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Diocese prays for consecration of Russia, Ukraine

CATHOLIC VIRGINIAN STAFF

Bishop Barry C. Knestout and Catholics throughout the Diocese of Richmond and the world joined Pope Francis in consecrating Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Friday, March 25, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

The bishop and six priests concelebrated the noon Mass, which was attended by nearly 230 people. Another 200 joined the Mass via livestream.

Among those watching the livestream were 20 members of Resurrection Parish, Moneta. They gathered at their church, decorated with posters of St. Michael the Archangel and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to participate in the liturgy and to pray the Act of Consecration.

During his homily, Bishop Knestout, referencing the first reading from Isaiah, said God establishes peace and grace in his Son to come.

“God offers peace and grace to his people; ask for it, be open to it,” he said. “There is no limit to God’s grace.”

The bishop noted that Catholics are encouraged to seek forgiveness during Lent.

“The fruit of that forgiveness is that we might know God’s peace in our hearts and see it manifested in world around us,” he said.

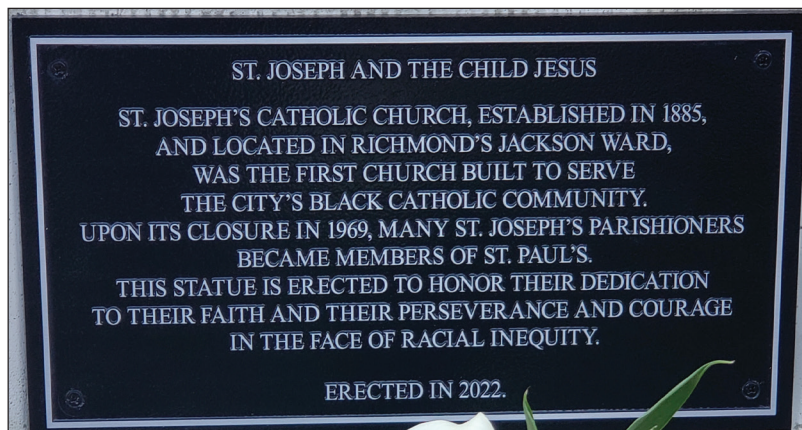
Reflecting on Mary’s response to the angel — “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” — Bishop Knestout said her words are about salvation for the entire world.

“Mary leads the way for us, always inviting us to a relationship with her son, the Prince of Peace, always to a deeper relationship with her son, a communion

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Above: Jewel Mitchell, Tom Brown and Doris Bates look at the St. Joseph statue following its unveiling at St. Paul, Richmond, by Deacon John Tucker, Saturday, March 19. **Now members at St. Paul, they were members of St. Joseph, Richmond, which closed in 1969. Below:** The plaque explains why the statue was erected. (Photos/Sheri Brown)



Statue a tribute, symbol of reconciliation

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

It is not uncommon to see a statue of a parish’s patron saint on its grounds. However, near the entry of St. Paul Church, Richmond, one will see a statue of St. Joseph — the patron saint of a Black Richmond parish that the diocese closed in 1969 in an attempt to promote integration.

“When St. Joseph closed, a number of parishioners said, ‘The heck with the Catholic Church.’ Others did not, which in turn caused some (St. Paul) parishioners to leave and go elsewhere,” said Deacon John T. Tucker III, who serves at St. Paul. “This was hurtful but a neat scenario in that members of both races made a conscience decision to be Catholic and to say, ‘I am going to worship here at St. Paul’s.’”

According to Deacon Tucker, he and the late Deacon Charles Williams, a close friend who had been a member of St. Joseph but who left the Church in anger when it closed, had talked about it for a number of years.

“We thought it would be a proper tribute to the folks at St. Joseph that stuck with the Catholic Church and came over to St. Paul’s,” he said.

When Father Jim Begley was appointed pastor of St. Paul last year, the deacons approached him with the idea, which he embraced.

With support from the Diocese of Richmond’s Office for Black Catholics, which Deacon Williams directed, Deacon Tucker applied for and received a grant from the Daniel Rudd Fund of the National Black Catholic Congress. The grant and money raised through other efforts provided the nearly \$5,500 needed to erect the statue, which was blessed and dedicated on Saturday, March 19.

Deacon Tucker, noting the statue was a “moment of reconciliation and a symbol of reconciliation,” said the impact of having the statue can be seen in

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Remain attentive to protecting children, vulnerable adults



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

This year, the beginning of National Child Abuse Prevention Month overlaps with the final weeks of Lent.

During April, we are reminded about the abuse that children have suffered and are encouraged to be pro-active in protecting all children from becoming victims of any form of abuse.

On Ash Wednesday, we were marked with ashes and the words, “Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” As a Catholic community, we must continue to repent for the horrific actions of those clergy who harmed children. We cannot relegate what happened years and decades ago to past tense because victim survivors and their families still live with the injury.

This is an ongoing effort; we can never become complacent. Even if we see progress, which gives us hope, we can always see signs of weakness or failure, which require renewed dedication and intentional attention, to help victim survivors in their ongoing healing.

Due to COVID, we were not able to schedule Masses for Hope and Healing in 2020 and

the first part of 2021. But in September and November 2021, and in February of this year, we resumed these gatherings — one in each of our diocese’s vicariates.

Individuals who had experienced some form of abuse and many others among our parish communities who were aware of the trauma of sexual abuse wanted to gather in solidarity with victim survivors and to pray for healing of all who have been affected by abuse.

After each Mass, I had the opportunity to listen to people who were victims of abuse and to their families. Counselors were also available for those who sought additional help in their healing process.

During these Masses, we prayed for healing of those who have suffered injustice, including those who have left the Church and may never return. We also prayed for those who caused the suffering that they recognize the sinfulness of what they did and that their repentance includes accepting responsibility for their deeds.

We turned our attention to the tragedy of abuse, coming at the hands of those most trusted, and we sought grace to move forward with renewed hope and with a deeper commitment to authentic expressions of love and healing.

The Church should never have been — and should never be — a place which is the

cause of injury or harm to one of God’s children. Justice requires a price to be paid for injury, to provide healing for those who have been harmed.

While we repent for the sins of the past, we also focus on the present and future. Later this month, our diocesan Office of Safe Environment will publish its annual report in which it details our ongoing efforts for protecting children and vulnerable adults. These efforts are more than policy; they are reminders that we are to remain attentive to this mission.

We know that we are most effective in this regard when we are intentional in establishing safe environments for our children and when we train adults to be vigilant in keeping children out of harm’s way. We have made progress in this regard, but we can never put aside our efforts to make that progress.

As we observe National Child Abuse Prevention Month and immerse ourselves in the final days of Lent, let us — individually and as a faith community — continue to pray for victims of abuse and for our Church that all may experience the healing provided by our merciful God.

At the same time, let us remain pro-active in protecting the most vulnerable among us so that no one will ever suffer the scourge of abuse again.

Consecration

Continued from Page 1

with him,” he said. “We offer this consecration, this dedication, setting aside good and holiness for people who are experiencing strife and division, war and suffering in the midst of that.”

Bishop Knestout concluded his homily by reading Pope Francis’ letter to the world’s bishops regarding the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, emphasizing the pope’s statement: “This Act of Consecration is meant to be a gesture of the universal Church, which in this dramatic moment lifts up to God, through his Mother and ours, the cry of pain of all those who suffer and implore an end to the violence, and to entrust the future of our human family to the Queen of Peace.”

Following the Creed and the prayer of the faithful, the bishop knelt before the statue of the Blessed Mother and led the congregation in praying the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



Kneeling before a statue of the Blessed Mother in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, Bishop Barry C. Knestout leads the congregation in the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for Russia and Ukraine during Mass on Friday, March 25. (Photo/Ashly Carneal Krebs)

Good Friday collection vital

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

For Franciscan Father David Grenier, the Pontifical Good Friday collection is not just another Church collection. It is vital to the roots of Catholicism as it funds ministries and outreach in the Holy Land.

“This is where our faith comes from as a Church,” said Father Grenier, commissary for the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America.

In 1342, Pope Clement VI designated the Franciscans as the Church’s custodians of the Holy Land where they not only maintain the holy places, but minister to the Christian communities there.

When St. Pope Paul VI established the international collection in 1964, he wrote, “... it is necessary for Christians from all over the world to show their generosity, bringing to the Church of Jerusalem the charity of their prayers, the warmth of their understanding and the tangible sign of their solidarity.”

Father Grenier noted that the collection is an important part of how the Franciscans’ work is funded.

“Without it, it would be very difficult to maintain, taking care of pilgrims and maintain our charity over there,” he said.

Not only did COVID have

an impact upon the Good Friday collection in the U.S. — \$17 million collected in 2019 but only \$8 million in 2020 — but the needs in the Holy Land were greater as there were no tourists and those who made their living through tourism-related jobs were unemployed.

“A lot of our income comes from pilgrims,” the priest explained. “And Christians working in restaurants and hotels didn’t have jobs during that time.”

Money from the Good Friday collection, which includes \$19,406 collected in the Diocese of Richmond last year, is used to staff and maintain shrines, operate schools, support seminarians, provide pastoral care at 29 parishes and tell the Holy Land story throughout the world.

Father Grenier pointed out that in 1948, 25% of the population in the Holy Land was Christian. Today, Christians make up less than 1% of Palestine’s 4.8 million people, and 1.4% of Israel’s 9.2 million.

“Seeing the home of Christianity without Christians affects us,” the priest said. “We need everyone’s help to continue our work there.”

Editor’s note: To learn more about the Pontifical Good Friday collection, visit <https://myfranciscan.org>.

Memorable Lenten journey for students

Spring break time of service for VCU, ODU campus ministries

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Thirteen students from Old Dominion University and Virginia Commonwealth University tried something different this year, turning their spring break into a memorable Lenten journey.

The students spent the week of March 5-10 in Cape Charles on the Eastern Shore, volunteering at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church and Cape Charles Christian School.

“We just did things that typically go unnoticed,” Nathan Laurin, a senior at ODU, said. “I mean, no one wants to weed, really, or to organize a whole basement, but the fact that we did the things no one else wants to do reminded me of the passage about Martha and Mary.”

It was a theme that tied the trip together, Laurin said, as days spent scrubbing, painting and making repairs were interwoven with quieter times — time to attend daily Mass or to say a rosary on the beach. A spring cleaning for a church, a school and the soul.

