



The Catholic Virginian

Serving the People of the Diocese of Richmond for 90 years

Vol. 97, No. 9

www.catholicvirginian.org

February 21, 2022

Adoring, celebrating Eucharist

Right: Bishop Barry C. Knestout carries the Eucharist, Saturday, Feb. 12, during eucharistic adoration for participants in the Diocese of Richmond's Diocesan Youth Conference at the Richmond Convention Center. Below: Students from William and Mary were among more than 400 college students from nine Catholic campus ministries in the diocese attending the College Summit and celebrating Mass on Saturday morning at the event. More photos on Page 3. (Photos/Vy Barto)



Vaccine mandates dividing Church

Coercion vs. morality source of disagreement among faithful

SIMON CALDWELL
Catholic News Service

A parishioner of a church in Western Australia captured the moment when police interrupted Mass to demand that five people who were not wearing face masks comply with the law.

The woman who photographed the raid at St. Bernadette's Church in suburban Perth put the picture on Facebook. It was featured in a Feb. 4 report by 7News.com, an Australian broadcaster, and it has been viewed all over the world.

The scene resembled the moment when police in London halted a Good Friday service in 2021 after a complaint that COVID-19 regulations were not being met, telling more than 130 worshippers that the gathering was "unlawful" and threatening them with fines and arrest if they did not go home.

Since then, the situation has radically changed in England with the last remaining pandemic restrictions — including social distancing and compulsory wearing of masks in indoor public settings — were to be removed by the end of February. There will be a full return to work, free mixing of children in schools without face masks, freedom of travel, no vaccine passports, no vaccine mandates and no requirement to self-isolate

after a positive test for COVID-19.

The English bishops, in their latest guidance, have suggested that face masks "may continue" to be worn by people in churches, if they wish, but the practice must continue in Wales and Scotland because of differ-

Church teaching does not authorize coercive medication. In its 2020 document, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith noted a vaccine "is not, as a rule, a moral obligation ... and must be voluntary."

ent government restrictions there.

Such progress has been possible partly because of the wave of the comparatively mild but more infectious omicron variant of COVID-19 supplanting earlier and more deadly variants, and also because of the success of a mass vaccination program.

Catholics divided

The idea that vaccination is the way out of

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The Catholic Virginian
7800 Carousell Lane
Richmond, VA 23294

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Let Lent be a time for listening, reflecting, praying



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

One of the additional benefits we have in Lent this year is the universal Church's focus on synodality — the process taking place worldwide leading up to the 2023 World Synod of Bishops.

There are parallels between Lent and the synod processes, and, at times, what we are attempting to accomplish during the season and the initiative intertwine.

Prayer, discernment, listening and action are elements of both Lent and synodality. In his reflection on synodality, Pope Francis notes that for the Church, the discernment process requires awareness of what is happening around us, choosing what to do about it and then acting on that choice. When this occurs in our parish listening sessions and among those to whom we have reached out, it manifests the journeying together that is at the core of this process.

However, before that can happen, each participant needs to reflect on their own sinfulness and their need for God's grace, to put aside their selfishness and renew their desire to serve God and serve one another.

That is not unlike what we do during Lent when we pray, fast and give alms. In our

discernment, we engage in what Pope Francis mentioned as self-accusation, examining our weakness with the intent of being more faithful to the Gospel. In doing that, we try to move away from only seeing other's failures and the temptation to accuse everyone else of their faults, while neglecting to see our own.

It's easy to get distracted with other's faults, but when we do, we ignore or don't pay attention to the faults that we carry. It's what Jesus teaches when he admonishes us to remove the block from our own eye before removing the speck from someone else's (Mt 7:1-5).

These accusations of others are what Pope Francis, in his book "Let Us Dream," terms the actions of an "isolated conscience." He notes that the antidote for this is for us to lose our pride, to "lower" ourselves to make room for the action of God to unite us.

Sinfulness leads to isolation and fracturing, separating us from the Spirit who is our advocate, who calls us and is a source of our union, our communion with one another.

All of us are sinners. When we are aware of our sin and we have empathy for others who struggle with the same weakness we have, we are better able to journey together toward holiness. In doing so, we support and assist one another on the path of discipleship rather than shame each other because of our weaknesses and failures.

As our diocese is immersed in the discernment process of the Spirit, it is healthy for us to enter into Lent with that same spirit of self-accusation rather than to seek out and highlight the faults of others. The only finger-pointing that should be part of discernment, whether it is during Lent or in our synodality, is that which we point at ourselves.

Whether it is for Lent or for the listening sessions in which we are engaged, we would do well to consider all or some of the questions Pope Francis raises in "Let Us Dream," as he considers them important in discernment:

■ What is the Spirit telling us?

■ What is the grace offered here if we can only embrace it; and what are the obstacles and temptations?

■ What humanizes, what dehumanizes us?

■ Where is the good news hidden within the somber news, and where is the bad spirit dressed as the angel of light?

Our Holy Father states, "These are questions for those who humbly search and listen, who are willing not just to grasp answers, but to reflect and pray."

May our Lent be a time for searching, listening, reflecting and praying.

Pope: Love, protect the Church, despite its faults

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The same love that gave St. Joseph the strength to protect Jesus and Mary must inspire Christians to love the Church, especially when calling out its sins and flaws, Pope Francis said.

Love "makes us capable of speaking the truth fully in a nonpartisan way; of saying what is wrong but also of recognizing all the goodness and holiness that are present," the pope said Feb. 16 during his weekly general audience.

"Nowadays it is common, it is an everyday occurrence, to criticize the Church, to point out its inconsistencies — and there are many — to point out its sins, which in reality are our inconsistencies, our sins, because the Church has always been a people of sinners who encounter God's mercy," the pope said. "Let us ask ourselves if, in our hearts, we love the Church."

Reflecting on St. Joseph as the patron of the universal Church, the pope said he was concluding his series of audience talks about the foster father of Jesus.

The Gospel stories involving St. Joseph note that he takes Jesus and Mary with him and obeys God's commands, thus highlighting his role as their protector, the pope said.

Departing from his prepared remarks, he added that "a very beautiful aspect of the Christian vocation" is protecting life and "protecting human development."

"The Christian is — we may say — like St. Joseph: he or she must protect," he said. "To be a Christian is not only about receiving the faith, confessing the faith, but protecting life, one's own life, the life of others, the life of the Church."

Christians, he continued, "must always ask

ourselves whether we are protecting with all our strength Jesus and Mary, who are mysteriously entrusted to our responsibility, our care, our custody."

St. Joseph, "in continuing to protect the Church, continues to protect the child and his mother, and we too, in loving the Church, continue to love the child and his mother," he said.

Loving the Church, he added, means protecting and walking with all its members.

"The Church is not that small group that is close to the priest and bosses everyone around; no. We all are the Church, all of us," he said.

"This is a good question: when I have a problem with someone, do I try to protect them or do I immediately condemn them, speak ill of them, destroy them? We must protect, always protect!"

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to seek

St. Joseph's intercession, especially in "the most difficult times in your life and the life of your communities."

"Where our mistakes become a scandal, let us ask St. Joseph to give us the courage to speak the truth, ask for forgiveness and humbly begin again. Where persecution prevents the Gospel from being proclaimed, let us ask St. Joseph for the strength and patience to endure abuse and suffering for the sake of the Gospel," the pope said.

St. Joseph's intercession, he added, is also a source of comfort for the poor and the suffering and an encouragement for those "who serve the least, the defenseless, the orphans, the sick, the rejected of society."

"How many saints have turned to him! How many people in the history of the Church have found in him a patron, a guardian, a father!" the pope said.

Theme for grandparents, elderly day found in Psalm 92

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis is dedicating the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, being celebrated July 24, 2022, to the importance of inviting older people to contribute to building a better world. The pope has chosen "They shall bear fruit even in old age" from the Book of Psalms (92:15) as the theme.

The theme "intends to emphasize how grandparents and the elderly are a value and a gift both for society and for ecclesial communities," said a Feb. 15 communique from the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, which was promoting the world day. The same day, the pope tweeted that elderly "should be cared for like a

treasure of humanity: they are our wisdom, our memory. It is crucial that grandchildren remain close to their grandparents, who are like roots from which they draw the sap of human and spiritual values."

