



# The Catholic Virginian

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## Petersburg church dedicated



Father Gino Rossi, pastor of St. Joseph, Petersburg, waits for the sanctuary lamp to be lowered prior to placing the candle in it during the church dedication Mass on Saturday, Jan. 8. Father Rossi was also installed as pastor during the liturgy. See story, Page 3. (Photo/Tom Whitmore)

## New Ethnic Ministries head focused on office's legacy

### Villar makes connections, growth priorities

JANNA REYNOLDS  
The Catholic Virginian

Forming connections among the different cultures in the Diocese of Richmond, facilitating growth and establishing legacy are Daniel Villar's main goals as the new director of the diocesan Office of Ethnic Ministries (OEM).

Villar was promoted on Monday, Jan. 10. He had been serving as acting director of the office since September 2021.

Villar, who holds a bachelor's degree in religious studies and minors in sociology and philosophy from Florida International University-Miami and a master's degree in systematic theology from St. Leo University in Florida, began his employment with the Diocese of Richmond in 2015. He worked in the Office of Hispanic Ministry, where he was in charge of "everything surround-

ing formation."

"When I started in Hispanic Ministry, my main focus was, and still was until Monday (Jan. 10), sacraments, catechesis, adult faith formation and ecclesial movements," he said.

He began working with OEM when the office was created in 2019, under then-director Comboni Missionary Sister Inma Cuesta.

Villar speaks English, Spanish, French and Italian, and said he has "always had a passion for different cultures and diversity and inclusiveness."

In his new role, Villar said he wants to "continue the wonderful work begun by Sister Inma," who left the Diocese



Daniel Villar

See Director, Page 2

## Pope: Give 'reality check' to vaccine misinformation

CAROL GLATZ  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The COVID-19 pandemic calls for an urgent reality check against baseless information and for increased efforts so everyone has access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools, Pope Francis told diplomats from around the world.

He urged individuals, governments and the international community to recognize the effectiveness and importance of immunizing as many people as possible as part of fighting the pandemic, which he called a "grave moment in the life of humanity."

"Vaccines are not a magical means of healing, yet surely they represent, in addition to other treatments that need to be developed, the most reasonable solution for the prevention of the dis-

ease," the pope told ambassadors from the 183 countries that have diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

At his annual meeting with the diplomatic corps Jan. 10, the pope also told them that facing today's challenges "will require humanity to join together as one great family that, starting from different viewpoints, should prove capable of finding common solutions for the good of all."

In his speech, the pope highlighted his hopes and concerns regarding the state of the world, ongoing wars and violence, the arms trade, today's "cancel culture," the treatment of migrants, the importance of increased funding for education and the need to step-up efforts for universal vaccinations for COVID-19.

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### Inside This Edition

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# Catholic schools go well beyond academic excellence



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

It is natural for us to reference events or changes in our lives as “before” and “after” statements, e.g., “That happened before I left for college” or “We did that after we moved here.”

Since March 2020, “before COVID” has joined the list of ways we mark how life was and how it is. During these nearly two years of uncertainty, we have found reassurance in things that have remained constant.

One of the constants has been our Catholic schools. You might recall that when in-person learning ended in March 2020, our schools adapted quickly and were able to provide quality virtual education for the remainder of the academic year.

During the summer of 2020, after consulting with our diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and having been assured that all necessary safety precautions would be in place, our schools returned to in-person learning for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Thanks to the diligence and commitment of our parents, teachers and administrators, our schools have remained opened throughout the pandemic, providing our children with the in-person environment that is most beneficial to their ability to learn.

As we prepare to celebrate Catholic Schools Week this Sunday, I highlight this particular time in our Catholic schools’ history as an example of how integral they are to our Catholic mission.

When people talk about quality education, they often focus on high test scores, academic achievement and advancement to higher levels of learning. In our Catholic

*“We are blessed that while our Catholic school teachers, staff and administrators see their work as a profession and hold themselves to high standards, they also see what they are doing as a vocation, a calling, a response to God’s own plan for them.”*

- BISHOP BARRY C. KNESTOUT

schools, we encourage academic excellence, but we go well beyond that.

We form our students intellectually and spiritually. We demonstrate reverence and dignity for the human person daily in the way we operate our Catholic schools, in the way we treat our students, parents and others who are part of our school families.

We are blessed that while our Catholic school teachers, staff and administrators see their work as a profession and hold themselves to high standards, they also see what they are doing as a vocation, a calling, a response to God’s own plan for them, and they recognize that they are contributing to the larger plan for his people.

The mission of the Church — teaching, sanctifying and living in charity — is embed-

ded in our schools. As we form students in the faith, we teach right and wrong, how to live and act, how to grow in goodness and in their relationship with God.

Through prayer, sacraments and opportunities for traditional expressions of piety, we nurture their spiritual lives, encouraging them to embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit as they mature in their faith.

This is expressed in the acts of charity that are part of their education and are examples of how they are to live their lives as followers of Christ.

When it comes to charity, our schools have benefited over the decades from thousands of generous individuals throughout our diocese. Assessments from our parishes, the Annual Diocesan Appeal and other sources have supported our schools.

As we began this academic year, our parish schools and regional schools have undertaken a Learn to Lead Campaign to provide them with the financial resources they need — and will need — in years to come. As you read some of the details about this initiative on Page 15, and as you learn more about it in the months to come, you will realize how important Catholic school education is to the mission of our Church.

As we highlight work of our schools during Catholic Schools Week, I invite you to join me in prayers of thanksgiving for those — particularly our men and women religious — who made sacrifices decades ago in order to educate our children and to center our schools firmly in the life of the Church.

At the same time, let us pray for all in our Catholic school families that the children we educate today will be examples of Catholic discipleship now — and for decades to come.

## Director

Continued from Page 1

of Richmond in September 2020 to serve her community in Rome. That work, he explained, includes “her expertise in being able to work with many different cultures and learning other cultures from both a secular and Catholic context, which is very important.”

In addition to building upon those aspirations put in place by his predecessor, Villar sees “establishing legacy” as an essential part of his role.

“I think legacy is very important for us as Catholics. Discipleship is a legacy, right?” he said. “So that’s something that is very deep in my heart, to really be able to get to the work that Sister started in the office and continue that work, being able to expand it, help it grow, and continue servicing the communities we’ve been servicing since the beginning.”

Villar explained that in the Diocese of Richmond, ethnic communities are an increasing part of the Catholic population.

“Establishing the legacy of this office is very important for me

because I [know] that these groups are soon to become the majority of Catholics in our diocese — with the exception of Hispanics because that’s the majority now — but eventually the Filipinos and Vietnamese will also be part of the Catholic majority,” he said.

He added that the immigrant indigenous, like those from southern Mexico and Guatemala, present a unique challenge because that group is currently “severely misrepresented or underrepresented.”

“They don’t consider themselves Hispanics; Spanish is not their language.... It’s a different community, a different structure culturally, different languages, dialects — Mayan dialects, Aztec dialects — so they don’t prescribe to the quintessential Hispanic culture as an umbrella culture,” he said. “There’s large communities of them around the diocese, and that’s a group that I’m trying to connect with. That’s part of what I’m going to do, too,” he said.

In order to accomplish those goals, Villar will first work to make sure everyone is connected.

“We are a diocese of 33,000 square miles, so connection is the most fundamental thing,” he said.

“Jesus emphasized unity, especially when he prayed for his disciples, making sure that they were one under the Holy Spirit. That’s one of the roles of the Holy Spirit.”

Villar worked closely with the Filipino community last year to connect those in Virginia Beach, Roanoke and southwest Virginia when they celebrated their 500th anniversary of Christianity in the Philippines, and he plans to do the same for the other ethnic communities in the diocese.

To do that, Villar will collaborate with the OEM advisory committee — a group Villar describes as “very distinguished leaders in their own communities who have created very, very deep connections between those communities and the diocese.”

The group will assist in establishing specific goals, provide information on the current status of their communities and receive ongoing formation — “things to move the office forward,” according to Villar.

“I have a lot of work ahead of me,” he said, “but I look forward to it with the help of the Holy Spirit and the guidance I receive from God through Jesus and Mary.”

## Texas Catholic church reaches out to synagogue

COLLEYVILLE, Texas (CNS) — As the tense hours of a Jan. 15 hostage standoff situation unfolded at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, so, too, did an unbelievable manifestation of faith and community at nearby Good Shepherd Church, according to Franciscan Father Zachary Burns.

“Just seeing not only the Good Shepherd community, but people from other faiths and the community in general coming together to help one another was so unbelievable,” the parish’s parochial vicar told North Texas Catholic, the news outlet of the Fort Worth Diocese.

That morning Malik Faisal Akram, 44, entered Congregation Beth Israel armed during the synagogue’s Sabbath morning service and took four hostages, including Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, and engaged in an 11-hour standoff with law enforcement officials.

All four were eventually released unharmed though Akram was killed in the incident.

See Outreach, Page 7

# Church honors its traditional roots with renovation

## St. Joseph, Petersburg, completes \$350,000 project

KRISTEN BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

After years of planning and hundreds of thousands of dollars raised, Bishop Barry C. Knestout dedicated the newly-renovated St. Joseph Church, Petersburg, on Saturday, Jan. 8.

St. Joseph Church has existed since the 1890s and is a testament to Victorian Gothic architecture with its grand stained glass windows, detailed statues and soaring arches.

Nearly 130 years of worship had left its mark on the building, inside and out, and a plan was developed by former pastor Father Brian Capuano, who now serves as the diocesan vicar for vocations, to complete substantial renovations to the church.

Instead of trying to “modernize” the church, the parish decided to honor its traditional roots by restoring and highlighting the original architecture.

Father Capuano worked closely with the parish financial council and liturgy committee to bring these ideas to life. The \$350,000 undertaking included painting the ornate tin ceiling, restoring the high altar, grinding and polishing the soapstone floors, refinishing the wood floors, repairing and refinishing the pews and kneelers, and other projects.

St. Joseph’s Deacon Bob Young said, “Father Brian Capuano was the main architect with the dream and vision . . . His dedication and willingness to work the long and arduous hours to accomplish this was the reason that all this was accomplished.”

A labor of love, Father Capuano said that it’s a duty to preserve the church building, “not simply because of its architectural qualities, but principally, because of what it ‘speaks’ for the sake of the salvation of souls. Remember, churches were often built recognizing the need to catechize the faithful in an organic way. Structures can literally speak. Let’s continue to dignify and beatify this inheritance that was offered as a sacrificial offering to the glory of God by those who came before us.”

This was echoed by Father Gino Rossi, who has served as pastor at St. Joseph since July 2021 and oversaw the renovation work. He was installed as pastor of the



Assisted by Deacon Bob Young, Bishop Barry C. Knestout anoints the altar during the dedication Mass on Saturday, Jan. 8, at St. Joseph, Petersburg. The \$350,000 project included painting the ornate tin ceiling, restoring the high altar, grinding and polishing the soapstone floors, refinishing the wood floors, and repairing and refinishing the pews and kneelers. (Photo/Tom Whitmore)

parish at the dedication Mass.

He explained why the physical place of worship is so important: “In a time when Catholic identity and beliefs are becoming more and more countercultural, individuals who still embrace the faith want it in its fullness, including how they worship. The Catholic Church is a treasure chest of tradition and beauty, in its spirituality, its music, its art and its architecture.”

The planning began five years ago, with smaller projects, such as installing the Stations of the Cross and repairing the choir loft, being

completed earlier in the process.

Deacon Herb Funk, who is a lifelong member of the parish, said, “These smaller efforts gave people something tangible in the present and kept alive the vision and promise of the future.”

