo/Jennifer Neville)

## Yorktown parishioners are 'hands and feet of Jesus'

More than 100 St. Joan of Arc youth, adults participate in Service Week

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

With volunteers laughing, chatting and helping each other, Service Week at St. Joan of Arc Parish, Yorktown, was an uplifting ministry in June.

Side-by-side, youth and adults worked at 10 homes of fellow parishioners. They became the hands and feet of Christ as they did yard work, landscaped and made minor repairs too difficult for the residents, e.g., repaired decking, installed railings and power washed a house.

"I was amazed how much fun they were having as they worked," said Cynthia Loiacono, a recipient of the volunteer work.

"It was like a big family," she said. "It was just a marvelous day."

About 100 SJA volunteers served in various roles, some in more than one. In addition to the work teams, there was the kitchen crew Munch Bunch, a tech group, music ministry and "prayer warriors" who prayed for the volunteers and the success of Service Week.

Father Mike Joly said the event was "a week-long retreat with sever-



Jeanne Billings, left, and Sofia Delnero weed a garden for a parishioner during St. Joan of Arc's Service Week in Yorktown. The four-day event sent dozens of parishioners to help parishioners who are no longer able to handle landscaping and other chores. (Photo/Jennifer Neville)

al dimensions: worship, sacramental, service, fellowship and human."

Parishioner Carol Romeo said "it was wonderful" for the parish to have "this homegrown" mission to serve the SJA community. Despite previous COVID restrictions, "we are still pushing forward and doing God's work, and I think that is awesome."

Service Week began with 24 hours of Eucharistic Adoration in the worship space June 21.

Anna Billings, worker, said, "Doing this work is Jesus, and you are either Jesus or you are not. Either you act like Jesus, or you don't. Either you are going to give, or you're not going to give. It's as simple as that."

Nan Mack, one of the workers, viewed volunteering as "a joy and an opportunity" because the parishioners "have done so much for us."

Some parishioners were reluctant or ashamed to ask for help, but Father Joly said their silence "blocks Christ."

"It's important to allow the strength of Christ in parishioners, youth and adult, to reach out to those in need," Father Joly said.

He said the residents were "overjoyed at the loving folks that were there" and pleased with their work.

Anne Cipriano called the workers "garden angels" who "flocked" to help her.

Her adult daughter Lisa Cipriano said it was "more meaningful" to her mother that fellow parishioners helped her than it would have been had it been done "by a stranger."

Kelly Bustamante, who can no longer do yard work due to arthritis, was moved and appreciative that people who didn't know her personally performed tasks.

Jennifer Strash Sanders, SJA coordinator of faith formation (lead for SJA Service Week), said she hoped parishioners on the receiving end felt

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# Yorktown

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loved, supported and like valued members of the parish family.

She added that volunteers had “a major feeling of accomplishment,” understood they were part of a “grander vision,” and realized that sharing their talents to help others is “a beautiful and wonderful thing.”

Michael Corbett wanted that message to sink in with three of his children working with him: Jacob, 13, and Rachel, 12, worked at the homes. Hannah, 9, helped with the Munch Bunch.

“It’s important to instill in them the values of serving others,” Corbett said. “That’s exactly what Jesus

taught us, to serve one another. This is an opportunity in a very real, hands-on way to let them be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Each day started at 9 a.m. with Mass. Monday through Thursday, the workers had a quick breakfast at an espresso bar set up in the commons and then dashed to the worksites. They went home about 3 p.m. to freshen up and then returned to the church in the evening for dinner and a program – two of which were a talent show and Praise and Worship, which offered adoration, music and prayer. Friday was “a day of pure enjoyment and thanksgiving” at a barbecue and pool party in a neighboring community.

“The point of the evening

programs was to enjoy the video of the day’s work and to bond, to laugh, to meet, to share, to eat, to have fun, to rejoice,” Father Joly said. For fellowship, the workers ate lunch together at the worksites with lunches packed by the Munch Bunch.

There were impromptu moments of fellowship like when the youth had a contest to see who could stand on their head the longest or when the volunteers struck up a game of bocce (similar to lawn bowling) after weeding a course at one person’s home.

Many volunteers found community building to be just as important as the service work. They reconnected with old friends and forged new friendships as they

laughed, talked and worked together. Individuals became more than a face across the aisle at church or a person in the doughnut line.

Sometimes the people being served entered the conversations, often reminiscing about days of yore. Donna Prantl, one of the volunteer workers, said it was a blessing to get to know fellow volunteers and persons being served.

Strash said a sense of community is essential for “a thriving Church.”

“If you just have people that come and sit in the pew and then go home, it’s not a very giving Church,” she said. “It’s not what we are called to do. We are called to be part of our community and to serve our community.”

# Thrifty Sisters

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beings and how they live. It’s about humanity,” Binns said.

Binns and Slough, and Thrifty Sisters and Saint Francis Home, are excited about the possibilities of their new partnership as they work together to help the elderly poor.

“Hopefully, someone who has been struggling with the challenge of finding an affordable assisted living option will read this article and come take a look,” said Slough. “We want to help as many people as possible get the quality care everyone deserves.”

*Editor’s note: To donate or volunteer with Thrifty Sisters, visit <https://thriftysistersrva.org/>. To learn more about Saint Francis Home, visit <https://saintfrancishome.com/>*

# Summer service



Youth and adults from parishes throughout the Diocese of Richmond did service projects in their respective communities the week of June 21. Left: a ramp is being built at a home in Roanoke by St. Andrew parishioners. Right: Volunteers from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart work at a Richmond home. (Submitted photos)



Left: At Holy Name of Mary, Bedford, a participant packs lunches for those serving in the area. Right: Parishioners from Sacred Heart, Danville, clear brush during the week. (Submitted photos)

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# Eucharist document must unify, not divide

## GUEST COMMENTARY

GREG ERLANDSON  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

The June virtual meeting of the U.S. bishops has created a firestorm of press coverage and commentary regarding a proposed document on the Eucharist, unfortunately, much of it negative.

Watching some journalists trying to describe the situation has been at times frustrating, but it is hard to blame them, since there is disagreement even among some bishops over what is being contemplated.

In its simplest form, the proposed document's intent is summed up in its title: "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church: Why It Matters."