“I learned a lot about my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ,” VCU junior Katrina Sian said. “I saw their beauty in the gifts that they were able to demonstrate in the service projects we did. And it was just a nice break away from all the schoolwork that I’ve been doing. It was a very rewarding experience.”

In faith and friendship

Marissa O’Neil, Catholic campus minister at ODU, said that she and Morgan Yost, CCM minister at VCU, decided to bring their schools together for the trip when they discovered that their respective spring breaks fell during the same week.

“Since we’re both the sole staff member at each CCM, other than our chaplains, we thought it would be great to come together for this larger project, to have that support,” she said.

In looking for service opportunities within an easy distance for student drivers, the campus ministers turned toward the Eastern Shore.

“It’s a part of our diocese and a part of our state that tends to get forgotten,” O’Neil said. “I don’t know how many maps I’ve seen where the Eastern Shore is not included on a map of Virginia.”

The students found it easy to connect from the start, Yost said, since ODU and VCU are similar in being urban campuses.

“It was cool for them to see that there are other college students out there who want to give up their time on spring break,” she said, “and who want to join together in prayer and community and give back in this big and powerful way.”

Thomas Ames, a senior at VCU, said he enjoyed meeting other CCM students on the trip, as well as making connections with those in the local community, particularly with the middle schoolers at Cape Charles Christian School.

“We got to play soccer with them, and it was amazing to see how much they looked up to us,” he said.

He hoped that spending time with the college students might give the middle schoolers a glimpse into opportunities that they, too, might enjoy, he said, inspiring them to set their sights on college, just as he had once been inspired.

“I remember, when I was younger, looking up to the older kids, too,” he said, “so that was a cool experience for me.”

Growing in faith

“For me, I would say, it was about growing in my faith,” said Arely Rangel-Gomez, a freshman at ODU. “We did the rosary, we went to Mass several times a week and had reflection.”

When she’s on campus, she said, she’s kept busy with schoolwork, so she appreciated the time to embrace a “Mary” frame of mind.

Ames found inspiration, he said, in spending time with Father Michael Breslin, pastor of St. Charles.

“Seeing Father Michael’s faith, seeing him at the daily Mass, the way he came out and even helped the students — getting out there to help us with the gardening — was amazing,” he said.

“We were giving up our spring break,” Laurin said. “While everyone else was doing, like, ‘Spring Break’ sort of things, we were doing service things. I just found it pretty fulfilling, to give it up.”

Sense of connection

The students were humbled by the gratitude expressed to them by those at the church and school, they said, as much as they found the work itself humbling — jobs that included staining picnic benches, scrubbing out garbage cans and even hauling an old toilet to the dump. They were things that needed to be done but are hardly a day on the beach.

“I am particularly proud of organizing the Cape Charles School basement,” Sian said, laughing.

The school plans to make good use of the newly-cleared out space, she said, as a place to hold tornado drills and as a shelter.

Sian said one of her favorite moments of the trip came when Cape Charles Christian School invited the college students to an ice cream social.

“The school, as a huge ‘thank you’ for the work that we did,



Above: Jacqueline Nikiema, sitting, Milton Ortiz-Gonzalez and Colin Bales remove a dead tree at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Cape Charles, Sunday, March 6. Below: Thomas Ames, left, and Mary Kehoe gather the weeds they pulled from the property. Thirteen students from Catholic Campus Ministry at VCU and ODU spent their spring break volunteering at the parish and Cape Charles Christian School. (Photos provided)



invited us back for some delicious vanilla ice cream and to hang out with some of the kiddos,” she said. “Kids are just absolute joys.”

The children seemed to enjoy meeting students from Norfolk and Richmond, she said, as much as the collegians enjoyed the hospitality and friendship they found in Cape Charles.

“It was nice to have a different

experience,” Rangel-Gomez said. “I’m used to my own place, here in Norfolk, so going to a smaller community and seeing how people are more connected was very nice.”

“It was eye-opening to see how a small group of college students can make a small impact on a small town,” Laurin said. “I wish I wasn’t a senior, so I could experience it all again.”

Casa Alma exemplifies Dorothy Day's work

Charlottesville Catholic Worker community lives in 'right relationship' with God, others, Earth

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

In a diverse, working-class neighborhood in Charlottesville, the spirit of social activist and Servant of God Dorothy Day lives in Casa Alma — a Catholic Worker community dwelling in three small houses and their shared yards.

Founded in 2009 by former Maryknoll lay missionaries Steve and Laura Brown, Casa Alma is an all-volunteer, nonprofit urban homestead that welcomes low-income families in need of housing, mostly African American or Latina single parents and their children, into an eco-friendly setting.

"At Casa Alma, we are exploring what it means to live in 'right relationship' with God, with others and with the earth," Laura explained. "Those themes and elements are important to us."

One of nearly 200 Catholic Worker communities worldwide, including the other Virginia locations in Norfolk, Spotsylvania and Louisa, Casa Alma follows the principles established in 1933 in New York City by Day, Peter Maurin and their volunteer colleagues to live the charity and justice of the Gospel. It is guided by peace and nonviolence, social justice, simple living, care for creation, and service to and fellowship with the poor.

Temporary residents, known as guests, who come to Casa Alma stay rent-free in one of two hospitality houses for up to two years. During that time, they are often able to save for affordable housing, pay down debt and plan for the future. They also practice skills such as gardening and living sustainably.

At the central community house where the Brown family lives, guests receive community support through prayer, shared meals, discussions, musical gatherings and other public events.

Resident volunteers who work on the property also live there; they all speak Spanish. Heidi Coleman and her 12-year-old daughter, Linda, originally from Guatemala, returned to



Laura and Steve Brown, former Maryknoll lay missionaries, worked in the garden last month at Casa Alma — a Catholic Worker community in Charlottesville. The Browns established the entity in 2009 after completing missionary work in Chile. (Photo/ Karen Adams)

work at Casa Alma after having been guests in 2017. Claire Hitchins and her fiancé, Julio Quispe, do much of the gardening work. Hitchins, a musician, holds concerts onsite as well. The Browns raised their three daughters, Emily, Anna and Ella, at Casa Alma. Ella, a high school junior, still lives there.

On the 0.6-acre property that backs up to Rives Park, the resident volunteers stay busy year-round: vegetables and herbs grow in the front-yard garden, fruit trees blossom in the back-yard orchard, black currants and hazelnut bushes sprawl along a back fence, 12 beehives produce honey and 11 hens lay eggs. All food grown or raised at Casa Alma is shared there, at a second housing property called Carlton House, and with neighbors and friends.

Dire need for housing

Guests are referred to Casa Alma through a network of area pastors, social workers, guidance counselors and others that has been built over many years.

When the Browns, who had lived in Charlottesville prior to their missionary service in Chile, returned in 2009, they had already conceived the idea of forming a Catholic Worker entity.

"We wanted a life rooted in faith and community. We wanted our Maryknoll mission to continue," Laura explained.

They asked at their parish, Church of the Incarnation, and throughout the city: "What are the greatest needs not being met here?" The consistent response: affordable housing for low-income families.

They found the property on Nassau Street they wanted to buy and paid for it from their own savings and gifts from their parents. They started renovating with volunteer help, and began building that network.

There is a process to place a family, which is most often a single mother and two children. During the first visit, the family learns about the Casa Alma community and discusses whether they can see themselves living there. They learn about its sustainable practices — such as conserving water and composting food waste — and see the common elements: a food pantry, washing machine and drying line. They also learn that others are often there to attend events or volunteer.

"A bunch of students might be here doing gardening outside your window," Steve said. "It's a little more public than a private home."

Visitors share their stories, too, sitting in the front room of the simple blue house with Catholic Worker art on the walls.

"Often they need to sit across from someone and talk about the most painful thing in their lives," Laura said.

"Alma" means "soul" in Spanish and "kind" and "nourishing" in Latin.

"By calling it Casa Alma, we wanted it to feel familiar and welcoming to our Spanish-speaking guests simply by the name," Laura explained. "And the Latin is a connection to our Catholic faith."

An inheritance from Steve's great-aunt Alma Dugdale, given by his parents, helped finance the property. The name also was a way to honor her memory, Steve said.

Additional outreach

Last year, the Browns were presented with an opportunity of purchasing and managing a multi-unit dwelling. Partnering with local developer Chris Murray, BMC Property Management and Virginia Organizing, and with support from the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund, the project would provide reduced-rent housing while also offering a sense of community. The group purchased the building in December and began renovations immediately.

In the two-story, 10-unit building, built in 1984, each apartment has one bedroom and one private bathroom, with two common kitchens and living rooms as well as laundry facilities.

Eight residents who were already there have chosen to stay. When each of the two vacant apartments is completed, two residents will have the option of moving in so their vacant spaces can be updated. Each apartment will be completed in this way.

The building on Carlton Road is just a half mile from Casa Alma to allow easy interaction and sharing of food, as well as accessibility of resident volunteers. Coleman, who manages the site, checks on residents and leads activities, such as cooking community dinners.

"I love to help people at Carlton House," Coleman said. "Some of them are elderly and need encouragement and faith. We support people to look up and have hope."

Abundance of generosity

As a nonprofit, Casa Alma relies on dona-

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Claire Hitchins, a resident volunteer at Casa Alma, shows eggs to visitors during a March open house. In addition to the chickens, the community's sustainability includes by growing produce from the garden, fruit trees and bushes, and extracting honey from 12 beehives. The community shares the food with neighbors and friends. (Photo/ Karen Adams)

Casa Alma

Continued from Page 4

tions, and others' generosity has helped it grow. In the early years, several grants funded specific needs, such as the tall cistern built to collect roof rainwater for the garden. Local churches provide some goods and funding, but the majority of support comes from individual donations.

To pay for personal and household expenses, the resident volunteers have outside jobs. Steve is a bookkeeper at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Laura works for The Women's Initiative counseling center, Coleman is a local Spanish translator and Latino grocery store employee, and Quispe works for the city helping people with rent relief. Hitchins is earning her Master of Divinity degree through Vanderbilt Divinity School.

As a University of Virginia undergraduate student, Hitchins first came to volunteer in 2010 with her older sister, Christine. She met Quispe there in 2018, and they will marry in June.

Quispe, a farmer who immigrated from Peru, had a food truck before the pandemic and now uses his culinary skills to cook meals for Casa Alma when not at his job.

Hitchins said that she and Quispe have seen Casa Alma as a different way to live their Catholic faith.

"Catholicism holds a multitude of ways of connecting to the sacred, and this has opened my horizons to what is possible with faith, community and stewardship."