Deacon Funk also commented on how the parish community, which has seen an influx of younger, more traditional members in recent years, widely supported the renovation plan.

“I find that many younger folks seem to be searching for the more formal liturgical expressions and value the sense of the sacred

they seem to find,” he said.

Like most projects undertaken in the past two years, the pandemic hindered its progress. Supply chain issues delayed and halted construction; problems were revealed during the renovation that needed to be addressed and repaired. Mass was celebrated in the parish hall for several months while awaiting the completion of the renovations.

The most cumbersome project was the renovation of the original high altar area. This required the disassembling of large marble pieces, working to locate and repair missing original pieces of the altar, and finding workers who could construct matching pieces for portions of the altar that were completely lost.

This took a considerable amount of time and talent. The altar is now restored to its original position in the center of the sanctuary, displaying the Eucharist for all to see.

It was a fitting time for renovations to take place at St. Joseph, as Pope Francis declared 2021 as the Year of St. Joseph – the 150th anniversary of the saint being declared patron of the Catholic Church. St. Joseph was a carpenter who worked with his hands, and in his apostolic letter “Patris corde” (“With a father’s heart”), Pope Francis wrote that physical work “is a means of participating in the work of salvation” and that “those who work are cooperating with God himself.”

The work was finally completed the week before Christmas, allowing parishioners to celebrate the birth of Jesus in their renovated worship space.

The impact was immediate.

“There is no mistaking you are in a Catholic Church when you enter St. Joseph, and people love that,” Father Rossi said. “Just last week, a visitor paid us a great compliment after Mass, saying, ‘If I were going to bring someone to Mass to introduce them to the Catholic faith, this is exactly how I would want it to be shown to them.’”

*Editor’s note: To learn more about St. Joseph Parish, visit <https://www.sjcpetersburg.com>.*

# The Beatitudes.

Every Friday, at the  
[catholicvirginian.org](https://www.catholicvirginian.org).

# Supreme Court takes up case of fired football assistant

## Was dismissed for post-game praying on the field

CAROL ZIMMERMANN  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court announced Jan. 14 that it would hear an appeal from a former high school football coach in Washington state who says his rights to freedom of speech and religion were violated when he was fired in 2015 for praying on the football field after team games.

Joseph Kennedy, former assistant coach at Bremerton High School, outside of Seattle, is asking the court to reverse a lower court decision in 2017 that sided with the school district. The decision said Kennedy had acted as a public official by praying with athletes who wished to join him in prayer in view of other students and parents.

Kennedy first appealed his case to the Supreme Court in 2019. The justices chose not to consider it but didn't rule it out completely. Justice Samuel Alito, joined by Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, wrote in a separate concurrence that the time wasn't right to review the case because it had "unresolved factual questions."

First Liberty, a law firm specializing in religious freedom cases, is representing Kennedy, described on its website as "Coach Joe." It also asks for support for Team Kennedy, saying it's "game on" now at the Supreme Court and it includes a photo of Kennedy in front of the court with a football.

It is not clear if the court will hear oral arguments in this case in April or next term.

Kennedy, who said he made a personal commitment to thank God after each game, win or lose, since he started coaching in 2008, made it a point to kneel by the sideline after the game by himself for quiet prayer. Eventually he was joined in this practice by many of the team members.

One player's parent said their son, an atheist, felt like he had to join in prayer or face potential loss of playing time.

School district officials told Kennedy to stop the postgame prayers in keeping in line

*"We look forward to the Supreme Court considering the arguments in this case and affirming the constitutionally protected freedom of public officials to prayerfully practice their faith during working hours."*

— JOHN BURSCH

with the Constitution's establishment clause prohibiting the government from favoring one religion over another.

Kennedy asked the school to just give him 15 seconds to kneel on the field for silent prayer when the players were off the field, which the school district officials denied, calling it a violation of policy.

Instead, the school district offered to give the coach a private space to pray or said it would allow him to pray after the crowd had left the stadium.

A description of the case from scotusblog.com, a website about the Supreme Court, said Kennedy's announcement that he would not comply prompted a large group of supporters — including parents, a state legislator, and members of both teams — to join him at the 50-yard line after a game in October 2015.

After that, the school district placed Kennedy on paid administrative leave. During a performance review, the head football coach said Kennedy shouldn't be rehired because he violated the school district's policy.

Kennedy did not seek to be rehired for the coaching position and instead filed a lawsuit in federal District Court claiming the school district violated his First Amendment rights.

The lower court sided with the school district, which led Kennedy to the Supreme Court in 2019 and again last year, pleading his case, which has gained some national attention.

He told the justices the ruling against him by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit put the religious expression of hundreds of thousands of teachers "on the verge of extinction" and that its "chilling effects elsewhere around the country are palpable."

Kennedy's lawyers argued that the Supreme Court has long held that teachers and students do not have to give up First Amendment protections while at school.

The Bremerton school district, represented by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, urged the court not to take up the case, saying Kennedy's appeal distorted or ignored facts.

In its brief, it said the school district "faced a stark choice: Either let its employee dictate how school events would be run — even if that threatened the safety and religious freedom of the students — or take the steps necessary to curb the practice."

The case has friend-of-the-court briefs from 24 states, several religious groups and two former pro football players.

John Bursch, senior counsel and vice president of Alliance Defending Freedom, a religious liberty firm, praised the court's decision to take up this case. In a Jan. 14 statement, he said that if the lower court's opinion remained intact, its "overt hostility to personal religious practice would drum the faithful out of public life."

"We look forward to the Supreme Court considering the arguments in this case and affirming the constitutionally protected freedom of public officials to prayerfully practice their faith during working hours," he said.

Follow Zimmermann on Twitter: @carolmaczim

## Kenyan priest gives crisis advice

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — Consolata Father Nicholas Makau, who was thrust into the center of the Jan. 15-16, 2019, al-Shabab attack on an upscale office complex in Nairobi's Westlands area, said time has given him a chance to process events.

Father Makau advised priests who find themselves approaching a crisis situation to pray, invoking God in silence and making themselves part and parcel of the situation. He also advised them to exercise extreme sensitivity, so they do not increase the people's grief.

"We are priests and human. So, when consoling the people or grieving with them, one can grieve to the point of losing control. Sensitivity helps understand that we are human and we can grieve," he said.

However, he urged priests to try to keep an emotional distance so that they can offer true consolation to strengthen the people.

"In my case, these were my Christians. I had already known their families. So I had to take myself out of the situation so that I empathized with them as an outsider. It is not an easy thing," he said.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father John Campbell McGinnity



A Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated Saturday, Jan. 15, at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Hot Springs, for Father John Campbell McGinnity. Father McGinnity, 88, died Tuesday, Dec. 14.

A native of Managhan, Ireland, he was the son of the late John and Mary Brady McGinnity.

He gave up teaching in 1970 to join the priesthood, being ordained on June 15, 1975, in All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, as a priest for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, in which he arrived in August of that year.

His pastorates included St. Peter, Welch; Christ the King, War; Sacred Heart, Point Pleasant; Our Lady of Fatima, Huntington; St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; St. Catherine of Siena, Ronceverte, and its missions at Lewisburg and Union until retirement from the diocese in 1998.

Father McGinnity received a calling to come out of retirement and become pastor at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Hot Springs, in the Diocese of Richmond, where he would faithfully serve for an additional 17 years.

He is survived by a sister, Margaret Frances Connor of Wexford, Ireland; two brothers, Celestine McGinnity and David Brendan McGinnity, both of England.

He was preceded in death by four brothers, Patrick, James Sylvester, Joseph Anthony and Edmund Ignatius.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, P.O. Box B, Hot Springs, VA 24445.

# Catholic school students 'crusade for life'

## Pray rosary weekly in front of Minnesota Planned Parenthood clinic

DAVE HRBACEK  
Catholic News Service

HOPKINS, Minn. — Every Monday morning at 7:45 during the school year, a long line forms in the school office at Chesterton Academy in Hopkins.

Most weeks, it stretches into the school entryway and out the front doors. On Jan. 3, 40 students made sure to arrive before the bell rang to signal the start of the school day.

Why? To be part of a group that, two days later, would get into several vehicles and SUVs, head 15 miles to St. Paul and pray a rosary in the biting cold at Planned Parenthood, so they could make their presence felt as the "pro-life generation."

They call themselves "Crusaders for Life," and are led by a fierce defender of life — and Chesterton parent — Kalley Yanta, a regular at prayer gatherings at Planned Parenthood and other abortion facilities for the past 20-plus years.

Although Yanta, who came up with the idea during the previous school year and pitched it to administrators, was unable to attend this gathering because of a COVID-19 quarantine, she was there in spirit — and by text — cheering on the students and their parent chaperones.

### 'Shake the building'

Despite the serious nature of the abortion issue and the fight to end the killing of unborn children, this gathering, like all others, was marked by joy.

Plus, plenty of horn honking. At the prayer gathering, students held signs that read "Honk to End Abortion." Many motorists obliged, with some laying on their horns for a second or two. There also were occasional blasts from semi-trailers, which, in the words of senior Gabriel Schmitz, "shake the whole (Planned Parenthood) building."

Although nearly all of the students were shivering in the subzero cold by the end of the final Hail Mary, their passion to fight against abortion remained red hot. The truth is, there would have been more than 40 students at this prayer gathering if Yanta hadn't capped the list at 40 for safety and logistical reasons.

Still, that's more than one-fourth of Chesterton's student body.

That's why there is such a rush every Monday to get to school early. Sophomores Claire Lelemsis and Therese Rivard, among others, want to make sure they get on the list every week. Both were part of the first group that went last school year, and have only missed signing up once since then.

"We kind of have a system," said Lelemsis, whose older brother Dominic, a senior, also comes.



Students from Chesterton Academy in Hopkins, Minn., pray the rosary outside Planned Parenthood in St. Paul Jan. 5, 2022. (CNS photo/Dave Hrbacek, The Catholic Spirit)

"Usually, whichever one of us gets to school first gets in line and then signs us both up. There's always a huge line coming out of the office — big traffic in the hallway — because so many kids are so passionate about this."

"It's such a community and bonding experience with our whole generation, and showing people that we are the pro-life generation," she told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

### 'Opportunity to be bold'

The weekly prayer gatherings also express the school motto: "Cultura Vitae" ("Culture of Life"). This is exactly what Dale Ahlquist, school co-founder and current interim headmaster, had in mind when Chesterton Academy opened its doors 14 years ago.

"When we formed the school, part of our mission was to counteract the culture of death," said Ahlquist, whose school, the flagship of the Chesterton Schools Network, has 150 students in grades nine through 12. "And so, we've always had a pro-life charism (at) the school. ... When Kalley came in with this idea, it

just resonated wonderfully. I think our only disappointment was that we hadn't thought of it earlier."

At first, only five or six students went every week, Lelemsis recalled. Steadily, the number grew and Yanta had to set a limit due to

how many parent-drivers she could recruit every week, plus monitor the students' safety.

Yanta, an experienced pro-life activist and sidewalk counselor, knows that responses can sometimes be negative, and even hostile.

But that does not diminish the students' enthusiasm. They brave not only occasional rude remarks and gestures, but all kinds of weather, including severe cold Jan. 5, with a wind chill below zero, just weeks ahead of Jan. 22 — the 49th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide.

The gathering is all part of an effort to be, as Yanta described, "on the front lines, literally, of the greatest spiritual battle of all time."

"It's so cool," said Yanta, 56, a mother of six whose son Kolbe, a Chesterton junior, attends the weekly gatherings, as does her husband, Jon. "I love it so much because it gives our kids an opportunity to be bold, to be the hands, the feet, the hearts, the voices, the ears, the eyes, the love of Christ on the sidewalk for these babies and their mamas."