In its communique, the dicastery said this year's theme "is also an invitation to reconsider and value grandparents and the elderly who are too often kept on the margins of families, civil and ecclesial communities. Their experience of life and faith can contribute, in fact, to building societies that are aware of their roots and capable of dreaming of a future based on greater solidarity."

College Summit, DYC return after one-year absence



More than 400 students from nine colleges and universities served by the Diocese of Richmond's Catholic Campus Ministries, including this one from James Madison University, participated in the Catholic Campus Ministry Summit, Feb. 11 and 12, at the Richmond Convention Center.



Participants in the Diocesan Youth Conference fill bags with ingredients distributed by Rise Against Hunger, Saturday, Feb. 12, at the event. Right: Franciscan of the Immaculate Brother Gabriel M. Cortés demonstrates one of the skateboards created by Motherboards Skateboarding Company at the Catholic Campus Ministry Summit and Diocesan Youth Conference the weekend of Feb. 11-13, at the Richmond Convention Center.



Joseph Chellis, a Virginia Tech student, is interviewed at the Catholic Campus Ministry Summit by Deborah Cox (hidden by camera), communications director for the Diocese of Richmond, as part of an initiative that focuses upon the Real Presence of the Eucharist. The camera operator is Mark Kwolek.



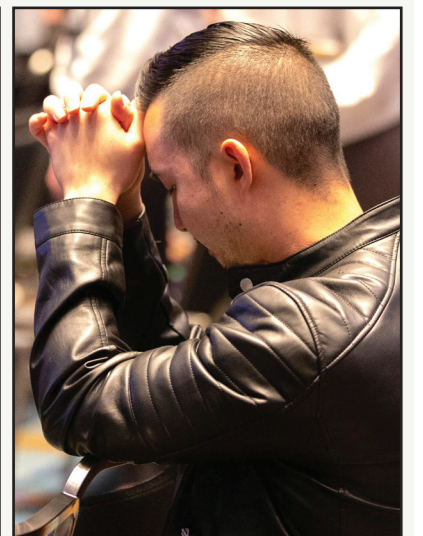
During one of the presentations, DYC participants break into small groups in order to discuss what they heard. Nearly 600 youth participated in the event that was sponsored by the Office for Evangelization.



Diocese of Richmond seminarian David Urlwin lights candles in preparation for eucharistic adoration at DYC, Saturday, Feb. 12. Urlwin is a pre-theology student at Mount Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland.



High school students listen to a presenter at one of the 14 breakout session that were offered during the event, including a religious sisters' panel for girls and a seminarian panel for boys. Right: A participant takes advantage of one of several opportunities for prayer offered during the summit and conference. (Photos/Vy Barto)



In Lebanon, religious fill multiple roles

DOREEN ABI RAAD
Catholic News Service

BEIRUT — As Lebanon crumbles under a socio-economic crisis, Lebanon's religious are assuming roles as relief and social workers.

"We cannot be a real priest, a real presence of Jesus Christ, without helping the people. Otherwise, we are just a functionary of the Church," Maronite Father Hani Tawk told Catholic News Service.

"We are missionary workers, because we see Our Lord Jesus Christ in the face of every family, every person we meet," said Father Tawk, a member of the informal group Church for Lebanon, which includes 15 priests and one nun from three Catholic rites: Maronite, Latin and Melkite.

"We made this decision to be with the people, to help them, to support them and to seek justice," Father Tawk said.

The roots of their union stem from the October 2019 mass uprising in Lebanon against a corrupt government; during that time, some of the priests became acquainted on the street.

Little by little, they started to meet. As Lebanon's economy began to unravel, individual and collective outreach initiatives began.

Jesuit Father Gabriel Khairallah, with a team of volunteers that includes the Circle of Catholic Youth, organized the distribution of hot meals and food boxes and established a health clinic and dispensary.

What started as 25 hot meals a day in 2019 has now grown to 260 a day. And from 30 weekly food boxes in 2019, the initiative is now delivering about 300 a week.

The increase reflects the emergence of the "new poor" in Lebanon, Father Khairallah said.

Since 2019, the Lebanese currency has devalued by more than 90%, and food prices have increased by more than 1,870%. Poverty is now a reality for nearly 80% of the population, in what was considered a middle-income country.

"More and more people are in need," Father Khairallah said.

"They have lost their purchasing power. People are not able to afford the minimum

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Mass for Consecrated Religious



Left: Benedictine Brother Ambrose Okema does the second Scripture reading at the Mass for Consecrated Religious, Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Right: Members of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate were among the religious to attend the Mass celebrated by Bishop Barry C. Knestout. (Photos/Deborah Cox)

Ukrainian chaplain 'preserves troops' humanity'

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

ROME — For Jesuit Father Andriy Zelinskyy and the soldiers he ministers to in Ukraine, the threat of a war with Russia isn't news; "the war started eight years ago," he said.

What is new, he said, is that the United States and the European Union are taking the threat seriously.

Father Zelinskyy is coordinator of military chaplains for the Ukrainian Catholic Church. He ministered full time with troops on the front in Eastern Ukraine from 2014 to 2018 before taking on the coordinating role.

Speaking from Kyiv with Catholic News Service Feb. 14, Father Zelinskyy said while global headlines are filled with dread over the Russian mobilization of troops and weaponry on Ukraine's border, most Ukrainians are just going about their business, and that is even more true for the troops.

One new thing for the Jesuit is that in December, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law establishing a military chaplain structure within the country's armed forces. Before 2016, he said, all of the chaplains were volunteers; for the past six years some of them have been civilian employees, but starting in July they will be considered members of the military.

Father Zelinskyy had been part of an ecumenical and interreligious working group pressing for the law but running up against a "post-Soviet mindset" that either saw military chaplains as unnecessary or as a violation of the separation of church and state. Now he's involved in designing training programs for the ministers.

"I see my role as helping lean

heaven toward the soldiers," he said.

"We must help them choose good, seek truth, promote justice and contemplate beauty," he continued. "These are all essential for preserving their humanity. We can solve so many problems if we can preserve our humanity, especially in the chaos of war."

And while he said his most vivid memory of the front is "tens of kilometers of mud," Father Zelinskyy insisted beauty also can be found there.

He tells the story of moving with an officer from one position to another near Donetsk in the fall of 2018. "We would move very early in the morning, because usually there was no fighting."

The area was industrial, filled with defunct and abandoned factories, he said. They went inside one that was pocked with thousands of

holes from bullets and missiles.

"The sun was just coming up," he said. "It was like being in a planetarium and seeing a starry sky. It really was beautiful. You don't have to make it up, you just have to see it."

Of course, holding on to one's humanity in war also means experiencing pain.

Before the war in Eastern Ukraine began, Father Zelinskyy was involved in a chaplaincy program working with military cadets in Lviv, in Western Ukraine.

When the war started in 2014, those young men were on the front.

"It was very difficult to see friends die," he said. "It wasn't just two or three. There were many."

"There is nothing worse than war," he said. "We have to treasure peace because if we lose it, it is very difficult to bring back."



Jesuit Father Andriy Zelinskyy, coordinator of military chaplains for the Ukrainian Catholic Church, is pictured in a 2018 photo. Father Zelinskyy said the threat of a war with Russia isn't news and that "the war started eight years ago." (CNS photo/courtesy Father Andriy Zelinskyy)

Bishop praises pro-life commitment at Defending Life Day

More than 300 participate in first-time event at capitol

Catholic Virginian Staff

The first Defending Life Day in Richmond, held Wednesday, Feb. 9, was an invitation for the people of Virginia to come together in prayer and to meet with their legislators and encourage them to defend human life.

"We were so blessed to have more than 300 participants in the first-ever Defending Life Day," said Jeff Caruso, executive director of the Virginia Catholic Conference. "They prayed, advocated and inspired! Through perseverance and determination, these efforts and efforts that build on this foundation will change minds and hearts and save lives."

Defending Life Day began with an interfaith prayer at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, which was attended by Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Richmond and Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington. Bishop Knestout delivered the invocation.