There is some worrisome evidence that many Catholics may not be able to confidently explain "why it matters." Polls suggest this, and the slow return of Catholics to celebrating

Mass together suggests this as well.

While the bishops are also planning a three-year agenda for a "eucharistic revival," the proposed document was initially prompted by a working group formed by Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the bishops' conference, after the 2020 virtual bishops' assembly last November.

Archbishop Gomez asked the group to consider how to respond to a newly elected Catholic president who was perceived to "support policies that attack some fundamental values we hold dear as Catholics," including "the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and the preservation of Roe v. Wade."

This working group made two recommendations, a letter addressed to the new president and "a document addressed to all of the Catholic faithful on eucharistic coherence."

At the June meeting, after long debate, the bishops approved the drafting of the document, which will focus on "the Eucharist as a mystery to be believed, a mystery to be cele-

brated and a mystery to be lived," according to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chair of the bishops' doctrine committee charged with its drafting.

What has confused matters is that there has been a vocal campaign for months to disallow President Joe Biden from receiving Communion because of his policy positions on abortion.

Such a decision is solely the prerogative of the local bishop, however, and President Biden's local bishop, Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, has already made it clear that he will not do that.

Because of this campaign, and because several bishops during the June 17 debate mentioned President Biden and abortion as a reason such a document is needed, many reporters assume that the planned document is an explicit rebuke of President Biden.

While that debate was wide-ranging, observers have noted that another morally se-

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### Follow the example of Jesus

I am following with interest the debate over whether the Church should deny the Eucharist to President Biden and other Catholic politicians who support abortion. In this, as in all things, the Church should follow the example of Jesus.

At the Last Supper, Jesus directly confronted his looming betrayal by Judas and his pending denial by Peter. Betrayal is certainly an apt description of how the Church must feel regarding the flaunting of its teachings by Catholic politicians. But Jesus did not withhold his body and blood from any of the apostles at the Last Supper.

The Church (and all Catholics) must never use religion, and especially never use denial of the Eucharist, as a method of punishment against anyone. Doing so literally makes Jesus, the Prince of Peace, a weapon in contemporary culture wars.

On Good Friday, Jesus himself was a victim of a culture war, with capital punishment for the crime of blasphemy imposed on him by zealots in his religious community. Denial of the Eucharist by the Church could easily encourage modern-day zealots to engage in more aggressive religious-based violence, thus compounding the violence of abortion.

The Church in the United States should focus its efforts on educating the 50% of its members who apparently support abortion. To these, the Church needs to

clearly communicate why, biologically, life begins at conception and why, theologically, by the Fifth Commandment, abortion is inadmissible.

The Church must also remember that everyone, including the Church itself, has committed some sin. Selective denial of the Eucharist will not remedy this reality nor reduce the number of abortions.

— Dr. Martin G. Mlynczak  
Yorktown

### Catholic politicians should unify rather than divide

Through prayer the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' holy Eucharist's review for pro-abortion Catholic politicians such as President Biden and Speaker Nancy Pelosi will reach a final determination inspired by Christ.

There has been a cultural rot spreading throughout our society over the decades like a cancer feeding on our national morality. It has been mind-numbing to many Catholics causing a deliberate blurring of the lines between good vs. evil.

Catholic doctrine clearly rejects abortion, homosexuality, same sex marriage and transgender identity as grave sins yet these Catholic politicians are boldly promoting these evils globally as socially acceptable.

Misguided Catholics are objecting to the USCCB's Eucharist review because of their own political party affiliation. They are obfuscating fundamental Church teachings by trying to sep-

arate pro-abortion political policies from strict adherence to Church doctrine on killing innocent life.

The teachings of St. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 explains that a Catholic must be in a state of grace — that is, free of any grave or mortal sin — before receiving Communion. This does not mean that Catholic politicians get a free pass.

Jesus Christ, in his abundant love and mercy, established the sacrament of reconciliation so that we as sinners can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church.

Confession places the burden on the sinner to ask for forgiveness and to avoid the near occasion of sin. The Catholic Church will be better served if these Catholic politicians focused on the sacrament of reconciliation and avoid further dividing the Catholic Church over the Eucharist.

— Carmine Largo  
New Kent

### All Catholics do not vote on one issue

I am both saddened and appalled by the scathing commentary, "Catholic perspective must be voiced in public square" (Catholic Virginian, June 28), regarding Sen. Tim Kaine.

You allowed a publication by Stephen Reardon, a parishioner at St. Bridget. Do you think his career gives him more credence? It attacks Tim Kaine, a well-respected Catholic politician by making biased judgmental accusations.

tal accusations.

Politicians are candidates for all people. All Catholics do not vote on one issue a politician stands for. I expect intelligent people and I would hope you also to look at all a candidate stands for.

It seems that the concept of being personally opposed is not understood by conservative Catholics. Perhaps there were articles telling people not to vote for Biden that I missed. I consider that a blessing that God spared me the voice from the New Virginian re-

garding our president.

Perhaps it might do you and writers for the Catholic Virginian to expose themselves to Catholic perspective as presented in the Jesuit publication of America magazine. Might those articles be more representative of what Pope Francis stands for.

All Catholics aren't conservatives. You make it much easier to leave the Church by supporting such a narrow view. Remember, leaving results in less income.

— Linda Tucciarone  
Glen Allen

### 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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## Parish

*Continued from Page 1*

At the dedication Mass, Bishop Knestout anointed the altar with sacred oil and blessed the church with holy water and incense. He also placed relics of St. Stephen, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Maria Faustyna Kowalska, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Maria Goretti, St. Rose of Lima and St. Francis de Sales beneath the altar.

At the dedication, attended by area Catholic and ecumenical clergy, Bishop Knestout referred to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians ("You are no longer strangers"): "Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred to the Lord."

### For the present, future

Part of the beauty of the new church, noted by many, is the inclusion of elements of the former church. The stained-glass rose window and reframed stations of the cross have been brought in, and the old crucifix, tabernacle and altar have been moved to the chapel.

Parishioner Kathie Ward has attended St. John the Evangelist for 50-plus years with her family. It has been bittersweet to leave behind the memories in the old church, said Ward, who is the parish nurse, an usher and a finance council member.

"But I keep in mind that this new church is for many generations to come," she said. "I think of the people who built the old church for me to have a place to worship, and now that's what we're doing for the future."