She thinks one of the main reasons Crusaders for Life is so popular with Chesterton students is the feeling of empowerment that comes with making the half-hour trip to Planned Parenthood every week.

"Teenagers often feel like there's nothing they can actually, tangibly do to make a difference in the world," she said. "But this

is very tangible, especially among people like them who understand the power of prayer."

### 'Life-changing' experience

Sophomore Thomas DeReuil went for the first time last April. He learned later that, while the group was there, two different cars pulled into the facility, each with an abortion-minded woman inside.

Both cars later drove out, and people inside the car told Chesterton students they changed their minds about abortion and decided not to go through with it because of the students' presence there.

"That just really hit me," said DeReuil, whose older brother John Paul, a senior, also goes to the rosary gatherings. "They're real lives and you're actually saving them. It's just so powerful and crazy."

One byproduct of the event is the chance for people from all four grade levels at the school to get to know each other.

All are on equal footing on the sidewalk in front of Planned Parenthood, and freshmen through seniors enjoy and appreciate the chance to pray together in the fight against abortion.

It also brings together parents and students. Jeff Mitchell rearranges his work schedule at his real estate business to come to Chesterton and serve as a driver, along with his wife, Erin.

Sometimes, he leads the rosary, as he did Jan. 5, and often goes with daughters Elizabeth, a junior, and Grace, a freshman. In the parking lot as students gathered before leaving, he sprinkled holy water on students as they passed by, another part of the event.

"It's great," he said. "It's a wonderful thing to serve Christ and to bring that joy and light in(to) the world right now."

Freshman Jack Berg started going in the fall of this school year and tries to make it every week. Occasionally, his older brother Fred also comes. Jack signed up just two weeks into the school year and, like DeReuil, was hooked immediately.

"It was just life changing," he said. "It's my favorite part of each week. I'm so thankful for it and that this school takes the time to do that."

Berg has five siblings, and his mother has had several miscarriages, he said, so he has firsthand experience with both the life and death of unborn children.

"When I see a baby, the amount of joy that comes to my face is unbelievable," he said. "And to think of that life being taken every day in multiple (abortion) clinics all around the world, that's just a dagger in my heart."

*"Teenagers often feel like there's nothing they can actually, tangibly do to make a difference in the world. But this is very tangible, especially among people like them who understand the power of prayer."*

— KALLEY YANTA

# VCC monitoring General Assembly session

## COMMENTARY

JEFF CARUSO

The 60-day 2022 session of the Virginia General Assembly began Tuesday, Jan. 12. As a result of the November 2021 elections, this session will feature 17 new members of the House of Delegates and “divided government” between the two chambers, with a narrow Republican majority in the House and a narrow Democrat majority in the Senate.

As in every even-numbered year, the session will also produce a new state budget for the next two fiscal years.

As of Monday, Jan. 10, only about 10% of the number of bills we are likely to see during this session have been posted online. A much clearer picture will emerge over the next few weeks.

The Virginia Catholic Conference is moni-

toring bill filing closely. Though the exact form most legislation will take is uncertain, what is certain this year and every year is the strong stand we will take for life, conscience, families and protecting the poorest and most vulnerable across a wide spectrum of issues.

During this session, we will be especially focused on working to restore pro-life gains lost during the past two sessions, and on continuing to defend religious freedom from any threats that may surface. We also anticipate opportunities to promote parental rights in various contexts, as this general topic is shaping up to be one of the prominent themes of the session.

As bills impacting key areas of VCC advocacy such as education, poverty reduction, marriage and family life, access to health care, immigrants and refugees, and criminal justice reform continue to be filed, we will be monitoring emerging opportunities and challenges.

### To make a difference this session:

**Connect:** Visit [www.vacatholic.org](http://www.vacatholic.org), where you can click “Join us!” to sign up to receive VCC email alerts, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. We will provide action alerts throughout the session – easy and effective ways for you to contact your legislators before they vote on key bills

**Engage:** Act on VCC action alerts. Legislators must hear from their constituents.

**Be a powerful presence:** Attend Defending Life Day on Tuesday, Feb. 9, in Richmond. Join pro-life advocates from across Virginia for prayer led by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge and Bishop Barry C. Knestout, meetings at legislators’ offices and Mass. Visit [www.vaprolifeday.org](http://www.vaprolifeday.org) to register and learn more!

*Jeff Caruso is executive director of the Virginia Catholic Conference.*

### Could not find corroboration for letter writer’s assertions

I was very disturbed to read Dr. Seeds’ guest commentary (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 10), especially his statement that “The evidence for harm is evident with thousands of deaths in the U.S. within 72 hours of injection reported on the CDC’s own website and tens of thousands of adverse reactions.”

I went to the CDC website to see if I could corroborate Dr. Seeds’ assertion but could not find anything resembling the data he asserts. Rather, what I found on the CDC website were many statements similar to this one: “Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely unlikely following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination.”

If, in fact, Dr. Seeds’ assertions are true, please tell me and your readership where they can be found on the CDC website.

– **Dr. James M. Cooper, Ph.D.**  
Charlottesville

### Don’t be ‘megaphone for disinformation’

I am dismayed by the platform provided for anti-vax untruths and distortions in the commentary by Dr. Seeds (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 10), alleging that vaccine mandates are coercion that “eliminates free will and destroys ethical consent.”

Every law and governmental regulation requires or forbids some course of conduct and thus is coercive: Laws against murder, robbery or abortion; long-standing vaccine requirements for school children, health care workers, military personnel

and overseas travelers; licenses for hunting, fishing, driving a car, starting a business, gun ownership, liquor sales, marriage and the practice of medicine and law.

Pragmatic limitations on personal liberty do not threaten the innate metaphysical reality of free will. Indeed, all law presupposes the human capacity to obey or disobey.

Dr. Seeds further claims “thousands of deaths.... within 72 hours” after COVID-19 vaccinations. In this, he is giving credence to a long-refuted conspiracy theory. There is no government database supporting these assertions, which have been refuted by multiple health care and news organizations.

COVID-19 has killed 850,000 Americans, mostly unvaccinated, and we are living through a desperate public health emergency. Vaccines and masks are clearly the most effective preventive measures available.

As often pointed out by the Vatican and in The Catholic Virginian, love of neighbor requires taking these measures to protect the lives and health of others, even those of our polarized political opponents.

It is shocking to see The Catholic Virginian become a megaphone for disinformation — adding to public confusion, reinforcing vaccine uncertainty and possibly leading readers to fear the vaccine — with all the consequences that may ensue.

– **Marvin Wingfield**  
Lynchburg

### Vaccines are safe, effective

Is the Catholic Virginian so hard up for stories that they resort to printing false and unsubstantiated articles such as “Coercion destroys free will” (Jan. 10)?

The writer seems to confuse moral obligation with an ethical dilemma. As the Catholic faith continues to promote a pro-life value, it should be obvious that being vaccinated not only protects the recipient, but also everyone they come in contact with!

We are ethically required to care for each other and willingly accept other vaccinations such as mumps, measles, diphtheria, etc., yet fight being vaccinated against COVID, which has been proven to successfully prevent hospitalization or death from this disease. Although the writer makes many undocumented statements, the facts are clear that the vaccines are safe and effective.

He then does a mental leapfrog to state that aiding patients in pain is equivalent to assisted suicide. Perhaps he and your readers should consider that not getting vaccinated is a better example of assisted suicide since unvaccinated individuals spread the disease to those who have other complicating factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol issues, which will lead to their death if exposed.

I expect better from The Catholic Virginian, especially since the pope himself endorsed vaccines.

– **Ken Kimidy**  
Norfolk

### Verify information before printing

I read the commentary by Dr. John Seeds (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 10). His main theme, I think, was coercion. This referred to the vaccination mandates for COVID-19.

He states evidence that the vaccines are not as good as they should be. He stated that there have been thousands of deaths and tens of thousands with adverse reactions.

I was at the U of Va. hospital when I read this. I asked several doctors and nurses if they have heard of this. They all said no. Shouldn’t something as serious as this be verified?

On the last page of the same issue, there is an article stating that the Pope Francis encourages everyone to wear a mask, especially at Mass. We know that President Biden is a Catholic. Is he being coerced by the pope?

We know that the pope encourages crazy policies like helping the poor and to halt global warming. The president also supports these things. Ethics? How do we measure ethics?

The information presented by Dr. Seeds is comparable to the NRA stating that guns save a million lives. Prove it.

– **Marie Flowers**  
Farmville

### 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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# What you should know about Olympic ski area

## Region has long history of Catholic persecution

ZHANGJIAKOU, China (CNS) — Chongli, a popular resort town and venue for the main skiing events during the upcoming Winter Olympics, holds a history of persecution and massacre of Catholics in the region during the imperial and communist regimes.

The attention on China, host of the Feb. 4-20 Winter Games, has focused on the coronavirus pandemic, diplomatic boycotts due to crimes against humanity against Uyghur Muslims, constant trampling of human rights and an intensified crackdown on religious freedom.

But ucanews.com reported the Olympics have brought to the fore a little-known massacre of Catholics in Hebei province and the neighboring Chahar region during the anti-Christian insurrection, Chinese civil war and Cultural Revolution under Mao Zedong.

The greater Chahar region, which includes Xuanhua and Xiwanzi-Chongli dioceses, has been a Catholic stronghold since the arrival of missionaries in the late 17th century and early 18th century.

The first bout of persecution against Christians started in 1723 when the Manchu-Qing emperor banned all Christian missions in mainland China, ucanews.com reported. The ban prompted missionaries to move outside of the Great Wall at Kalgan — now Zhangjiakou — and to settle in Xiwanzi village.

The ban was lifted in 1858.

More missionaries, notably Belgian priests from the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, or Scheut Fathers, arrived and contributed to making the region a haven for Catholic missionaries and the faithful.

The 1899-1901 Boxer Rebellion,



Workers move a sign Oct. 29, 2020, at the Thaiwoo ski resort near skiing venues of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Chongli, a popular ski resort town in China. The town has a long history of persecution and massacre of Catholics in the region during the imperial and communist regimes. The resort area is one of many in the Beijing area that will host the Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games Feb. 4-20 and March 4-13. (CNS photo/Thomas Peter, Reuters)

an anti-foreign, anti-colonial and anti-Christian uprising, sought to destroy Westerners, including Christians who enjoyed privileged positions in China. Supported by the imperial Chinese army, the Boxer militia carried out brutal campaigns against Christians across northern China, including today's provinces of Hebei, Shandong and Chahar.

Many faithful were killed and about 5,000 took shelter at the Cathedral Church of Xiwanzi and survived the massacre, according to Bitter Winter, a magazine on human rights and religious liberty.

Later, many Catholics joined the anti-communist side after the

end of World War II. The communists started to view Catholics as enemies colluding with foreign forces. For instance, the communists detained and tortured 33 Trappist monks of Our Lady of Consolation Trappist Abbey at Yangjiaping of Xuanhua, leading to their deaths in 1937.

In the worst violence in 1946, the communists attacked Xiwanzi village. About 1,000 civilians, mostly Catholics, were tortured and killed. Two years later, the communists recaptured and ravaged Chongli.

Following the communist takeover of China in 1949, Catholics in the Chahar region and other parts continued to face abuses

and persecution.

In September 1951, the communists arrested Belgian-born Bishop Léon Jean Marie De Smedt of Xiwanzi and other clergy in Kalgan. The bishop died in prison two months later due to harsh treatment. The communist regime banned the Legion of Mary by terming it a "counterrevolutionary force." Between 1952 and 1954, all 27 foreign clergy from Xiwanzi Diocese were expelled.

In 1957, the communists set up the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, the state-sanctioned body to control the Catholic Church in China. Catholic bishops, clergy and faithful who refused to join the association were abused and tortured.

