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Members of St. Anthony, Norton, pray a "living rosary," Friday, Oct. 19, in the parish's fellowship hall. Every evening during October, the month of the rosary, parishioners come to pray the rosary and to share a meal. (Photo/Joseph Staniunas)

Month-long celebration rooted in daily recitation of the rosary

Thirty-year tradition continues at St. Anthony, Norton

JOSEPH STANIUNAS
Special to The Catholic Virginian

If it's been a while since you've prayed the rosary, members of St. Anthony in the far southwest city of Norton have you covered.

During October, several of them met each night at the church to hold treasured rosaries and recite the prayers that recount the lives of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"We celebrate rosary month in October, but most of us do the rosary every day, once or twice a day," said Ken Slater as he gathered with about 25 other people on a late Friday afternoon, the trees just starting to turn color on the hills overlooking the church. "Every time I do the rosary, I feel blessed and protected."

Like other parishioners who have been taking part in a St. Anthony tradition that began about 30 years ago, Ken is a native of the Philippines, where devotion to Mary is handed down from generation to generation. Living with an uncle when he was about 12, his friends at school helped him develop his prayer life.

"I see them praying all the time, in the hallway," he said. "I still remember the name of one girl, Lourdes, with other kids saying, 'C'mon, c'mon, join us.' 'No, later, later,' I said because I was shy at that time. But eventually I was able to join them, and they taught me how to pray and do the rosary."

"I remember my grandmother when I stayed with her, 3 o'clock in the morning she walks around praying the rosary," said Jane Slater, Ken's wife. "I think it's our tradition to be prayerful."

Both are doctors; they met in medical school in the Philippines.

"When I was new here, I was surprised myself," Ken said. "Where did all these Filipinos come from?"

Many of them are in the health professions, recruited to come to southwest Virginia to work in the under-served communities of Appalachia.

Like her fellow rosarians, retired physician

See Rosary, Page 11

Why 'eucharistic revival' is Church's most urgent need

CHAZ MUTH
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Toni Guagenti of Virginia Beach was raised in a traditional Churchgoing Catholic family and educated in the teachings of the Church, yet as an adult she views the consecrated host as a symbol of Jesus and not the Real Presence of Christ.

It appears as though Guagenti's understanding of the Eucharist is the same for a majority of U.S. Catholics, and Church leaders are trying to figure out what to do about that.

A 2019 Pew Research Center study showed that 69% of all self-identified U.S. Catholics said they believed the bread and wine used at Mass are not Jesus, but instead are "symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." The other 31% said they believed in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Though that study has been criticized by several Catholic scholars, it got the attention of the U.S. bishops, who will be discussing what they consider a catechetical crisis at their upcoming fall general assembly in Baltimore in November.

"I think it shows a lack of catechesis over at least two generations now of people," said Bishop Alfred A. Schlert of Allentown, Pennsylvania. "Also, when we look at the amount of people who are not practicing their faith, who have left the Church and really have become a non-denominational person in any respect, I think that would be really emblematic of why the number is so high."

Guagenti grew up one of eight children in a Lima, Ohio, household where her parents were actively involved in their parish and the religious education of their children.

"We would fill a pew," she said in referring to the Guagenti family's Church life, "so it was very much a part of my family, my extended family, my cousins. It was woven in the fabric of our family."

From belief to unbelief

Before receiving her first Communion, Guagenti said, she was provided with detailed instruction about Church teaching on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and said that education continued throughout the rest of her childhood.

See Revival, Page 5

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Inside This Edition

Faith-filled centenarian has much to celebrate
Page 3

Religious, witness your joy to young adults
Page 6

It's permissible to get J&J booster shot
Page 8

Pray for those in the hidden Communion of Saints



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

To mark the month dedicated to All Souls, I will be celebrating Mass at two Catholic cemeteries in Richmond for the first time — Mount Calvary, Saturday, Nov. 6, 9:30 a.m. and Holy Cross, Sunday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m. In years to come, I hope to celebrate All Souls Masses at other Catholic cemeteries in our diocese.

Many Catholics are buried in these cemeteries. At Holy Cross, there is a row of graves for the religious sisters who ministered to Spanish flu patients during the early 1900s. Mount Calvary is the resting place of two of my episcopal predecessors, Bishops Augustine van de Vyver and Denis J. O'Connell, the sixth and seventh bishops, respectively, of our diocese.

All Souls is an appropriate time to remember the dead and to pray for all who have gone before us in faith. We use that day and this month to highlight and for recollection of those who have gone before us. Those recollections were foremost in my mind as I was writing this column on the first anniversary of my mother's death.

We reflect on them as we remember all the wonderful ways they interacted with us, helped us and gave examples of goodness and holiness. Those memories, punctuated with "Remember when..." moments, become more vivid and more strengthened over time. They are an indication that whatever faults individuals may

have had, they are certainly assured of the grace and prayers to be on their way to enjoy full life with God in his kingdom.

As we focus upon All Souls, we pray that what might have hindered the deceased's pursuit of holiness, and for which the Gospel is our path, is addressed through the purification all of us need — and will need. It is through purgatory that the residue of human weakness and our venial sins are purged from our souls and we are assured of the full life with God in the presence of his beatific vision.

In praying for the deceased whose words, works and example made a positive impact upon our life, we are reminded that we remain united with them in the Communion of Saints. We pray that our Lord sees the good they have done in being true to the Gospel and rewards them with fullness of eternal life.

Our friends and loved ones in cemeteries are part of the hidden Communion of Saints who intercede for us. They are saints we don't see and who are not part of the liturgical calendar, but we know them because we recognize the holiness and love they showed us in our encounters. They were the presence of Christ for us.

A couple of years ago, I celebrated Mass in Rome at the tomb of Frank Parater — a native of our diocese, an Eagle Scout and an alumnus of Benedictine College Prep who died of rheumatic fever in 1920, two months after beginning seminary studies at the North American College. In a spiritual testament discovered after he died, he offered his life for the sanctification of

people throughout Virginia. He is an example of saints we may not have known, but whose life can continue to impact our faith.

When I walk or jog past Mount Calvary, Riverview and Hollywood cemeteries, I often pray the rosary for all of the faithful buried there. When I pass any cemetery, I do what has been a long-held Catholic practice — say an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for the happy repose of their souls. It is a good practice for all of us.

At the conclusion of his homily during the first All Saints Day Mass he celebrated as pope, Pope Francis said:

"Today, before evening falls, each one of us can think of the twilight of life: 'What will my passing away be like?' All of us will experience sundown, all of us! Do we look at it with hope? Do we look with that joy at being welcomed by the Lord? This is a Christian thought that gives us hope.

"Today is a day of joy; however, it is serene and tranquil joy, a peaceful joy. Let us think about the passing away of so many of our brothers and sisters who have preceded us, let us think about the evening of our life, when it will come. And let us think about our hearts and ask ourselves: 'Where is my heart anchored?'

"If it is not firmly anchored, let us anchor it beyond, on that shore, knowing that hope does not disappoint because the Lord Jesus does not disappoint."

As we commemorate All Saints and All Souls this month, let us hold fast to that hope which sustains us in this life and which carries us into eternal life.

Protection for children, vulnerable adults strengthened

Diocesan Office of Safe Environment provides policy updates

Three years after promulgating his pastoral letter "From Tragedy to Hope," Bishop Barry C. Knestout continues to direct the "building blocks of renewal" in the local Church, according to a summary of updates released by the Diocese of Richmond's Office of Safe Environment, Monday, Oct. 25.

Among those "building blocks" is an ongoing process of strengthening policies and programs for child protection and vulnerable adults. The summary highlighted several safe environment efforts that have occurred in 2021.

April 1, Bishop Knestout promulgated the revised edition of the diocesan Safe Environment Regulations. The handbook's purpose is to "provide the Diocese of Richmond with an official procedure and structure to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy and Church personnel."

Many of the updates aligned the diocesan regulations with "Vos Estis Lux Mundi," the "motu proprio" ("on one's own initiative") issued by Pope Francis in 2019. That document outlines for the universal Church specific processes for reporting and investigating

"Leadership is best practiced in a transparent way, which includes accountability. All clergy must accept the accountability that comes from being called to their vocation and the care of God's children."

— BISHOP BARRY C. KNESTOUT
"From Tragedy to Hope," Sept. 14, 2018

accusations dealing with sexual abuse.

The handbook's revisions also clarify procedural points regarding cases of sexual abuse of minors that were issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) through its "Vademecum" ("handbook") on July 16, 2020.

Updates within the diocesan manual include but are not limited to:

- addressing guidelines for safe virtual meetings with minors;
- registered sex offenders on school or church property;
- guidelines for creating a safe

environment online for virtual meetings that involve minors;

- a parental consent form for virtual gatherings; and
- initiating a safe environment program for teens who are employed or serving as volunteers.

Beginning in April, the diocesan Office of Safe Environment required mandatory training for any teen employed with the diocese, per the revised regulations. The training is completed online through a VIRTUS training module known as "Boundaries Module for Youth Who are Employees or Volunteers." The training is highly

recommended for teen volunteers.

This requirement is to strengthen the protection of not only children, but youth who may serve in various roles within the diocese and parishes, according to the release. The training is intended to help teens identify the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, recognize boundaries and to be able to quickly inform adults of unsafe situations.

An additional online training section was created for vulnerable adults. In September, training became available and is recommended for those whose ministries serve vulnerable adults in the diocese.

The training focuses on best practices on proper behavior to prevent abuse and steps to respond if an individual is made aware of a problem. This supplemental training is part of the VIRTUS program "Protecting God's Children for Adults," which is the safe environment program in the Diocese of Richmond.

The revised diocesan Safe Environment Regulations can be found online at www.richmond-diocese.org.