"There have been many efforts over these many years to try to expand and help convince people around us of the importance of the life of the unborn and the dignity of human life in all of its stages through natural death," Bishop Knestout said.

He noted that although there have been setbacks, "we see in recent years as well progress being made because of that advocacy and resistance and that dedication" as witnessed by the presence of so many people at the event.

He concluded with a prayer for the cause of life composed by St. John Paul II and asked God to grant grace and patience for those participating in the events of the day.

Bishop Burbidge said the closing prayers before those gathered set off for Capitol Square to meet with lawmakers in person.

Among those who attended the advocacy day were 40 students from Catholic High School in Virginia Beach.

Katrina Fabian, CHS campus minister, said many of her students were "super bummed" that CHS was unable to send students to the National March for Life in January due to restrictions. She explained that youth were able to attend the march through their parishes, not the school.

"We have a very robust Students for Life club at the school, and they were bummed to miss that, so this is a really great secondary opportunity to have a group of kids come out and do this," she said.

Connor Edgington, junior theology teacher at CHS, said he felt that students having the opportunity to see their peers from around their own diocese and Arlington was very important.

"To see both bishops together and to see students from all over the state, to be able to recognize this isn't just something that they're fighting for individually, but as a whole, throughout our state, throughout our nation," he said.

Some of the CHS students met with State Senator Bill R. DeSteph Jr. (R), who represents District 8 of the commonwealth.

Fabian described DeSteph as passionate about being pro-life and passionate about the Catholic faith.

"He really interacted well with our stu-



Above: Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, left, and Bishop Barry C. Knestout greet worshippers following Mass at St. Peter Pro-Cathedral, Richmond, Wednesday, Feb. 9, Defending Life Day. (Photo/Janna Reynolds)
Left: Jack Domark and Jacob Averill, seniors at Catholic High School, Virginia Beach, were among the 300 people to participate in Defending Life Day. (Photo/Deborah Cox)

dents and was encouraging them to continue to stick to their principles, and that was just really great to see someone in such an influential role to be encouraging the students in that way," she said.

Edgington said that being able to attend Defending Life Day was a good lesson for his students on "perseverance and understanding" of the elements of advocacy for respecting all life.

"Especially with the students that didn't get to go in and see the senators," he explained. "When we were out in the park, they were offering up the rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet for Respect Life and to focus, not only on going and talking (to lawmakers), but even on the effect that our prayer can have."

The opportunity to pray was continued at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Peter, where eucharistic adoration was held prior to the Mass.

More than 200 Virginians were in attendance at St. Peter, where Bishop Knestout and Bishop Burbidge concelebrated Mass along with Father Michael Boehling, vicar general for the Diocese of Richmond; Father Jamie Workman, vicar general for the Diocese of Arlington; Father Maxwell Appiagyei, administrator of St. Peter; and Father Brian

Capuano, director of vocations and interim director of worship for the Diocese of Richmond.

In his homily, Bishop Knestout spoke of the confidence and perseverance in advocating for human life, which is grounded in the Gospel. He also thanked those who participated in Defending Life Day for their presence and devotion, calling it "a gift to our country and to the good of humanity."

"If or when the court overturns Roe, it will be important for us in Virginia to double our efforts to seek protection for the unborn in the commonwealth. No matter what the outcome at the federal level, the battle is far from over," he said. "It may seem that the political winds have turned in our favor, but there are still great hurdles and many who do not yet see the value or good of human life as needing protection."

He concluded by reminding the faithful that "'grace upon grace' gives us courage, and the ability to never grow weary in our work and our prayer. These both go hand in hand. Our prayer and our work strengthen one another. Our prayer keeps us grounded in the source of love and life. This grounding enables and perfects our work of advocacy and service."

How parishes can combat systemic racism in the Church

GUEST COMMENTARY

FATHER JOSH JOHNSON
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

“What can our parishes do to combat the sins of racism in the geographical boundaries of our community?”

This is a question I am frequently asked when I travel the nation to speak on the topics of racial justice and reconciliation. My response to this important question always begins with prayer.

Combating racism is a good and necessary work for the Catholic Church in the United States. However, every good work must be the fruit of our time spent in prayer with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In fact, prayer is the first mandate that Jesus gave to the apostles after their ordination at the Last Supper. Before they were commanded to preach, teach, baptize and make disciples of all nations, they were invited to spend an hour praying with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus invited the apostles to pray 2,000 years ago, and Our Lord invites us to pray today. As a witness, Jesus spent time in prayer before he preached his first sermon, before he called the Twelve Apostles and before he entered into his passion.

As disciples of Christ, we are invited to

imitate Our Lord and prioritize prayer so that our works of racial justice and reconciliation can be the fruit of our intimate communion with God.

Often when we reflect on the lives of the saints, we are drawn to their apostolic works. What goes unnoticed though is the amount of time they spent in prayer before they engaged in their works of justice and reconciliation.

For instance, St. Dominic spent hours in prayer in the eucharistic presence of Jesus before he preached his sermons.

Likewise, St. Jean Vianney woke up every day at 2 a.m. to pray in silence before the Blessed Sacrament. The fruit of his personal relationship with Jesus was manifested in the amount of hours he sat in the confessional offering the sacrament of reconciliation.

Similarly, St. Katharine Drexel prayed on her knees for four hours a day before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle while she engaged in the work of racial justice for African Americans and Native Americans throughout the nation.

I cannot emphasize this enough; we must be men and women of prayer. The fruits of our prayer will be manifested in our works of racial justice and reconciliation. These works may include:

- Offering Masses of reparation for the sins of racism in America.
- Hosting listening sessions in which

the people of color within the geographical boundaries of the parish are invited to share their stories of racism with the pastor, staff and leadership team.

■ Joining in protests of institutions and organizations that have racially unjust practices and policies.

■ Reading the writings about the Black Catholic experience from “Servant of God” Sister Thea Bowman, the late Father Cyprian Davis and the Black bishops of the United States.

■ Purchasing stained glass windows, statues and artwork of the Black saints and those on the path to canonization for our Church parishes and schools.

■ Attending the Archbishop Lyke Conference and the National Black Catholic Congress and enrolling the parish staff into classes at Xavier University of Louisiana’s Institute for Black Catholic Studies.

■ Financially tithing to religious orders that serve predominantly Black communities such as the Sisters of the Holy Family, the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, the Josephites.

■ Participating in small group Bible studies with people of different races, ethnicities and tongues.

■ Praying the rosary throughout the different neighborhoods in the geographical boundaries of the parish. *See Commentary Page 12*

Vaccine reactions

I am writing in response to the letters regarding Dr. Seeds’ commentary (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 10). I will explain my experience with the vaccine in the hopes it may show that there are individuals who had reactions to the vaccine.

I had a very mild case of COVID in late January 2021. My symptoms lasted for at most one day. Three months later I signed up to take the first Moderna vaccine at my doctor’s office. I got the shot on a Saturday morning and woke up during the night feely achy and miserable. I had had mild reactions to the flu shot a few times in the past but nothing like this.

By the morning, I felt so sick. It wasn’t flu-like symptoms — no fever, no cough. What seemed to be affected were my kidneys and lymph nodes. I felt so bad by Monday morning I called my physician’s office as soon as they opened to ask them if I should be concerned. I was told not to worry; none of their patients ended up in the emergency room. I am pretty sure my reaction was not documented in my file — or anywhere.

I did finally recover but it took four days. I decided against getting the second

shot — a decision I have not regretted. A few months later at an appointment with my physician, he asked if I was fully vaccinated. I told him no and I told him why. I still doubt that what happened to me was ever recorded or reported.

— **Patrice Becker**
Chesapeake

Beware of ‘stampede’ by ‘Modernist storm’

While I share the enthusiasm of Anthony Rago Jr. (Catholic Virginian, Feb. 7) for the growing awareness of the multiple rites that are part of the patrimony of Holy Mother Church, I cannot help but contrast that with the continuing war to crush and destroy the “Usus Antiquior” — the Mass that in all essentials has been celebrated by the Western Church for approximately 16 centuries.