In 1958, Bishop Leon Yao Liang of Xiwanzi was sentenced to 28 years in labor camps and prison.

During the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, all religions, including Catholicism, faced severe persecution, with most churches demolished or damaged. However, Catholics in Chahar were not spared after the end of the brutal campaign, Bitter Winter reported.

From 1990 to 2011, at least a dozen clergy, including bishops and hundreds of local Catholics, were arrested, tortured and jailed in Chahar.

In the most high-profile case, Bishop Augustine Cui Tai of Xuanhua was arrested in 2007 when he was still a priest. Chinese authorities rearrested him 2013 soon after his ordination with approval from the Vatican. His whereabouts remain unknown.

"Since his arrest in 2007, he has not been able to spend Easter in the diocese," ucanews.com reported in 2020.

## Reality

*Continued from Page 1*

Recalling the passing of Archbishop Aldo Giordano, a well-respected Vatican diplomat who died of COVID-19 in December, the pope told the ambassadors the fight against the pandemic still calls for "significant effort" by everyone — on a personal, political and international level.

Effective vaccination campaigns have decreased the risk of the "severe repercussions of the disease," he said. "It is therefore important to continue the effort to immunize the general population as much as possible."

Individuals have a duty to care for themselves and their health, which includes "respect for the health of those around us," he said. But "sadly we are finding increasingly that we live in a world of

strong ideological divides" where people let themselves be influenced by ideologies built upon "baseless information or poorly documented facts."

"Every ideological statement severs the bond of human reason with the objective reality of things," he said. "The pandemic, on the other hand, urges us to adopt a sort of 'reality therapy' that makes us confront the problem head on and adopt suitable remedies to resolve it."

Governments can help by engaging citizens more and fostering constructive discussion, he said. "The lack of resolute decision-making and clear communication generates confusion, creates mistrust and undermines social cohesion, fueling new tensions. The result is a 'social relativism' detrimental to harmony and unity."

## Outreach

*Continued from Page 2*

Officials from numerous law enforcement agencies and media outlets made use of Good Shepherd's parking lot and facilities during the standoff.

"We were able to open the parish hall for them and congregants from Congregation Beth Israel so they could get out of the cold, warm up and get coffee," said Mike Short, the diocese's director of security.

Short oversaw the diocesan Guardian ministers' efforts to assist law enforcement officials.

"We had a great response from (Guardian ministers) from throughout the diocese who provided security and help throughout the day," Short said. "It was amazing — the support from staff, parishioners, other faith leaders and members, and the community just pulling together to do everything they could to help."

The diocese's Guardian Ministry is a community-led safety and security volunteer ministry that provides parishes with a peaceful and safe place to worship.

"I cannot even begin to tell you how thankful we are for our Guardian ministers," Father Burns said. "So thankful we have these guys willing to be that line of defense, and yesterday's response was unbelievable. I couldn't begin to tell you how many Guardians showed up."

Members of Christian, Jewish and Islamic faith backgrounds and a representative from the city attended a prayer vigil in Good Shepherd's chapel.

"It was a late development deal that lasted about 45 minutes," Father Burns said. "Just a chance for anyone to get up and offer a prayer or reflection, just people trying to support each other."

# Church teaching on gambling includes a caution



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

**Q.** Years ago — when I was a member of a Protestant denominational church — it seemed as though the preacher and the congregation were almost always doing fundraising for various building projects. During one of these drives, a member of our congregation won the state lottery for \$20 million and donated a million of it to the church.

Though having preached for years against vices such as gambling, the preacher and congregation accepted it. What would be the Catholic view of such winnings donated by a Catholic to a local parish? Accept it or not? (Indiana)

**A.** Various religions have various positions on the morality of gambling. In the Catholic Church's view, gambling is not intrinsically evil.

As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Games of chance (card games, etc.) or wagers are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of

others" (No. 2413).

Notice the caution, though, in that statement; a person's gambling must not prevent him from meeting other obligations, including supporting himself and his family and paying his debts.

To your question — as to what a Catholic parish might do if offered a donation from gambling winnings — I can tell you, as a recently retired pastor of a large suburban parish, I would gladly and gleefully accept.

In fact, there's a precedent: In 2016, someone who had won \$100,000 in the Massachusetts state lottery donated those winnings anonymously to St. Anthony's Shrine, run by the Franciscans in downtown Boston.

That shrine provides a variety of social services, and the pastor announced that the money would be used for purchasing Christmas gifts for needy children, food donations for families and a large Christmas dinner for several hundred veterans.

**Q.** Throughout the year — but especially during the Christmas season — we hear from many sources (homilies, meditation guides, etc.) that Christ came "to free us from sin and death."

Generally, that notion is just presented without any explana-

tion of its meaning. This is confusing — since in reality we do sin, and we do die. Could you help me understand? (Metuchen, New Jersey)

**A.** Perhaps the best answer to your question is found in the New American Bible, in a footnote to the early verses of Chapter 8 of Paul's Letter to the Romans. There we read:

"Through the redemptive work of Christ, Christians have been liberated from the terrible forces of sin and death. ... At the cross, God broke the power of sin and pronounced sentence on it. ... The same Spirit who enlivens Christians for holiness will also resurrect their bodies at the last day."

So you are right: We do sin, and we do die; but Jesus, by his own suffering and death, offers us the path to ultimate happiness. If we are sorry for our sins and seek forgiveness from the Lord, we are assured of joy and life that are eternal.

**Q.** My wife and I are planning to take our two children on a trans-Atlantic trip next spring to visit my grandmother. We expect that it will be her only opportunity to meet her great-grandchildren, as she is in poor health.

However, my wife has expressed concern about taking that long plane trip if she should then be

pregnant. Additionally, general medical advice seems to be that women are better off waiting for a year after birth before becoming pregnant again. (Our youngest is 8 months old.)

Pope Paul VI's "Humanae Vitae" allows for the use of natural family planning to avoid pregnancy when there are "well-grounded reasons" (also translated as "just cause"), while Pope Pius XII's "Address to Midwives on the Nature of their Profession" required "grave reasons" for such use. Has the Church clearly settled which of these standards to apply? (Wichita, Kansas)

**A.** Your question is answered in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood" (No. 2368).

Even Pope Pius XII's 1951 address to midwives, which you referenced, mentions "medical, eugenic, economic and social" reasons as possible justification for licit use of the sterile period. In your own circumstances, my pastoral judgment would allow natural family planning. Your motive is certainly not one of selfishness, but kindness to your grandmother.

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



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Bishop Barry C. Knestout to preside at a  
**Mass for Hope & Healing**  
*"Christ our Light and Hope"*

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



**Central Vicariate:**

**Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022 at 7pm**  
**Saint Thomas Aquinas University Parish,**  
**Charlottesville**

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**



# Show gratitude for gifts by using, sharing them



**IN LIGHT OF FAITH**  
BARBARA HUGHES

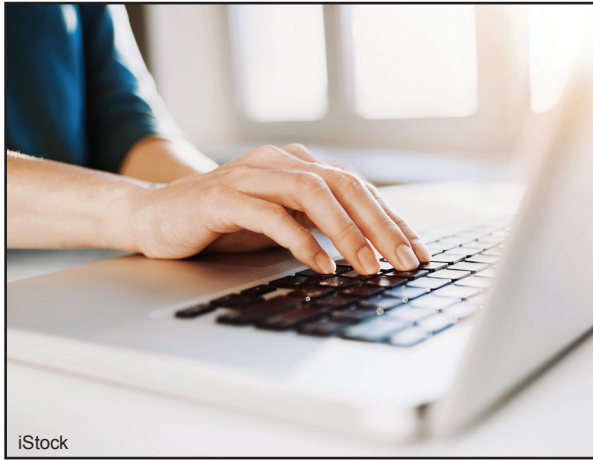
I began this column sitting at my computer staring at a blank page. After more than 21 years of authoring this column, this is only the second time that I remember experiencing writer's block. That's not to say that a few ideas didn't cross my mind, but they were dismissed almost as soon as they broke through the fog.

And so, I did what I usually do when all else fails; I sat in my prayer chair and asked for divine inspiration. The fact that it took a blank page to move me to prayer is a stark reminder that I have a long way to go in putting into practice what I know I should have done in the first place.

Once seated in my chair, I immediately became aware of the ticking of the clock located on the wall above me. The clock had been given to my father when he retired after more than 60 years of service at the same company and serves as a reminder that he is with me even after his death.

As I sat and listened to the steady rhythm of the pendulum, an article that appeared decades ago in a home decorating journal came to mind. According to the author, every room should have at least one of three items: a clock (the ticking kind not a digital time piece), a plant and a mirror.

Those items have often come to mind, especially while settling into a new home after one of our many moves. While I don't remember the rationale behind the author's premise, I've come up with my own theory about the



importance of keeping those objects in view.

The ticking of a clock is a reminder that life is passing, that every second counts and that time is too precious a commodity to waste. That doesn't mean we have to be a constant bevy of activity, but that we can consecrate the hours by lifting our heart and mind to God anytime, anywhere as an act of gratitude to God who is timeless.

The presence of a plant offers a living testimony to the fact that every life is dependent upon something beyond itself. In order to survive and thrive, every plant requires soil, water and sunlight. Without these elements, it will quickly shrivel and die, and so it is with every person.

We depend on others for food and security, for knowledge and inspiration, but most of all we depend on God for light and love to maintain growth, even during times of drought or neglect, such as I exhibited when I needed a blank page before turning to God. That brings me to the purpose for a mirror.

Looking into a mirror reminds me that what I see is only an external representation of who I am and not my truest identity. The face I saw

five, 20, 50 or more years ago has changed significantly, but so has my understanding of who I am. As a child of God, I am so much more than what I do, how I look or how others view me.

Everything we do and possess is a gift and the best way to show our gratitude for gifts received is to use them and share them. It's the way each of us is called to love one another and as John of the Cross wisely counseled: "In the end, we will be judged by the way we love."

To the original list, I would add a scented candle. Every morning when I begin my prayer time, I light a candle, filling the room with a glow that only God can bring to the early hours of the morning, reminding me that Christ is present even when only darkness surrounds us.

Under the heat of the flame, the wax softens and melts ever so slowly until at last, the candle loses its original form, eventually dissipating altogether. Much like our physical bodies that begin to wrinkle and sag over the years, that need not be the condition of our soul. For just as the scent of the candle lingers, so do the effects of prayer, silently transforming hearts and minds as grace secretly draws souls to become one with God.

Despite the presence of evil in the world, there is much more to remind us of God. So, rather than allowing evil to dishearten you, make time to rediscover the beauty that surrounds you. Then, let it speak to you and it will surely fill your heart with gladness.

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

## Act upon vocation God has given you



**BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY**  
MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

Last Saturday, we were asked by the Church to mark a day of prayer and penance for the restoration of the full protection of life and for the harm caused by abortion in our country. Like many other issues in our country, the right to life has become so politicized that many have stopped listening to any voice other than that in their own heads.

The Scriptures for the fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time offers us an invitation to meditate on the dignity of life and to whom life – every life – belongs. The words of Jeremiah are powerful for Jeremiah and for each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." God was calling Jeremiah to understand his vocation, not simply as what he was called to do in life, but rather as the very source of his existence in the God who loved him into existence.

Each one of us can read ourselves in the place

of Jeremiah if we allow ourselves to enter deeply into this word of God. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew *you*; before you were born, I dedicated *you*. God formed and dedicated each of us for a specific call, a specific way of serving him, a specific way of loving him. It was for that purpose that he brought us into existence.