Faith-filled centenarian has much to celebrate

Ascension parishioner Helen Meima's advice is 'love the Lord'

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Helen Meima, a parishioner of Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, is a firm believer in looking for reasons to celebrate.

It's been true of her from the very beginning. She was born five minutes to midnight on Oct. 19, 1921, she said — so close to the moment of the clock joining hands that the nurse in attendance recorded the date as Oct. 20 on her birth certificate.

"It can be a problem, today," Meima admits, "but I've always liked to look at it like I have two birthdays. An excuse to have an extra party."

On Tuesday, Oct. 19, 2021, about 50 of her friends and family gathered in a sun-lit room of Marian Manor, the Virginia Beach assisted living home in which she resides, to celebrate the "first" of her 100th birthdays — with champagne, balloons, cupcakes, dancing and music brought by fellow parishioner Frank Cubillo, a Frank Sinatra tribute singer.

"Gratitude is a great word that describes Mom," Meima's daughter-in-law, Karen O'Reilly, said. "She lives gratefully and is ever-aware of her many blessings."

"She's an inspiration is what she is," Cubillo said, gesturing around the crowded room. "You can see just how many people love her."

After her eldest son, Jimmy O'Reilly, honored her with a toast, Meima was clearly moved — both laughing and growing a little misty-eyed, too.

"I didn't expect such a party; I can't even tell you," she said. "All I can say is, 'God bless everybody.'"

Life filled with love, faith

In her upstairs apartment, Meima displays a teddy bear given to her by her great-grandson that, with the touch of a button, sways to the beat of her favorite song, Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York."

Just as the lyrics sing the praises of "making a brand-new start of it," so Meima, too, has met 10 decades of new starts, marked by joys and sorrows, with love, faith and a cheerful heart.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, as Helen Downey, Meima grew up in St. Francis of Assisi Parish, where she lived with her mother, Emma,



Left: Frank Cubillo serenades Helen Meima, a fellow parishioner from Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, during her 100th birthday party on Tuesday, Oct. 19, at Marion Manor. (Photo/Wendy Klesch) Right: An undated photo of the centenarian in her earlier years. (Family photo)

her father, Frank, and her two sisters and two brothers.

"We had so much fun growing up," she said. "We lived not far from Prospect Park, where the Brooklyn Dodgers played. If we couldn't get in, we used to watch through holes in the fence."

After high school, she went to work as a waitress at Stouffer's Restaurant on 5th Avenue. It was there that she met her first husband, Jimmy O'Reilly, who was working as a bartender.

"It was all cocktails in those days," she said. "All sorts of complicated mixers and different glasses. He would laden up the tray, and I could carry it all without spilling a single drop."

Because his shift ended before hers, she said, he returned to the restaurant each night to see her safely home.

"You'll never know how good he was," she said.

She and O'Reilly married in 1942, shortly before he enlisted with the Marines and joined the war effort. In the meantime, Meima began a new job with AT&T, working in the drafting room, where she set type for corporate manuals and publications and trained new employees.

"Women were just beginning to work there, as so many of the men were away," she explained.

Once her husband returned from the war, she left AT&T, and the couple went on to have three sons — Jimmy, Bob and Rich. But in 1949,

her world changed when her husband was killed in a car accident.

"My youngest was just 4 months old," she said. "So I had to figure out: 'What am I going to do?'"

'You never know'

Meima credits her mother and her faith for helping her through the next few, difficult years. She returned to work at AT&T, and her mother, then widowed, came to live with her to help her with her children.

"I loved my mother so much," Meima said. "She did such a great job with my boys. And they'd do anything for their grandma. I always like to say, 'If my mama ain't in heaven, ain't nobody in heaven.'"

"The Lord has always looked out for me," she added. "I never needed for anything. If I ever needed an extra penny, I always got the chance to pick up some overtime."

Meima remained with AT&T until her retirement in 1985, when she moved to Bonita Springs, Florida. There, she ran into Elmer Meima, a former coworker. The pair married in 1987.

The couple enjoyed spending time on the beach, Meima said, and out in their small boat, fishing.

"I never baited a hook before I moved to Florida," she said, laughing. "So you never know. There's always something new."

They were also active in their parish, volunteering with RCIA and Meals on Wheels, until Elmer passed away in 1994.



"The Lord gave me two husbands," Meima said. "I didn't get to keep either one for very long, but they were both so very good to me."

'Just love the Lord'

In 2008, Meima moved to Virginia Beach to help care for her older sister and to be closer to her three sons, whose careers in the Navy had brought them each to Hampton Roads.

When she first visited Church of the Ascension, she said, she knew she had found her parish home.

"I can't even tell you how they greeted me. Everyone was so welcoming. I said to myself, 'This is my church.'"

Today, Meima has five grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. At Ascension, she is a member of the Rainbows, a group of seniors who meet to socialize and to organize fundraisers for the parish. She also volunteers with a group at Marion Manor who assemble teddy bears for paramedics to distribute to children in emergency situations.

"I've got so many memories," Meima said. "My best were when my sons were born. I wouldn't trade them for anything. And my daughters-in-law are just out of this world."

Her secret for dancing all the way to age 100?

"Just love the Lord, and he will find you what you need," she said. "Love the Lord, and he'll take care of you."

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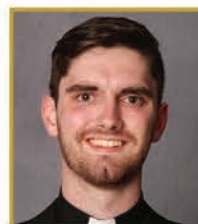
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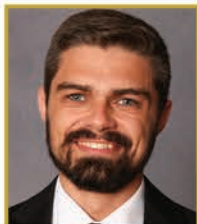
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Image: "Jesus Appearance to Saint Margherita Alacoque" by Francesco de Rohden, Basilica del Sacro Cuore

Bishops looking for ‘evangelizers of the Eucharist’

CAROL ZIMMERMANN
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — At their meeting this past June, the U.S. bishops spoke about helping Catholics come to a deeper understanding and appreciation for the Eucharist through an upcoming eucharistic revival and a document on the Eucharist.

The bishops will continue talking about these Church actions and will vote on the Communion document during their November meeting in Baltimore.

In the meantime, two U.S. bishops — who head the committees working on these initiatives — spoke recently on a recorded video roundtable produced by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to further explain just what the bishops hope to achieve through the upcoming revival and document on the Eucharist.

In the video, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, spoke with Marilyn Santos, associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Bishop Cozzens is chair of the USCCB’s Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, and Bishop Rhoades is chair of the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine.

Santos told Catholic News Service Oct. 12 that it was important for the bishops to give an “official voice” on what these initiatives are, and what they are not, during this “significant moment for the Church in the United States.”

The eucharistic revival is meant to be an act

of evangelization for some and a reawakening of understanding for others, she said, while the document on the Eucharist, which has gained more public attention, is meant to be more of a “teaching tool to be incorporated into” the planned revival.

In the roundtable discussion, Bishop Cozzens said the impetus for the bishops’ work on a eucharistic revival was a Pew study in the fall of 2019 that showed just 30% of Catholics “have what we might call a proper understanding of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist.”

The bishops saw this as an opportunity to increase Catholics’ understanding and awareness of the Eucharist with a revival that is set to launch on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 19, 2022.

Bishop Cozzens said what will be a three-year process will include events on the diocesan level such as eucharistic processions around the country along with adoration and prayer.

In 2023, the emphasis will be on parishes with resources available at the parish level to increase Catholics’ understanding of what the Eucharist really means.

Ultimately, the revival will end with a National Eucharistic Congress in the summer of 2024 and possibly other gatherings like this in the future.

The Minnesota bishop said this spotlight on the Eucharist will emphasize that it is such a great gift to the Church.

He also said the focus of this revival will not just be for parish priests to run another program but for Catholic groups and movements to be involved in reaching out and explaining the

meaning of the Eucharist to Catholics.

Bishop Rhoades said he was excited about this revival and feels the document that his committee will present to the bishops this month, “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” will be a good contribution to it.

He said the document will focus on how “the Eucharist is our greatest treasure as Catholics” and will look at different aspects of the Eucharist, particularly how it illustrates Christ’s sacrifice and is the real presence of Jesus, not just a symbol.

The second half of the document will emphasize what Catholics should do with this deeper understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist from more active participation at Mass to participating in devotions such as adoration and then renewing their commitment to serve others.

When asked how the two initiatives fit together, Bishop Cozzens said he thought the document on the Eucharist would “become a sort of launching pad for the revival.”

He urged Catholics to really pray for this eucharistic revival, recognizing that “what ultimately is going to change the world is the Holy Spirit.” Bishop Rhoades similarly encouraged people to pray for the revival and then to participate in any way they can and spread the word about it.

“Evangelize. Be evangelizers of the Eucharist,” he said.

Follow Zimmermann on Twitter: @carol-maczim

Revival

Continued from Page 1

That instruction would have included the Church doctrine of transubstantiation during which the bread and wine have changed their substance from what they fundamentally are — through the instrument of the ordained minister’s words of consecration — to the total and Real Presence of Jesus Christ, that is his body and blood.

“We were taught pretty strict what the Eucharist meant,” Guagenti said, meaning she learned that “it is the body of Christ. This is very sacred. You have to feel like you deserve that you are able to take this pure peace of the Lord into you.”

Though Guagenti did believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist throughout her childhood and adolescence, her acceptance of transubstantiation changed in adulthood.

“It’s like Santa Claus, OK, we sort of know eventually he doesn’t exist, but you still believe in the spirit of the giving,” she said. “It’s pretty impossible to me that millions of Churches across the world have the actual body of Christ. The bread is sanctified, it’s consecrated by those who are living the word, breathing the word, teaching the word of Christ. That’s good enough for me.”

Crisis in catechesis

This view of the Eucharist has

alarmed many U.S. bishops because belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated host is a central Church teaching.

Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles — a high-profile Church leader who is the founder of the Catholic evangelization organization Word on Fire and host of an award-winning documentary about the Catholic faith that aired on PBS stations — didn’t mince words about the Pew study.

“It’s hard to describe how angry I feel,” he said on his website just after the study was released, saying he blamed himself, his brother bishops, other priests, catechists and parents, really anyone else responsible for spreading the faith.

He was among the first Church leaders to call this a crisis in catechesis.

“This should be a wake-up call to all of us in the Church,” Bishop Barron said. “We need to pick up our game when it comes to communicating even the most basic doctrines.”

The study prompted the U.S. bishops to plan a three-year eucharistic revival to help address what they see as a catechetical crisis and perhaps one of many reasons why so many Churches have fewer members in their congregation with each passing year.

It’s also one of the driving forces behind the U.S. bishops’ proposed

document on the “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” even though some bishops would like the document to clearly say Catholic politicians who support abortion should be denied Communion.

“I think the greater problem is we’ve lost what St. John Paul II referred to as eucharistic wonder and awe,” said Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia.

“How often do we take the most precious gifts for granted?” Bishop Burbidge asked. “Our own family members, we take for granted the gift of life itself, the gift of health, and I think that’s happened with the gift of the Eucharist, that it’s just something we’ve lost, that wonder and awe. Without that wonder and awe, belief or participation will not be sustained.”

Guagenti no longer attends Mass on a regular basis and said when she does attend a wedding or funeral, she doesn’t present herself for Communion.

“I think it’s just because I’m not putting in the time at Church, and I feel like the Lord and God deserve that respect when you’re there,” she said. “So, I don’t want to belittle the sacrifices that he made for us.”

‘Go all in’

John Grabowski, an associate professor of moral theology and ethics at The Catholic University of

America, found Guagenti’s reverence for the Eucharist striking, considering her lack of belief in the Real Presence.

“But it’s probably not isolated,” Grabowski said. “People who have grown up in Catholic families, in Catholic education, who have Catholic habits of mind and practice, even if they don’t have a strong, personal faith at a given point in their lives, those habits are still there at some level and still kind of directing the way they operate and navigate.”

He hopes the U.S. bishops’ three-year eucharistic revival takes hold in parishes and small groups of people throughout the country.

“I am hoping that we can move the needle in a significant way so that more than just one third of Catholics in the United States recognize the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist,” Grabowski said.

“I’m hoping we can kind of go all in as a Church and really take on this catechetical crisis and give people a deeper, better understanding of this mystery,” he said, “that is again supposed to be the very source and summit of our life as Christians and the very source and summit of the Church. Every crisis is an opportunity.”

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Religious, witness your joy to young adults

GUEST COMMENTARY

SISTER CONSTANCE VEIT
LITTLE SISTER OF THE POOR

I do a lot of outreach to the young on behalf of my religious congregation, so I try to be aware of trends in vocations work and common traits of emerging generations.

Recently I took some time to review the latest “Study on Religious Vocations,” co-sponsored by the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), hoping that it would give me an “aha moment” on how to interest young women in our community of Little Sisters of the Poor.

I was struck by a section of the report titled “Intergenerational Living.” According to the 2020 NRVC/CARA study, a mere 13% of perpetually professed members of religious communities are younger than 60, while the same proportion are at least 90 years of age.

These are sobering statistics!

I was consoled to read the following testimony from a young religious: “It is beautiful to have all different generations and ethnicities in one community, in one house, if we allow ourselves to see that beauty.”

What a hope-filled attitude! It really inspired me to stop bemoaning the aging of our religious communities and start seeing the beauty.

As we observe National Vocations Awareness Week, I would like to address a message of hope to my fellow women and men religious who, like me, are not so young anymore!

May you, too, take heart in realizing that young people seeking religious life are not as deterred by the older demographics of most of our communities as we thought. They don't seem to mind that many of us are older — but they do hope that we will live simply, in solidarity with the poor, and that we will live and pray together in a spirit of joy.

So how do we connect with the young? Let's take a few cues from Pope Francis. The pope has suggested that we seek to renew our youthfulness at every stage of life.

“As we mature, grow older and structure our lives,” he wrote, “we should never lose that enthusiasm and openness to an ever greater reality.”

In “Christus Vivit,” our Holy Father encouraged us to let ourselves be loved by God, for he loves us just as we are.

A young friend and former FOCUS missionary told me that this is the essential message we need to communicate to young people. They need to know that they are loved as they are, even though God wants to give them more.

God “values and respects you,” we might say to them, borrowing from the pope's words, “but he also keeps offering you more: more of his friendship, more fervor in prayer, more hunger for his word, more longing to receive Christ in the Eucharist, more desire to live his Gospel, more inner strength, more peace and spiritual joy.”

This joy is something about which the pope often speaks, and it is something that speaks deeply to young people in their voca-

tional discernment.

It is something they see in the quality of a gaze or a smile, in the serenity with which a consecrated person embraces trials or suffering, and in the generous gift of self to the poor day after day.

Pope Francis insisted on joy in a recent speech to Discalced Carmelites. “It is ugly to see consecrated men and women with a long face. It is ugly, it is ugly. Joy must come from within: that joy that is peace, an expression of friendship,” he said.

God forbid that any of us become ugly as we grow older!

In “Christus Vivit,” the exhortation he wrote following the Synod on Young People in the Life of the Church, Pope Francis reminded us that Christ is alive, and he wants us to be fully alive.

“When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear,” he wrote, “he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope.”

Let's ask Jesus, “himself eternally young,” to give us hearts that are ever young and capable of loving, ready to welcome the new generations who knock on our doors just as Elizabeth welcomed the Virgin Mary into her home in the Visitation.

Let's witness to these young women and men the joy that fills our hearts and is eager to fill theirs as well — if only they give themselves to him!

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Jesus would accept member's devotion

I am writing in response to Father Doyle's column (Catholic Virginian, Oct. 4). The question was from Richmond about a parishioner that disrupts services. I am appalled by the answer but equally appalled that the editor made the decision to print the question and answer.

I cannot imagine how saddened the member and her family felt when they read the question and more so the answer. Really? Call the police and have her escorted out! I know this member that Richmond wrote about. Many of my friends knew exactly who the member is and the parish and could not believe what we read.

We have had many discussions about this, and all have come to the conclusion that clearly “All are not welcome” in the Catholic Church. We should never sing that song again during Mass. This member that Richmond wrote about is a caring woman who loves Christ deeply and shows her love more demonstrably than most Catholics, but nonetheless is a member of the Catholic faith.

What a slippery slope we are on when we have the police show up during Mass and escort a member out because that member is different. What about the autistic young adult that blurts out during Mass or the adult with Alzheimer's that roams after Communion? Should all these members be escorted out also? And, of course, we have crying babies. Where is the line drawn?

What has happened to compassion and tolerance? Jesus would surely be accepting of the member's devotion.

— Donna Mitchell
North Chesterfield

Saddened by what was in the letter

I was terribly saddened to read about the parishioner who rocks back and forth in the pew and calls out during Mass (Catholic Virginian, Oct. 4). I was saddened, too, over the response to involve the police to bring her to the hospital. But by far the saddest of all was the pastor who told her she was no longer welcome.

Jesus welcomes all. He loves all people with every affliction. God created her and he loves her. It sounds as if this person needs to ex-

perience the works of mercy.

Suppose the pastor/church finds out her story and how to help her? They could find out if she had loved ones who are supporting her or if she needs help with food, shelter and medical care. I am sure involving the police like she is a criminal is less humane. How has the parish helped her?

While I can sympathize that it is probably not comfortable to experience the “out of the ordinary” during Mass, try bearing patiently and praying for her as Jesus would. If she were passing out from a diabetic coma during Mass, all would rush to her aid and accept her condition and pray for her.

Unfortunately, the mentally ill are never recognized as ill; they are just treated as an annoyance or “bad.” The mentally ill do not choose to be ill, yet they are the most overlooked ill by society and in the medical field.

I know this must be a thorn in Christ's crown because he said love the least of these.

— Kathleen DeForge
Mathews

Doing what Jesus would want us to do

Regarding the letter

“Don't scorn, don't ridicule” (Catholic Virginian, Oct. 4): But don't you dare come near the rest of us who have done exactly what Jesus would want us all to do if he were walking around on the Earth today.

In fact, Jesus would be just as indignant as he was when he chased out the moneychangers in the tem-

ple. Jesus would say: “Get the COVID vaccine now!”

He would also add: “God, my Father, gave certain talented people the ability and means to create an effective way to end this pandemic. And to not protect others and yourself is the definition of sin.”

— David Woodburn
North Chesterfield

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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Nuns confront slaveholding past, work for racial justice

RUBY THOMAS
Catholic News Service

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The historic buildings on the motherhouse grounds of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, were “built by the hard labor of the enslaved men who made the bricks and laid them in place,” said Sister Theresa Knabel, a member of the congregation.

“That these buildings are still standing is a tribute to their labor,” she told participants in the “Walking Together: Pilgrimage for Racial Justice” Oct. 16.

The event included a pilgrimage from the Cathedral of the Assumption to Presentation Academy, where the 150 or so participants listened to a panel of Sisters of Charity discuss their congregation’s own pilgrimage — from its early years as slaveholders to its efforts today for racial justice.

Sister Knabel began by describing the congregation’s history, admitting aloud: “We were slave owners.”

It began with the founding of the order, she said.

In 1812, Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget of the Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky — a predecessor to the archdiocese — called on young women to help teach the (white) children of Catholic families who’d migrated from Maryland.

Some of the women who responded to that call brought enslaved individuals or families with them, she said.

The number of slaves owned by the sisters varied through the years; by 1865, when the state of Kentucky started emancipating slaves, about 30 people were enslaved at Nazareth, she said.

The community bought and sold people, usually conducting the transactions with Catholic families, said Sister Knabel.