This persecution was begun by the remarkably uncharitable, mean spirited, indeed cruel, *motu proprio*, “Traditions Custodes,” of Pope Francis, which was recently explicated by the Congregation for Divine Worship’s “Responsa Ad Dubia.” This Mass of St. Gregory the Great never was suppressed by Vatican Council II and was affirmed by

Benedict XVI’s “Summorum Pontificum.”

Pope Francis faces risks of schism on a number of fronts that are unprecedented in recent times, which makes it all the more puzzling why he would attempt to kick the legs out from under a growing segment of Catholics who affirm, and are affirmed by, the Traditional Latin Mass. God bless those of our bishops, including Bishop Barry C. Knestout, who have not been stampeded by the Modernist storm and prize the patrimony of Holy Mother Church, Eastern and Western.

— **Robert R. Kaplan**
Midlothian

TLM provides ‘fullness of Roman Catholicism’

Anthony Rago Jr. is entitled to his own opinion “Grateful Vatican II stimulated renaissance” (Catholic Virginian, Jan. 24), but he is not entitled to his own facts. The bishops, priests, religious and laity of the 1970s abandoned or, in some places, attempted to destroy much of that heritage in the name of Vatican II.

The dichotomy of those offering Mass according to the Missal of 1962 and that of 1970 clearly demonstrates that the implementation of

Vatican II served to accomplish the exact opposite of restoration. I would recommend the works of Mr. Evelyn Waugh or of the inestimable J.R.R. Tolkien to see personal perspectives on the destruction wrought in the name of Vatican II.

The reason why these customs and practices are returning has little positive to do with Vatican II. Certain groups simply continued to do what was done before 1970 and preserved much of that heritage to pass on to the next generation.

Pope Benedict XVI’s letter “Summorum Pontificum” on the use of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reform of 1970 opened the eyes of many to what was lost because the bishops cannot control the internet. COVID-19 accelerated the process.

Young families and converts have turned to parishes offering the Traditional Latin Mass. Why? They desire the fullness of Roman Catholicism.

— **Timothy Olmsted**
Farmville

Correction

Due to an editing error, and not the work of the writer, an incorrect date appeared in the Feb. 7 commentary written by Dr. Jonathan Erpenbach. The date of the commentary to which he was referring appeared in the Jan. 10 Catholic Virginian, not Jan. 24.

Mail: The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Ln., Richmond, VA 23294
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Circulation changes to: akrebs@catholicvirginian.org

Publisher: Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout

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Postmaster: Send address change to The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. The Catholic Virginian ISSN 0008-8404 — Published every other week on Monday by The Catholic Virginian Press, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA. Periodical postage paid at Richmond, VA and at additional mailing office. Sixty cents per copy, \$15 per year.

Cristo Rey Richmond High School chapel dedication



Left: Bishop Barry C. Knestout blesses the new chapel at Cristo Rey Richmond High School and dedicates it to the patronage of Our Lady of Bon Secours on Friday, Jan. 28. The chapel, located on the top floor of the academic tower, was the second part of a five-phase building project. It cost \$250,000 and took two years to complete. Right: Sisters of Bon Secours and Cristo Rey Richmond High School students attend Mass at St. Benedict Church prior to the blessing and dedication. (Submitted photos)

Divide

Continued from Page 1

the pandemic is opening up new fault lines everywhere and particularly over the question of vaccine mandates, the obligation to have a vaccination in order to continue in employment or have access to other freedoms.

It is the issue of coercion, rather than the morality of the vaccines, that tends to be the preeminent source of tension between those who seek greater restrictions and those who seek greater freedom, and Catholics appear to be divided as societies in general.

The extent of Catholic support for mandates has been demonstrated not least by the Vatican, which on Dec. 23 declared that all employees must be vaccinated against the coronavirus or show proof of having recovered from it. It was a policy already in force in some U.S. dioceses, such as Chicago, where in August Cardinal Blase J. Cupich introduced vaccine mandates for all archdiocesan employees and clergy, though not for the laity.

As the omicron variant arrived in Europe, the bishops of Austria agreed to the imposition of a vaccine mandate if it was used “as a last resort,” and beginning Feb. 1 the government made vaccination compulsory for every citizen over the age of 18.

In neighboring Germany, Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich also said he was not opposed to the idea of mandatory vaccination, claiming it “can be an important step” in the fight against the coronavirus.

‘Some mandates warranted’

In Australia, agencies such as Catholic Health Australia went further, leading calls for compulsory vaccination of health and residential care workers, while in New Zealand the bishops said they “believe that, on balance, the introduction of vaccine mandates for certain sectors, as well as the use of vaccine certificates,

are warranted for now.”

Churches in Australia are not listed among the public places in which a vaccine passport — proof of vaccination — is needed before a person may attend, and New Zealand operates a complex “traffic light” system, withdrawing liberties of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in different measures depending upon the severity and prevalence of an outbreak of COVID-19.

But in Canada, the government of Quebec in February imposed a requirement for vaccine passports in churches, prompting the bishops to say they are “deeply indisposed” by the measure and “deeply upset” by it, but would consent to it.

While agreeing with “the many believers” who think the vaccine passport is “an intolerable discrimination that deprives unvaccinated people of their right to religious freedom,” the bishops reminded that “Catholics have a duty to join with all members of society to ensure the safety and health of all.”

Catholic pastors in Singapore also were aggrieved by a government mandate demanding that all people without medical exemptions over the age of 12 have a vaccination before they are able to attend church. Some have appealed to the authorities to make concessions to allow parishioners to worship in public irrespective of their vaccination status.

CDF: Vaccines ‘must be voluntary’

In the U.S., the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and the Thomas More Society in mid-February petitioned the Supreme Court to block New York’s coronavirus vaccine mandate for health care employees and allow religious exemptions to the vaccine mandate.

Some Catholics object to the use of COVID-19 vaccines derived from stem cells from fetuses aborted 50 years ago; the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) declared all of the vaccines to be morally licit in December 2020.

Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have each received vaccines, with Pope Francis urging Catholics to accept a jab as an “act of love.”

Church teaching does not, however, authorize coercive medication. In its 2020 document, the doctrinal congregation noted a vaccine “is not, as a rule, a moral obligation ... and must be voluntary.”

David Jones, director of The Anscombe Bioethics Centre, an institute serving the Catholic Church in the U.K. and Ireland, told Catholic News Service Feb. 15 it was unethical to attempt to impose a vaccination on someone who does not wish to have it.

“The need for informed consent is a fundamental principle of medical ethics,” he said. “There are Catholics in good conscience who argue that, in the extreme circumstances of a pandemic, it is legitimate to mandate people to take a vaccine. However, the view of The Anscombe Bioethics Centre is that vaccine mandates are coercive and unjust.

“Mandates are also divisive,” Jones said. “Mandates undermine the sense of shared solidarity and can be counterproductive. They lead to resentment and can lead to other harms such as staff shortages.”

Divisions within the Catholic Church are now beginning to express themselves in actions, for instance in the protests in Italy led by Father Emanuele Personeni, who began an anti-mandate pilgrimage across the country Feb. 11.

Bishop Francesco Beschi of Bergamo, his bishop, has disagreed with his stance and suspended him, citing vaccination as a “moral obligation” and a “legal obligation” and forbidding parishes from hosting any of his talks.

The mayor of Bergamo, a city ravaged by the pandemic, has also urged Bishop Beschi to suspend Fathers Alessandro Nava and Andrea Testa, who joined Father Personeni in authoring a pamphlet against forced vaccination last year.

Spiritual nourishment for every week of Lent.

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Believe it; there is an actual, literal hell



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
 FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
 CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Q. What is the Catholic view on whether there is an actual, literal hell? A lot of people, including some who are Catholics, while they believe in an actual, literal heaven, say that hell is simply death. (Indiana)

A. Catholic theology holds that there is an actual, literal hell. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, ‘eternal fire’” (No. 1035). That same section goes on to explain that “the chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God.”

The teaching from the catechism is based on a host of scriptural passages: In Matthew 25:41-46, for example, at the judgment, Jesus says to the accursed, “Depart from me ... into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” and in Mark 9:48, Jesus describes hell as a place where the “worm does not die and the

fire is not quenched.” Some of the blessed have had visions of hell; St. Faustina Kowalska described it as “a place of great torture” where there is a “perpetual remorse of conscience” and a “fire that will penetrate the soul without destroying it ... a terrible suffering since it is a purely spiritual fire, lit by God’s anger.”