If that is true for each of us, and it is, it is also true of every soul ever created. God foreknew and has brought into existence every soul, every human being, for a specific purpose. Therefore, no human life can truly belong entirely to another, not even to ourselves. Every life has as its very source in the generosity of a loving God. As human beings, we participate in that process of creation, but we are not its source.

The tragedy of abortion, the tragedy of claiming the right to end a life in the womb, is that this life foreknown and dedicated by God is never allowed to fulfill the purpose for which he or she was created. Although this life can never be taken from the love of God, he or she can be prevented from fulfilling the plan that God set for this person in the world and for the sake of the world.

Jeremiah fulfilled his vocation in calling the people of Israel to repentance and preparing a people to receive the Messiah when he

came. In the Gospel, Jesus is reflecting on the reading from Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah and announcing that this prophecy was now fulfilled in the hearing of those in the synagogue in Nazareth and by all of us down through the centuries. Jesus is proclaiming his vocation, the very purpose for which God the Father brought him into the world.

Each of us is also called to listen to the voice of God to understand and act upon the vocation given to us. It is the purpose for which each of us is brought into this world. But if this is true of us, it is also true of the unborn and all those whose lives have been lost through abortion.

No matter what our political thinking, allow the word of God to at least challenge our hearts with the loss of so many who were known by God before he brought them into existence. Remember that each human soul that has ever existed has been dedicated to him. Remember that every soul who ever existed was and is given a vocation for the sake of all people and for the sake of the world, and that the world is impoverished in that so many millions have been prevented from fulfilling that vocation.

Although we have been asked to spend a day for prayer and penance, maybe our readings this week are calling us to extend our prayer and penance for so deep a tragedy.

*Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.*

**Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C**  
**Jer 1:4-5, 17-19;**  
**Ps 71: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15, 17;**  
**1 Cor 12:31-13:13**  
**OR 1 Cor 13:4-13;**  
**Lk 4:21-30**

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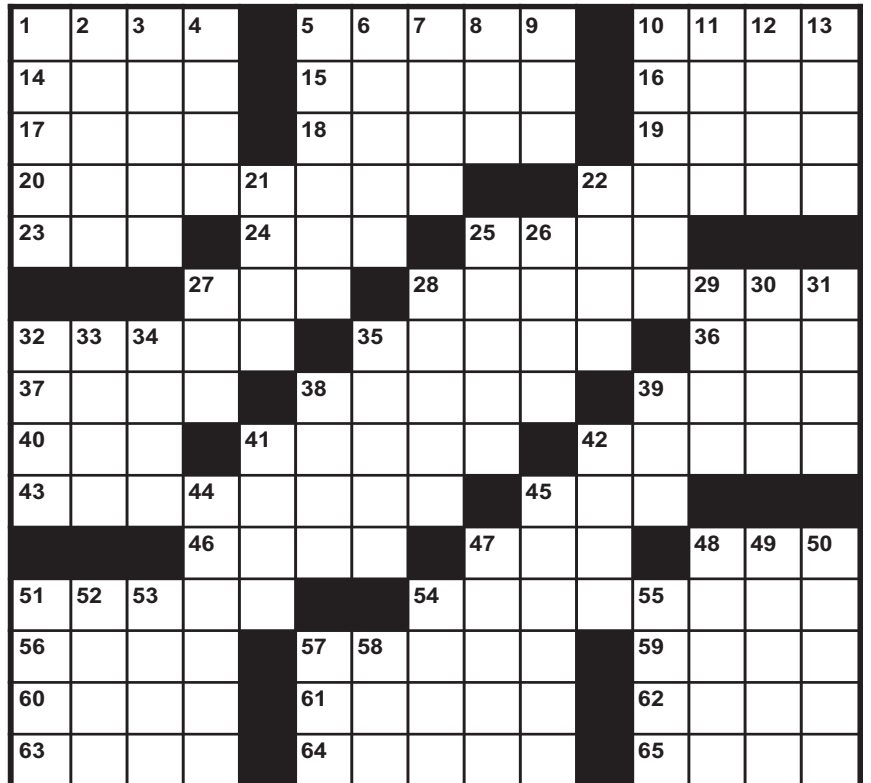
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# Pope aids victims in Philippines

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis is sending thousands of dollars in relief aid to the Philippines after a devastating typhoon struck the Southeast Asian archipelago in December. In a statement released Jan. 18, the Vatican said that in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Rai, the pope

sent “an initial contribution of 100,000 euros (\$113,868) for the relief of the population, through the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.” The distribution of the money, the Vatican said, would be coordinated through the apostolic nunciature in the Philippines.



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

**ACROSS**

- 1 Jesuits' motto (abbr.)
- 5 Russian country house
- 10 Thrill
- 14 Polish site
- 15 Leers
- 16 To him, to Pierre
- 17 Pleasing
- 18 Wuthering Heights setting
- 19 Fastens a knot
- 20 Incessant
- 22 Toothed wheels
- 23 Energy-saving light source
- 24 Some
- 25 Equipment
- 27 Benedict's number
- 28 Small gland
- 32 A knife is named after this Catholic defender of the Alamo
- 35 Clock faces
- 36 His wife was turned to salt
- 37 Commander of the army who was made king over Israel in 1 Kings
- 38 Liverpool elevators
- 39 Molten rock
- 40 Santa \_\_\_ winds
- 41 Trousers
- 42 Catholic actress and First Lady of the American Theatre
- 43 Wife of Moses
- 45 “\_\_\_ and at the hour of our death. Amen”
- 46 Sister of Rachel
- 47 OT wisdom book
- 48 Road service org.
- 51 Husband of Sarai
- 54 Abominable
- 56 Military jail
- 57 Mistake
- 59 Wading bird
- 60 \_\_\_ Brummel
- 61 Musical instrument
- 62 Inflict on
- 63 Perry's creator
- 64 Targeted (with “in on”)
- 65 Riding

- 4 Small secluded valley
- 5 Anno \_\_\_
- 6 Jesus' experience in the Garden
- 7 Overfill
- 8 Pronoun
- 9 A jawbone from this animal was sued as a weapon by Samson.
- 10 \_\_\_ Tekakwitha, “Lily of the Mohawks”
- 11 Hip bones
- 12 One who prompts
- 13 Judas betrayed Jesus with one
- 21 Jazz musician and Catholic convert Brubeck
- 22 Women
- 25 Jesus spoke of separating these from the sheep in Matthew 25
- 26 Old cloth measures
- 27 Number of apostles, in Roman numerals
- 28 Commandment that forbids killing
- 29 Adam was made from this
- 30 “...the greatest of these is \_\_\_” (1 Cor 13:13)
- 31 LAX postings
- 32 Ruth's second husband
- 33 Discontinued Dodge
- 34 Enclose in paper
- 35 Sister of Judah
- 38 Zhivago's love
- 39 The \_\_\_ of Moses
- 41 Composition in verse
- 42 Biblical instrument
- 44 Frogs or locust
- 45 Biblical hunter
- 47 Rhone tributary
- 48 Boss monk
- 49 Catholic United States Supreme Court Justice
- 50 “The Tortoise and the Hare” author
- 51 French clergyman
- 52 \_\_\_ rabbit
- 53 Monetary unit of Iran
- 54 Small drink of liquor
- 55 Verdi opera
- 57 NT epistle
- 58 “\_\_\_ Bravo”

**DOWN**

- 1 Declare a marriage invalid
- 2 The Diocese of Portland is here
- 3 Did a kitchen job



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# Ukrainian archbishop warns of Russian massacre

## Says 'reality of war is part of fabric of life'

GINA CHRISTIAN  
Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA — Ukrainian-American Catholics warn a Russian military buildup on Ukraine's border poses a grave threat not only to that nation, but to Europe and democracy itself.

"It is a question of life or death for thousands, who will be massacred by an escalated invasion," said Archbishop Borys Gudziak, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia. He said he expects 3 million to 6 million refugees to flee to Western Europe.

Speaking Jan. 16 by telephone with CatholicPhilly.com, the news website of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the archbishop described Ukraine as a "bulwark of freedom" against what he called an authoritarian regime that is "moving toward totalitarianism" under Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"If Russia succeeds in subjugating Ukraine, chances are the process will continue in the Baltic countries, Central Europe and beyond," Archbishop Gudziak said.

For Ukrainians, "the reality of war ... is not a new story," Archbishop Gudziak said. "Our priests (there) have been burying war dead regularly for over eight years."

### Cybersecurity attacks prelude to military action

Eugene Luciw, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, echoed the archbishop's concerns.

Putin's demands — including that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet states — show that he wants "to reestablish the sphere of influence the Soviet Union had (by bringing) back the rest of Eastern Europe," said Luciw, a member of Presentation of Our Lord Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

In 2014, Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, with Russian-backed separatists proclaiming "people's republics" in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. The move came 23 years after Ukraine gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union, of which it had been a part.

Clashes, shelling and sniper attacks have become common in eastern Ukraine since the incursion. The United Nations reported nearly 1.5 million internally displaced people in the country in 2021, with more than 3,350 civilian deaths and more than 7,000 civilian injuries between April 2014 and March 2020.

In recent months, about 100,000 Russian troops have amassed at Ukraine's border, with as many as 175,000 poised for a military operation in the coming weeks, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

A Jan. 14 cybersecurity attack, regarded by observers of the region as a prelude to military action, crippled approximately 70 Ukrainian government websites with an onscreen message warning users to "be afraid and expect the worst."

The breach, which occurred hours after diplomatic talks between Moscow and Western allies stalled, showed signs of Russian involvement, said Kyiv's state security service.

### Concern about religious communities' safety

The online assaults are far from unprecedented, Archbishop Gudziak said.

"The energy grid, businesses and political institutions have been subjected to malware and cyber warfare," he explained. "And all this be-



Ukrainian snipers take part in military exercises in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, Jan. 17, 2022. Ukrainian-American Catholics warn that a Russian military buildup on Ukraine's border poses a grave threat not only to that nation, but to Europe. (CNS photo/Anna Kudriavtseva, Reuters)

cause Ukraine wants to be free, and Ukrainians insist on their self-determination."

Although "the reality of war has become part of the fabric of life," he said, "the prospect of escalation into war is leading people into a kind of deeper anxiety."

The U.S. provinces of the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great released a statement that expressed "great concern" for the safety of 165 members of the order's Ukrainian-based Holy Trinity province.

"We are equally concerned for a number of other religious communities in Ukraine," the congregation said.

Leaders of Manor College, a Catholic institution in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, released a similar statement.

"The mounting Russian forces on Ukraine's border have the community throughout Manor College very concerned for the safety and well-being of families and individuals in Ukraine as well as the peoples of all of Eastern Europe," Jonathan Peri, president, said in the statement.

Economic and political sanctions against Russia are not necessarily sufficient to deter "what appears to be an imminent, large-scale invasion of Ukraine," Peri wrote. "Although we see the wisdom in responsive transactional diplomacy, it is imperative that the United States stand firm in communicating and enforcing its resolve to protect the sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine."

Former college trustee Leonard Mazur told CatholicPhilly.com his family members in Western Ukraine feel as if they are "living with a comet about to collide with (them)."

### Putin rejects 'basic Christian anthropology'

Archbishop Gudziak described the logic behind Russian aggression as "quite simple."

"Ukraine is one of the democratic success stories after the fall of communism. And a democratic Ukraine with a free press, a growing economy, vibrant ecumenical relations, a political system that is modified by the vote of its citizens, and which is found on the borders of Russia, is a great threat to the system that President Putin has set up," he said.

As "a witness to the freedom that Putin has crushed in Russia," the archbishop said, Ukraine offers a visible alternative to a system that, "while not classical communism," nonetheless "rejects basic Christian anthropology" and "the teaching of who is a human being."