University of Virginia students volunteer weekly in the gardens. Friends, acquaintances and strangers come to help with con-

struction, renovations and repairs. Many come for concerts, prayer gatherings, potlucks, open houses and retreats.

"So many people have come through these doors, with their labor and their interests, to be in a place that encourages them to talk about their faith, what's important to them, how they want to be in the world, how to be of service," Laura said. "It's divinely inspired."

Casa Alma attracts people for different reasons, Steve noted, including faith (Catholic or not), social justice, earth care and community connections.

"One man said he'd never have met this array of people if he had not come here to volunteer and participate," he said.

Challenges remain

Sometimes after leaving Casa Alma, guests' lives are still hard.

"For an immigrant or refugee, trying to earn a working wage and find housing in a market that's too expensive – there are so many barriers," Laura said.

"I've had to change what I see as success," Steve added. "Sometimes this is the most stability the kids have ever known."

While many of the 13 families who have lived at Casa Alma have gone on to stable housing, not everyone has – for complicated reasons – but the time there provides a safe, caring respite at least, Laura noted.

"We share the Catholic Worker belief that everyone is made in God's image and is deserving of dignity, respect and a thriving life," she said. "When we are asked about 'success,' I think of Dorothy Day's comment: 'Don't worry about being effective. Just concentrate on being faithful to the truth.'"



Carlton House, Casa Alma's new property, provides reduced-rent living for low-income residents and shares produce, meals and community events. (Photo/Karen Adams)

Knowing people with such hard lives has changed the Browns' children, their parents said. While Ella lives at home – Emily is earning a doctorate in chemistry, and Anna works in marketing – it has been gratifying to see their widened awareness, Laura said.

"They have talked about growing up at Casa Alma, and the people they met, the guests who were here. Hearing about the struggles they faced and knowing them personally affected them," she said.

Abundance of faith and grace

The Browns said their faith has grown on their unique journey, which has been rooted in prayer.

"When we founded Casa

Alma, we recognized that we'd have to put everything into it," Steve said. "And we did. So much has grown from that seed."

He described how, when obstacles appear, it often feels as if they are running headlong into a brick wall.

"Then we close our eyes and pray, and suddenly we are over the wall. That's grace."

Laura agreed.

"By providing hospitality for others, we experience the grace of a community that comes together to help each other," she said. "This vocation has been a daily education in abundance in all ways. Grace is necessary to make this happen."

Editor's note: For more information, visit casa-alma.org.



Casa Alma's 'right relationship' with God, others and Earth includes conserving water, composting food waste, using a washing machine and drying clothes on a laundry line. Casa Alma's property abuts Rives Park in Charlottesville. (Photo/Karen Adams)



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Biology is real; do not ignore gift of Creator

GUEST COMMENTARY

RICHARD DOERFLINGER
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Judging by news coverage and social media, Senate hearings on the confirmation of appellate Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to replace Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer have provided more political theater than enlightenment on the law.

One media storm erupted over the claim that Judge Jackson doesn't know what a woman is.

The question actually posed to her by Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee was: "Can you provide a definition for the word 'woman'?"

The exchange that followed went like this:

Jackson: "I can't."

Blackburn: "You can't?"

Jackson: "Not in this context. I'm not a biologist."

Some conservatives leaped to question how a woman, nominated by a president wanting to choose a Black woman, doesn't know what she is.

But the question was about defining the word, a more difficult matter — as Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously told us in 1964, when he said he wasn't sure how to define a phrase like "hardcore pornography," but "I know it when I see it."

One perspective is that Judge Jackson was de-

clining to prejudge a legal issue that could come before the court. Judicial nominees are not supposed to answer such questions, because they should make their judgment based solely on the facts and arguments presented by both sides in the case.

That would make sense.

For decades, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 has barred discrimination "on the basis of sex" at educational institutions receiving federal funds. But in 2016, the Obama administration issued guidance claiming that "sex" should be defined in terms of a student's self-identification.

That policy was enjoined by a federal court, which found no basis for this new definition in the law's text or history. The Trump administration then reversed the Obama policy, saying it would interpret "sex" in accord with the biological differences between men and women.

Finally, President Joe Biden has expressed interest in restoring the Obama policy, with final regulations expected this spring.

The outcome of this dispute may determine whether Title IX continues to ensure equitable support for women's athletics at American colleges. Recently, University of Pennsylvania student Will Thomas, after changing his name to Lia and identifying as a woman, won the NCAA women's swimming championship.

Even transgender advocate Caitlyn Jenner has said that Thomas is not the "rightful winner" of the title, and that allowing biological men to compete

against women is "not good for women's sports." Many states are trying to stop this trend, but a contrary federal law could block their efforts. This will end up in federal court.

The interesting thing about Judge Jackson's answer, though, is that she suggested this is a question of biological fact, not of personal choice or legal dictate. Which is what the Trump administration said. Perhaps the senator should have thanked her for this excellent answer and moved on.

Supreme Court justices have sometimes ignored the relevance of biological facts. In 1973, for example, they said, "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins" because "those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus."

But it is biology that is "the study of life." The court ignored the embryology textbooks to create a new "right" to extinguish life before birth.

Pope Francis has spoken against gender ideologies "that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality," in the apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" (No. 56). He urges us not to ignore or replace the gift of our Creator. The Church's theology reminds us that biology is real. On this one point, we saw a moment of nonpartisan clarity at the hearing.

Doerflinger worked for 36 years in the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Washington state.

Why Lent is valuable

Instead of complaining about things we think the Church is doing wrong, how about complimenting her on something she does that is absolutely right and necessary for our spiritual wellbeing? I am talking about Lent.

Solomon writes in the Book of Ecclesiastes (2:10-11): "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all of my labor, and this was the reward for all of my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind, nothing was gained under the sun."

The Church, in her infinite wisdom, calls us to a period of self-denial so that we might step back from the course of our lives and take a hard look at who we are and where we are headed. Through the Lenten period of self-denial, the Church gives us the opportunity to examine our lives in order to prevent the tragedy that Solomon describes in this passage.

Through self-examination, by way of detachment, we can see more clearly if we are living lives pleasing to God or just pleasing to ourselves!

— Joseph Swonk
Dunnsville

Church has rubrics, rules for a reason

Regarding Deacon Melvin Dowdy's letter (Catholic Virginian, March 7): If a priest were to speak the incorrect words for the sacraments of matrimony, penance, Communion or any other sacrament, those sacraments would also be declared invalid. This is because of the importance and sacredness of the sacraments themselves. Also, the exact words are contained in the rubrics. The formula is not to be changed or edited.

In the case of the invalid baptisms in the Diocese of Phoenix, I agree with the baptisms being declared invalid. The priest who performed these invalid baptisms was saying, "We baptize you ..." when in reality, the priest should have followed the rubrics and said, "I baptize you..."

The central issue here is that the community is not baptizing a person, but the priest or deacon who has the authority to do so is doing it. We as the faith community do not have the power nor the right to baptize anyone unless it is in an extremely dire situation, such as a dying infant or someone dying in a car accident.

In this case, I see Catholic "legalism" as a good thing, as it limits instances such as these and also prevents

Catholic clergy from changing the sacrament wording or the liturgy as they see fit. It would start with something small, and slowly but surely continue to progress further away from what the sacrament should be.

The Church has written rubrics and rules for a reason; they need to be followed. They are put in place for our guidance and for our salvation.

— Gabriel Utz
Richmond

Baptism and the rule of law

Baptism is a gift from God and should be administered with the reverence due to all heavenly realities, to include the precise recitation of the baptismal formula. Why? Because the Church is the "home" of the sacraments (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1131).

To not follow her demands in the sacramental economy is to reject the authority granted to her by Christ: "I ... give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 16:19). These keys grant legal authority to the Church, thus legitimizing the ancient practice of canon law, which teaches that "Baptism ... is validly conferred only ... with the proper form of words" (Canon 849).

Legality aside, though, baptism is a sacrament, or ritual, of initiation. It is the ordinary means by which someone is "born" into a life of divine sonship or daughtership, just

as natural birth is the ordinary means by which human persons become sons and daughters of their parents.

Initiation rituals in secular and religious cultures are safeguarded to provide assurance to the initiated and witnesses alike that new members have entered into the community.

This provides for stability and unity, as well as cause for joy, to these groups; deviation in Christian rituals, such as baptism, unnecessarily presents doubt to the Christian community, which seeks to know its family members with assurance as any natural family would.

The only place for sentimentalism in baptism is in the knowledge that one has been made a son or daughter of God by Christ's sacrifice, in his Church and through the laws established therein.

— Andrew Slattery
Norfolk

Liked story about Defending Life Day

I saw the article on Defending Life Day (Catholic Virginian, Feb. 21). I agree with what was published. It is a really great thing to do. A lot of the article was about Catholic High School and the students who went. I am also a student at Catholic High School.

I was going to go to the March for Life in DC, but that got cancelled for us, and I couldn't make the Defending Life Day in Richmond. However, I enjoyed hearing about it and seeing pictures and now reading about it in the paper. It was really cool to see teachers and staff that I know from school have their words published in the newspaper.

Thank you for putting in such a great article about it, and I hope I will be there next year. Maybe I'll even make it in a picture that's published!

— Raúl Acevedo
Norfolk

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IN MEMORIAM

Deacon Gerald 'Jerry' Wyngaard



A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Thursday, Feb. 24, at St. Gabriel, Chesterfield, for Deacon Gerald "Jerry" Wyngaard who passed away on Thursday, Feb. 17.

Prior to his ministry, Deacon Wyngaard served as an officer in the Air Force for 27 years after graduating from the Air Force Academy. He retired as a colonel.

Following retirement, he began teaching math and coaching high school football. He also taught for several years at the Riverside Regional Jail.

In 2002, he earned a graduate degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University of New Orleans. He earned a master's in theology from St. Leo University in 2021 and was ordained a deacon on Nov. 3 that same year.

In addition to his prison ministry, Deacon Wyngaard served in diaconal ministry at St. Gabriel and Good Samaritan, Amelia.

He is survived by his wife, Candy, and five children: April (Michael) Guminsky; Rebecca (Tucker) Wright; Todd (Kim) Wyngaard; David (Thelma) Wyngaard; and Peter (Patty) Wyngaard.

He is further survived by siblings Jack and Joe Wyngaard, and Judy Ebert, and by 15 grandchildren.