We don’t know the exact nature of that eternal punishment. Are the “flames of fire” to be taken physically, as we on Earth know fire?

I’m not sure; it’s possible that the inspired authors simply used the most painful things they could imagine to describe what is ultimately indescribable — the absence of God and the presence of eternal torment.

Q. I live in an area where there are many other Christian churches. When I attend funerals of friends who belonged to these churches, those funerals are called “Celebrations of Life.”

I understand that these denominations do not believe in purgatory and say that the person “has gone to be with the Lord.” So my question is this: Are Catholics the only ones who go to purgatory, while the others go straight to heaven? (Oneonta, NY)

A. To answer your question directly — no, I don’t believe that only Catholics go to purgatory. Purgatory is the name we give to the final purification of the elect to make them ready for the glory of God’s presence. I suspect that a lot of us will need that last cleansing, and not just Catholics.

That belief of the Church is reflected in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says: “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name purgatory to this final purification of the elect” (No. 1030-31).

The Church’s belief is based on a number of scriptural passages, going all the way back to the Old Testament. In the Second Book of Maccabees (12:46) we read that Judas Maccabeus “made atonement for the dead,” that they might be freed from sin — which suggests a Jewish practice of offering prayers to cleanse the souls of the departed.

In the New Testament, Matthew’s Gospel (12:32) has Jesus

saying that certain sins “will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come,” an indication that some purging of the soul may need to occur following a person’s death.

Q. My dad told me about a new member of his parish who bows to the priest as the priest is processing out at the end of Mass. My dad thinks that this is horrible and borders on worshipping the priest.

I could see it, though, as not being so offensive in some contexts or cultures, especially if we believe that the priest is acting “in persona Christi” (in the person of Christ). Could you help give me some insight? (Gate City)

A. Although not prescribed in any of the Church’s liturgical directives, I see no harm with a member of the congregation’s bowing to the priest as the priest exits following Mass.

I would interpret it as you do — as simply a sign of courtesy and respect and also, I would think, of gratitude for the blessings of the Mass. As a priest for more than 50 years, it has never occurred to me that parishioners were “worshipping” me when they have bowed in my direction.

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

Foster the GOOD

A LUNCH SPEAKER SERIES

Realizing that ministry has radically shifted in the past year, the Office for Evangelization and the Office of Social Ministries are presenting a new monthly speaker series: *Foster the Good*. Those that serve the church: Youth Ministers, Social Ministers, Campus Ministers, and Volunteers, have found themselves pushed in new directions, and this series looks to build up the skills needed to truly serve the Church in this particular period of time.

Featuring Christopher Kerr, the Executive Director of the Ignatian Solidarity Network. He will speak about the power of advocacy in our Catholic faith and the importance of this as a tool for justice. He will provide concrete and accessible ways for engaging in advocacy that anyone can use for any issue.

FEBRUARY 24, 2022
 12:30-1:30PM

Register for FREE at: [Bit.ly/FostertheGoodFebruary2022](https://bit.ly/FostertheGoodFebruary2022)

Lenten Mission 2022

March 15 - 18, 2022 | 6:30 - 8:00 PM

CHANGE OUR HEARTS...

- ...THROUGH GRATITUDE AND PRAISE
- ...THROUGH FORGIVENESS
- ...THROUGH ADVERSITY
- ...THROUGH FELLOWSHIP AND SACRIFICE

<p>MARCH 15 GRATITUDE & PRAISE</p> <p>STEVE BRANNING Director of Christian Formation & Evangelization St. Nicholas Catholic Church, Va Beach</p>	<p>MARCH 16 FORGIVENESS</p> <p>FR. MICHAEL RENNINGER Pastor St. Mary's Richmond</p>	<p>MARCH 17 ADVERSITY</p> <p>ALISON DELANEY Board Certified Catholic Chaplain VCU</p>
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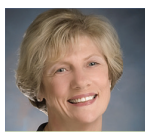
MARCH 18
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Your choice: Do God's will or succumb to false gods?



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

Hosting a pancake supper on the eve of Ash Wednesday has become an annual tradition in many parishes around the country. For a long time, I wrongly assumed that the day preceding Lent, infamously known as "Fat Tuesday," was about loading up on sugar and carbs before the season for fasting began.

If it was meant to mimic the weeklong Mardi Gras celebration that takes place prior to Lent in New Orleans, I failed to see the connection. However, after reading what Pope Benedict XVI wrote about Mardi Gras or Fasching, as he called it, I've come to a different understanding.

While Mardi Gras is not a celebration in the Church's calendar, the pope emeritus points out that the observance can contribute to our understanding of the Judeo-Christian faith. In his book, "Seek That Which Is Above," he points to the origin of Mardi Gras as being significant. For Jews, the celebration recalls the biblical account of Queen Esther by whom the Israelites were freed from their

persecutors in the Persian Empire.

According to Pope Benedict, the spirit of joyful abandonment represents the jubilant spirit that followed the liberation of the Jews from their captors, but it also signifies the rhythm of "creation, simultaneously ordering and purifying the chaotic multiplicity of human nature."

Noting that our own celebration is rooted in the abandonment of prehistoric pagan deities and practices in favor of worshipping the one true God, the masquerade of Mardi Gras mirrors the Old Testament prophets who mocked the false gods, which they no longer needed to fear.

As the psalmist playfully noted, "They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell" (Ps 115:5-6).

The practice of merriment preceding the somber celebration of Lent is very much in keeping with the rhythm of life that is reflected not only in the Book of Ecclesiastes, but also in the liturgical calendar of the Church.

Imagine if we went straight from the celebration of Christmas directly into the Easter season. Even the most glorious celebra-

tions need a time of respite in order to be better appreciated.

Every season finds its place in the whole, from the seasons of the year to the days of the week. The cycle is as old as creation and is linked to the freedom to choose between good and evil.

Life has a dark side, but as Christians, we have the light of Christ to show us the way. And so, as Ordinary Time gives way to Lent, we stand at a crossroads. Do we choose the freedom that comes in doing the will of God, or do we succumb to the false gods that litter the road to perdition?

We live in a world where human rights are threatened and ignored, where persecutions and war force millions of people from their homes, and where hunger and starvation lead to certain death.

Some days we may be tempted to ask: what can I do against so much suffering? The answer may be as simple as a saying that comes from the Talmud, which teaches: "Every good deed tips the balance of the world in favor of goodness."

Jesus didn't cure every person that was disabled, nor did he eradicate suffering. He took it upon himself, and in doing so, he saved

the world from death. We are not messiahs, but we are called to follow in the footsteps of the One who is.

Therefore, we pick up our cross daily as Jesus said we must, because like St. Paul, we believe that "in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col 1:24). As part of the Body of Christ, what I do affects the entire world. This not only gives me hope, but it makes good sense.

Next week, the sun will begin its descent on Ordinary Time so enjoy Fat Tuesday by indulging in pancakes dripping with syrup. Consider eating breakfast food for dinner a mini- Mardi Gras meant to mock modern false gods because when morning breaks, we will enter the desert with Jesus.

As we do, let's pray for the wisdom to recognize the false gods that may be lurking in the corner of our lives. Only in eliminating them, will we help tip the balance of the world in favor of goodness, making it a better place for everyone.

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

Let go of biases in order to love as Christ loves



BELIEVE AS
YOU PRAY
MELANIE CODDINGTON

The Book of Sirach offers an abundance of wisdom about speaking, listening, withholding judgment and holding one's tongue til the right moment. Ben Sira's insights ring with relevance for our contentious times.

Today's brief passage makes its point with a stack of metaphors, rendered poetically, with parallel phrases layered one upon the other.

First, we hear of a sieve shaken to bring refuse to the surface. Just so, our speech can reveal flaws in our character, especially when we are agitated.

The second metaphor builds on the first, comparing the trial-by-fire that proves the potter's skill to the tribulation that tests the integrity of the just person. Though speech is not mentioned explicitly, the context suggests that foul speech under stress can be likened to the crack of a shoddy pot in the kiln.