"Our faith, our Church teaching, the holy Scriptures, which are the basis of Western democracy, have inculcated in us a deep awareness of the fact that we are children of God," he said.

That dignity "cannot become a function of some goal," he continued. "You can't kill millions of people leading humanity to some kind of utopian future, as the communist system has promised."

Paradoxically, said Archbishop Gudziak, the "colonialist, imperialist plan" of Putin is being endorsed by the Russian Orthodox Church, with which Mikhail Gorbachev restored relations in 1988 while he was general secretary of the Soviet Union's Communist Party.

### 'Fed a fable'

Putin himself professes to be devoutly Orthodox, but Archbishop Gudziak said the alliance between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian state is essentially "a fight for grandeur and a fight for territory" based on a nostalgic desire for "past imperial glory," both "political and ecclesiastical."

Archbishop Gudziak also said the Russian people themselves are "being fed a fable" that Western nations seek to humiliate Russia, which in turn must "flex (its) muscle" and "recover what it has lost," with Ukraine being "goal No. 1."

The propaganda is also designed to "sow doubt in the minds and hearts" of Westerners, causing them to dismiss the Ukrainian crisis as too complicated to understand, said the archbishop, urging Christians in particular to "look at reality in light of the Gospel and know the facts."

Archbishop Gudziak stressed prayer is crucial in resolving the Ukraine crisis.

"We Christians recognize that God is the Lord of history and his grace has effected miracles in human affairs," he said. "The crumbling of the Soviet Union 30 years ago is one example. That happened not through war, not through armed conflict. It happened peacefully and, I would say, miraculously."

Basilian Sister Ann Laszok, director of religious education in the Ukrainian Catholic Church's Eparchy of St. Josaphat, based in Parma, Ohio, said she prays "constantly for all our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are facing the threat of aggression against their sovereignty and independence."

Her prayers transcend all borders.

"I also pray for the aggressors, that they may see the light of Christ and de-escalate in order to reinstate peace to all in eastern Ukraine," Sister Laszok said.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond** seeks an assistant digital editor for its Office of Communications. The assistant digital editor is part of the multimedia communications team, to include The Catholic Virginian, and will be responsible for supporting the editor, maintaining editorial content of the diocese's publications across digital and print media, and assisting in the growth of the newspaper's daily digital presence. The assistant digital editor is involved in advancing the engagement of the Catholic audience and readership across the diocese.

A bachelor's degree in English/journalism/mass communications or related field required, and three or more years related experience in the print or communications industry, with diocesan and/or general Catholic press experience preferred. Strong understanding of digital journalism, best practices and the ability to keep abreast of emerging trends.

The successful candidate will be a strong communicator — interpersonally and in writing — and a collaborator. Orientation to detail, ability to manage time, plan, organize and manage projects are a must, as is commitment to maintain confidentiality.

Proficiency using Microsoft Office and AP Stylebook required, and proficiency in Adobe software (InDesign, Photoshop, Acrobat Professional) and Catholic News Service Stylebook is desired. A practicing Catholic with working knowledge of Church structure and Catholic Church teaching is required. The position requires some evening and weekend hours, with possible travel throughout the diocese.

Qualified candidates should forward a cover letter, résumé with links to samples of your work, and completed diocesan application to Kelly Shumate, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. Email [jobs@richmond-diocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmond-diocese.org). Fax 804-622-5163.

**The Diocese of Richmond** is seeking an associate director, Office of Social Ministries and Respect Life. The associate director provides a wide range of coordination support relating to social ministries, Respect Life, Pro-Life Initiatives and prison ministry.

The associate director works in unison with the office director to set and effectively communicate a comprehensive vision for social ministries and Respect Life across the diocese. Provides training for parish staffs and ministry leaders and fosters collaboration through the vicariates

and deaneries. Master's degree in theology, pastoral ministry or a related field is preferred. Minimum of three years of professional experience in ministry is required, preferably in an area of Catholic Social Teaching in a parish setting. Knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching tenets and ability to develop and implement programs to support various communities is required.

Must demonstrate sensitivity to the service population's cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, decision-making, problem-solving skills, the ability to work in a fast-paced, changing environment and meet deadlines. Interpersonal skills in communication, collaboration, group process, and the ability to maintain confidentiality are required. Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with an understanding of Catholic Church teaching and Church structure.

Regular office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday through Friday). Occasional evening and/or weekend work is required in the Pastoral Center or off-site at an event as needed. Interested candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application (available on the diocesan website) to Kelly Shumate, HR Coordinator, at [jobs@richmond-diocese.org](mailto:jobs@richmond-diocese.org)

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond** seeks a human resources officer to oversee the offices of Human Resources, Safe Environment, Facilities Management and Copy Services. The human resources officer is responsible for providing leadership in developing and executing human resources strategy in support of the overall mission of the Church, to include organizational and performance management, leadership development, staff orientation/training, recruitment, payroll/HRIS, compensation and benefits, employee relations, employment law, and policies and procedures/personnel administration. The human resources officer serves as chief HR consultant for the Pastoral Center, parishes, schools and other agencies in matters pertaining to human resources.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond has retained Higher Talent Executive Search to manage the recruitment process. Interested candidates can find a detailed prospectus on the position and learn how to apply at <https://bit.ly/3njODUY>. Candidates will complete comprehensive reference and background checks.

## SHORTTAKES

**Holy Hour for Vocations**, Monday, Feb. 7, 6 p.m., St. Andrew, Roanoke. Evening will include exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a short talk, Benediction and presentation of the vocations cross. Families are encouraged to attend. For further information about this evening and the vocations cross, call the diocesan Vocations Office, 804-359-5661.

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](mailto:tours@albastours.com) or (804) 298-4035. \*Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited. \*\*COVID-19 policies available upon request.

**Join Father John David Ramsey and Father Danny Cogut** on a spiritual journey to the places of St. John Paul II, Prague and Vienna, the week of Sept. 18-30. This could be the wonderful spiritual opportunity you've been waiting for. Total cost per person for airfare, lodging and meals is \$4,399 double occupancy. Reservations are due Feb. 28 with a deposit of \$500 per person. Your choice of airport: Dulles or Charlotte. For detailed information and registration form, contact Larry Cogut at [LCOGUT@gmail.com](mailto:LCOGUT@gmail.com) or call 703-635-9243.

**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/STECC\\_Bulletin](https://bit.ly/STECC_Bulletin) or contact the parish office by emailing Mary Rose Purcell at [mpurcell@stelizcc.org](mailto:mpurcell@stelizcc.org) or by calling 804-329-4599. If no one answers, leave a message with your information.

**Polish Food to Go:** St. Mary's Knights of Columbus Council 14129 will be having a Polish Food to Go event to benefit Virginia Knights of Columbus Charities Inc. Meal includes Polish kielbasa/sauerkraut, stuffed cabbage, bigos (Polish hunter's stew) and kolachki. \$20 per meal. Safely precooked, frozen and prepackaged food with proper reheating instructions. Online sale is underway at [www.stmarysrichmond.org](http://www.stmarysrichmond.org). Check the upcoming events area on the St. Mary homepage. Pick-up is Saturday, Feb. 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. outside the parish hall side door. No need to leave your car; just pull up in line for food order.

**New Creation Community's series** on spiritual warfare Sunday, Feb. 6, 3:30 p.m., 1600 Elbow Road, Chesapeake, or via Zoom. Topic: "The Whole Armor of God." For upcoming dates and topics visit [www.NccCharismaticCommunity.org](http://www.NccCharismaticCommunity.org). New Creation is a private association of the faithful in the Diocese of Richmond.

## Pope: Look for signs of God's love

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — God likes to intervene behind the scenes and without fanfare, always ready to help and lift people up, Pope Francis said. "And then, if we are attentive to these 'signs,' we will be conquered by his love, and we will become his disciples," he said to visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square Jan. 16 for his Sunday Angelus address.

The pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading (Jn 2:1-11) of the wedding at Cana and how the first of Jesus' signs was transforming water into wine. In the Gospel, a "sign" is "a clue that reveals God's love, that does not call attention to the power of the action, but to the love that caused it," the pope said. "It teaches us something about God's love that is always near, tender and compassionate."

Jesus' first sign was in the middle of a wedding feast, when a couple faced a huge problem on

the most important day of their lives when they ran out of wine. Aware of the problem, Mary discreetly brought it to Jesus' attention, and "he intervened without fanfare, almost without making it obvious. Everything took place reservedly, everything took place 'behind the scenes,'" when Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water and then it became wine, the pope said.

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# El Papa en el Ángelus: no descuidemos la oración

POR VATICAN NEWS

La oración abre al cielo, da oxígeno a la vida y hace ver las cosas “de modo más amplio”. Es “el modo”, según el Papa, “de dejar que Dios actúe en nosotros, para captar lo que Él quiere comunicarnos incluso en las situaciones más difíciles”, y tener así “la fuerza de ir adelante”.

Puntualmente al mediodía de este 9 de enero el Papa Francisco se asomó a la ventana del Palacio Apostólico Vaticano para rezar junto con los fieles presentes en la Plaza de San Pedro la oración mariana del Ángelus. Comentando la Liturgia del día, que muestra la escena con la que comienza la vida pública de Jesús, el Papa Francisco invitó a detenerse en un punto importante, a saber, en el momento en que Jesús recibe el Bautismo: el texto – señaló– dice que “estaba orando”.

*“Nos hace bien contemplar esto: Jesús reza. ¿Pero cómo? Él, que es el Señor, el Hijo de Dios, ¿reza como nosotros? Sí, Jesús – lo repiten muchas veces los Evangelios – pasa mucho tiempo en oración: al inicio de cada día, a menudo de noche, antes de tomar decisiones importantes... Su oración es un diálogo vivo, una relación íntima con el Padre. Así, en el Evangelio de hoy podemos ver los “dos movimientos” de la vida de Jesús: por una parte, desciende hacia nosotros en las aguas del Jordán; por otra, eleva su mirada y su corazón orando al Padre.”*

## La oración es la clave que abre el corazón al Señor

Es esta una “gran enseñanza” para nosotros, señaló el Santo Padre: inmersos “en los problemas de la vida y en muchas situaciones intrincadas, llamados a afrontar momentos y elecciones difíciles que nos abaten”, si no queremos permanecer aplastados, “tenemos necesidad de elevar todo hacia lo alto”. Y así, la oración, “que no es una vía de escape, no es un rito mágico ni una repetición de cantilenas aprendidas de memoria”, es “el modo”, según el Papa, “de dejar que Dios actúe en nosotros, para



El Papa Francisco bautiza a un bebé durante la Misa que marca la fiesta del Bautismo del Señor en la Capilla Sixtina en el Vaticano el 9 de enero de 2022. El Papa bautizó a 16 bebés. (Foto del CNS/Vatican Media)

captar lo que Él quiere comunicarnos incluso en las situaciones más difíciles”, y, de este modo, “tener la fuerza de ir adelante”.

*“La oración nos ayuda porque nos une a Dios, nos abre al encuentro con Él. Sí, la oración es la clave que abre el corazón al Señor. Es dialogar con Dios, es escuchar su Palabra, es adorar: estar en silencio encomendándole lo que vivimos. Y a veces también es gritar a Él como Job, desahogándose con Él.”*

## La oración da oxígeno a la vida y abre al cielo

La oración “da oxígeno a la vida”, aseguró Francisco, además de hacernos ver las cosas “de modo más amplio”.