Deacon Wyngaard was buried with full military honors at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for April 10, 2022

Luke 19:28-40

Following is a word search based on the Processional Gospel reading for Palm Sunday, Cycle C. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

JERUSALEM	DREW NEAR	BETHPAGE
BETHANY	SENT	ANYONE
FOUND	ROAD	MOUNT
OF OLIVES	MULTITUDE	PRAISE
MIGHTY	THE KING	WHO COMES
NAME	HEAVEN	GLORY
HIGHEST	SILENT	STONES

STONES WOULD CRY

T S E H G I H E A V E N
 K H S E D R E W N E A R
 O S E N T M K W L M N A
 J E V K R O A D E R Y N
 E M I S I U E D L L O E
 R O L E D N U O F C N G
 U C O N F T G Y A R E A
 S O F O I S I L E N T P
 A H O T O M L I O H J H
 L W L S U E S I A R P T
 E U C H O C H O W P Y E
 M I G H T Y N A H T E B

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Correction

The caption on the front page of the March 21 Catholic Virginian incorrectly noted that the pipes for an organ being installed in the cathedral sanctuary were for a concert organ. They were for the choir organ.

In Observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month



Together, may we always protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults in our homes, churches, schools and communities.

To learn more about our child protection efforts in the Diocese of Richmond, visit:

<https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>



Join us for delicious **ALL YOU CAN EAT** Shrimp, BBQ, Hush Puppies, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, Onion Rings, & Adult Beverages!

Food provided by



Tickets are available online April 4th at <http://smsvb.net/news-and-events/carnival/> \$40 each in advance—same price for adults or children.

Open to the public!
Please join us and bring your friends.
No outside food or drinks permitted.

Contact **LaDonna Sinsabaugh** at 757-420-2455. or Lsinsabaugh@smsvb.net for more information.

St. Matthew's Catholic School 4th Annual
"All You Can Eat" Shrimp Fest
Thursday, May 5, 2022 from 6-10pm
Proceeds benefit the students & school.

The hope of Holy Week

JEM SULLIVAN
Catholic News Service

In his passion, Jesus' sufferings were unequalled. For the Son of God offered himself as a sacrifice for all. No one, not even the saintliest person, can take on the sins of all people in every time and place. Only God can, and did.

It is this gift of faith, at the heart of our Lenten journeys, that Matthias Grunewald, master German painter, brings to life in a vivid painting titled "The Small Crucifixion." We are invited to reflect not only on the historical event of the Lord's crucifixion, but the redemptive meaning of Jesus' suffering love, poured out for all humanity and for each of us.

Grunewald's image is particularly poignant in these times of uncertainty as we walk the via crucis, the path of Jesus' paschal journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday.

Grunewald's best-known masterpiece, the "Isenheim Altarpiece," was commissioned for the high altar of the church of the Monastery of St. Anthony in Alsace. There, patients suffering from the plague were treated.

In that large altarpiece, Grunewald depicts a crucified Christ whose body is scourged with plague-type sores. Patients bearing the pain of their physical afflictions found spiritual comfort as they gazed on the crucified Jesus and found consolation in the mystery of his suffering.

"The Small Crucifixion" was, most likely, a personal devotional image, intended either for a domestic setting or a private chapel. Here we are drawn into the reality of Jesus' passion. Color, line, form and composition convey, with remarkable expressive power, the depths of Jesus' abandonment and the extreme physical suffering of a crucifixion.

His gaunt body is racked with scars of torture. His emaciated face and bowed head evoke his unbearable agony. Under a piercing crown of thorns, the scarred face of Jesus bleeds. His tattered loincloth gives evidence of the depravity of his tormentors. Few artists have conveyed the scene of the crucifixion with the intense realism that Grunewald brings to his composition.

Jesus' crucifixion is set in a bare landscape painted in an unusual greenish blue color, evoking the Gospel detail that, at the hour of his passing, the sun darkened and creation itself groaned.

Visitors who stand in front of this painting in its museum setting cannot help but notice that the small panel bends outward into the viewers' space. Grunewald leaves no room for one to remain a passive bystander or objective onlooker in the face of Jesus' sufferings.

From the center radiates the Lord's outstretched arms with twisted hands and contorted feet stretched over the cross. His hands and feet convey the divine anguish over human alienation from God. Obedient even to death on a cross, Jesus' self-offering rises as a perfect oblation through his gnarled fingers that strain upward to the heavens.

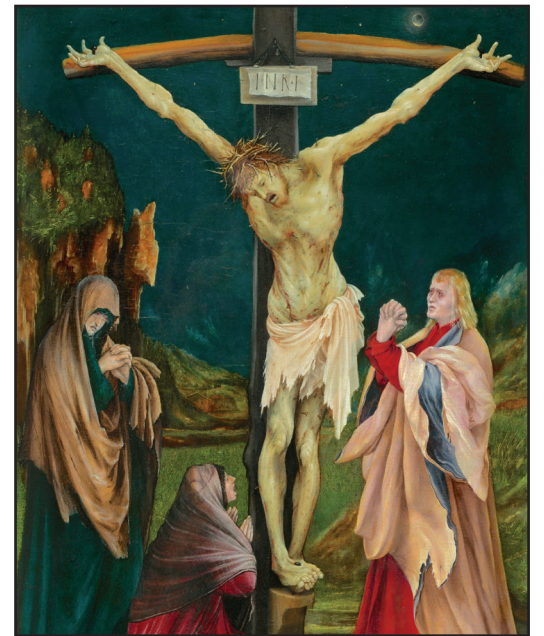
His ankles, twisting beneath the brute force of the nail that pierces his feet, evoke the chains of human alienation. The cross-beam strains downward not only under the

mass of his wounded body, but from the full weight of divine mercy that takes the form of crucified love.

On either side of the cross are Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the beloved disciple, St. John the Evangelist. Mary's robed head is bowed with her hands clasped in prayer, as she shares uniquely in her son's suffering. John conveys the agony of this faithful disciple. Kneeling in anguished meditation at the foot of the cross is St. Mary Magdalene.

Their perspective is meant to be ours as we contemplate Jesus' passion. Grunewald's vision allows us to glimpse the relentless mercy of God as it takes the form of suffering love on the cross. We are invited to receive the gift of divine crucified love poured out on the world and on each one of us.

Good Friday is good news in that death



This is a Good Friday illustration photo of a hammer, nails, wood and a crown of thorns. In the passion narrative, we hear of the agony in the garden, the arrest and trial of Jesus, and his scourging and crucifixion.

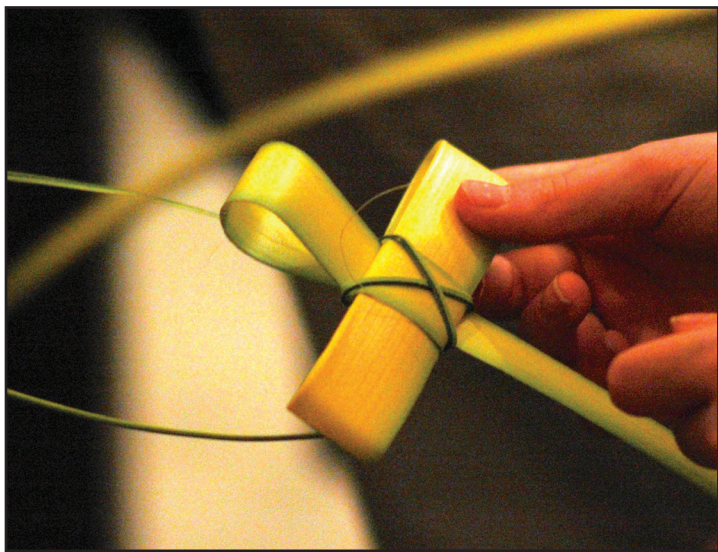
(CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

no longer has the final word on the human condition. As we enter into the mystery of Jesus' passion and death on the cross, we are filled with hope in the victorious power of God who will raise him from the dead.

And as we journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, Grunewald's image evokes our vocation to live the new life of the risen Christ.

We know and believe in faith that the horror of Jesus' crucifixion will most certainly give way to the radiant glory of his, and our own, resurrection. And so we pray, "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world."

Jem Sullivan, educator and author, contributes a Scripture column to Catholic News Service and is the author of "Believe, Celebrate, Live, Pray: A Weekly Retreat with the Catechism."



A churchgoer forms palm fronds into the shape of a cross on Palm Sunday. Also known as Passion Sunday, the liturgical feast commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem before his crucifixion. Palm Sunday is April 10. (CNS photo/Ed Zelachoski)

Why we use palms

CHAZ MUTH
Catholic News Service

What would a Palm Sunday procession or Mass be without the presence of its namesake — the palm?

The palm branch represents victory and peace during the Lenten journey and frequently serves two liturgical functions in more than one physical form.

The palm is a prominent holy object that helps Catholics prepare for the death and resurrection of our Savior.

But it's not always a palm branch that is used in these Lenten liturgies.

In some regions, Catholics use olive branches in their Palm Sunday processions as a sign of peace, victory and reconciliation during the last Sunday of Lent, marking the beginning of Holy Week.

So, perhaps it could be called Olive Branch Sunday?

But the green branches of the palm tree are the traditional props Catholics wave on Palm Sunday to commemorate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and into our faith as we welcome him into our lives as our Messiah.

Palms are historically a symbol of victory and peace and were plentiful in Jerusalem during the lifetime of Jesus.

The Gospel of John recounts how he was welcomed into the city by a crowd waving palming branches: "When the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, (even) the king of Israel'" (12:12-13).

Catholics use the palms as a way of welcoming Jesus in a jubilant act of faith, said Father John Benson, parochial vicar of Washington's Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle.

The palms aren't just a symbol.

Before the Palm Sunday procession begins, a priest blesses the palm branches with holy water, calling Christ's presence to mind, and the branches become a sacramental, a holy object designed to draw us closer to God.

Since palm trees do not grow natively near the Washington cathedral where he is assigned, Church leaders there order the palms from growers in California or Florida who "lovingly" harvest and package the soon-to-be sacramental objects for their intended use, he said.

According to the Code of Canon Law, blessed items are to be treated with reverence (Canon 1171). If there's a need to dispose of sacramentals, they must be buried or burned, not discarded in the trash.

Still, it's customary for Catholics to take the sacramental palms home with them — sometimes weaving them into crosses — and displaying them in their homes until the next liturgical year.