Pat Cekada, a nearly 50-year member of the parish, also found the move bittersweet at first. But the new church is "breathtaking," she said. She also was part of a procession, led by the Knights of Columbus, that brought the new crucifix to the church.

"That cross is so lifelike; I can't take my eyes off it," she said. "God is definitely watching over us."

### New chapter for parish

Karen Toomy, a parishioner since 1967, reflected: "I look forward to a new chapter in our St. John the Evangelist at Sheppard Court. It has been so beautifully done, with so much love and attention to every detail."

Bob Prebish, a newer parishioner and Knight who helped carry the crucifix, said he



Bishop Barry C. Knestout, priests and deacons from the Diocese of Richmond celebrate the Mass at which St. John the Evangelist Parish, Waynesboro, dedicated its new church on Sunday, July 4. Constructed at a cost of \$12.5 million, the church has a capacity for 600 worshippers. (Photo/ Eichner Studios)

and his wife, Martha, were drawn by Father Castillo's dynamic homilies and the warm community that loves its church.

"People had tears in their eyes when they came to the new church," especially after being away from Mass during the pandemic, he said. "In so many ways, this is a new beginning."

Lector Dan Toft, a five-year Catholic convert, has noticed the improved sound when he reads.

"There's a nice echo in the new place," he said, adding that even the bright and colorful crucifix and statues of Mary and Joseph have deepened his faith experience. "The Lord really does work in mysterious ways."

"I think we all grew from this experience because everybody had a chance to be part of it," said 34-year member Linda Thompson. "It's a sacred place and I feel like I'm home."

### 'Living stones'

One challenge that faced the parish was what to do with the old property. In another remarkable turn, an ideal tenant and future buyer appeared in Appalachian Christian School, which needed to relocate from the Afton area. It successfully reopened at the new site in August 2020.

"It was serendipity — some say the Holy Spirit — that the head of the school just happened to pass by the church one day when he was in town," said Jim Boland, a 17-year parishioner who led the marketing effort.

"The Holy Spirit is calling all of us to participate," said Father Castillo. "While looking at the stone exterior, I thought of the 'living stone' of Scripture. The stones are irregular in color, shape and size but every one has a place, like us, and together they make this monument to faith."

## Eucharist

*Continued from Page 6*

rious issue that was never mentioned was the death penalty. Although there are well-known Catholic politicians and officials who continue to support its use, the Catechism of the Catholic Church makes it clear that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person" (No. 2267).

In retrospect, mention of the death penalty

within the context of eucharistic consistency debate might have made the discussion appear less partisan, reminding Catholics that neither of the major parties have agendas completely compatible with Catholic teaching.

While abortion is certainly a point of severe conflict between some politicians and the Church, Bishop Rhoades has assured his brothers that the document would not be fixated on only one issue, nor would it be directed at one class of Catholics, such as politicians.

"In a document addressed to all Catholics,

it will cover the broad range of Catholic social teaching," he said. "All of us as Catholics will be able to find ourselves in this teaching."

The bishops' debate, civil as it was, made it clear there are differing expectations and concerns regarding this document. The challenge for the doctrine committee will be to create a document that will unify rather than further divide.

*Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.*

# No automatic transfer of powers with pope in hospital

CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The organization of the universal Catholic Church has a precise hierarchy, but there is no such thing as a "vice pope," who steps in when the reigning pontiff is traveling abroad, ill or under anesthesia.

Although hospitalized since July 4, when he underwent a three-hour surgery on his colon, Pope Francis is still the supreme pontiff and fully in charge.

Some news outlets, like the Italian agency ANSA, reported that with the pope in Rome's Gemelli hospital, "the cardinal camerlen-

go," or chamberlain, "has the task of administering the temporal goods of the Holy See."

The current camerlengo is U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

But according to the apostolic constitution, "Universi Dominici

Gregis," issued by St. John Paul II in 2007 and updated by then-Pope Benedict XVI in 2013, the camerlengo's duties begin only with the reported death of a pope.

"We are not in that situation," Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, secretary of the Pontifical Council for

*See Pope, Page 12*

# Church requires lay ministers be in full communion



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

**Q.** I am a cradle Catholic. I was divorced in 2019 and am now dating a woman who is not a Catholic.

If I were to marry this woman in a civil ceremony or in her Christian church — without an annulment — is it true that I could not receive Communion in a Catholic church as well as not teach religious education, be a godparent or coordinate our parish's Mass-server program — all of which I now do?

Also, would my ex-wife have to consent to the annulment? What is her involvement in the process? (I would like it to be minimal.) (Norfolk)

**A.** Yes, it is true that if you married this woman without first obtaining an annulment from the Catholic Church you would not be permitted to receive holy Communion. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that you would be “in a situation that objectively contravenes God’s law” and “cannot receive eucharistic Communion as long as this situation persists” (No. 1650).

As to service in ministries that the Church offers, the standard

requirement for such volunteers is that they be in full communion with the Church. As one U.S. archdiocese explains on its website, those who serve as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, for example, must be “practicing Catholics, distinguished in their Christian life, faith and morals” and “if married, the marriage must be a valid Catholic marriage.”

I applaud your willingness to offer valuable help in your parish's ministries, and I am pleased that you are thinking of an annulment, which would allow your work to continue. If you were to apply for an annulment, your ex-wife would be notified that you have done so, and she would be offered the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire including her “take” on the marriage and what contributed to its break-up.

For your annulment to proceed, it would not be necessary that your ex-wife complete that questionnaire or participate at all in the annulment process — only that she be offered the chance to do so. Often enough, the former spouse is unwilling to be involved, and the process can still proceed.

**Q.** I have been a non-practicing Catholic, but I am sending my child to a Catholic school. She is now 4 years old and wants to be baptized, and I want this for her, too. My desire is to return to Church practice, have her baptized and bring her up as a

Catholic. But because I have not been attending a church, I cannot find a parish that will baptize her.

Recently I was asked to fill out a form whereby the pastor of my previous parish would sign permission for her to be baptized in the parish that we will now be attending. I have no idea how to proceed and am hoping that you can advise me. (Austin, Texas)

**A.** It surprises me that you have been unable to find a parish willing to baptize your daughter — especially given your willingness to return to Church practice yourself and thus serve as an example for your child. As a parish priest myself, I would be delighted to welcome to the sacraments someone with a similar story.