“It was the bishop or priest who made the purchase for us ... because, since we were women, we weren’t allowed to own property.”

‘Institution of cruelty’

The Church required that husbands and wives be bought or sold together. As a result, historical records show enslaved married couples living in Nazareth. Others married and lived out their lives in Nazareth, giving birth to children who were baptized there.

Though the state of Kentucky didn’t recognize the marriage of slaves at the time, Catholic priests would celebrate these weddings in the church on the motherhouse campus, said Sister Knabel.

Baptisms and weddings were considered “special occasions,” she said. The sisters also built a social hall to give the slaves a place to gather.

Despite the attention given to slaves by the sisters, Sister Knabel noted that slavery is “an institution of cruelty and some of that cruelty may have seeped into Nazareth.”

She said 11 men worked the large farm under the watchful eyes of an overseer. Historical records show that in 1862 Nazareth needed a new overseer. The documents related to that hire stated they needed someone to “control Blacks.”

This caused her to wonder, she said, “how did one man force 11 strong men to work in the hot sun without pay unless there was at least the threat of violence? I don’t know if he had a whip, I don’t know if he had a gun, but he had to have something.”

“I’ll leave that to your imagination,” Sister Knabel told her listeners, which included students, parishioners and Catholic school educators.

Eliminating racism a priority

Sister Adeline Fehribach, one of the vice presidents of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, also addressed the pilgrims during the event.

“We lament our participation in slavery and nothing can truly undo the harm that was done by it,” she said.

Sister Fehribach described the sisters’ outreach to African Americans starting in 1871, when members of the congregation became teachers at St. Monica School in Bardstown and St. Augustine School in Louisville. Both parishes are traditionally African American.

The sisters also have served in pastoral ministry in African American churches and provided social outreach through agencies such as Catholic Charities of Louisville’s Sister Visitor Center, which provides emergency assistance to those in need.

Currently, Sister Paris Slapikas, a Sister of Charity of Nazareth, is the center’s director.

In 1971, the congregation adopted the “elimination of racism” as one of its four priorities, said Sister Fehribach.

In 2000, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth along with the Sisters of Loretto and the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine, Kentucky — now the Dominican Sisters of Peace — held a prayer service where they asked the African American community for forgiveness for their participation in slavery.

The sisters also have made monetary contributions to the community in the form of scholarship funds and grants.

In June, the sisters announced a \$2.5 million gift to the Louisville Urban League designated for the renovation of vacant and abandoned properties into affordable housing in West Louisville.

A year earlier, the sisters made a \$1 million community economic development investment loan to Louisville Housing and Opportunities Micro-Enterprise Community Development Loan Fund Inc. for small loans and to help curb

evictions in Louisville’s West End, said Sister Fehribach.

Continuing to learn

Sister Julie Driscoll also shared with the gathering the ways the congregation has used its voice to advocate for change on issues affecting the African American community, including voting rights, gun violence, the death penalty and reparations.

During a question-and-answer session following the sisters’ presentation, Kim Telesford-Mapp, a member of St. Martin de Porres Church, questioned the congregation’s decision to make a \$2.5 million gift to the Louisville Urban League instead of to an agency such as the Catholic Enrichment Center, which is part of the Archdiocese of Louisville’s Office of Multicultural Ministry.

It provides enrichment and outreach programs to the West Louisville community. The center also provides after-school tutoring and access to a computer lab, which Telesford-Mapp described as “woefully underfunded.”

Among the West End’s many needs, she added, is the need for children to get a good Catholic education, something most families cannot afford. She asked the sisters if it was possible to provide “opportunities for the descendants of slaves to get a good Catholic education?”

“Reparations don’t mean you have to come out of your pocket and put money on the table. ... Education is the key, the key to economic success. That’s a great place to start. One thing we’re looking at, is trying to get a Catholic school back into the West End,” said Telesford-Mapp, drawing hearty applause from the gathering.

Sister Knabel thanked Telesford-Mapp for voicing her concerns and invited the community to keep reaching out. “We need to learn” how best to serve the African American community, she said.

Chime time in Bristol



Led by Chris Neal, third from left, members of the newly-formed tone chime choir at St. Anne School, Bristol, practice on Thursday, Oct. 14. Since COVID regulations limit singing at Mass, the school opted for chimes to keep students musically involved in the liturgies. A parishioner purchased the chimes for the school. (Photo/Nicole Hughes)

It is permissible to get Johnson & Johnson booster



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. My question regards the Johnson & Johnson vaccine booster. Six months ago, Catholic bishops were recommending to get any vaccine available, notwithstanding that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was morally questionable.

But now, with vaccines no longer in short supply in the U.S., should Catholics receive a Johnson & Johnson booster, or should Catholics opt instead for the Pfizer or Moderna booster? (Henrico)

A. To be precise, what the U.S. Catholic bishops said in March 2021 was this: "If one can choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines should be chosen. Therefore, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna's vaccines should be chosen over Johnson & Johnson's."

That statement came from the chairmen of the bishops' Committees on Doctrine and on Pro-Life Activities. The moral preference for Pfizer or Moderna is based on the fact that, with these two, an abortion-derived cell line was used for testing them, but not in their production. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine, however, was developed, tested and is produced with abortion-derived cell lines.

The catch here, though, is that —

although the evidence at this point is far from conclusive — medical experts have generally been saying that, ideally, the booster dose should be the same type with which you were first vaccinated.

University of Chicago Medicine, for example, says on its website that Centers for Disease Control recommends "that booster doses match the original mRNA vaccines people received earlier this year. ... If you absolutely cannot find a matching dose of vaccine, it would be OK to get the other one."

Given that medical advice, I would judge that it would be permissible for one previously vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson to stay with J&J for the booster.

Q. Growing up as a Baptist, for us to be "saved" (gain entrance into heaven), we had to "invite Jesus into our heart and accept him as our personal savior" — which I have done.

I've been a Catholic now for 10 years, and when I attend Mass, I've never really heard anything about being "saved" or how to gain entrance into heaven. I would appreciate your shedding some light on this subject. (Indiana)

A. It is true that Paul says in Romans that "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (10:9). But that has never been viewed by the Catholic Church as a one-time act that guarantees en-

trance into heaven.

There are a number of other scriptural passages that indicate, instead, that eternal salvation is based on a lifetime of choices.

In Colossians 1:21-23, for example, Paul writes: "And you who were once alienated and hostile in mind because of evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through his death, to present you holy, without blemish, and irreproachable before him, provided that you persevere in the faith, firmly grounded, stable, and not shifting from the hope of the Gospel which you heard."

That "proviso clause" indicates the Catholic belief that heaven is won by a lifetime of choices and not by a single act. Salvation is not guaranteed by a decision we have made in the past. We continue to have free will and retain the ability to turn away from God if we choose to do so.

Q. I had attended a nearby Catholic church for more than 20 years. But now I have been driving 40 minutes to another parish because of changes to restore "old traditions" at my local parish.

One of them is the common recitation of the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel immediately after Mass. I find it inappropriate to speak of St. Michael and Satan right after we have been charged to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

At my former parish, I felt hostage to a small minority who tried to control my post-Mass thoughts and feelings instead of letting me leave Mass

with the joy of the Eucharist. (Iowa)

A. The prayer to St. Michael was part of a group of prayers called the Leonine prayers that were said in Catholic churches following Mass from 1884 until 1965. They were originally introduced by Pope Leo XIII and stemmed from a vision he reportedly had of Satan wanting to destroy the Church.

The intention for which the prayers were said changed over time. Originally they were offered for the temporal sovereignty of the Holy See but later began to be said for the conversion of Russia.

During the Second Vatican Council, a Vatican instruction implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy decreed that the Leonine prayers were suppressed and would no longer be used. But the recitation of the prayer to St. Michael has been making a "comeback," and a number of parishes are now reciting that prayer following Mass.

There has been no official Church declaration that this prayer should be resurrected; if your parish is using it, that is most likely a determination by the local pastor — although it could simply be the choice of a group of parishioners who have decided to pray together after Mass.

In any case, you might want to speak with the pastor of your former parish to let him know of your discomfort with this particular prayer and the fact that it seems to dim the joy with which you should be leaving Mass.

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

Victim-Survivor Support Group Meeting

The Office of Safe Environment will be hosting a Support Group meeting on **Thursday, Nov. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the YMCA**, Mt. Trashmore location in Virginia Beach. All victim-survivors of sexual abuse by clergy residing in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond are welcome to participate. Spouses or other support persons are also welcome. This will be an ongoing initiative by the Diocese of Richmond to encourage victim-survivors and their families to share personal experiences, feelings and coping strategies. Light refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Karen Loper, at (877) 887-9603 or by email at vac@richmonddiocese.org.



Bishop Barry C. Knestout to preside at

Masses for Hope & Healing

"Christ our Light and Hope"

You are invited to come and pray for victim survivors of sexual abuse and their families.



Eastern Vicariate:

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021 at 7pm
Basilica of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk

Light refreshments will be served after Mass.

Counselors will be available before and after Mass.

For information, contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 877-887-9603

Be inspired by witness of saints, martyrs



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

While browsing the shelves at the public library, the book “Quo Vadis” caught my eye. The 600-page novel written in 1896 combines historical facts with early Christian tradition and was made into an epic film in 1951. Since I was only 7 years old when I saw the movie, the only thing I remember is the title, which means: “Where are you going?”

According to the author, the question was posed to Jesus by St. Peter who encountered the Lord carrying his cross while the apostle was fleeing from Rome. Puzzled by the vision, Peter asked the Lord where he was going, to which Jesus replied, “When you abandon my people, I must go to Rome to be crucified once more.”

Filled with remorse, Peter rose from the ground where he had lain prostrate and immediately returned to Rome, where he eventually died a martyr’s death.