QUESTIONS &
ANSWERS
FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Father Doyle has retired from writing the question and answer column. Catholic News Service expects to name his replacement within a few weeks, after which time the column will resume appearing in The Catholic Virginian. Thank you for your patience.

What we must do for the peace of God to reign



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

Sadly, we've gotten used to the sight of refugees fleeing war torn counties in places like Syria, Afghanistan and Sudan, but what startles many people is the sight of refugees fleeing a cultural milieu not so different from our own.

The sight of mothers pushing strollers and children wheeling suitcases along paved streets is alarmingly familiar. As one friend said, "If it can happen there, it can happen anywhere."

As a baby boomer, all I know about world wars is what I've read or heard. I have no real-life experience, and yet, suddenly the ravages of war inflicted on a country that values democratic principles are no longer relegated to the annals of history.

As war machines on both sides escalate, and scenes of death and destruction overwhelm our sensibilities, the words of St. Pope John Paul II that "There are no winners in war" should bring us all to our knees.

With the renewal of the consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Catholics remain hopeful that our Blessed Mother's pleas for prayer and fasting will turn hearts to God so that peace may reign once and for all.

Quite often, I hear people say



prayer is the only effective weapon against evil, and yet, I fear that in turning to Mary, we relinquish part of our responsibility. What I mean is that prayer is only part of what Mary asks us to do. She has repeatedly added the injunction to fast as well as pray the rosary daily.

In pondering her words, I've come to realize that the reason we are to fast is so that our hearts will be purified. Fasting has always been an important part of the purification process.

Consider that fasting was one of the first mandates that Adam and Eve received in the Garden of Eden. Fasting from the tree of good and evil was about obedience to the will of God, which should always come before doing what we want.

St. John of the Cross, a doctor of the Church, wrote, "God cannot fill an occupied heart," meaning that if we give into every sensory pleasure available to us, our heart remains filled with temporal and material satisfaction to the point that there is

little room for God.

In essence, we've made ourselves and creature comforts the gods we turn to as we attempt to fill the hole in our heart that only God can fill. Although we eventually learn that all sensory pleasures are fleeting, our reliance on other gods has consequences.

They blur our spiritual senses so that God is no longer the center of our life but is relegated to a place where we invoke his name when it is convenient or when we want God to do something for us or for the people we love. So it can happen that foolish hearts that have grown cold presume to expect God will respond to their prayers.

Consider that it took more than 400 years for God to respond to the cry of the Israelites. Appearing to Moses in the burning bush, God said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their

sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them" (Ex 3:7-8a). Similarly, it took more than 2,000 years from the time God called Abraham until he sent his son as Redeemer.

"But when the affections, desires and true love of the spotless Virgin, whom God had fashioned as the new Eve, could be contained no longer, her soul cried out in union with the will of God, 'The time is fulfilled'" (Mk 1:15).

We know from the angel's greeting that Mary was full of grace. She was virgin, which meant that not only her physical womb was empty, but her heart was empty of anything that would keep her soul from being filled with God.

Judeo-Christian history teaches us that God responds to the pleas of his people at the opportune time, but because Mary is full of grace, he responds to her without reservation. And so, we might ask: Am I willing to obey Mary's request to pray the rosary daily and fast in its many forms for the conversion of Russia and for peace in our world?

Let's pray that all respond with a resounding "yes" because when we unite our efforts with the sufferings of Jesus in solidarity with all who are traveling the road to Calvary, the peace of God will reign.

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

Christ's obedience opens the way to our salvation



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY
MELANIE CODDINGTON

After two years of disruption, we may find unexpected delight in this Sunday's festive procession-by-all. The smell of fresh palm fronds pressed into our hands, the feel of curly strings tickling our fingers, the shimmer of holy water soaring through the air help to focus our imagination on the noisy, crowded streets of Jerusalem.

We hear in Luke's account how Jesus' actions evoke the Messianic expectation spelled out in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass."

Bringing this prophetic image to life, Jesus enters Jerusalem humbly, as the joyful clamor of "the whole multitude of his disciples" erupts around him.

Similarly, Jesus embodies Isaiah's suffering servant, the central figure of today's first reading. In his preaching and teaching, Jesus uses his "well-trained tongue" to "speak to the weary," and his words indeed "rouse them" to faith and devotion to God's reign.

Those with much to lose are also roused — to unbelief and violent resistance to this threatening "first shall be last" rearrangement of the status quo.

The unwavering obedience of Jesus to the Father's *will*, despite threats against his life, arises from an intimate relationship of trust, built on prayer. "Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear" beautifully portrays the continuity of the conversation between

Jesus and his Abba, as nighttime prayers give way to dreams, and the message of dreams linger in the conscious mind upon waking. "I have not rebelled, have not turned back" shows the depth of

his trust in the Father's steady instruction.

Psalm 22 seems at first to signal a break in the relationship, with its refrain, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me," but if we persevere in our listening to the end, we move with the psalmist from plea to praise, or at least the vow to praise ("I will proclaim your name..."). This vow demonstrates trust; the psalmist expects to be delivered. Even amid terrible suffering, the conversation of covenant partners continues.

St. Paul's letter to the Philippians expands on the theme of obedience: "And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Christ's humility, his emptying of self, opens the way to his obedience, and his obedi-

ence opens the way to our salvation.

If we consider Phil 2:6-11 in its biblical context, we notice how St. Paul suspends his usual dense prose in favor of a *hymn* — a pre-existent piece of liturgy, most probably well-known at the time of his writing. He cites this familiar text, this beloved song of faith, to remind the Philippians of their commitment to live justly, as true disciples of Jesus the *servant* Lord.

Verses 6-8 present Jesus, in his humility and obedience, as the model for their behavior (and ours). Following the example of Jesus, they (and we) can move beyond self-interest toward compassion and true community. This splendid hymn also encapsulates and enshrines the Paschal Mystery — the suffering-death-resurrection of Jesus that accomplishes our salvation.

The Passion according to St. Luke follows the basic outline common to all three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) but also features unique elements: First, we hear the criminals crucified with Jesus differ sharply in their response to him. One shows no sign of remorse for his crime yet demands favor. The other recognizes his guilt and asks for mercy. His repentance and trust prompt the promise, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Finally, Jesus prays from the cross, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," from Psalm 31. This brief quote stands in for the entire text, recalling the intimacy and trust of covenant partners portrayed in it, and pointing us toward Good Friday.

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

How patron saint of philanthropy influenced tax code

Mother Katharine Drexel paved way for charitable deductions

TIM SWIFT
Catholic News Service

BENSALEM, Pa. — This tax season, Americans have an unexpected figure to thank for one of their most-used deductions. She wasn't an accountant, a lawyer or even a politician, but an actual saint.

St. Katharine Drexel is well known for being a trailblazing figure in the early 20th century, championing the needs of Native Americans and Black Americans, but few know she may have the most lasting impact on philanthropy of any American in U.S. history.

Her unexpected role in the U.S. tax code began at the outbreak of World War I in 1913, which spurred the creation of the federal income tax.

But by 1917, the tax became a graduated one, sending Mother Drexel's tax bills skyrocketing and potentially endangering the charitable work of her religious order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. The sisters' motherhouse is in Bensalem, Pennsylvania.

By 1924, Mother Drexel and her influential family successfully lobbied Congress for what later became known as the "Philadelphia nun provision." Under the provision, anyone who had given 90% of their income to the charity for the previous 10 years was exempt from income taxes.

It was a distinction that described only one U.S. citizen at the time — Mother Drexel, said Seth Smith, a professor of an assistant clinical professor of history at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Phil Brach, vice president of college relations at Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina, said the "Philadelphia nun provision" goes to the heart of what set Mother Drexel apart from her better-known philanthropic contemporaries such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie.

"What made her unique is the order of magnitude," said Brach, who has taught courses on philanthropy for The Catholic University of America. "There were years where the amount she gave was almost equal to the combined amount of all the collections and all the parishes in the entire country."

Mother Drexel's giving mostly benefited Black Catholics and Native American Catholics at a time when racial prejudice ran high and those communities struggled with crippling poverty and lack of access to quality education. Her order built schools and churches across the American South and established what is now Xavier University of Louisiana, the nation's only historically Black Catholic college.

Mother Drexel also was a staunch supporter of the Josephites



This likeness of St. Katharine Drexel is seen at the Katharine Drexel Shrine in Bensalem, Pa. The saint, who founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, helped lobby Congress in 1924 to make an federal income tax deduction for charitable giving part of the U.S. tax code. (CNS photo/The Crosiers)

throughout her life, purchasing land for the religious order to build many of their parishes and schools.

St. Katharine's family, the Drexels of Philadelphia, was one of the wealthiest families in America. An heiress to a banking fortune who chose religious life, she devoted her wealth to Blacks and Native Americans served by her religious order and to other people in need.

She gave approximately \$20 million dollars over her lifetime, including support for schools in the Diocese of Richmond.

Brach said few have been able to match the sheer scope of Mother Drexel's giving then or now. For example, he cited the Giving Pledge — a well-received philanthropic campaign spearheaded by billionaires Bill Gates and Warren Buffet.

The Giving Pledge encourages wealthy people to donate at least 50% of their wealth to charitable causes, but that's a far cry from Mother Drexel's 90% of her wealth.

"There is a reason she's the patron saint of philanthropy," Brach told *The Josephite Harvest*, the magazine of the Josephites, known formally as St. Joseph's Society of the Sacred Heart.

According to "Sharing the Bread in Service: Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament 1891-1991 — Volume 1," the "Philadelphia nun provision" was essential to the operation of the order in the years after it became part of the law.

"The exemption was really important because the sisters were responsible for basically taking care of 15,000 dependents annually. They had over 300 employees or teachers," Smith said. "They also contributed annually over \$50,000 to support Black and Native American

See *Giving*, Page 12

SAVE THE DATE | APRIL 29, 2022

Saint Francis Home Annual Benefit Dinner

THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT CHRISTY HEINEN:
CHEINEN@SAINTFRANCISHOME.ORG | 804.237.5602

For 45 years, an Annual Benefit Dinner was held to raise funds to support the care of the elderly residents of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Since the Little Sisters' departure from Richmond, Saint Francis Home is the only remaining faith-based assisted living community in the area dedicated to exclusively serving older adults of limited means. Past attendees of this annual event encouraged Saint Francis Home to continue this longstanding Richmond tradition that provides support for Richmond's low-income elderly. We hope we can count on your support to make this year's event a success!