If the parish that you now wish to attend is requiring your former pastor to submit a letter of approval, by all means you should try to make that happen. But first, I suggest you telephone (or, even better, visit) that former pastor and explain your situation.

Make sure that he understands your deep desire to have your daughter baptized and your own intention to return to regular Church attendance and ask him if he would be comfortable in vouching for you.

**Q.** As a Catholic, I am very devoted to St. Expeditus. I have tried

to look for a Catholic parish named for this saint, but I have been unable to find one in the United States.

If it be God's will, would you consider placing a statue of St. Expeditus in your own parish church? There is such a statue in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in New Orleans. (City and state of origin withheld)

**A.** This question is indicative of the ardent devotion some Catholics have to particular saints of which little may be known historically. St. Expeditus (or Expedito) is generally thought to have been a Roman centurion who was martyred for his Christian faith about the year A.D. 303 in what is now Turkey.

Devotion to the saint seems to have only started much later, and there is some doubt about his existence.

As for the statue in the New Orleans church, one story (perhaps legendary) is that in the 1920s, Catholic nuns at Our Lady of Guadalupe on Rampart Street received a crate marked “expedite”; inside was contained an otherwise unidentified statue of a Roman soldier, whom the nuns dubbed “St. Expedito,” and that statue now stands near the entrance to the church where it draws prayers from those seeking rapid intervention.

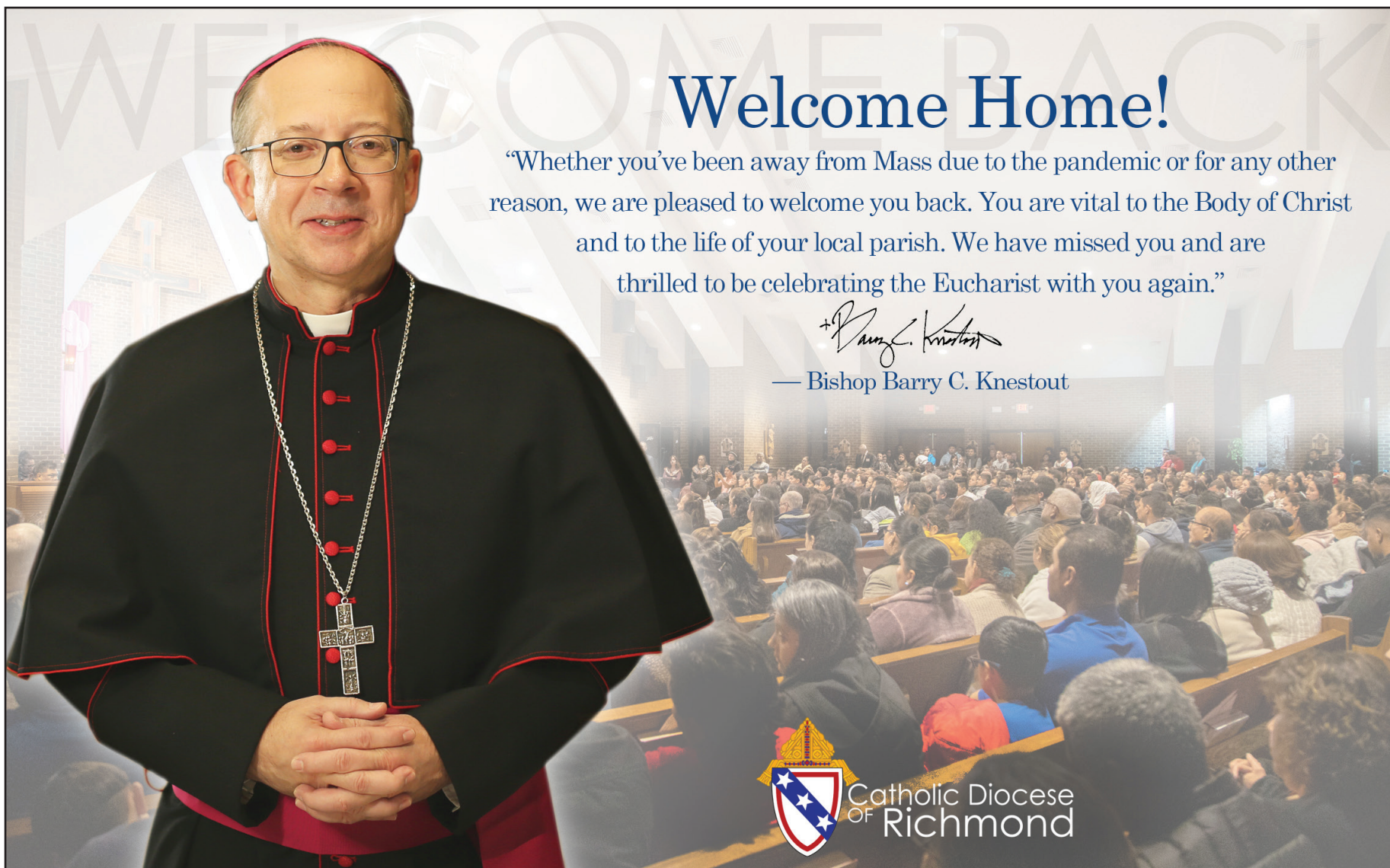
That saint may or may not have an historical basis, but it doesn't hurt for someone to invoke his help.

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

## Welcome Home!

“Whether you’ve been away from Mass due to the pandemic or for any other reason, we are pleased to welcome you back. You are vital to the Body of Christ and to the life of your local parish. We have missed you and are thrilled to be celebrating the Eucharist with you again.”

— Bishop Barry C. Knestout





# Find inspiration in Mary Magdalene's love for Jesus



**IN LIGHT OF FAITH**  
BARBARA HUGHES

It seems to me that no person in Scripture has been mischaracterized or surrounded by as much speculation as Mary Magdalene. Identified in the Gospel of Luke as the one “from whom seven demons had gone out,” she is also listed among the women who contributed to the support of Jesus during his public ministry.

Some Scripture scholars suggest that she came from a prominent family in Magdala, a bustling pagan seaport in Galilee during the time of Jesus. This would account for her wealth and explain why she is often referred to as Mary of Magdala. Unfortunately, by the fifth century, her reputation took a negative turn.