*“Sobre todo, nos permite tener la misma experiencia de Jesús en el Jordán: nos hace sentir hijos amados del Padre. También a nosotros, cuando rezamos, el Padre dice, como a Jesús en el Evan-*

*gelio: “Tú eres mi hijo, el amado” (cfr. v. 22). Nuestro ser hijos comenzó el día del Bautismo, que nos ha inmerso en Cristo y, miembros del Pueblo de Dios, nos ha hecho convertirnos en hijos amados del Padre. ¡No olvidemos la fecha de nuestro Bautismo!”*

## No descuidemos la oración

Antes de concluir el Papa Francisco dejó para la reflexión de los fieles algunas preguntas: “¿cómo va mi oración? ¿Rezo por costumbre, desgano, sólo recitando algunas fórmulas? ¿O cultivo la intimidad con Dios, dialogo con Él, escucho su Palabra?”

Animando a que, entre las muchas cosas que hacemos, “no descuidemos la oración”, pidió que le dediquemos tiempo, sugiriendo que, además de leer el Evangelio todos los días, “utilicemos breves invocaciones para repetir a menudo” porque la oración “abre al cielo”. A la Madre, Virgen orante, que “ha hecho de su vida un canto de alabanza a Dios”, el Papa invitó a dirigirse en oración.

## Desde el escritorio de Daniel Villar:

La experiencia de la fe en la comunidad hispana es una que se manifiesta fielmente por medio de los sacramentos y es rodeada por lo sacramental en la vida diaria. Es una que es vivencial y crece a través de los momentos con Dios en la oración y en el servicio. Hace un par de años atrás tuve la oportunidad de presentar algunos líderes de las diferentes parroquias de la diócesis en nuestra página del Catholic Virginian. Algunos eran catequistas y/o



ministros apenas empezando a desarrollar sus vocaciones mientras que otros líderes ya laboraban, con fe y obra, en la viña del Señor por muchos años. Este año tendremos la oportunidad de leer las palabras conmovedoras de estos diferentes líderes y poder ser inspirados por sus experiencias de fe. Cada mes un líder dará una reflexión breve con un mensaje inspirador de la vida en Cristo como parte de una serie de reflexiones que culminarán con una reflexión y oración en diciembre del

2022. Espero que estas hermanas y hermanos le inspiren en su camino con Jesús y María y que podrán crecer en el amor y la sabiduría de Dios.

¡Que Dios le bendiga!  
Ad Jesum Per Mariam,  
Daniel Villar  
Director  
Oficina de Ministerios Étnicos

# Doggone it, read pope's words on pets in context

CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Context is everything. But sometimes Pope Francis assumes people know him and the context of his words.

When they don't, hackles are raised.

One case in point has garnered huge publicity — again: Pope Francis' view on couples having pampered pets instead of children.

The nervous laughter in the Vatican audience hall Jan. 5 should have tipped him off that he was heading for a mishap.

Speaking at his general audience about the importance of parenthood, both literal and spiritual, Pope Francis again brought up his concern about a "demographic winter," especially in Europe, where birthrates are consistently below death rates.

The pope spoke about the suffering of couples who cannot have children and about the bravery of those who choose to adopt.

But what stuck in many people's craw was when he said that "many couples do not have children because they do not want to, or they have just one — but they have two dogs, two cats. Yes, dogs and cats take the place of children."

When people laughed, he responded, "Yes, it's funny, I understand, but it is the reality. But this denial of fatherhood or motherhood diminishes us, it takes away our humanity."

In his audience talk and when discussing the "demographic winter" Dec. 26, the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis mentioned the practical problems declining birthrates have for a nation, especially when it does not have enough young workers paying taxes to support the pensions and health care of the elderly.

The issue has long been a concern for Pope Francis, who has made it clear he does



**Pope Francis greets dog owners during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in this Sept. 19, 2018, file photo. The pope is in the doghouse with some pet lovers over recent comments about some couples preferring to have pets rather than children.** (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

not believe Catholic couples need to have as many children as possible, but he does believe countries and companies should enact policies that make it possible for couples to have the children they long for.

But the idea of some couples being selfish has been part of his discourse, too. In fact, in "Fratelli Tutti" in 2020, he wrote, "a decline in the birthrate, which leads to an aging of the population, together with the relegation of the elderly to a sad and lonely existence, is a

subtle way of stating that it is all about us, that our individual concerns are the only thing that matters."

And, seeming to pick on those who would rather dote on their dogs or cats is not new for him either.

The fur also flew in June 2014 after Pope Francis preached at an early morning Mass in the chapel of his residence with couples celebrating big wedding anniversaries.

Again, he spoke of the pain of couples unable to have children and of the suffering of parents whose child is ill. But that didn't cause alarm.

According to the Vatican newspaper, the pope told the couples that "Jesus does not like marriages in which couples do not want children, in which they want to remain fruitless," who think "not having children is better, this way you can travel and see the world, you can have a house in the country and relax!"

Such a culture, the newspaper quoted the pope as saying, suggests "it is more comfortable to have a little dog and two cats" to love, but at end of such a marriage, "old age arrives in solitude, with the bitterness of awful loneliness: it is fruitless."

Speaking to reporters returning to Rome with him from Panama in 2019, he said he saw something there that he didn't see in Europe. "They hold up their children and say, 'This is my victory, this is my future, this is my pride!' In the demographic winter we are experiencing in Europe — below zero in Italy — this should make us think: What is my pride? Tourism, a villa, a small dog or raising a child?"


Still, he has praised some attention to pets, like at the chrism Mass in 2020 when he lauded priests who are so close to their people that they even know their dogs' names.




## Happy Catholic Schools Week!

CCC is proud to partner with Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Richmond. We are thankful for the dedicated parents, staff, and educators who nurture and build a foundation of faith and service in tomorrow's leaders.

[www.cccofva.org](http://www.cccofva.org)






# ANNUAL SCOUT MASS

**2PM Sunday, March 13, 2022**  
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**Richmond**

If your scout is interested in attending, please contact the Office for Evangelization at [scouting@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:scouting@richmonddiocese.org)



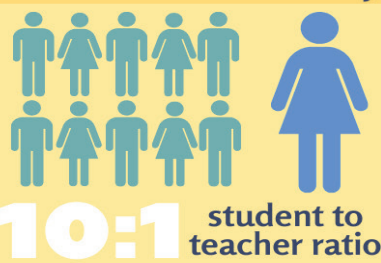
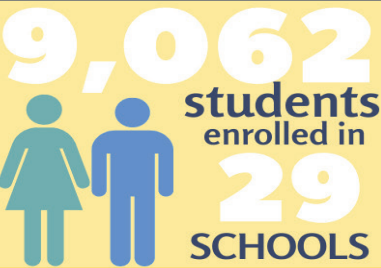
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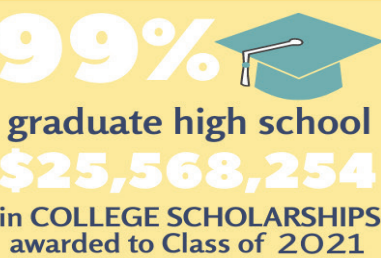
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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Richmond saw a 10 percent surge in enrollment this school year! This is a direct result of how well our schools responded to the challenges of the pandemic led by their devotion to our students and community. Teachers, principals, and staff are working tirelessly this school year to provide in-person instruction and meet the needs of all our students. Teachers partner with parents uphold our high standards of learning while having fun and growing in our faith every day, too.

National Catholic Schools Week is January 30—February 5 and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our schools. This year, we are especially grateful to our school communities for their fortitude and adaptability. We invite you to explore the benefits of a Catholic education, reconnect with your alma mater or share your talents by volunteering. As we reflect on our accomplishments, we also look to the future and how we will continue living our mission. I am excited to share two new initiatives with you.

## ST. VINCENT DE PAUL VIRTUAL ACADEMY

This year we fulfilled our vision to offer a virtual learning option providing a rigorous, faith-based curriculum built on Catholic principles. St. Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy (SVVA) serves students in grades 8-12 across the diocese, state and country. This initiative makes a Catholic education available to families who seek a dynamic, online learning option to meet their child's learning needs or who are not near a traditional brick and mortar school.



SVVA students attend live classes including real time interaction with teachers and collaboration with peers using innovative online education platforms and conferencing cameras in each classroom. This unique virtual learning experience brings students together to enhance their academic, social, and spiritual growth. We invite you to learn more about SVVA and share this dynamic learning opportunity with students who could benefit from an online Catholic education.

Named for the patron saint of the diocese, Saint Vincent de Paul Virtual Academy operates under the guidance of administration and staff from Peninsula Catholic High School in Newport News and is managed by the Office of Catholic Schools.

## LEARN TO LEAD CAMPAIGN

We are embracing a bold vision to raise \$30 million to extend the extraordinary legacy of our 23 diocesan schools serving families from Bristol to Roanoke, Virginia Beach to Charlottesville, and from Danville to Richmond. Together these schools shape the lives of more than 7,400 young people – helping them realize their greater purpose – succeeding, leading and serving God, their families, churches, and communities.



Our goal is to raise \$30 million to prepare student leaders in the Diocese of Richmond over the next decade. Crucial initiatives will fund local priorities at our schools, enhance financial aid, support economically-disadvantaged schools, develop and retain outstanding teachers and promote Catholic education to a new generation of students.

The cornerstone of the campaign is the local initiatives championed by individual schools to meet specific facility and programmatic priorities. The Learn to Lead Campaign provides the chance to make a truly transformational impact in how we fulfill our mission as a Catholic Schools system. Donors have already begun to make very generous pledges at both the diocesan-wide and local school level. Will you join us to help our students learn to succeed, serve and Learn to Lead?

I am grateful for the teachers, staff, parents, parishioners, and volunteers who support our schools. May we all strive to live in active service of Jesus and his mission as we nationally join together during Catholic Schools Week and always. I continue to pray each day for the health and well-being of all those in our schools, their families and our entire community.

Yours in Christ,  
Kelly Lazzara  
Superintendent of Schools



## WHERE DO LEADERS COME FROM? Are they simply born that way? Is leadership taught or formed by experience?

We've seen firsthand how a Catholic education helps students achieve their academic potential. And that training does more than prepare them for a successful career. It transforms boys and girls into men and women who live generously, serve others humbly and walk spirit-empowered lives. It is a sacred responsibility and we need your help to do it.

**Join us in investing in Catholic students as they Learn to Lead.**



## THE FUTURE ISN'T WRITTEN BUT IT CAN BE SHAPED.

- \$12 MILLION** FUND PRIORITIES AT DIOCESAN SCHOOLS
  - \$7 MILLION** FINANCIAL AID FOR FAMILIES
  - \$6 MILLION** TEACHER & LEADER DEVELOPMENT
  - \$4 MILLION** SUPPORT FOR MISSION SCHOOLS
  - \$1 MILLION** ENHANCED MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT
- \$30 MILLION**

**LEARNTOLEADCAMPAIGN.ORG**



“I see the ministry of Catholic Schools as more important than ever – offering parents a great option to nurture the academic achievement of their children while also forming them in Catholic teaching, values and morals that will guide their life.”

— BISHOP BARRY C. KNESTOUT

“Our children love attending a faith-based school and have commented that starting the day with a prayer and being able to have faith be part of their day is comforting.”

— Mary Ellen and Patrick Elias, Charlottesville Catholic parents

Charlottesville Catholic



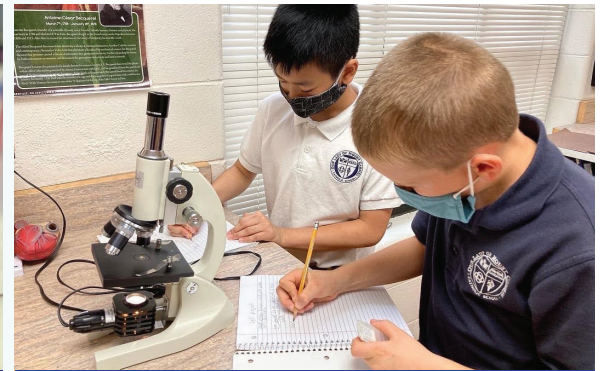
All Saints



Catholic High



Christ the King



Our Lady of Mt. Carmel



“We were drawn to Lourdes for its warm and inclusive environment. Both kids love all of their classes and have been lucky to have great teachers over the years who are truly rooting for their success and happiness.”