A home where Catholicism, Legos meet

Siblings build what they experience at parish

AMANDA LAUER

Catholic News Service

APPLETON, Wis. — A little creativity with Lego pieces by John and Holly Ostermeier's six children has yielded a re-creation of the family's parish church, St. Pius X in Appleton, right down to the altar, candle bank, piano and priest celebrating Mass.

There's even a thurible for incense and a candle snuffer.

The children, all of whom have been part of the "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd" faith formation program at their parish, were inspired to build the replica of the church sacristy while learning about the Mass and the various terms associated with it.

Their three oldest children — Isabel, 13, Ben, 12, and Amelia, 10 — are altar servers at the parish. Their younger children — twins Simon and Linus, 8, and Jonah, 5 — plan to be altar servers when they're older.

Holly said the project began two years ago when Linus built a very small church with an altar, chalice, paten, some bread and a tabernacle. With some encouragement, the siblings transformed the generic church into a miniature of the St. Pius X Church's nave.

"The 'Catechesis of the Good Shepherd' really gave them a lot of the background and the inspiration to do this because they know what everything is on the altar and in the sacristy," John explained. "And altar serving," Holly added.

All six children are home-schooled.



John and Holly Ostermeier's six children used Legos to create a scene from Mass at St. Pius X Church in Appleton, Wis., seen in this undated photo. It includes a Lego version of Father Patrick Costello, parochial vicar, celebrating Mass and holding a thurible for burning the incense. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass)

"This is our first year," Holly said, explaining the decision on home schooling was made following a year in which the children attended public school classes online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The home schooling has worked out for the family.

Hanging behind the altar in the St. Pius miniature is its most eye-catching feature: a large crucifix. Three aisles are lined by pews filled with parishioners, including a family with a baby, an elderly woman in a wheelchair, a man with a crutch and a person attending Mass with their service dog.

Steps lead to the sanctuary. A Lego version of Father Patrick Costello, St. Pius X's parochial vicar, stands at the altar celebrating Mass. The Lego blocks in the wall behind him match the colors of the stones in the church.

"We added a glow-in-the-dark statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with candles in front of it. There's a baptismal font. Next to that is the Easter candle. Because it's Lent, we have Lenten decorations on the steps to the altar — two pots with sticks in them," Isabel explained to The Compass, newspaper of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

"On the altar is a crucifix, two candles, the Roman Missal, wine and the ciborium where the consecrated hosts are kept," she added. "Father is holding a consecrated host in his right hand. The back altar has two candles, the tabernacle where the ciborium is stored and the sanctuary lamp next to it that's lit all the time. On the table in the back are the cruets. One has wine and the other has water. Then there's the lavabo dish for the washing of the hands."

Several months ago, the children built a convent and high school modeled after the Discalced Carmelites' Monastery of the Holy Name of Jesus in Denmark, Wisconsin, about 15 miles south of Green Bay.

"We call it 'Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.' Because they're Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, we called the school Labouré High School, since St. Catherine Labouré designed the Miraculous Medal," Isabel

explained.

The kids' latest project was duplicating St. Pius X's sacristy and narthex.

"Because we're altar servers, we get to see a close-up view of all this. Ours has all the same stuff that is in the sacristy at St. Pius," Isabel said. "Behind the sacristy is a confessional with the person kneeling. Father Jim (Jugenhimer, pastor of St. Pius Parish) is in the confessional."

Father Kyle Sladek, former parochial vicar of St. Pius X, is depicted vesting in the sacristy by a mirror. The priest now serves two other Wisconsin parishes as administrator — St. Mark in Redgranite and Sacred Heart of Jesus in Poy Sippi.

The narthex completes the church property.

"There's a statue of St. Pius X. Our church has chairs and tables in that area, a bulletin board, a table next to the sacristy that has the 'Two Hearts Devotion' (Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary), prayer intention books and copies of The Compass newspaper," Isabel said. "The headline on this one is, 'There's a Lego church campus.'"

The project — which is both for show and for play — is not only a testament to the faith of the Ostermeier children, but to their creativity as well. "To take all these little Lego pieces and find these creative uses for them, I can't comprehend that," John said.

"It's just evolving," Holly said. "Every week, they tell us to come downstairs because they think of something new."



A scene made of Legos depicts a religious sister teaching children in this undated photo. "We've got the Glory Be in Latin (Gloria Patris) on the wall," explained Isabel Ostermeier, who with her five siblings used Legos to recreate scenes of St. Pius X Church in Appleton, Wis. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass)

Ukrainian archbishop recounts horrors, heroism of war

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

ROME — With his voice often trembling and tears sliding down to his beard, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church spoke via Zoom about the death and destruction Russia is raining down on his people and his country.

Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych repeatedly apologized for the tears and acknowledged the contrast between his daily video messages of encouragement to his people and his talk during the webinar March 29 sponsored by Rome's Pontifical Oriental Institute.

He started the videos to keep in touch with his people and “just to let people know that I am alive, the city of Kyiv lives,” he said, his voice breaking.

“Forgive me for my tears, but I think I can (cry) with you,” he said. “With my people, I feel an obligation to be a preacher of hope, a hope that does not come from military power or from the possibility of diplomacy — we don't have those hopes yet — but a hope that comes from faith.”

“Today, I am speaking to you from Kyiv. It's a miracle,” Archbishop Shevchuk said. “The strength of the Ukrainian people is being revealed as a miracle that is surprising the world.”

In too many cities in Ukraine, the archbishop said, the Russians have “razed everything to the ground” and the only food the people have is what they get from the churches and other aid agencies.

The city of Slavutych, near the failed Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, is surrounded, he said, and an Eastern-rite Catholic priest and his wife there welcomed their third child into the world “in the midst of a terrible assault.”

“The baby was born in a hospital without electricity and without water,” Archbishop Shevchuk said. “When the war started, knowing that the baby was about to be born, I tried to intercede to get my priest and his

family brought to safety. He told me, ‘You are my bishop and I received from you the mandate to be the pastor of these people. I can't leave.’ And he stayed. For the last three days, I haven't heard from him.”

People will rebuild the churches and houses and bridges and factories destroyed by Russian shelling, he said, but the people killed will not be reunited with their loved ones “only on the day of the resurrection of the body.”

Archbishop Shevchuk choked up talking about the bravery of his priests and their wives, but his tears really began to flow when he spoke about reports of thousands of people, including children, being taken against their will to Russia and their passports being confiscated.

“This reminds us of the deportations of (Josef) Stalin,” he said. “We are talking about children, women, people with handicaps. What awaits them? What future will they have? Certainly, they will die.”

“I feel an obligation to be the voice of this suffering people and to be a simple witness to the reality being lived by our people in Ukraine.”

“I never would have imagined being the head of the Church in a time of war,” he said. “No one is ever prepared for war except for the criminals who plan and put it into action.”

In a long list of people he wanted to thank, Archbishop Shevchuk singled out Pope Francis, especially for his decision to lead a global consecration of the world, Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary March 25.

The consecration was important, he said, because “before our eyes there is a battle, an apocalyptic battle, between good and evil.”

“This consecration to our Mother who crushed the head of the ancient dragon, this strong presence of the Mother of God among us, is very important for us,” said the archbishop, who led a simultaneous consecration at the Cathedral of the Mother of God in Zarvanytsia.

at the base of the statue, which reads: “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.”

“That plaque will be there for a long time to come. It's part of the history of the parish — a parish that is unique in that it is a mixed race community,” he said. “The presence of both races is prevalent.”

million in today's money — that she had paid the government before the provision took effect, but Mother Drexel declined, worried that it would exacerbate anti-Catholic prejudices at the time.

While the provision was enacted without controversy in 1924, Smith said opposition to the exemption grew in 1933 during the height of the Great Depression. Only after lobbying from influential U.S. bishops, did the provision survive the challenge.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Honored: Three alumni of St. Gregory the Great School, Virginia Beach, who are Boy Scouts from Troop 12, earned the rank of Eagle Scout earlier this year after each completed a project benefiting a specific community.



Adam Hakim



Christian Goodman



William Greene

Adam Hakim built a fire pit at the St. Gregory the Great Youth House. Christian Goodman did garden and pond renovation at St. Gregory the Great Church. William Greene created a Virginia native plant pollinator garden at Catholic High School. Goodman and Greene are seniors at Catholic High School; Hakim is a senior at Prince Anne High School.

Standing up for life: Forty Days for Life has been taking place in locations throughout the diocese during Lent. Among the groups participating are parishioners from St. Pius X, Norfolk, and the Knights of Columbus, Norfolk Council 367. They silently protest in front of Planned Parenthood in Virginia Beach every Saturday from 11 a.m. to noon. Their witness includes recitation of the rosary. Speaking of life, the Virginia March for Life is Wednesday, April 27. Details at <https://marchforlife.org/virginia-march-for-life>.

Good people doing good things: When the Council of Catholic Women (CCW) of Bristol met March 10, they heard about the Appalachian Literacy Initiative (ALI) from St. Anne parishioner Kathy Carnell. True to its mission to support service and community outreach, the CCW members contributed to the ALI, which distributed 12,000 new books to 30 schools in five states where access to libraries and other resources is limited. Further information is available at readappalachian.org.

Outreach grows: Indicative of how the outreach of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has grown in the diocese was seen March 19 in Glen Allen when 85 Vincentians from conferences in Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Richmond, Charlottesville and Roanoke met for a day-long meeting. Five years ago, there were three SVDP conferences in the diocese; today there are 10. The meeting focused on mental health, trauma and homelessness — concerns Vincentians encounter when they carry out their ministry.

What have you heard? The CV would like to know what you've heard — or read — regarding Catholics in your community receiving honors and awards, as well as achievements, accomplishments and other good stuff. We'll try to publish a selection of submissions in each issue of The CV. Put “What we've heard” in the subject line and email your item to akrebs@catholicvirginian.org. Include your name and phone number in case we need to follow up. Information cannot be taken over the phone.

Reconciliation

Continued from Page 1

terms of the past, present and future.

“Folks came 53 years ago. There was a mixed reaction to them coming, but they stuck with it, and they persevered in their faith,” he said. “The statue is recognition of and a tribute to their faith.”

Regarding the present, Deacon Tucker noted that the number of people who were St. Joseph parishioners was dwindling and that the dedication and blessing was an opportunity to bring them together and to personally recognize and honor them.

As for the future, he noted the plaque

Giving

Continued from Page 10

children in schools outside of their own.”