Despite the lack of moral judgement regarding those from whom Jesus exorcised demons, Pope Gregory the Great referred to Mary Magdalene as a prostitute who “turned the mass of her crimes to virtue.” Throughout the centuries, confusion about Mary Magdalene’s identity was perpetuated, interchanging her identity with Mary of Bethany and the unnamed sinner in Luke’s Gospel who anointed Christ’s feet.

Long before “The Da Vinci Code” wrongly portended that Mary Magdalene was married to Jesus, there was no absence of myths surrounding her. One account claimed that she ended up in France after being set adrift at sea in a boat without benefit of oars or sails. Some theorized she was the victim of jealous disciples, while others thought her voyage was devised by those who persecuted the early Christians.

It wasn’t until 1969 that the Catholic Church finally separated Mary Magdalene from Mary of Bethany by assigning July 22 as the feast of St. Mary Magdalene. In February of this year, Pope



Francis added Lazarus to the feast of Mary and Martha, celebrated July 29.

Hoping to dispel the misconception that Mary Magdalene was the sinner who anointed the feet of Jesus, the Church emphasizes her faithfulness and her great love for the Lord, which culminated in her presence at the foot of the cross.

The Gospel of John places Mary Magdalene in the garden on Easter morning. After finding the tomb empty, overcome with grief, heart-broken and conflicted, she remained near the tomb weeping silently.

When the Lord appeared, she mistook him for a gardener and pleaded with him to tell her where Jesus was taken. Only after she was called by name did she recognize the gardener as Jesus.

It’s not clear why Mary did not recognize the Lord, but one thing is certain. Following Jesus’ resurrection, the relationship between Jesus and his disciples took on a mystical dimension.

As Mary tried to reach out to our Lord, which would have been a natural human reaction, Jesus’ response, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father,” (Jn 20:16) was cryptic. Not only was Mary not to cling to the Lord, but through her, Christians have come to understand that it’s not necessary

for us to touch Jesus, but that we allow him to touch us through word and sacrament.

Before his death, Jesus called his followers friends, but after rising from the grave, he called them brothers. He instructed Mary Magdalene to “go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’” (Jn 20:17). Their relationship had changed; they were more than friends, they were family.

Going to the apostles, she announced, “I have seen the Lord” and told them what he had said to her (Jn 20:18). It was this mission that has earned her the title “Apostle to the Apostles.”

There is no further mention of Mary Magdalene in Scripture or even in early Christian tradition. However, in the 20th century, the Dead Sea Scrolls were accidentally discovered in Palestine, and one of them was the Gospel of Mary Magdalene.

Only part of the gospel named after her was found, and although it’s not part of the official canon of Scripture, the words attributed to her are quite lovely. In the very beginning of the text, the “Apostle to the Apostles” seems to reassure the men in her company by saying:

*Don't cry or break into despair or doubt.  
His grace will go with you and protect you.  
Let us praise the greatness of his work  
For he had prepared us, made us truly human.*

These are words we can all take to heart, especially when we are misunderstood or are unjustly maligned. The Magdalene’s deep love for Jesus remains an inspiration, especially for women who have suffered abuse, been wrongly accused or are victims of human trafficking. And so, we pray: St. Mary Magdalene, pray for them!

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

## How to break down barriers that separate us



**BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY**  
DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

In our readings this weekend, we hear a number of titles or names which refer to Christ. I’ve seen a poster which lists names by which Jesus is known; if you were to take a moment or two, you might be able to name many of them. Knowing these titles is nice, but it’s not enough. Knowing what these titles or names mean, or their significance, will help us understand our call to follow Jesus.

In the first reading, Jeremiah refers to the king whom God will raise up as the (righteous) shoot of David.

Referring to him as the shoot of David acknowledges he existed before David. Jeremiah also names the king “The Lord our Justice.” Jesus came to establish justice on Earth, which leads to peace.

In the reading from Ephesians, we are told Jesus is our peace, reflecting the title Prince of Peace. Psalm 23 speaks of the Great Shepherd

which makes reference to the Lord as a shepherd, who provides rest for us in verdant pastures and along restful waters – a shepherd who protects and guides us through dark valleys and who spreads a banquet before us.

These titles and references to Jesus give us an indication of what it means for us who claim to be followers of Jesus and who minister in his name. To be a Christian means to follow the Good Shepherd. If we follow Jesus, we do what he would do as Good Shepherd: feed the hungry, protect the weak and vulnerable.

If Jesus is our peace, we are called to bring peace to our world. To achieve true peace, we must bring about justice in the world. St. Pope Paul VI said, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

Scripture tells us not just peace for some, but peace for all. St. Paul reminds us that our ministry of peace and justice should be to all peoples because Jesus came and preached peace to those who were far off and to those who were near.

In reminding us that Jesus came for all, Paul is addressing the great difference of opinion or debate in the early Church. Some held that the Gentile converts to Christianity needed to follow the Jewish laws and practices, such as

circumcision. St. Paul and others thought they need not follow Jewish tradition and laws because they were baptized into Christ.

In addition to the early Church, Paul is speaking to us. There are great differences of opinion or debates that exist in the Church. For example, people are far apart in their opinions about the reception of Eucharist by certain people and ministry to the LBGT+ community, to name a couple which are certainly the most prominent.

Paul tells us Jesus came “to preach peace to those who are far off.” As practicing Catholic Christians, are those on the opposite side from us on any given issue the “far off,” ones to whom we are called to reach out? Conversely, are we the “far off” ones for others?

We are told we all have access to the Spirit of God in Jesus, and in that Spirit, we become one. If we have differing opinions with others, maybe we need to follow Jesus’ example and get away to a deserted place so we can once again discover the Spirit of God that is in us. This in turn will help us break down those barriers that separate us so that we may find unity in that same Spirit of God.

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

## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond** is seeking an Administrative Assistant/Ecclesiastical Notary to assist the Tribunal and Chancellor's Office to accomplish their canonical mission through providing administrative and technical support to both offices and ensuring that all legal administrative matters pertaining to the following judicial levels are completed in accordance with mandated timelines, canonical provisions and office procedures.