Finally, we hear how a tree's fruit shows the care it has received. If properly cultivated and pruned, it bears good fruit. Just so, speech discloses "the bent of one's mind" and the disciplined effort made to bend it so.

To sum up: Speech reveals character, integrity and discipline — or the lack of it. We might all benefit from an examination of conscience, focused on how we speak, text, post and share, as well as deeper discernment on the streams that fill our ears.

In Psalm 92, gratitude lays the foundation for prayer that proclaims God's "kindness at dawn" and his "faithfulness throughout the night." Here, good speech transforms the person. 24/7 intimacy with God, expressed in grateful prayer, enables the just one to flourish, like a tree planted in God's house, and remain fruitful over a lifetime.

In the Gospel, Jesus focuses on a particular form of speech — judgment of other people. Last Sunday's imperative, "Stop judging and you will not be judged," sets the stage for today's passage.

Jesus uses blindness as a metaphor to illustrate the folly of pointing out someone else's fault, while overlooking our own. We might ask: What blinds us, so that we cannot see our own fault? What distorts our vision of the other, so that we can only find fault with him or her or them? Sin, of course, but it wears a subtle guise.

Our perceptions of one another rely on our presumptions — that set of preconceived assumptions that we inherit and build over time, based on culture, upbringing (religious or not) and experience. These biases shape

and inevitably limit our vision. We cannot help but see others through our own lens.

Scripture speaks to this deficit. In the story of David's anointing, the Lord makes this point: "God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The Lord looks into the heart" (1 Sam 16:7b). We all fail to see as God sees and to love as God loves. Therein lies the sin.

So how do we become good people, who produce good fruit out of the store of goodness in our hearts? Jesus says, "No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher" (Lk 6:40). Here lies the key to the disciplined speech of Sirach. It is in relationship with Jesus — 24/7 intimacy with God, through Christ, by the power of the Spirit — that we can be transformed.

St. Paul counts love, kindness, gentleness and self-control among the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), so it takes openness to the Spirit to develop *grace under fire* as an enduring aspect of character. In this Spirit, he encourages us to "be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord."

To become like our teacher, we must ask for the courage to let go of the biases that make us feel secure and superior to others. Only then can we begin to see as Christ sees, all persons in God's image, and to love as Christ loves, with the compassion of the Father.

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

Eighth Sunday Ordinary Time

Sir 27:4-7;

Ps 92:2-4, 13-14, 15-16;

1 Cor 15:54-58;

Lk 6:39-45

OPPORTUNITIES

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is seeking a director for the Office of Christian Formation.

The director, Office of Christian Formation, supports the bishop's primary responsibility for the total catechetical mission of the diocese. The ideal candidate will have a forward-thinking vision that has deep roots in the tradition of the faith and will be able to guide both the diocesan office and parishes in the goal of forming Spirit-filled disciples, ready to engage in the evangelical mission of the Catholic Church. This is accomplished through the formation of leaders in the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI) and in the formation and training of catechetical leaders. The director also provides oversight for RCIA and instruction for sacraments, and works closely with pastors and the Christian Formation Commission.

Qualifications: M.A. degree in religious education, theology or related field. At least five years full-time experience in parish religious education with diocesan experience desired. Other qualifications include knowledge of all universal, national and diocesan catechetical documents; liturgical and sacramental Rites; working knowledge of canon law; knowledge of contemporary adult learning theory and research in religious education; good interpersonal skills to form, direct and facilitate a team; understanding of leadership development and training; public speaking and communication skills; workshop planning and implementation skills; and organization and time management skills. An active, practicing Catholic in good standing with an excellent understanding of Catholic Church teaching and Church structure is required. This is a full-time position with some evening and weekend work. Travel and overnight travel are required. Interested candidates should please send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application to Kelly Shumate, HR coordinator, at jobs@richmonddiocese.org.

St. Mary Catholic Church, Richmond, is seeking a director of music responsible for the design, facilitation and implementation of the parish's liturgical music ministry in a manner that promotes the "full, conscious and active participation" called for by the liturgical rites in the Roman Catholic Church as articulated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

In collaboration with the pastor, the director of liturgy, staff members and parishioners, the director of music is charged with integrating music ministry into the overall parish mission. The director recruits, trains, directs and oversees the choir, instrumentalists, bell choir and cantors, and

serves as the keyboardist. The parish's repertoire consists of liturgical music drawn primarily from Breaking Bread (OCP) and Gather (GIA).

This is a full-time position. The director's specific schedule is negotiable but will include leading choir rehearsals, the Saturday/Sunday liturgies, funerals, weddings and other liturgies, as well as attending the weekly parish staff meeting.

The ideal candidate holds a bachelor's degree, or the equivalent, in music or music education with specialized training credentials in liturgical music and understanding of Roman Catholic liturgy; knowledge of performance practice and liturgical styles and forms; understanding of musical, liturgical and pastoral needs; the ability to exercise discerning judgment in selection of liturgical music based on the parish's musical style; has five to seven years of parish ministry experience, though not required; proficiency in keyboard performances, to include piano and organ; knowledge of basic piano and organ maintenance; familiarity with vocal techniques and experience in choral leadership.

The position is available now. To apply, please send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application (accessible at <https://bit.ly/3pSfKZm>) to Joyce Park at jpark@stmmarysrichmond.org.

For more information on the parish, please visit our website at <https://www.stmarysrichmond.org>.

SHORTAKES

Knights of Columbus Assembly #1505 will hold a Lenten fish dinner every Friday during Lent, March 4 until April 8. Doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner will be served until 7 p.m. at the Columbian Club, 1236 Prosperity Rd., Virginia Beach. Dinner will include fried fish fillet, french fries, homemade coleslaw and hushpuppies; or baked fillet of fish, rice pilaf, homemade coleslaw and hushpuppies; or chicken nuggets and fries for children if desired. Cost is a donation of \$10 for those 13 and over, \$5 for youth 7-12, and free for those 6 and under. Coffee, iced tea and hot tea provided. Beer and soda, as well as desserts, are available for a minimal extra donation. Carryout is also available. Call Dave Smith at 757-576-3949 or email him at david4632@cox.net if you have questions.

"Ashes to Alleluia" During this silent Lenten retreat, Barbara Hughes, author and Catholic Virginian columnist, will lead participants into the desert on a pilgrimage of the heart. In biblical times, the desert was a place where God spoke to listening hearts, fed his people and destroyed false idols, and it can do the same for us. The retreat will be held at St. Clare of Assisi Retreat Center, Hampton, March 4-6, 7 p.m. Friday until Sunday noon. Cost of the weekend is \$40; donations to the retreat center are accepted. To register or for more information, call 757-797-6629 or email philippians2foundation@gmail.com.

Fish Fry at Sts. Peter and Paul, Palmyra, will be held every Friday from March 4 through April 8, 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. This will be a drive through pick-up. Cost is \$13 cash or credit card. Meal will include fried or baked fish, hush puppies, fries cole slaw and dessert. The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring this event. If you have any questions, contact Doug Mullinex 434-981-6950.

New Creation Community's series on spiritual warfare Sunday, March 6, 3:30 p.m., 1600 Elbow Rd., Chesapeake, or via Zoom. Topic: "Fasting and Pleading the Blood." For upcoming dates and topics, visit www.NcCharismaticCommunity.org. New Creation is a private association of the faithful in the Diocese of Richmond.

For women and couples struggling with infertility: During Lent, the Springs in the Desert team invites you to join us as we reflect on those saints and friends of Christ who walked with him and witnessed his Passion: from the Blessed Virgin Mary to Mary Magdalene; Simon of Cyrene to Veronica; and the women of Jerusalem to the centurion. Each Thursday, March 10 through April 7, we will meet virtually at 8 p.m. to pray, listen to a brief reflection and build community through small group sharing. The event is free and provides those struggling with infertility a chance to enter more deeply into the Lenten spirit while gathering in prayer with

others on this same path. Visit springsinthedesert.org for information and to register.