“Frankly, the Church historically has fallen short, with Black Americans to the South, but the greatest legacy of Catholic support is in those schools,” Smith said.

According to “Sharing the Bread,” allies of Mother Drexel urged her to seek a refund for almost \$800,000 — the equivalent of about \$13

The charitable exemption continued to support the work of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament until Mother Drexel's death in 1955.

The “Philadelphia nun provision” was eventually written out of the tax code in 1969, but Mother Drexel's influence on U.S. philanthropy can't be understated, Branch said.

“The official language may be out of the code, but in general, it is the genesis of the charitable deduction that still exists,” he said.

Some Catholics encourage dialogue with BLM movement

Suggest examining common ground between the entities

CAROL ZIMMERMANN AND CHAZ MUTH
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Black Lives Matter movement is coming up to its 10th anniversary next year, so it's hardly in its beginning stages.

It remains a work in progress, and some Catholics see it as something at which the Church should be willing to look, talk about and even collaborate where it can, to take a hard look at racism and attempt to find a path forward.

The movement first appeared as a social media hashtag after the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death the previous year of the Black teenager Trayvon Martin.

A year later, the movement's name spread after the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, when protests and demonstrations included the repeated mantra: "Black lives matter."

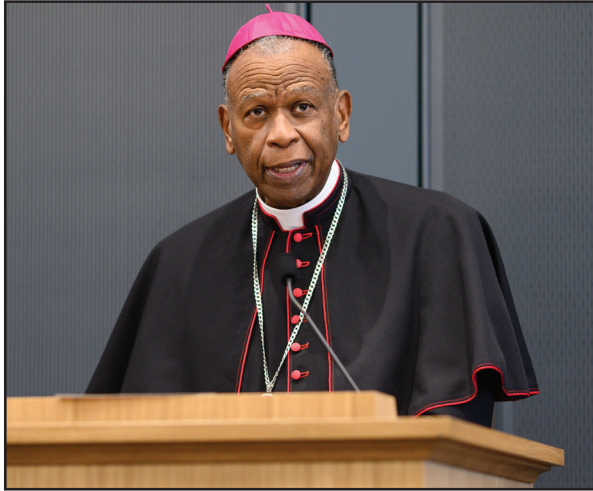
And in 2020, numerous Black Lives Matter demonstrations across the country took place after George Floyd's death while in Minneapolis police custody.

The movement's title is an attempt to drive home a message that Blacks still face unequal treatment in the United States, particularly with some police officers.

In 2016, Bishop Edward K. Braxton, now the retired bishop of Belleville, Illinois, wrote a pastoral letter "The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited," where he acknowledges the conflict between the Church and the Black Lives Matter movement in terms of Church teaching on abortion, sexuality, gender identity and more.

Making distinctions

He stressed in an interview with Catholic



Retired Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Ill., gives a lecture on "The Catholic Church and the Racial Divide in the United States" at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana Oct. 7, 2021, during the 31st annual meeting of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium. He said the Second Vatican Council urges dialogue with people and organizations of divergent views.

(CNS photo/Matt Cashore, courtesy University of Notre Dame)

News Service that the Second Vatican Council urges dialogue with people and organizations of divergent views.

When it comes to Catholic engagement with Black Lives Matter, there's a consensus among some leaders that distinguishing between the broader movement and problematic organizations that bear the name is a key place to start.

In 2020, during the height of protests against Floyd's death, then-Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, told The Catholic Spirit, archdiocesan newspaper of St. Paul and Minneapolis, that the phrase "Black lives matter" fits within Catholic social teaching about

the value of each person and "places before us this reality that Black lives have not always been afforded intrinsic and equal value."

The prelate, who is now an archbishop since being appointed earlier this year to head the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, chairs the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism.

He added that "it is entirely possible to give a positive response to the concept of Black Lives Matter ... without being beholden to an organization with objectives that are in conflict with the Catholic faith."

Similar concerns

Many Catholics who have taken part in Black Lives Matter-affiliated events have said their focus was simple: protesting the perceived unjustified use of lethal force by police against Black people and calling for reform. They said topics that concern other Catholics about Black Lives Matter — Marxism, transgender ideology and even support for keeping abortion legal — don't really come up.

Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, gained attention for kneeling while holding a "Black Lives Matter" sign in June 2020. After a photo of that went viral, he received a call from Pope Francis thanking him. The pope also called Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez to thank the U.S. bishops for their pastoral tone during demonstrations across the country.

More recently, Archbishop Gomez's comments calling out social justice movements in general in the United States drew heated reaction. Without naming any specific group, but he cautioned Catholics to recognize that these movements can

See Dialogue, Page 16

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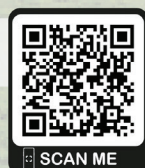
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OPPORTUNITIES

The Abbate Agency with the Knights of Columbus is seeking multiple Catholic financial professionals and administrative assistants across Virginia and West Virginia. If you're interested in a career that builds up faith while providing for your family and other Catholic families, please visit www.abbatekofc.com/career-opportunities.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond seeks an innovative and motivated assistant editor for its Office of Communications. We are looking for a person who is experienced in print *and* digital media, and who sees the complementariness of them in order to serve the multiple constituencies within our diocese. At our biweekly publication, *The Catholic Virginian*, you will be responsible for working closely with the editor in planning local and national content, writing, editing and placing copy, following up on story leads and assisting the editor by working with correspondents in developing feature articles.

At the same time, you will assist in strengthening the publication's daily digital presence, developing ways of engaging the Catholic community through timely news and information. The individual will assist in producing a visually appealing print and digital product through written and visual storytelling.

Qualifications: A bachelor's degree in English/journalism/mass communications or related field required, and a minimum of three years' related experience in print *and* digital communications, with Catholic communications experience preferred. Strong understanding of digital journalism, best practices, and the ability to keep abreast of emerging trends required. The successful candidate will be a strong, professional communicator — interpersonally and in writing — and a collaborator. Flexibility, initiative, self-motivated, strong attention to detail, ability to manage time, plan, organize and manage multiple projects are a must, as is commitment to maintain confidentiality. Expertise in using mobile devices as a reporting tool a bonus. The position requires some evening and weekend hours, with some travel throughout the diocese. Proficiency using Microsoft Office and AP Stylebook is required, and proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat Professional). Knowledge of Catholic News Service Stylebook is desired. Background clearances are required. A practicing Catholic passionate about serving the mission of the Catholic Church through storytelling, and who has working knowledge of Church structure and Catholic Church teaching is required. Qualified candidates should forward a cover letter, résumé with

samples or links to samples of your work, and completed diocesan application to Kelly Shumate, HR coordinator, at 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. Email jobs@richmonddioocese.org. Fax 804-622-5163.

The Benedictine Schools of Richmond seeks an innovative, collaborative and experienced full-time teacher for mathematics and science.

Essential duties and responsibilities include: Model and teach essential critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; collaborate with other faculty on cross-curricular and cross-disciplinary initiatives; differentiate instruction to support and engage a diverse community of learners; self-generate resources and assessments for each unit of study; support the missions and teaching philosophy of the schools; model Benedictine values and journey with students as they become more confident, competent and compassionate; utilize the school's LMS, including Open Gradebook, to post assignments, units of study and related course materials to support student self-initiative and self-advocacy; assume standard non-curricular responsibilities assigned to all faculty in furtherance of our schools' sense of community.

Math position would be responsible for teaching multiple levels of college preparatory mathematics and appropriately integrating technology, including graphing calculators, into lessons and assessments. This is a 10-month teaching position, and faculty report to work in mid-August 2022.

Qualifications: Virginia state teaching license preferred (but not required); bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred; demonstrated effective classroom instruction; strong communication, organizational and interpersonal skills; experience with Google Apps for Education and teaching in a 1:1 environment preferred.

To apply, please submit a cover letter, résumé, a completed application and an essay titled "My View of America" to the human resources manager: Jaime Harmeyer — jharmeyer@benedictineschools.org. A copy of our application may be found on our website: www.benedictineschools.org/employment.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is seeking a director of human resources. The director of human resources, under the direction of the human resources officer, is responsible for overall human resource compliance and personnel administration for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond by supporting its approximately 2,700 employees. The director functions primarily as a consultant with pastors, principals and business managers, and active-

ly supports the mission of the office to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations, as well as diocesan policies and procedures. The position acts as a backup to the HR officer and supports the office in all areas of human resources.

Qualifications: A minimum of a bachelor's degree in human resources or a related field and 7+ years' experience as a human resources manager, preferably in non-profit environment. Master's degree preferred. Active certification as either a PHR/SPHR or SHRM-CP/SHRM-SCP is strongly desired. The selected candidate must bring credibility and integrity to the human resources function. Required skills include impeccable communication, strong leadership, facilitation, planning and organizing skills and pastoral sensitivity. Ability to maintain confidentiality and have a working knowledge of MS Office, technical HRIS experience, an understanding of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and its teaching, the ability to resolve problems and analyze data/metrics and be able to multi-task, prioritize and meet deadlines is critical. Status as a Catholic in good standing is helpful but not required.

This is a full-time position with some evening and weekend work. Frequent day travel and occasional overnight travel are required.

Interested candidates should please send a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application (<https://bit.ly/36ndEsX>) to Kelly Shumate, HR coordinator, at jobs@richmonddioocese.org

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, Newport News, is seeking faith-filled and excellent educators for the following positions: full-time Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, 1st grade, 3rd grade and K-8 Spanish teachers. OLMC is also hiring substitute teachers, a CDL licenses bus driver and technology support. Please visit olmc-school.com for more information or send a diocesan application, résumé and cover letter to sajoseph@olmc-school.com. All inquiries should be directed to Sister Anna Joseph at 757-596-2754.

Peninsula Catholic High School, a college preparatory high school in Newport News, seeks collaborative and experienced teachers/instructors who have an enthusiasm for youth, skills for effective integration of technology in the classroom and a desire to be part of a community with a 119-year history of excellence in Catholic education. Unique to PCHS, in-person and virtual students take classes together, with teachers providing high-quality instruction and engaged learning activities that serve both learners. Qualified, innovative full-time instructors in: Math (Algebra I and

above), experience with online platforms such as WebAssign/Kuta/IXL preferred; Science (Earth Science and Biology) hands-on inquiry and STEM focus is a must; Social Studies; and English.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teaching license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas. Application: Please send cover letter, résumé, diocesan application and references to Peninsula Catholic High School Attn: Principal 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 principal@peninsulacatholic.org. Application for employment can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/36ndEsX>.