The successful candidate will assist the Judicial Vicar-Chancellor, judges and other tribunal staff in legal matters related to prescribed canonical responsibilities including: serving as auditor to take testimony for cases heard in First Instance, as well as for the Rogatory Commissions requested by other Tribunals in accordance with the Code of Canon Law; assisting in preparation and processing of Privilege cases; ensuring accuracy of legal references and citations and preparing case-related correspondence and drafting letters for judge as requested.

Other administrative duties include handling and entering incoming/outgoing mail, sharing in general office activity, assisting the Judicial Vicar in coordinating tribunal staff activities, staff development and resourcing including sending invitations for workshops, as well as overseeing preparation for these events.

**Qualifications:** Must be a Catholic in good standing. High school diploma or equivalent required. The successful candidate must be proficient in skills of recording and filing data; must be attentive to details; must keep confidentiality given the nature of the work of the Tribunal and Chancellor. A knowledge of Spanish, spoken and written, is preferred.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application to [jobs@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmonddiocese.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 functions 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](mailto:employment@saintfrancishome.com).

**St. Patrick Catholic Church, Lexington,** is seeking a part-time Youth Minister beginning with 20 hours per month (10 hours every two weeks organizing and leading two Youth Group events per month) with potential to increase in hours as the youth group and ministry program grows. We are looking for someone to inspire and encourage our youth in organized group activities and to promote their service within our monthly Youth Ministry Mass.

This position will develop and implement a comprehensive ministry to the youth (grades 9-12) of the parish community. It includes faith formation programs, evangelization and community building activities. The youth minister will report to the pastor and the DRE, and will be responsible to recruit, train and supervise program volunteers. In addition, the youth minister will update and schedule all social media posts and maintain a presence on the parish website and app.

**Qualifications:** Practicing Catholic in good standing, able to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, with a ready and proficient knowledge of the faith; grounded in sound Catholic doctrine, faithful to the teaching authority of the Church; passion for evangelizing and guiding/mentoring youth; valid driver's license and must be willing to have a criminal background check and be Virtus certified; willing to work a flexible schedule including evenings and weekends, and occasional overnight trips to chaperone diocesan events; Proficient in the use of technology and social media, e.g., Facebook, Instagram, etc. Bilingual in Spanish and a bachelor's or master's in religious studies or theology from a Catholic institution are a plus!

Send a résumé, with references, and a completed diocesan application to [DRE@stpatrikslexington.com](mailto:DRE@stpatrikslexington.com)

**St. Gabriel Catholic Church** is seeking applicants for the position of Children's Formation Coordinator. This position is responsible for overseeing the faith formation program for pre-school through grade 5, and children's preparation for first reconciliation and first Eucharist.

**Qualifications:** Candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Undergraduate degree in theology, ministry, religious education or equivalent preferred. Excellent people skills, outstanding computer skills and the ability to maintain confidentiality.

This is a 25-hour-per-week, part-time position with regular weekend events and occasional evening meetings.

To apply: Please send a résumé and diocesan application to Therese Venti, 8901 Winterpock Road, Chesterfield, VA 23832 or [thereseventi@saintgabriel.org](mailto:thereseventi@saintgabriel.org).

## SHORTTAKES

**The Catholic Golden Age – Our Lady of Peace Chapter** in Richmond is sponsoring a trip to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on Sunday, Aug. 15. We will attend the Solemn High Mass of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. After Mass we will go to Madigan's Waterfront Restaurant in Occoquan for a late lunch. All ages are welcome to join us. Cost of trip is \$72 and includes lunch at Madigan's. Reservations and payment must be received by Wednesday July 28. Call Peggy Nitz at 804-272-0769 for details.

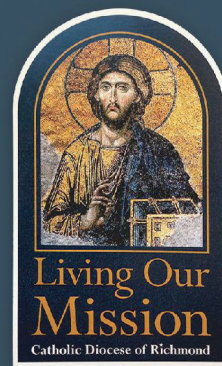
**Father Nicholas Habets Assembly 1505,** the patriotic degree of the Knights of Columbus in Virginia Beach, is hosting the 2021 USO Warrior Classic Golf Tournament at the Sewells Point Golf Course, Friday, Oct. 8. The tournament is open to the public. Net proceeds will be donated directly to the USO-HRCV to support LOCAL programs. For more information, visit <https://birdeasepro.com/2021usowarriorclassic>.

**World-Famous Oberammergau Passion Play!** St. Therese, Chesapeake, has a few spaces left for a special journey, June 13-23, 2022,

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

**Have you been touched by the current of grace that is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?** If so, we would like to know who you are and how God has been leading you! Please connect with us at: [contact@AwakeningTheDomesticChurch.com](mailto:contact@AwakeningTheDomesticChurch.com) or 757-814-1706

**Hope 4 Life Seventh Annual (Hybrid) St. Joseph Banquet,** Saturday, July 24, St. Matthew, Virginia Beach. Reception 6:30 p.m., Banquet 7:15 p.m. Fr. Eric Krager, St. Benedict Church, Chesapeake, will be the keynote speaker. This year's banquet, due to continued COVID restrictions, will be "hybrid" with limited in-person seating. RSVP early to Louantha Kerr, [louantha@gmail.com](mailto:louantha@gmail.com). The banquet will be live-streamed for those unable to attend. Tune in to our website at [hope4lifeva.com](http://hope4lifeva.com) to view this event.



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for parishes, ministries, endowments, capital projects, distance learning centers and more



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Strengthening Our Parishes



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Advancing Our Shared Mission

To learn more about endowments, please visit the Catholic Community Foundation's website at <https://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/>

# Francisco: 'Dejemos que Dios transforme nuestra existencia con el Evangelio'

Reflexionando sobre la carta de San Pablo a los Gálatas, la cual aborda en profundidad los conflictos que atravesaban las comunidades cristianas de aquella época, el Papa explicó en su catequesis de hoy, la importancia de "volar alto" hacia lo esencial de las cosas, en busca de la verdad y la libertad que caracteriza a los cristianos. "Dejémosnos conducir por esta conciencia: la gracia de Dios transforma nuestra existencia y la hace digna de ser puesta al servicio del Evangelio", dijo Francisco.