The author, Henryk Sienkiewicz, offers a riveting account of the circumstances surrounding the persecution of Christians that emerged as part of early Church tradition. The author, whose book was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, paints a literary portrait of the Roman empire as it existed at the time.

Awash in corruption and debauchery, decadence, injustice



and cruelty, Rome was a godless nation despite having numerous temples to countless gods whom its citizens worshipped out of fear. Blinded by pride, ignorance and evil, they couldn’t imagine a God of love who died a horrible death to save sinners, nor could they tolerate those who believed such a God existed.

Their only recourse was to arouse enough animosity toward Christians to justify putting them to death in ways too cruel to imagine. Of course, there were exceptions. Those who were honest with themselves were able to acknowledge the lack of joy and meaning in their lives, and they remain a testimony to the process of conversion when hearts are open to the power of love.

Over the years, much has been written about the persecution of the early Christians. It’s part of our history, but unless we remember who we are, upon whose shoulders we stand, and the price that was paid, we may be at risk for

taking our faith for granted.

The early Church was built in part by the death of heroic souls who took literally the words of Jesus that “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains but a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24).

Although the names of some are recorded in the annals of Christian history, thousands of men, women and children were crucified, burned to death or torn apart by wild animals, yet remain unnamed and uncelebrated except in the kingdom of heaven. Though it seemed unfathomable at the time, the Church rose from the very soil that had been watered by the blood of martyrs, proving once again that God’s ways are not our ways.

During November, the Church remembers and honors saints and souls of the faithful who have gone before us. We remember our loved ones, family and friends, but it’s also a time to give thanks for

the countless souls whose lives and deaths paved the way for the Church today.

While most of us will never die a martyr’s death, we were all sealed with the sign of the cross at baptism and are called to take up our cross daily just as Jesus said we must. More than 2,000 years later, the cross no longer stands on Calvary, but is embedded in the events of our lives.

It may take the form of broken relationships, serious illness, unemployment, the death of a loved one, to name a few. It may feel like a burden that weighs us down, or it can remain a gnawing ache that threatens to erode the will to persevere in faith. Either way, we are reminded that although pain and suffering are part of the human condition, they are never the end.

As Catholics, we come from a rich tradition of saints to whom we can look for inspiration. It matters little if they lived centuries ago, years ago or are sharing the journey with us. As part of the Communion of Saints, past and present, they remind us that if we remain faithful to the end, we will be able to say with St. Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7).

May the strength and perseverance of the martyrs be ours this day and forever!

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

In the person of Jesus, our future is already underway



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY
MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

As Americans, we can have expectations of others that might be summarized by the phrase, “What have you done for me lately?” We see it particularly in our political life.

We get into spiritual danger when we start transferring that attitude to our relationship with God. If our hearts have grown cold toward God or in our expression of our worship in the Church, could this attitude be at the bottom of why we have become lukewarm in our faith?

We have each experienced the Lord’s faithfulness to us in the events of our lives. We might not be feeling it right now, but each of us, if we are honest, can see how God has sustained us throughout our earthly journey.

Psalm 146 has a beautiful vision of the Lord’s

faithfulness: “The Lord keeps faith forever, . . . The Lord gives sight to the blind; . . . The fatherless and the widow he sustains.”

Yet the cry can also go up: When, O Lord, will this vision be fulfilled? It seems a vision that is only fulfilled in fits and starts. It seems only a reality in anticipation in the mission of Jesus during his earthly pilgrimage. But when will it be complete and finally triumph?

It is too easy to say it will all be fulfilled when we get to heaven. That is exactly the critique of Karl Marx – that religion is the opiate of the people. It puts off the fulfillment of the vision to some undefined point in a hazy future paradise.

But that is not the vision of the Psalm 146, and it is not the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That future has definitively begun now for us and for the world in the person of Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Our second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews uses the image of the Temple and Jesus as the high priest to tell us of Jesus’ final victory over sin and death. The Temple was at least four things: (1) the dwelling-place of God on earth;

(2) a microcosm of heaven and earth; (3) the sole place of sacrificial worship; (4) the place of the sacrificial priesthood.

Jesus saw all four aspects of the Temple as being fulfilled in himself and his disciples. Temple worship was not just a means of worshipping God; it was one of the ways that the people of Israel believed that God used to sustain the world.

Oppression, sin, disease, death and human wickedness are powers of chaos that unmake the world. But they have all been definitively overturned by the sacrifice of the sinless Christ, who is at the same time the Temple, the High Priest and the sacrifice itself. So even though the victory over those things is still being worked out, it is really a mop-up operation because the war is over.

If we are tempted to lose heart, Christ reminds us that we are participating in that final victory as we live out the law of God, as we participate in works of mercy and charity, and as we offer our worship through our participation in the definitive sacrifice of Christ at the Mass.

God’s salvific action is not simply in the past or some distant future; it is being realized right now.

Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B

1 Kgs 17:10-16

Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Heb 9:24-28

Mk 12:38-44

Texas bishop tells Biden to end 'Remain in Mexico'

EL PASO, Texas (CNS) — The Biden administration must issue an immediate termination of the Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy, El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz said Oct. 25.

"God's word on how we should treat people forced to migrate is clear: We must welcome and protect," he said in a statement released by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network. "As the bishop of El Paso, I have seen firsthand the impact of disastrous policies of deterrence at the border such as 'Remain in Mexico.'"

"President Biden, as a person who values your Catholic faith and the leader of our country, I implore you to act immediately to end 'Remain in Mexico' and put in place at the border humane policies which uphold the value and dignity of every human being," Bishop Seitz said.

He said the "Remain in Mexico" policy "causes needless suffering for those forced to flee who have come to our doorstep in need of protection. It is time to heal, to restore our commitment to asylum, and in the words of the Holy Father, move 'toward an ever wider we.'"

The bishop was quoting the theme of Pope Francis' message for the 107th World Day of Migrants and Refugees Sept. 26.

"Bless each act of welcome and outreach that draws those in exile into the 'we' of community and of the Church, so that our earth may truly become what you yourself created it to be: the common home of all our brothers and sisters," said a prayer, in part, which the pope included in his statement.

Bishop Seitz also criticized the continued enforcement of Title 42, another Trump-era immigration policy the Biden administration has kept in place.

Title 42 is a provision of U.S. health policy enacted during the Trump administration that turns away certain immigrants at the border as part of public health measures to contain the coronavirus.

The Migrant Protection Protocols, or MPP, forces certain asylum-seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border to wait in Mexico for their cases to be adjudicated.

"The policy is deadly," CLINIC said in a news release with Bishop Seitz's statement. "It has resulted in asylum-seekers being extorted, raped, and murdered, and made it impossible for them to access legal assistance and other resources."

Shortly after he was inaugurated Jan. 20, Biden suspended the policy, but the U.S. Supreme Court recently ordered the Biden administration to reinstate the policy. Officials at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it would begin to be enforced sometime in November.

"While the administration has taken the stance that the restart of 'Remain in Mexico' is compelled by the courts, legal experts have made clear to the administration that a termination memo can be issued immediately," CLINIC said.

Immigrant advocates recently walked away from an online meeting with Biden administration officials to protest a move that will revive a Trump-era policy blocking people seeking asylum from entering the United States.

During a Zoom meeting Oct. 16, one of the advocates read a statement expressing disappointment with the administration's latest decision and asked those on the call to walk away from the virtual gathering.

Opening the synod process



As the director of the livestream crew watches the monitors, Bishop Barry C. Knestout delivers his homily during the Sunday, Oct. 17, Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, marking the opening of the 2023 World Synod of Bishops. Pope Francis, who opened the synod process with Mass on Oct. 10, instructed each diocesan bishop in the world to open the process in his diocese by celebrating Mass on Oct. 16-17 for that intention. (Photo/Stephen Previtera)

Vandals continue to target churches

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Oct. 10 vandalization of Denver's cathedral basilica that resulted in satanic and other "hateful graffiti" being scrawled on its doors and at least one statue brought to 100 the number of incidents of arson, vandalism and other destruction that have taken place at Catholic sites across the United States since May 2020.

That month the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty began tracking such incidents, according to an Oct. 14 USCCB news release.

"These incidents of vandalism have ranged from the tragic to the obscene, from the transparent to the inexplicable," the chairmen of the USCCB's religious liberty and domestic policy committees said in a joint statement included in the release.

"There remains much we do not know about this phenomenon, but at a minimum, they underscore that our society is in sore need of God's grace," they said, calling on the nation's elected officials "to step forward and condemn these attacks."

"In all cases, we must reach out to the perpetrators with prayer and forgiveness," said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

"Where the motive was retribution for some past fault of ours, we must reconcile; where misunderstanding of our teachings has caused anger toward us, we must offer clarity; but this destruction must stop. This is not the way," they said.

"We thank our law enforcement for investigating these incidents and tak-

ing appropriate steps to prevent further harm," Cardinal Dolan and Archbishop Coakley said. "We appeal to community members for help as well. These are not mere property crimes — this is the degradation of visible representations of our Catholic faith. These are acts of hate."

In a July 2020 joint statement, Archbishop Coakley and Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, then acting chairman of the religious liberty committee decried the growing number of incidents of church vandalism.

"Whether those who committed these acts were troubled individuals crying out for help or agents of hate seeking to intimidate, the attacks are signs of a society in need of healing," the two archbishops said.

"In those incidents where human actions are clear, the motives still are not. As we strain to understand the destruction of these holy symbols of selfless love and devotion, we pray for any who have caused it, and we remain vigilant against more of it," they said.

"Our nation finds itself in an extraordinary hour of cultural conflict," they added. "The path forward must be through the compassion and understanding practiced and taught by Jesus and his Holy Mother. Let us contemplate, rather than destroy, images of these examples of God's love. Following the example of Our Lord, we respond to confusion with understanding and to hatred with love."