— Powell Family, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

Our Lady of Lourdes



Benedictine



Blessed Sacrament Huguenot



Cristo Rey

LEARN TO SUCCEED



*"In addition to receiving an excellent college-prep education, I love that my son is genuinely cared for by all at PCHS: teachers, administration, staff, coaches, and fellow students. He is encouraged, and supported, to grow not just academically, but spiritually, emotionally, and as a leader. My son is known and nurtured here. The benefits of this educational experience are unrivaled!"*

— Jennifer Gates, Peninsula Catholic High School parent

Peninsula Catholic



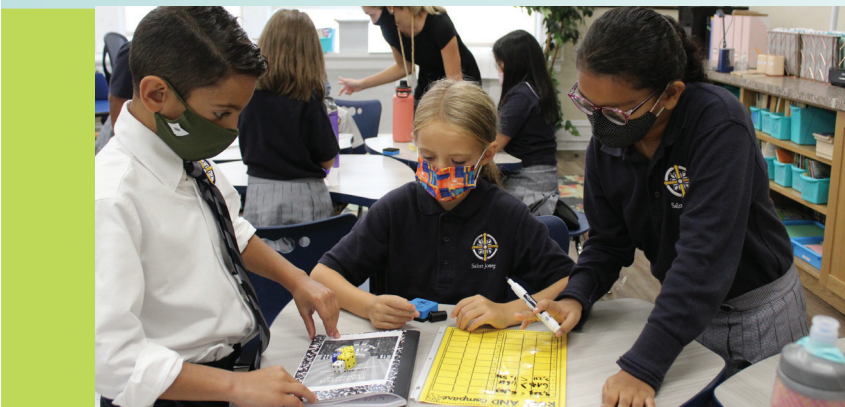
Portsmouth Catholic



Roanoke Catholic



Saint Gertrude



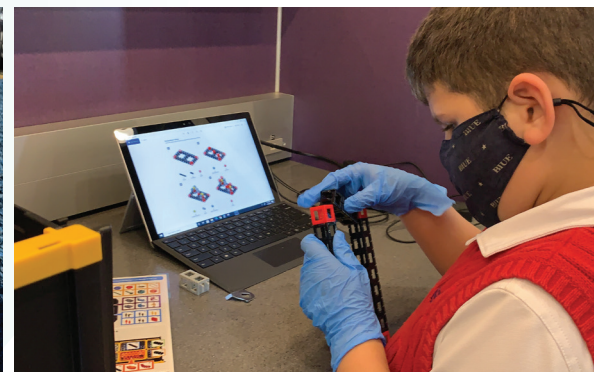
*"I am so grateful that my teachers have helped me not only with academics but also with my ability to find the virtues within me in order to meet the challenges that lay ahead."*

— McKenna Wallace, Saint Joseph Catholic School student

Saint Joseph



Saint Bridget



Sacred Heart



*"Educating isn't a profession but an attitude, a way of being. In order to educate you must go out of yourselves and be amidst the young, accompanying them in the stages of their growth, standing beside them."*

— POPE FRANCIS

LEARN TO SERVE



“We are forming great students who will learn to succeed, and not only for themselves. We want our students to learn to become leaders in their peer groups, families, churches and communities.”

— KELLY LAZZARA, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

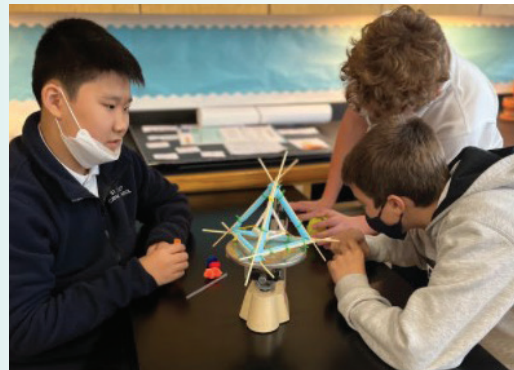
“From the very first phone call to the school to discuss application and admissions, it felt as though arms were being wrapped around us, welcoming us into a community we could never imagine. Suddenly, each of our children were valued, loved, and encouraged in school by staff, teachers, and their classmates. As parents, we could not have designed a better education and environment for our children. It just feels like home to us, to our kids, and I only wish we’d sent them sooner!” — Bethanie Nice, St. John the Apostle Catholic School parent



St. John the Apostle



St. Anne



St. Benedict



St. Edward



“St. Mary’s played a critical part in my development and helped to create a foundation of faith, integrity, and hard work that I have relied upon throughout my life

— Tim Legler, St. Mary’s Catholic School alumnus & ESPN Analyst

St. Mary’s



Saint Gregory the Great



St. John Neumann

LEARN TO LEAD

*"From the day our children started Pre-K, [Saint Mary Star of the Sea] has laid the foundation for their love for learning, for their love of God, and the kind, respectful kids they have become. We feel the teachers and staff have inspired them to do their best, to treat their classmates with respect, to work hard, to create goals for themselves and exceed those goals!"*

— Meghan Minkoff, Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School

### Saint Mary Star of the Sea



St. Matthew's



St. Pius X

*"Faith, learning, community, and service are the threads that knit our school together. Our school is firmly rooted in faith and students become and live what they believe."*

— Candace Seidensticker, Saint Patrick Catholic School parent

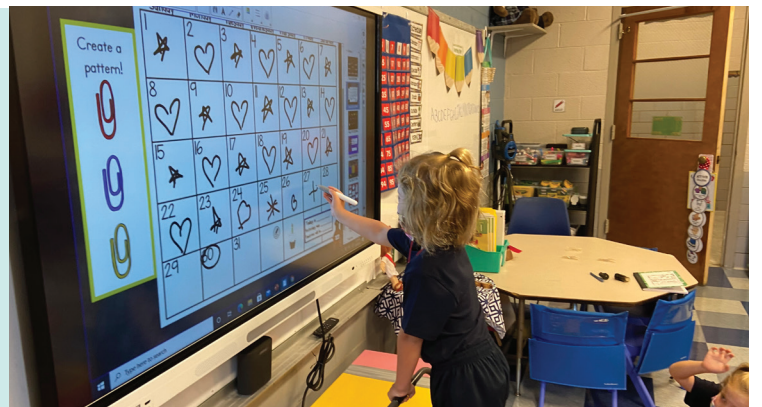
### Saint Patrick



*"Yes, the academics are strong. Equally as important, though, is the genuine love and care that is felt by the students and families. This is a school where every single individual is invested in your child and works toward their success every day."*

— Rebecca C., Star of the Sea Catholic School parent

### Star of the Sea



Walsingham Academy

*"When you positively impact the life of a child, you positively impact the lives of every person that child will encounter throughout their entire lives."*

— MARGARET KEIGHTLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND & MCMAHON PARATER SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION




# THE FUTURE ISN'T WRITTEN. BUT IT CAN BE SHAPED.


# DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE

Today's challenges are met with opportunities to create innovative solutions, build resilience and develop compassion to prepare our students for the future. Discover how a Catholic education can make a difference in your child's life.

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**All Saints Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
3418 Noble Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23222  
804.329.7524  
allsaintsric.org




**Benedictine College Preparatory**  
9th-12th grade, Boys  
12829 River Road  
Richmond, VA 23238  
804.708.9500  
benedictinecollegeprep.org




**Blessed Sacrament Huguenot School**  
PK2-12th grade, Co-Ed  
2501 Academy Road  
Powhatan, VA, 23139  
804.598.4211  
bshknights.org




**Cristo Rey Richmond High School**  
9th-12th grade, Co-Ed  
304 North Sheppard Street  
Richmond, VA 23221  
804.447.4704  
cristoreyrichmond.org



**Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
8250 Woodman Road  
Richmond, VA 23228  
804.262.1770  
LourdesRVA.org



**Saint Benedict Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
3100 Grove Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23221  
804.254.8850  
saintbenedictschool.org




**Saint Bridget Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
6011 York Road  
Richmond, VA 23226  
804.288.1994  
saintbridget.org




**St. Edward-Epiphany School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
10701 W. Huguenot Road  
Richmond, VA 23235  
804.272.2881  
seeschool.com




**Saint Gertrude High School**  
9th-12th grade, Girls  
12829 River Road  
Richmond, VA 23238  
804.708.9500  
saintgertrude.org




**Saint Joseph Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
123 Franklin Street  
Petersburg, VA 23803  
804.732.3931  
saintjosephschool.com




**St. Mary's Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
9501 Gayton Road  
Richmond, VA 23229  
804.740.1048  
saintmary.org



Serving students  
in Grades 8-12  
throughout the  
Diocese of Richmond




**Charlottesville Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
1205 Pen Park Road  
Charlottesville, VA 22901  
434.964.0400  
cvillecatholic.org




**Roanoke Catholic School**  
PK3-12th grade, Co-Ed  
621 North Jefferson Street  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
540.982.3532  
roanokecatholic.com




Scan to visit our website



**Sacred Heart Catholic School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
540 Central Boulevard  
Danville, VA 24541  
434.793.2656  
sheartschool.com




**St. Anne Catholic School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
580 Oakview Avenue  
Bristol, VA 24201  
276.669.0048  
stanneschoolbristol.org




**St. John Neumann Academy**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
3600 Yellow Sulphur Rd.  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
540.552.7562  
sjnacademy.org




**Catholic High School**  
9th-12th grade, Co-Ed  
4552 Princess Anne Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
757.467.2881  
chsvb.org



**Christ the King Catholic School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
3401 Tidewater Drive  
Norfolk, VA 23505  
757.625.4951  
ctkparish.org




**Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
52 Harpersville Road  
Newport News VA 23601  
757.596.2754  
olmc-school.com




**Peninsula Catholic High School**  
8th-12th grade, Co-Ed  
600 Harpersville Road  
Newport News, VA 23601  
757.596.7247  
peninsulacatholic.org




**Portsmouth Catholic Regional School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
2301 Oregon Avenue  
Portsmouth, VA 23701  
757.488.6744  
portsmouthcatholic.net



**Saint Gregory the Great Catholic School**  
JK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
5343 Virginia Beach Blvd.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
757.497.1811  
sggsvb.org




**St. John the Apostle Catholic School**  
PreK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
1968 B Sandbridge Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456  
757.821.1100  
sjavb.org




**Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
14 N. Willard Avenue  
Hampton, VA 23663  
757.723.6358  
saintmarystarofthesea.com




**St. Matthew's Catholic School**  
PK2-8th grade, Co-Ed  
3316 Sandra Lane  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
757.420.2455  
smsvb.net




**Saint Patrick Catholic School**  
PK-8th grade, Co-Ed  
1000 Bolling Avenue  
Norfolk, VA 23508  
757.440.5500  
stpcs.org



**St. Pius X Catholic School**  
PreK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
7800 Halprin Drive  
Norfolk, VA 23518  
757.588.6171  
stpiusxschoolva.org



**Star of the Sea Catholic School**  
PK3-8th grade, Co-Ed  
309 15th Street  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454  
757.428.8400  
sosschool.org



**Walsingham Academy**  
PK-12th grade, Co-Ed  
1100 Jamestown Road  
Williamsburg, VA 23187  
757.259.1430  
walsingham.org



**EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE**  
Schedule a tour to learn more!  
RichmondCatholicSchools.org