**Sofía Lobos - Ciudad del Vaticano**

La mañana del miércoles 30 de junio el Papa Francisco celebró la última Audiencia General del mes y su respectiva catequesis centrada en la Carta de San Pablo a los Gálatas en la que se refleja que los cristianos de aquella época se encuentran en conflicto sobre cómo vivir la fe.

En este contexto, el Santo Padre explica que el apóstol empieza a escribir su Carta recordándoles las relaciones pasadas, *"el malestar por la distancia y el amor inmutable que tiene por cada uno de ellos"* y *hace hincapié en que Pablo se preocupa porque la comunidad siga el camino correcto, comportándose como un padre que tiene una intención muy clara: "reafirmar la novedad del Evangelio, que los Gálatas han recibido de su predicación, para construir la verdadera identidad sobre la que funda la propia existencia"*.

## San Pablo: verdadero apóstol por la "llamada de Dios"

En este contexto, el Pontífice señala que el apóstol "vuela alto" y a través de esta carta, nos indica también a nosotros cómo comportarnos cuando se crean conflictos dentro de la comunidad eclesial, sin detenerse en la superficialidad de los problemas, sino más bien, profundizando en la raíz de ellos, porque *"lo que está en juego es la verdad del Evangelio y la libertad de los cristianos, que es parte integrante del mismo"*.

Asimismo, Francisco destaca que, en primer lugar, Pablo se siente en el deber de recordar a los Gálatas que es un verdadero apóstol "no por mérito propio", sino por la llamada de Dios.

*"Él mismo cuenta la historia de su vocación y conversión, que coincide con la aparición de Cristo Resucitado durante el viaje hacia Damasco (cfr Hch 9,1-9). «Encarnizadamente perseguía a la Iglesia de Dios y la devastaba, y cómo sobrepasaba en el judaísmo a muchos de mis compatriotas contemporáneos, superándoles en el celo por las tradiciones de mis padres» (Gal 1,13-14)"*

## Dejar que nuestras vidas sean transformadas

Igualmente, el Papa señala que es fundamental dejar que nuestras vidas sean transformadas por la mano de Dios, tal y como argumenta el apóstol en su carta, subrayando, por un lado, que había perseguido ferozmente a la Iglesia, había sido un «blasfemo, un perseguidor y un insolente» (1 Tm 1,13); y por otro, evidenciando la misericordia de Dios con él, que le lleva a vivir una transformación radical, bien conocida por todos:



Photo:CNS

*"Es como si quisiera decir a los gálatas que él podría ser de todo menos apóstol. Había sido educado desde niño para ser un irreprochable observador de la ley mosaica, y las circunstancias le habían llevado a combatir los discípulos de Cristo. Sin embargo, sucedió algo inesperado: Dios, con su gracia, le había revelado a su Hijo muerto y resucitado, para que él se convirtiera en anunciador en medio de los paganos (cfr. Gal 1,15-6)"*

## ¡Los caminos del Señor son inescrutables!

Es por ello por lo que el Santo Padre destaca el misterio con el que Dios actúa y marca, a través de un encuentro, la existencia de quienes abren sus corazones para Él.

*"¡Los caminos del Señor son inescrutables! Lo tocamos con la mano cada día, ¡pero sobre todo si pensamos en los momentos en los que el Señor nos ha llamado!"*, afirma Francisco indicando que nunca debemos olvidar el tiempo y la forma en la que Dios ha entrado en nuestra vida:

*"Tener fijo en el corazón y en la mente ese encuentro con la gracia, cuando Dios ha cambiado nuestra existencia. Cuántas veces, delante de las grandes obras del Señor, surge de forma espontánea la pregunta: ¿cómo es posible que Dios se sirva de un pecador, de una persona frágil y débil, para realizar su voluntad? Sin embargo, no hay nada casual, porque todo ha sido preparado en el diseño de Dios. Él teje nuestra historia y, si nosotros correspondemos con confianza a su plan de salvación, nos damos cuenta"*

## La llamada conlleva siempre una misión

El Papa finalizó su alocución puntualizando que la llamada del Creador conlleva siempre una misión a la que estamos destinados; por esto se nos pide que nos preparemos con seriedad, sabiendo que es Dios mismo quien nos

envía y nos sostiene con su gracia: "Dejémosnos conducir por esta conciencia: su gracia transforma la existencia y la hace digna de ser puesta al servicio del Evangelio", concluyó.

Queridos hermanos y hermanas:

Seguimos nuestras consideraciones sobre la Carta a los Gálatas. San Pablo escribe a los cristianos de Gálatas con la preocupación de un padre, consciente de que están en conflicto sobre el modo de vivir la fe. Para ayudarlos, el Apóstol, profundo conocedor del misterio de Cristo, no se queda en la superficie, sino que va a lo esencial: les recuerda sus orígenes, cuando recibieron el Evangelio por medio de su predicación y conocieron al Señor, el único da la vida verdadera.

Pablo también les comparte su propio testimonio, recordando la historia de su vocación y de su conversión. Quiere dejar en claro que Dios no lo llamó porque él lo mereciera, sino por pura gratuidad y misericordia. El Apóstol también describe con elocuencia el contraste de su vida, en la que pasó de ser perseguidor de los cristianos a convertirse en discípulo de Jesucristo. Dios lo llamó por medio de su gracia y le reveló a su Hijo, dándole la misión de anunciarlo a todas las gentes.

Al final de la Carta se explicita que el núcleo de la discusión entre los gálatas era la circuncisión, es decir, la principal tradición judía. Pero Pablo ahonda más en la cuestión, porque se da cuenta que lo que verdaderamente está en juego no es un asunto secundario, sino la verdad del Evangelio y la libertad de los cristianos. El Apóstol nos enseña también a nosotros a "volar alto" y nos indica cómo comportarnos cuando surgen problemas en la comunidad eclesial.

Saludo cordialmente a los fieles de lengua española. Pidamos al Señor que nos ayude a tener presente su paso en nuestra vida y a responder con disponibilidad y confianza a la vocación recibida, sabiendo que es Él mismo quien que nos llama, nos sostiene con su gracia y nos envía a los hermanos. Que Dios los bendiga. Muchas gracias.

# Triple amputee shows people ‘anything is possible’

## Plans to graduate from St. Thomas University in 2025

**TOM TRACY**

Catholic News Service

MIAMI — When asked how many surgeries he has had since contracting a deadly bacterial infection more than a decade ago, 21-year-old Franklin Mejias Castellano must pause and think for a moment.