These incidents have ranged from a man crashing his van through the doors of a Catholic church in the Diocese of Orlando, Florida, and setting the interior ablaze, to a St. Junípero Serra statue outside Mission San Rafael in San Rafael, California, in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, being

Celebrating 75 years at St. Gerard, Roanoke



Left: Among those providing music for the 75th anniversary Mass at St. Gerard, Roanoke, on Saturday, Oct. 16, were members of the parish's African choir. St. Gerard is southwest Virginia's only Black Catholic parish. (Submitted photos)



Above: Father Danny Cogut, pastor of St. Gerard, addresses the congregation at the Mass marking the parish's 75th anniversary on Saturday, Oct. 16. Right: Eric Damian Mariano presents Bishop Barry C. Knestout with flowers as a thank you gift for the bishop coming to celebrate the Mass. (Submitted photo)



Priests seek office, removed from ministry

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Three Catholic priests in the Philippines have been permanently relieved of all priestly duties after they declared their intention to run for public office in elections next year, the Philippine bishops' conference said.

Father Noli Alparce of Sorsogon Diocese, Father Emergon Luego of Tagum Diocese and Father Granwell Pitapit of Libmanan Diocese have received decrees informing them of the sanction from their respective diocesan bishops, ucanews.com reported.

Under canon law, clergy are prohibited from serving in "public offices which entail a participation in the exercise of civil power," an Oct. 26 statement from the bishops' conference said.

Bishop Jose Rojas of Libmanan described Father Pitapit's decision to enter politics as a "sad event."

"Father Granwell Pitapit decided to leave the priestly ministry and the priesthood for personal reasons," Bishop Rojas said in a letter to parishioners.

"Consequently, this decision to enter politics means his priestly functions are hereby revoked. This is deemed irreversible, thus preventing him from returning to the priestly ministry."

Because Father Pitapit wished to leave the priesthood, he no longer represented the Catholic Church or the diocese, the bishop said.

He said that although the revocation is immediate, a priest could not "immediately" engage in marriage without undergoing a special process at the Vatican called laicization.

Rosary

Continued from Page 1

Amor Barongan said the rosary is a constant part of her life — day and night.

"When I wake up in the middle of the night, I'm looking for my rosary," she said. "First, I pray to the Holy Spirit, and then after that I pray the rosary, and the next thing you know, I'm back to sleep. The rosary is so powerful."

Virginia Bulaclac said she and Barongan say the rosary every day without fail, whether home or out of town. And they say it online every day.

"With my sisters from Australia and Canada and the Philippines we do the online rosary since the start of the pandemic in March of last year," Bulaclac said. "Every day at 7 a.m. we have to wake up to pray the rosary."

More people filtered into the fellowship hall, including the people in charge of the evening's potluck supper. Group members took turns

hosting the meal during October, often choosing an important day in their life.

Dolly Palabrica picked her brother's birthday. An office manager for a local company, Palabrica came to Norton a couple of years ago to get married.

"I gained all these second moms and dads," she said, "and I don't even feel homesick because it's the same traditions here: going to church, the rosary. It's just like back home. Even as early as grade school, grade one, I prayed the rosary. And my mom always prayed the rosary. She's really the one that led all of us."

The group decided to have a living rosary this night, using one with beads the size of baseballs. Retired coal miner Anthony Willis said it was made by the Baptist brother-in-law of a late parishioner about 20 years ago.

"Each person will hold three beads and say either the Hail Mary or the Our Father, and it goes all the way around," he said. "It's a moving rosary."

While the meat and vegeta-

ble stew, rice and other dishes keep warm, the adults and children present grasp a section of the large rosary, form an oval and take turns reciting the familiar prayers "honoring Mama Mary," as Bulaclac likes to say.

Since it's Friday, they use the Sorrowful Mysteries.

"It's one of the ways to the heart of Jesus," said Barongan. "If you analyze all of those rosary mysteries it tells the whole story... passion, death, resurrection, joyful, sorrowful."

They close with a hymn to Our Lady of Fatima.

Father Eric Baffour Asamoah, parochial administrator for the Holy Trinity parish cluster that includes St. Anthony, said the rosarians provide "a wonderful experience."

The group wasn't able to do this last October because of pandemic restrictions, but he said the diocese did permit them to say the rosary after Sunday Mass last year — "a spiritual activity they did with all seriousness."

Anthony Willis' wife, Beverly, would like more people from the

parish to join them.

"You have to make it part of your day," she said. "It's only 15-20 minutes, whether you say it in the morning, any time of day or at night."

Some of the St. Anthony rosarians point out that the rosary can be great way to spread the faith.

"I was working in one of the hospitals here," said Jane Slater. "And there was a nurse who had fallen away from being a Catholic and she had forgotten how to pray the rosary, so I got the pamphlet and gave her a rosary."

Evangelization also took place the following day. Several parishioners gathered on a sidewalk in downtown Norton at noon for this year's Public Square Rosary Crusade, one of hundreds of similar rallies across the country to commemorate the final appearance of Our Lady of Fatima, and to encourage anyone who hasn't done it in a while to take out a rosary and spend a few minutes with the Blessed Mother.

Pope: Don't send migrants back to unsafe countries

CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis denounced the “inhuman violence” waged against migrants, refugees and other displaced peoples in Libya, and called for an end to sending people back to unsafe countries.

“Once again, I call on the international community to keep its promises to seek common, concrete and lasting solutions for the management of migratory flows in Libya and throughout the Mediterranean,” he said after praying the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter’s Square Oct. 24.

“We must put an end to the return of migrants to unsafe countries and give priority to saving lives at sea, with rescue devices and predictable disembarkation, guaranteeing them decent living conditions, alternatives to detention, regular migration routes and access to asylum procedures,” he said.

The pope said that when people are turned away and forced back to Libya, they face real suffering because “there are real lagers there.”

The U.N. Refugee Agency, the UNHCR, recently called on the Libyan government to address the “dire situation” of asylum-seekers and refugees with a humane plan that respects their rights.

Authorities there conducted raids and arbitrary arrests in areas populated by refugees and asylum-seekers, resulting in several deaths, thousands of people detained and many homeless and destitute, according to the UNHCR Oct. 22.

Human Rights Watch and other rights activists have long criticized the extreme

abuse waged against migrants by Libyan authorities.

However, it said the European Union, and Italy in particular, are complicit by financing and training the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrants in the Mediterranean as part of its “containment policy” to strictly limit migration into its borders.

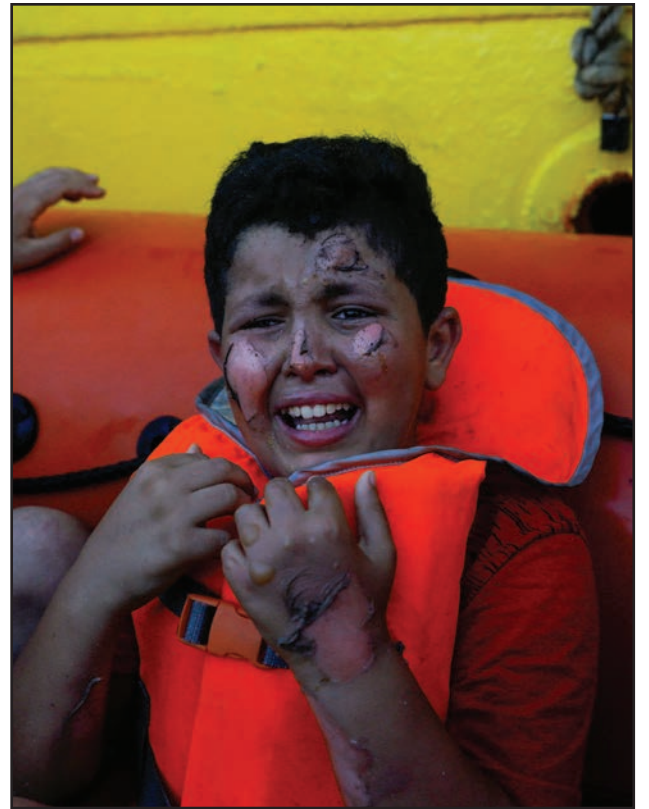
By abdicating almost all responsibility for coordinating rescue operations at sea and by providing material and technical assistance to the Libyan forces, the EU and Italy contribute “significantly to the interception of migrants and asylum seekers and their subsequent detention in arbitrary, abusive detention in Libya,” Human Rights Watch said in a 2019 report.

The increased interceptions and detentions have led to deteriorating conditions in Libyan detention centers, including “severe overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition and lack of adequate health care” as well as evidence of violent abuse by guards, it said.

“Enabling the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept people in international waters and return them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in Libya can constitute aiding or assisting in the commission of serious human rights violations,” the Human Rights Watch report said.

Giuseppe Sotgiu, who had handed over 101 migrants to the Libyan coast guard after rescuing them in the Mediterranean Sea in 2018, was given a one-year jail term by an Italian court in mid-October.

In his appeal, Pope Francis said, “I express my closeness to the thousands of migrants, refugees and others in need of protection in Libya: I never forget you; I hear your cries and I pray for you.”



A migrant boy with fuel burns on his face sits in an inflatable boat operated by a German nongovernmental organization after being rescued in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya July 30, 2021. Pope Francis denounced the “inhuman violence” waged against migrants, refugees and other displaced peoples in Libya, and called for an end to sending people back to unsafe countries. (CNS photo/Darrin Zammit Lupi, Reuters)

“Let us be aware of our responsibility for these brothers and sisters of ours, who have been victims of this very serious situation for too many years. Let us pray together for them in silence,” the pope said, as he led those gathered in the square in prayer.