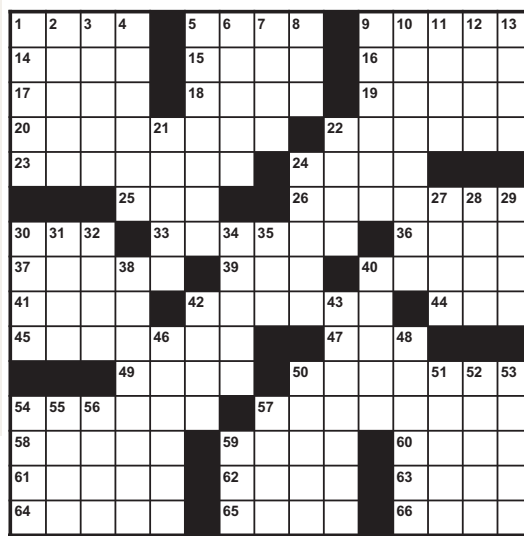
St. Paul Catholic Church, Richmond, will dedicate a statue to St. Joseph and the Child Jesus immediately following the 4:30 p.m. Mass, Saturday, March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph. The statue will be located near the entrance to the Parish Center. The statue will have a plaque at its base, which will read as follows: "St. Joseph's Catholic Church, established in 1885, and located in Richmond's Jackson Ward, was the first church built to serve the City's Black Catholic Community. Upon its closure in 1969, many St. Joseph's parishioners became members of St. Paul's. This statue is erected to honor their dedication to their faith and their perseverance and courage in the face of racial inequity."

All are invited to witness this special and long-overdue event. We thank the Daniel Rudd Fund whose grant, in part, made this event possible.

Join Fathers John David Ramsey and Danny Cogut on a spiritual journey to the places of St. John Paul II, Prague and Vienna the week of Sept. 18-30. Total cost per person for airfare, lodging and meals is \$4,399 double occupancy. Reservations are due Monday, 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 or call 703-635-9243.

Mass with charismatic expression, first Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.; adoration with healing prayer, second Sunday of the month, 5 p.m. St. Clare of Assisi Retreat Center, 620 Buckroe Ave., Hampton. Connect with us at contact@awakeningthedomesticchurch.com or 757-814-1706.



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

ACROSS

- 1 She appeared in "Where the Boys Are" before becoming a nun
- 5 Catholic Surrealist painter
- 9 Aquinas' opus, for short
- 14 Topping in a tub
- 15 Writer Wiesel
- 16 Head of a monastery
- 17 The Wise Men followed it
- 18 Containers
- 19 Religion of the Muslims
- 20 Headset
- 22 Sacred vessels
- 23 Movable cupboard
- 24 "___ Holy Queen"
- 25 Cell "messenger"
- 26 "Christian" first used here, according to Acts
- 30 First word of Mr. Roger's refrain
- 33 Teaching of the Buddha
- 36 "In the ___ of the Father..."
- 37 First prime minister of India
- 39 United States farmer's org.
- 40 Jeopardy
- 41 Loyal
- 42 St. Therese of Lisieux is a patron of this country
- 44 Little drink
- 45 The Archdiocese of Toronto is here
- 47 Church ___
- 49 Waterfall
- 50 Our Mother of ___
- 54 Biblical occupation
- 57 John Paul II's encyclical, "___ De Eucharistia"
- 58 Jesus said this divided could not stand
- 59 What the flesh is sometimes
- 60 Org.
- 61 Friendship
- 62 Femme's pronoun
- 63 Bound
- 64 The house of a parson
- 65 Colored
- 66 Possessive pronoun

DOWN

- 1 One of the prophets
- 2 Focal place of the Mass
- 3 Equip again
- 4 Apathy
- 5 Judge of Israel
- 6 Type of dress
- 7 Geometry basic
- 8 Plural suffix
- 9 Unlike 59A, this is willing
- 10 Member of an order of St. Angela Merici
- 11 "Should anyone press you into service for one ___..." (Mt 5:41)
- 12 Castle's defense
- 13 Weapons
- 21 Major religion in India
- 22 Catholic family conference
- 24 Chief minister of the Persian king in the Book of Esther
- 27 Rowing implements
- 28 902, to Nero
- 29 "Our soul waits for the Lord, he is our ___ and shield" (Ps 33:20)
- 30 "And lead us not ___..."
- 31 Web-footed aquatic bird
- 32 Close
- 34 Builder of the golden calf
- 35 Dietary data
- 38 They view things as they actually are
- 40 Parable of the ___ of great price
- 42 Of high grade
- 43 Timed
- 46 Butcher's cut
- 48 Advent foliage
- 50 Fish covering
- 51 Actor Davis
- 52 Smarter
- 53 Vegas Casino
- 54 Fraud
- 55 Prolonged unconsciousness
- 56 Those who want to be rich have many "foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into ___" (1 Tim 6:9)
- 57 Fishy
- 59 Receive a sacrament

En memoria de Arminda Prats

1944-2022

Mindy Prats era una mujer completamente entregada a Dios y llevaba en su espíritu el servicio al prójimo. Ella siempre caminaba con nuestro Señor Jesucristo y vivía una fe muy profunda. En conversación breve con Alex Prats, esposo de Mindy, él me dijo: "Daniel, ella no solo ayudaba a los hermanos y a las hermanas crecer en la fe sino también los ayudaban a crecer en el conocimiento de la fe." En este artículo, tenemos la dicha de poder conocer el testimonio de fe de esta gran líder en sus propias palabras:

Mi esposo y yo venimos de Cuba en 1976 a los Estados Unidos. Como veníamos de un país comunista, no sabíamos de los cambios en la Iglesia Católica que se habían hecho durante el Concilio Vaticano II. Aquí entonces un sacerdote nos dio la sorpresa y nos regaló una biblia. También, la estructura de la misa era diferente. El padre estaba de frente durante la misa mirando hacia la feligresía, la misa era en español, no había campanas en la misa, y no había ni una sola imagen de santo en la iglesia.

El padre fue muy amable y nos informó de los muchos cambios que había tenido la iglesia durante ese tiempo que estuvimos estancados en Cuba sin religión. Entonces, él nos invitó a asistir a los estudios bíblicos.

Nos costó mucho trabajo el poder ubicarnos en las clases. No sabíamos cómo colocar un libro en la biblia. Ni siquiera sabíamos que había dos testamentos. Entonces tomamos la iniciativa de familiarizarnos con la biblia y decidimos profundizar más en nuestra fe.

Después de un tiempo, decidimos formarnos por medio de la Universidad de Laurel en estudios teológicos, recibiendo después de 5 años de instrucción, un diploma el 10 de septiembre del 2000. Esto nos ayudó mucho a empezar a formar a otras personas en la fe. Había muchos que conocían muy poco sobre nuestra fe católica y esto nos ayudó a seguir formándonos en la Palabra de Dios.

En el 2005, nos mudamos para Charlottesville, Virginia y nos integramos al ministerio Kerigma en la parroquia de la Encarnación por medio de un retiro. Kerigma nos ayudó a participar y servir en los diferentes ministerios en la parroquia, con la intención de ayudar a formar a las personas en la fe.

Creo firmemente que los estudios bíblicos deben de ser una prioridad para todos aquellos que somos católicos. Es importante que todo feligrés crezca en la fe de nuestro ser católico y nuestra Iglesia. Es importante comprenderla y adentrarnos mejor en ella para que podamos ser verdaderos discípulos de Jesús.

El ayudar a nuestros hermanos y nuestras hermanas a sentirse parte del llamado que Dios les dio a aquellos primeros 12 discípulos fue una satisfacción inimaginable; un regocijo y ese gozo que solo Dios nos puede dar como verdaderos discípulos Suyos.

La diócesis de Richmond, en particular la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano, ha sido un buen recurso para nosotros. Hemos podido estudiar y capacitarnos con el fin de ayudar a los demás y ponerlo en práctica. El 3 de junio de 2015 tuvimos la suerte de poder terminar un curso de casi 3 años en la Universidad de Dayton, auspiciado por la diócesis donde nos graduamos 13 feligreses de varias parroquias.



Arminda Prats

Por diferentes razones, sabemos que es difícil incorporarse a cursos de esta magnitud; pero tanto las parroquias como la diócesis nos ofrecen enseñanzas claves para todo aquel que se siente con deseos de servir a Dios y seguir sus pasos, ayudando a los demás a salir de la oscuridad hacia la luz.