“Twenty-five,” answered the young man, who recently completed his first year at St. Thomas University, where he is studying business.

He easily navigates both virtual learning and the physical college campus despite being left a quadruple amputee after a bout of meningitis in 2011 left him hospitalized for nearly a year.

A week into his first trip to the U.S. from his native Venezuela, which was to include stops in Miami and Disney World, the youngster complained to his father that he wasn’t feeling well. At the time, he was enjoying Miami Beach.

In short order, he couldn’t walk and he couldn’t open his eyes. His father and sister brought him to a hospital in Aventura, where the doctors realized Castellano had a serious infection that required specialized intervention. He was transferred to Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital in Hollywood, Florida.

“I don’t remember anything after that for a number of days because I was in an induced coma and woke up at the Joe DiMaggio Hospital,” he said. “I didn’t understand what was happening to me. My hands and my feet were completely black.”

Due to complications from the infection, on Nov. 11, 2011, a team of doctors amputated Franklin’s hands and feet in a bid to save the then-12-year-old’s life. Where the bacterial infection came from remains a mystery.

“The only thing we know is the bacteria caused meningitis,” said Castellano, who now lives with his older sister, Franny, so he can com-



**St. Thomas University student Franklin Mejias Castellano, seen on campus in Miami Gardens, Fla., May 7, 2021, has decorated his prosthetic legs with the Venezuela and U.S. flags. He lost his hands and feet due to meningitis, which kept him hospitalized for nearly a year when he was 12. (CNS photo/Tom Tracy)**

mute to St. Thomas University.

After recovering from surgeries, the hard work of acquiring and adjusting to fitted prosthetics began — but not before doctors required yet more surgeries on his limbs to pave the way for prosthetics for his feet. (He prefers to do without prosthetics for his hands.)

After that, my life changed physically and mentally and now I see life completely differently — and I have the opportunity to show people that anything is possible,” he said, noting that he has written not one but two books dealing with his life hurdles and lessons learned.

“I don’t have any physical limits: I drive a car, I run, I swim, I can do anything. That is the message that I am giving everyone who follows me or sees me and is something I want to take to another level,” he told the Florida Catholic, newspaper of the Miami Archdiocese.

Castellano also speaks to high school groups about personal motivation and overcoming obstacles.

He credits his adopted country of America for providing him with health care and professional opportunities probably not available in his native South America. With the support of his father and sister, he completed middle school and high school in the Hollywood area.

“Starting here from scratch was difficult, but the most important thing was that we were together (as a family). We focused on one day at a time and here we are as part of this society, and we feel very happy about that,” he said.

Unsure what to do after high school, Castellano took some time to work and write his books, but a chance encounter with an admissions professional resulted in an application to St. Thomas University, which he said was a good fit in terms of its mission and vision statements.

“I really identified with the university,” he said, noting that he hopes to graduate with a business degree in 2025.

Meanwhile, he and his father own and operate a food truck business based in Hollywood. In his

free time, he competes in marathons and other athletic events.

His first book, written in Spanish and titled “Beyond My Hands,” tells the story of his illness and recovery. He is now putting the finishing touches on a book with a broader focus on his outlook on life.

“I see myself in five years traveling to different states, telling my history and motivating everyone,” Castellano said. “I love business and all of that. I know that the business field is not easy but offers things that I like, and I want to be a motivational speaker for everyone who needs it.”

Castellano almost fails to mention the pandemic year, and the fact that he and his immediate family all had a bout with COVID-19. In his case, it was serious enough to put him in the hospital for a week, but he has made a full recovery.

“Franklin has the best attitude on campus and it’s wonderful,” said David A. Armstrong, president of St. Thomas University. “He is an example for all of our students. We all have tough days and obstacles to overcome.

“Yet, when you see Franklin bounding across campus, carrying all of his books, doing all of the things he has to do to succeed with a huge smile on his face, it completely changes your day.”

Father Rafael Capo, past director of the Miami-based Southeast Pastoral Institute, and now vice president of mission at St. Thomas University, has noted that Castellano is an example of hope and leadership in the middle of life’s biggest challenges.

“Franklin has overcome all odds after losing hands and feet when he was a child. Today he is all heart, an example to all of us at STU, as a young leader inspiring hope and courage,” Father Capo wrote in a recent post online. “Franklin, thanks for your friendship, witness and the book.”

## Pope

*Continued from Page 7*

Legislative Texts, told Catholic News Service July 7. “The pope is fully lucid; he can call anyone. If there is anything urgent, a person can go to him.”

Neither the apostolic constitution nor the Code of Canon Law make provisions for an automatic transfer of any of the papal powers when a pope is away from the Vatican or incapacitated, he said.

With the pope in the hospital, officials of the Vatican and of the Diocese of Rome, whose

bishop is the pope, continue with the responsibilities he delegated to them by appointing them in the first place.

Bishop Arrieta said Pope Francis can, at any time, delegate special powers to someone in the Roman Curia. But until and unless he does so, the “temporal affairs” of the Vatican are handled by the Secretariat of State.

*Editor’s note: For updates on the pope’s health, visit [www.catholicvirginian.org](http://www.catholicvirginian.org).*

## Miami

*Continued from Page 3*

who was with the crew that found the body of his own 7-year-old daughter, Stella Cattarossi, the night of July 1. The firefighter carried her from the rubble.

The girl had been with her mother, grandparents and an aunt visiting from Argentina, according to news reports.

“On behalf of the Archdiocese of Boston, we also offer our prayers and support for the families impacted by the collapse,” Cardinal O’Malley said. “We know that God does not abandon us in our time of need. He is always present in our hour of grief.”

Father Sosa’s parish church, the nearest Catholic church to Surfside’s “ground zero,” is serving as a place of spiritual respite for members of the Surfside/Miami Beach community — both Catholic and non-Catholic — who have been affected in some way by the tragic partial collapse of the Champlain Towers South condominium.

St. Joseph also is accommodating fire rescue personnel and journalists from around the world who are parking or camped out on its premises.

The church remains open daily from 8 a.m. — when Mass is celebrated — until the conclusion of the last Mass each day.