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Franciscans run marathon to help the poor

JOYCE DURIGA

Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — The Bank of Chicago Marathon is known for the thousands of people who line the route and cheer on the runners as they pass through the city's 29 neighborhoods.

This year's race Oct. 10 was no different, especially with the addition of dozens of Franciscan women and men religious and laypeople awaiting runners at an intersection on the West Side.

They waved balloons and signs with messages such as "May the course be with u! Team OLA" and "You fast like Jesus in the desert!"

Among them was Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Lombardo, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, who blessed runners as they passed by, much like a bishop blessing people as he is leaving Mass, said Sister Stephanie Baliga, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist of Chicago.

The group was there to cheer on members of Team OLA, which raises money to support the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels in West Humboldt Park and its outreach to the poor. The cheering section was organized by the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago who minister at the mission.

Usually, the group joins other organizations at the Charity Block Party area near mile 15, but moved this year for safety reasons related to COVID-19, said Sister Baliga, who also ran in the marathon.

"It's the farthest west point of the course and the closest point to the mission," she told the Chicago Catholic, the archdiocesan newspaper. "And also no one is ever there. It's like 'no man's land' of no cheering, traditionally. But now we're there!"

Sister Baliga, who is in charge of Team OLA, said the team, which runs both the Chicago Marathon and the Shamrock Shuffle, is the mission's only fundraiser each year. It is on track to meet its goal of raising \$250,000, she said.

Sister Baliga was a track star at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and regularly runs



Sister Jaime Mitchell, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist of Chicago, leads the cheer section for "Team OLA" during the 2021 Bank of America Chicago Marathon Oct. 9. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic)

marathons. Last year, after the Chicago Marathon was canceled, she took her run to the treadmill and raised over \$190,000 for the mission and set a world record for the fastest time for a woman to run a marathon on a treadmill.

Team OLA is more than just a way to raise much-needed funds for the

mission, Sister Baliga said.

"It's both a fundraiser and an evangelization opportunity, which is a great thing," she said. "I think if it's at all possible to make fundraisers evangelization opportunities it's the best way to do this, because then you can bring people into your cause and your efforts who may not be as

engaged with the Church in various capacities."

She entices people to join Team OLA with guaranteed entries for the marathon, which otherwise uses a lottery system. Team OLA has 90 guaranteed entries for the 2022 race.

Some team members, like Claire Vogel, 23, from Baltimore, and Cadence Faurete, 25, from north-eastern Indiana, are drawn to the spirit and efforts of the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels.

Vogel volunteered at the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels for a couple of summers while she was a student at the University of Michigan.

"I love running and running races. I really had wanted to run the marathon for the sisters," Vogel said. "The support is just totally intoxicating. That's why people run marathons, because you have all those people cheering for you."

As part of Team OLA, members associate themselves with a different type of living that the general population might not be aware of, Vogel said.

"I think that just running for their team is an honor in that way, to just kind of represent the radicalness of this life," she said.

Faurete learned of

Team OLA through Sister Baliga's treadmill marathon last year, which had a large social media following and local and national news coverage.

"Then I realized they did a marathon every year," said Faurete, who competed in one other marathon with a group of women religious in Cleveland. "I was hoping I could run another one with religious sisters and I did not know that there's a group that runs one every year."

Being able to anticipate seeing the cheering section gave Faurete something to look forward to during the race.

"At like mile 10, I was running with someone else from the team and I was telling him, 'We're almost to the Franciscans!' but they were like five miles away still," she said, laughing. "It was really encouraging and it really pumped me up."

Faurete said she hopes to run with Team OLA again or visit to volunteer at the mission in the summer.

"I know a lot of different Franciscans and they all have the same sense of joy in any circumstance," she said. "It's really refreshing to be around people who have the joy of Christ like that and they're so eager to help everyone."

Lumen Christi Legacy Society Luncheon



Bishop Barry C. Knestout addresses 31 members of the Lumen Christi Legacy Society (LCLS), Wednesday, Oct. 20, during a luncheon at the Pastoral Center. Established in 2017 with 27 members, today the society's 241 members continue to name a variety of Catholic entities in their wills, e.g., the Catholic Community Foundation, the Diocese of Richmond, parishes, schools, campus ministries and specific diocesan ministries. (Photo/Michael Mickle)

SHORTAKES

St. Matthew Catholic School "Almost Together Again" annual Holiday Auction presented by Freedom Street Partners will start Monday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m. with silent auction items online for browsing and bidding. Live auction will be online via Zoom on Saturday, Nov. 20. You and your guests are cordially invited to join us from the comfort of your homes for our second virtual SMS Auction. The link to register is open at <https://one.bidpal.net/smsauction2021>. Registration is \$10 per person and those who register by Monday, Nov. 8, will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate for Matthew's Money! Those registered by Nov. 15 will receive a Watch Party Bag! For more information, please visit our website at <https://smsvb.net/news-and-events/auction-and-gala/> or call Liz Allen at 757-420-2455, x 522.

Save the dates: Sunday and Monday, April 3-4, 2022, Sarah Hart, one of the leading figures in contemporary Catholic music, will be performing at St. Therese Catholic Church, Chesapeake. More information to follow!

All are welcome to join Deacon Charles Williams of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from May 2-11, 2022, for the most deeply moving spiritual experience of your lifetime. A ten-day tour for \$3,599 including airfare, first class hotels, tours, breakfast and dinner, Mass every day in Holy Places and much more. For further information please contact Alba Kim at tours@albastours.com or (804) 298-4035. *Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited. **COVID-19 policies available upon request.

Holiday Bazaar, St. Augustine Catholic Church, 4400 Beulah Rd, North Chesterfield, Saturday, Nov. 6, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Sunday, Nov. 7, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Estate and white elephant sale, craft supplies, quit supplies, jewelry, religious items, raffle.

Annual Memorial Mass at Holy Cross Cemetery, 1700 1st Ave., Richmond, will take place Sunday, Sunday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m. Bishop Barry C. Knestout will be the celebrant.

The Diocese of Richmond, through its Office for Evangelization, invites you to join us for a half day seminar on planning for the end of life. This practical seminar will look at funeral planning,

wills and trusts, legacy giving and advance medical directives. It's an opportunity to hear what you can do to help get your affairs in order and to plan for the future. The seminar will be offered in person on Tuesday, Nov. 16, at the Pastoral Center in Richmond. We will offer a virtual option for those unable to attend in person. Registration can be found at bit.ly/2021EndofLifePlanning and will be open until Tuesday, Nov. 9.

A healing Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 6 p.m., Church of the Resurrection, Portsmouth. This healing Mass is open to everyone who would like to come and is looking for spiritual and physical healing. Prayer teams and the anointing of the sick will be available. This is not a penance service, but a Mass with the express intent of providing physical and spiritual healing for those in need. Come for yourself or come on behalf of someone you know. If you have any questions, please contact Church of the Resurrection at 757-484-7335 or vicar@clusterparishes.com.

Annual Holiday Bazaar Saturday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. Victoria Catholic Church, 305 Victoria Drive, Hurt. Food, frozen casseroles, homemade baked goods, jams, jellies and homemade craft items. Raffle tickets for valuable prizes available day of bazaar. Silent auction for a variety of other quality items. Come to see a handcrafted, beautifully furnished dollhouse. Raffle tickets for this item (drawing on Dec. 19) are available the day of the bazaar. Masks are not required for fully vaccinated individuals but are appreciated while indoors. Call 434-324-4824 with any questions.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, in the Highland Park area of Richmond, will celebrate its Centennial in 2023. Bishop Knestout will celebrate Mass on Nov. 20, 2022, and kick off the celebration, which will continue through Nov. 19, 2023. In between, you will have plenty of opportunities to share the history of the parish and recognize the people involved over the past century. If your family has ties to St. Elizabeth Parish, St. Elizabeth Catholic School, St. Joseph Parish and Van De Vyver School, then you are who we are celebrating. Join us! Register online at https://bit.ly/STEECC_Bulletin or contact the parish office by emailing Mary Rose Purcell at mpurcell@stelizcc.org or by calling 804-329-4599. If no one answers, leave a message with your information.



CLICKTOPRAY Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

New app Click To Pray 2.0

The new version of Click To Pray is now available!

A new version of the Click to Pray 2.0 app, available for iOS and Android phones, encourages prayers for the Synod of Bishops. The app is an initiative of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. (CNS photo/courtesy Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network)

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for November 7, 2021
Mark 12: 38-44

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: A lesson in true holiness. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

BEWARE	ROBES	MARKETPLACES
SEATS	HONOR	DEVOUR
HOUSES	PRAYERS	CONDEMNATION
SAT DOWN	OPPOSITE	MONEY
RICH	PEOPLE	LARGE SUMS
POOR	TWO COINS	WIDOW
CONTRIBUTED	OUT OF	WHOLE

SMALL COINS

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N R K L A R G E S U M S
W O P P O S I T E F E D
O N I P E O P L E C L E
D O Y T L F E N A T O T
T H Y Y A R O L N W H U
A C T L A N P T I O W B
S K R W R T M D U C S I
Y W E O E O O E D O E R
E B O K R W B C D I S T
N P R O S T A E S N U N
O A P R A Y E R S S O O
M A D E V O U R I C H C
    
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If you enjoy the Scripture Search and/or the crossword puzzle, please let us know. Email akrebs@catholicvirginian.org or call 804-359-5654.

Correction

The Outreach in Love photos in the Oct. 18 Catholic Virginian were incorrectly credited. They were taken by Charles Kehoe.