Pongamos en práctica las enseñanzas de San Pablo en la Segunda Carta a Timoteo 3, 15-17 que dice, "... y que desde niño conoces las Sagradas Letras, que pueden darte la sabiduría que lleva a la salvación mediante la fe en Cristo Jesús. Toda Escritura es inspirada por Dios y útil para enseñar, para argüir, para corregir y para educar en la justicia; así el hombre de Dios se encuentra perfecto y preparado para toda obra buena."

Testimonios de Mindy

Mi hermana Mindy fue una madre espiritual. Ella nos ayudó y nos enseñó a dar nuestros primeros pasos en la fe. Nos ayudó a estudiar en línea desde el principio y cuando digo el principio es que nos enseñó a prender la computadora y crear nuestro perfil para entrar en las clases. Esta y muchas más enseñanzas las llevaré en mi corazón. Gracias a mi hermana Mindy por todo lo que has hecho por nosotros y por amar a mi familia. – Ignacio Becerra

A mi me inspiro su entrega por la formación para los futuros matrimonios y ayudar a los demás en la formación de su fe fue muy profundo para mí. La extrañare y siempre estará en mis oraciones. – Alicia Duran

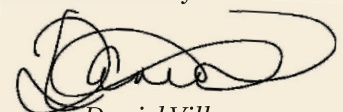
¡Tanto que decir de mi hermana Mindy! Para mi maestra, quien me enseñó a enfrentar mis miedos, a sacar todo desde adentro lo que me afecta, a no quedarme con nada, quien nos enseñó a defender lo que es nuestro y nos defendió a capa y espada de todo lo que ella consideraba que nos afectaría, una madre en la fe y en los valores familiares, alguien que siempre luchó e insistió que todos nos tenemos que empatizar y ponernos en la necesidad

del otro. ¡Tanto que decir sobre ella, pero lo resumiré! Maestra, madre, amiga, psicóloga, y para mí personalmente, mi "sensey", el ángel de nuestra familia, a quien extrañamos tanto físicamente. – Trinidad Rivas

¿Quién fue Mindy Prats para mí? Un ángel, una maestra y una madre, su carisma irreplicable en esta vida nos llenó de muchas cosas buenas y nos motivó a vencer retos y lograr en la vida un crecimiento a nivel intelectual y espiritual. Fue una vida muy bien vivida y una tremenda y ferviente luchadora para formar a quienes consideró sus hermanos, amigos e hijos como de sangre. En mi vida, un verdadero ángel. – Cesar Rivas

Mindy Prats fue para mí y mi familia una madre, una maestra. Hacer tiempo para escucharla hablar era prácticamente llenarse uno de sabiduría, tanto laboral como espiritual. Ella nos enseñó a enfrentar los problemas de la vida con inteligencia y valentía. Nos impactó mucho su partida, en la vida mía y la de mi familia, ha dejado muy bonitos recuerdos y momentos que nunca olvidaremos. – Mauricio Castillo

De parte de la Oficina de Ministerios Étnicos, le extendemos a la familia Prats nuestro más sentido pésame por el fallecimiento de Mindy. Ella verdaderamente fue una líder por excelencia quien se movía en cualquier momento para cualquier persona que tenía necesidad o estaba experimentando dificultades en su vida. Mindy emanaba ese amor de Cristo para todos quienes tenían un encuentro con ella. Le pedimos a toda la comunidad hispana que oren por la familia Prats y por el eterno descanso de Mindy.


Daniel Villar


Araceli Perez

Religious

Continued from Page 4

necessities. It hurts so much to see the loss of dignity of the people," said Father Khairallah.

"I see my mission as a priest now is also to console, to listen to people," as they share their burdens, the Jesuit noted, adding that many Lebanese religious are trying to develop listening and counseling ministries.

"People feel that the Church is the place where they can be helped and where they can share their pain," said Maronite Father Tony Lattouf, a group member and pastor of Our Lady of Assumption Church in Rabweh, a formerly middle-class area north of Beirut.

As Lebanon's living conditions deteriorate, parishes face challenges in helping families with a myriad of needs: rent and tuition assistance, food, medicine and hospital fees.

Father Lattouf attested to blessings despite the frustrations experienced by religious.

"Sometimes we feel that we can't handle everything. But we always believe the presence of God is with us, that he will take care of things," Father Lattouf told CNS.

The blast at the Beirut port in August 2020 further strengthened the unity of the informal group, and members continue to help the families of the victims and those affected

by the blast as well as to advocate for justice.

There has yet to be justice or accountability for the catastrophe, which killed more than 219 people, injured more than 7,000, and displaced more than 300,000.

Following the blast, Father Tawk established Mary's Kitchen in a small garage in a neighborhood about 500 feet away from the port. As more people slip into poverty, the initiative has grown and currently prepares 900 hot meals daily for four distribution areas in Beirut.

The walls of Mary's Kitchen are graced with photos of those who lost their lives in the blast. "It's not just a kitchen," Father Tawk said. "It's a center of conviviality, fraternity, a home for listening."

The 15 priests and nuns of the Church for Lebanon gather for weekly meetings.

"We discuss political issues, social issues and how we can be a sanctified presence among the people," Father Tawk explained.

Despite the different religious traditions of their Catholic rites and different political views, the group is united by a common goal of helping Lebanon's suffering population.

"We are passing through a very miserable situation. But we believe there is light at the end of this tunnel. We believe in the Resurrection," Father Tawk said.

Commentary

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■ Inviting Catholic speakers of color to present at the parish Advent and Lenten missions.

■ Seeking out people of color for leadership roles on the staff, pastoral council and finance council.

■ Examining the parish church and school handbook guidelines along with people of color to ensure that there are not any policies that unintentionally alienate or discriminate against parishioners or students of color.

The Holy Spirit is very creative. The Holy Spirit may inspire parishes to participate in these works or invite priests and their co-workers in the vineyard to do a number of other activities that are geared toward healing the racial divide in the geographical boundaries of their communities.

In the end, the capacity for each parish to bear supernatural fruit in their efforts to purify the sins of racism in their land will be rooted in the amount of time each priest and parishioner spends with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer.

The ministries, apostolates and works that we participate in for this just cause must not be our first priority. Rather, communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer must be prioritized above all else.

If we are faithful to prayer with the Trinity, then the fruits of our relationship with God will be manifested in our parish ministries, apostolates and works of racial justice and reconciliation.

Father Johnson is director of vocations for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, an author and host of the podcast "Ask Father Josh."

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IN MEMORIAM

Bernardine Franciscan Sister Mary Margaret Jackson



A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Thursday, Feb. 11, in Reading, Pennsylvania, for Sister Mary Margaret Jackson, a Bernardine Franciscan Sister. Sister Mary Margaret, 80, died Monday, Feb. 7.

A native of Richmond, Sister Mary Margaret ministered as a nurse at Mary Immaculate Hospital, Newport News, 1965-1967. After completing her degree in hospital administration, she became administrator of Mary Immaculate Hospital, 1971-1973. (Mary Immaculate is now Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital.) She also served at hospitals

in Pennsylvania, Missouri and Colorado.

Sister Mary Margaret was elected superior general of the Bernardine Franciscan Congregation in 1988 and served in that capacity through 2000. From 2006-2011, she served as assistant congregation minister.

She is survived by three brothers: Sebastian Jr. and Joseph, both of Richmond, and John, Virginia Beach. She is also survived by two sisters: Mary Ochs, Houston, Texas, and Evelyn Knoll, Scottsdale, Arizona.

IN MEMORIAM

Daughter of Charity Sister Mary Ellen Schwartz



A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Saturday, Jan. 29, in Emmitsburg, Maryland, for Sister Mary Ellen Schwartz, a Daughter of Charity. Sister Mary Ellen, 88, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 25.

A native of Baltimore, she joined the Daughters of Charity in 1956. For the first 44 years of her religious life, Sister Mary Ellen taught high school chemistry including at Holy Cross Regional School, Lynchburg, 1972-1985.

From 2001-2014, she had served in special projects and hospitality at the provincial house in Emmitsburg. Since 2014, she had served in ministry of prayer for her religious community.

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