Anteponer el enfermo a la enfermedad según la visión cristiana

Al recibir a los miembros de la “Biomedical University Foundation” de la Universidad Campus Biomédico de Roma el Papa les recordó que “el amor al hombre, especialmente en su condición de fragilidad, en el que brilla la imagen de Jesús Crucificado, es específico de una realidad cristiana y no debe perderse nunca”

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

Después de mediodía el Papa Francisco recibió en audiencia, en la Sala Clementina del Palacio Apostólico, a cincuenta miembros de la “Biomedical University Foundation” de la Universidad Campus Biomédico. Al saludar a los presentes el Pontífice se dirigió de modo especial al Profesor Paolo Arullani, presidente de la Fundación, a quien agradeció las palabras que le dirigió en nombre de los presentes y manifestó su satisfacción por este encuentro que se lleva a cabo en el día en que se celebra a San Lucas, a quien el apóstol Pablo llama “el querido médico”.

Anteponer el enfermo a la enfermedad

Tras manifestar que conoce este Campus de Roma el Santo Padre se refirió a lo difícil que es hoy en día llevar a cabo un trabajo en el ámbito de la sanidad, sobre todo cuando, como en esta policlínica, no sólo se centra en la asistencia, sino también en la investigación para proporcionar a los pacientes las terapias más adecuadas, con amor a la persona. En efecto, el Papa afirmó al respecto:

“Anteponer el enfermo a la enfermedad es esencial en todos los campos de la medicina; es fundamental para que el tratamiento sea verdaderamente integral y humano”

Y recordó que el Beato Álvaro del Portillo lo animó para que así lo hicieran. Ponerse cada día “al servicio de la persona humana en su totalidad”, algo que es “muy agradable a Dios” y por lo que Francisco les dio las gracias.

Centralidad de la persona

Aludiendo a la centralidad de la persona, “que subyace en su compromiso con la asistencia”, y también con la docencia y la investigación, el Papa dijo que de esta forma se ayuda a fortalecer una visión unificada y sinérgica, que “no pone en primer lugar las ideas, las técnicas y los proyectos, sino al hombre concreto, al paciente, al que hay que cuidar conociendo su historia, conociendo su experiencia y estableciendo relaciones amistosas que sanan el corazón”.

“El amor al hombre, especialmente en su condición de fragilidad, en el que brilla la imagen de Jesús Crucificado, es específico de una realidad cristiana y no debe perderse nunca”

Personas que se acogen y se ayudan mutuamente

El Obispo de Roma reafirmó que esta Fundación y el Campus Biomédico, junto a la sanidad católica en general, “están llamados a testimoniar con hechos que no hay vidas indignas o que deban ser desechadas porque no respondan al criterio del beneficio o a las exigencias del mismo”.

“Estamos viviendo una verdadera cultura del descarte; es un poco el aire que respiramos y debemos reaccionar contra esta cultura del descarte. Todo centro sanitario, en particular los de inspi-



Un doctor y una enfermera del Instituto de Neumología Marius Nasta en Bucarest, Rumania, atienden a un paciente con el coronavirus el 17 de octubre de 2021. El Papa Francisco dijo el 18 de octubre que la riqueza o la pobreza de una persona no debería ser el factor determinante a la hora de recibir el cuidado de la salud. (Foto del CNS / Fotos de Inquam, Octav Ganea vía Reuters)

ración cristiana, debería ser un lugar donde se practica la asistencia y donde es posible decir: ‘Aquí no se ven sólo médicos y enfermos, sino personas que se acogen y se ayudan mutuamente: aquí se puede experimentar la terapia de la dignidad humana’. Y esto nunca debe negociarse, siempre debe defenderse”

Profesionalidad y piedad, competencia y empatía

Por esta razón les dijo que es necesario “centrarse en la atención al individuo, sin olvidar la importancia de la ciencia y la investigación”. Puesto que el cuidado sin la ciencia “es vano, al igual que la ciencia sin el cuidado es estéril”. A lo que añadió:

Los dos van juntos, y sólo juntos hacen de la medicina un arte, un arte que implica cabeza y corazón, que combina conocimiento y compasión, profesionalidad y piedad, competencia y empatía.

A estos “queridos amigos” el Santo Padre les dio las gracias “por favorecer el desarrollo humano de la investigación”. A la vez que destacó que, desgraciadamente, a menudo se persiguen los caminos rentables del beneficio, olvidando que las necesidades de los enfermos están por encima de ellas. De ahí que haya afirmado que:

“Las necesidades de los enfermos evolucionan constantemente, por lo que debemos estar preparados para hacer frente a nuevas enfermedades y problemas”

La sencilla pero difícil palabra: “juntos”

El Pontífice también recordó a las muchas personas mayores y a las que están relacionadas con enfermedades raras. Y destacó que además de promover la investigación ayudan a quienes no tienen medios económicos para pagar su educación. Pienso, en particular, en los esfuerzos que ya han realizado para el Centro Covid, la sala de urgencias y el reciente proyecto de Hospice. Y subrayó la “sencilla pero difícil palabra: juntos”.

La caridad exige un don

Refiriéndose a la pandemia el Papa dijo que “nos ha mostrado la importancia de conectar, colaborar y abordar juntos los problemas comunes”:

“La sanidad, en particular la católica, necesita y necesitará cada vez más esto, estar en red. Ya no es tiempo de seguir el propio carisma de forma aislada. La caridad exige un don: hay que compartir el conocimiento, la experiencia, la ciencia”

Curar en profundidad

Hacia el final de su alocución el Papa aclaró que cuando dice “ciencia”, no se refiere sólo los productos de la ciencia, que, si se ofrecen solos, se quedan “en meras tiritas, capaces de taponar la herida, pero no de curarla en profundidad”.

“Esto se aplica a las vacunas, por ejemplo: hay una necesidad urgente de ayudar a los países que tienen menos, pero esto debe hacerse con planes de largo alcance, no sólo motivados por la prisa de las naciones ricas por ser más seguras”

“Los remedios, dijo Francisco, deben distribuirse con dignidad, no como lamentables dádivas. Para hacer un bien real, necesitamos promover la ciencia y su aplicación integral: entender los contextos, enraizar los tratamientos, hacer crecer la cultura de la salud. No es fácil, es una verdadera misión, y espero que la sanidad católica sea cada vez más activa en este sentido, como expresión de una Iglesia extrovertida y abierta”.

Por último, el Papa Francisco los animó “a seguir en esta dirección, acogiendo su trabajo como un servicio a las inspiraciones y sorpresas del Espíritu, que a lo largo del camino les hace encontrar tantas situaciones necesitadas de cercanía y compasión”. También les dijo que reza por ellos, y renovando su gratitud les impartió su bendición, a la vez que les pidió que también ellos sigan rezando por él.

African bishops demand end to private companies' 'land grabs'

OXFORD, England (CNS) — Africa's Catholic bishops have criticized the appropriation of land, natural resources and other economic assets by private companies and called on national governments to show greater concern for local community rights and needs.

"For most Africans, land is neither a tradeable commodity nor an individual possession — it is a gift from God and our ancestors, a common good," said the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

"The impunity of corporate and elite capture of African land and natural resources and the damage this is doing to Africa's food systems, to our environment, our soils, lands and water, our biodiversity, our nutrition and health is a major concern. Land grabs push people off the land, fueling conflicts and provoking displacement," the statement said.

The statement expressed concern that land deals in 2021, covering more than 62 million acres, had been concluded "by private actors encouraged and financially supported by governments and public development banks."

Such business ventures, the statement said, continued to reflect European perspectives because of "the legacy of colonialism and huge differentials of power and capacity."

"We have come together in

solidarity and fraternity to amplify the voices of African communities struggling for land justice," it said.

The signees urged the African Union and European Union to ensure "meaningful community participation" in future development projects.

The foreign ministers were meeting Oct. 26 to discuss common challenges ahead of a sixth European Union-African Union summit, planned for Brussels in early 2022, including recovery from COVID-19, poverty, security, migration, education and skills development.

They met as the United Nations' climate summit was about to begin in Glasgow, Scotland, Oct. 31.

In a separate interview Oct. 25 with Poland's Catholic Information Agency, KAI, Cardinal Philippe Ouedraogo of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, SECAM president, said Africa's growing Catholic Church was needed for "world evangelization," but was being held back by "scandalous structural poverty."

He explained that Burkina Faso's 17 gold mines are owned by international companies, leaving just 9% of profits in the country. He said a "new order" was urgently needed.

"African countries have gained independence," he said, "but this is just a formal independence, since we are still subject to domination."

Blessing for Baxter



Deacon Gregory Roettinger blesses Baxter during the second annual drive-through pet blessing at St. Bede, Williamsburg, Saturday, Oct. 2. Pet blessings are held on or near October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals. (Photo/Bernadette Roettinger)



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Continued from Page 10

desecrated with red paint and toppled, leaving just the saint's feet in place.

In response to such attacks, the Committee for Religious Liberty launched the "Beauty Heals" project featuring videos from various dioceses discussing the significance of sacred art.

At least 10 videos are available on YouTube; a link to the play list of all the videos can be found at <https://bit.ly/3peNq30>.

In a June 1, 2021, letter to the respective chairs and ranking members of the Appropriation Committee in the House and Senate, the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty joined with several other faith groups calling for more funding for appropriations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Nonprofit Security Grant Program in fiscal year 2022.

The text of the letter can be found at <https://bit.ly/3n6Rz6t>.

"As organizations representing Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Catholic, Episcopal, Evangelical, Lutheran, Protestant, Seventh-day

Adventist, and other Christian and communities of faith across the United States, we believe that all people ought to be free from fear when gathering for religious worship and service," they wrote, urging more funds for the FEMA grant program.

The grants provide funds for "target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities" for, as the letter stated, "at-risk nonprofits from urban settings to suburban neighborhoods and rural communities, including houses of worship, religious schools, community centers and other charities."

"There is a critical need and urgency for these grants," the faith groups said. "Our sacred spaces have been desecrated, and our faithful murdered."

In a 20-year period starting in mid-1999, there were shootings at an estimated 19 houses of worship resulting in fatalities.

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