Deadline: April 30, 2022, or until filled. Please visit www.peninsula.catholic.org for more information.

SHORTTAKES

Annual Easter Sunrise Mass will be celebrated Sunday, April 17, 6:30 a.m., in front of the garden mausoleum of St. Mary Cemetery, Norfolk. Celebrant for the Mass will be Father Leszek Sikorski, U.S. Navy Chaplain. For further information or to volunteer, contact Jim Fitzpatrick at 757-572-1420 or fitzpatrick1100@aol.com.

All parishes are invited to the St. Joan of Arc Divine Mercy Prayer Service on April 24, 3-4 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc, 315 Harris Grove Lane, Yorktown. Service will begin with eucharistic adoration. A reflection on Divine Mercy and the Real Presence of his mercy through the Blessed Sacrament will be presented by Father Michael Joly. The service will include chanting of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and readings from Scripture and St. Faustina's diary. The service will close with Benediction. For more information, contact Donna Prantl at 757-621-8353 or Cathy Fowler at 757-329-4059.

You are invited to "The Rehearsal," a worship and praise fellowship to include all Christian denominations on the Peninsula. Musicians, singers, prayer warriors and poets are welcome. Bring instruments and voices of all kinds for worship, prayer and praise. Second Saturday of the month, 12:30-3 p.m., St. Olaf Catholic Church, 104 Norge Lane, Williamsburg. For information, call Les at 757-846-1124. Fourth Sunday of the month, 5-7 p.m., St. Clare of Assisi Retreat Center, 620 Buckroe Ave., Hampton. For information, call Sherry at 757-814-1706.

Carta a los sacerdotes católicos sobre el sínodo

La Iglesia esta en un proceso sinodal. Este proceso también involucra la comunicación del Secretario General del Sínodo de los Obispos y el Prefecto de la Congregación para el Clero a todos los sacerdotes católicos del mundo. Como

laicos, esta carta nos ayuda a entender con mucha transparencia, el acompañamiento que estos cuerpos oficiales de la Iglesia da a nuestro clero para poder servir a nuestras comunidades con mucho amor fraternal.

Francisco en el Ángelus: Dios no usa la violencia, sufre por nosotros y con nosotros

En la oración mariana del Ángelus, el Santo Padre medita sobre el rechazo que hace Jesús de imputar nuestros males a Dios, que invita a la conversión.

JOHAN PACHECO - CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

“Estamos a mitad del camino cuaresmal”, así inició la reflexión antes del rezo del Ángelus el Papa Francisco, este III Domingo de Cuaresma, desde el Palacio Apostólico junto a los peregrinos presentes en la plaza de San Pedro en el Vaticano.

“¿Quién tiene la culpa de estos hechos terribles? ¿Quizás aquellas personas eran más culpables que otras y Dios las ha castigado?”

Y afirma que hoy también “cuando las noticias negativas nos oprimen y nos sentimos impotentes ante el mal, a menudo se nos ocurre preguntarnos: ¿se trata de un castigo de Dios? ¿Es Él quien envía una guerra o una pandemia para castigarnos por nuestros pecados? ¿Y por qué el Señor no interviene?”

Exhorta Francisco a estar atentos a la opresión del mal, para que no caer en la tentación de echarle la culpa a Dios:

“Tenemos que estar atentos: cuando el mal nos oprime, corremos el riesgo de perder lucidez, y para encontrar una respuesta fácil a cuanto no logramos explicarnos, terminamos por echarle la culpa a Dios. Cuántas veces le atribuimos nuestras desgracias y las desventuras del mundo a Él que, en cambio, nos deja siempre libres y, por tanto, no interviene nunca imponiéndose, tan solo proponiéndose; a Él, que nunca usa la violencia, sino que, por el contrario, sufre por nosotros y con nosotros”.

Recuerda el Papa que el mismo “Jesús rechaza y contesta con fuerza la idea de imputar a Dios nuestros males: aquellas personas injusticiadas y las que murieron bajo la torre no eran más cul-

pables que otras y no fueron víctimas de un Dios despiadado y vengativo, que no existe. De Dios no puede venir nunca el mal, porque Él «no nos trata según nuestros pecados» (Sal 103,10), sino conforme a su misericordia”.

“En vez de culpar a Dios, dice Jesús, tenemos que mirar nuestro interior: es el pecado el que produce la muerte”, menciona Francisco.

Y reitera el llamado a la conversión que hace el Señor en el Evangelio: «Si no se convierten -dice- perecerán todos del mismo modo» (Lc 13,5). Explica que “se trata de una invitación apremiante, especialmente en este tiempo de Cuaresma. Acojámosla con el corazón abierto. Convirtámonos del mal, renuncemos a aquel pecado que nos seduce, abrámonos a la lógica del Evangelio: ¡porque donde reinan el amor y la fraternidad, el mal ya no tiene poder!”

Y ante las debilidades que el cristiano puede atravesar en el camino de la conversión, el Papa medita sobre la “parábola que ilustra la paciencia que Dios tiene con nosotros”, con la imagen de la higuera que no da fruto “pero cuyo dueño no la corta: le concede más tiempo, le da otra posibilidad”.


“Así hace el Señor con nosotros: no nos aleja de su amor, no se desanima -dice el Papa-, no se cansa de darnos confianza con ternura”.

Al finalizar, el Papa insistió en que “¡Dios cree en nosotros! Se fía de nosotros y nos acompaña con paciencia”. Y pidió a los fieles no desanimarse.


“Dios es Padre y te mira como un padre: como el mejor de los papás, no ve los resultados que aún no has alcanzado, sino los frutos que puedes dar; no lleva la cuenta de tus faltas, sino que realza tus posibilidades; no se detiene en tu pasado, sino que apuesta con confianza por tu futuro”, dijo.

Al despedirse, el Papa Francisco saludo a los peregrinos de Italia y otras naciones, pidiendo como siempre que no olviden rezar por él.





CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS



SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM

Vaticano, 19 marzo 2022

Prot. n. 220083

Queridos sacerdotes,

Aquí estamos dos de vuestros hermanos, también sacerdotes ¿Podemos pedirnos un poco de vuestro tiempo? Nos gustaría hablarlos de un tema que nos añaden a todos.

«La Iglesia de Dios es convocada en Sínodo». El Documento Preparatorio del Sínodo 2021-2023 comienza con estas palabras. Durante dos años se invita a todo el Pueblo de Dios a reflexionar sobre el tema *Para una Iglesia sinodal: comunión, participación y misión*. Se trata de una novedad que puede despertar tanto entusiasmo como perplejidad.

Y, sin embargo, «en el primer milenio, “caminar juntos”, es decir, practicar la sinodalidad, era el modo habitual de proceder de la Iglesia». El concilio Vaticano II puso de relieve esta dimensión de la vida de la iglesia, tan importante que San Juan Crisóstomo pudo decir: «Iglesia y Sínodo son sinónimos» (*Explicatio in Psalmum 149*)

Sabemos que el mundo actual necesita urgentemente la fraternidad. Sin darse cuenta, anhela encontrarse con Jesús. Pero, ¿cómo podemos hacer que se produzca este encuentro? Necesitamos escuchar al Espíritu junto con todo el Pueblo de Dios, para *renovar nuestra fe y encontrar nuevas formas y lenguajes* para compartir el Evangelio con nuestros hermanos y hermanas. El proceso sinodal que nos propone el Papa Francisco tiene precisamente este objetivo: ponerse en marcha juntos, en una escucha recíproca, compartiendo ideas y proyectos, para mostrar el verdadero rostro de la Iglesia: una "casa" hospitalaria, de puertas abiertas, habitada por el Señor y animada por relaciones fraternas.

Para no caer en los riesgos señalados por el Papa Francisco - es decir, *el formalismo*, que reduce el Sínodo a un eslogan vacío, *el intelectualismo*, que hace del Sínodo una reflexión teórica sobre los problemas, y el *inmovilismo*, que nos aferra a la seguridad de nuestros hábitos para que nada cambie - es importante abrir el corazón y escuchar lo que el Espíritu sugiere a las Iglesias (cf. Ap 2,7).

Evidentemente, pueden surgir temores ante este camino.

En primer lugar, somos muy conscientes que los sacerdotes de muchas partes del mundo ya soportan una gran carga pastoral. Y ahora parecería que se añaden “nuevas tareas”. Más que invitarnos a multiplicar vuestras actividades, nos gustaría animaros a mirar a vuestras

comunidades con esa *mirada contemplativa* de la que nos habla el Papa Francisco en la *Evangelii gaudium* (nº 71) para *descubrir los muchos ejemplos de participación y de maneras de compartir* que ya están germinando en vuestras comunidades. De hecho, esta fase diocesana del proceso sinodal propone “recoger la riqueza de las experiencias de la sinodalidad vivida” (Doc. prep., 31). Estamos seguros de que hay muchas más de lo que puede parecer a primera vista, quizá incluso informales y espontáneas. Allí donde se escucha profundamente, se aprende unos de otros, se valora los dones de los demás, se ayuda y se toman decisiones juntos, ya hay sinodalidad en acción. Todo esto debe ser resaltado y apreciado para desarrollar cada vez más este *estilo sinodal*, que es “el *modus vivendi et operandi* específico de la Iglesia, Pueblo de Dios” (Doc. Prep., 10).

Pero también puede surgir otro temor: si se pone tanto énfasis en el sacerdocio común de los bautizados y en el *sensus fidei* del Pueblo de Dios, ¿qué será de nuestro papel como líderes y de nuestra identidad específica como ministros ordenados? Sin duda, se trata de descubrir cada vez más la *igualdad fundamental de todos los bautizados* y de estimular a todos los fieles a participar activamente en el camino y la misión de la Iglesia. Así tendremos la alegría de encontrar hermanos y hermanas que comparten con nosotros la responsabilidad de la evangelización. Pero en esta experiencia del Pueblo de Dios, puede y debe emerger de una forma nueva, el *carisma especial de los ministros ordenados* para servir, santificar y animar al Pueblo de Dios.

En este sentido, nos gustaría pedirnos que hagáis una triple contribución al actual proceso sinodal:

- Haced todo lo posible para que *este camino se base en la escucha y la vivencia de la Palabra de Dios*. El Papa Francisco nos ha exhortado así recientemente: «apasionémonos por la Sagrada Escritura. Dejémosnos escuchar interiormente por la Palabra de Dios, que revela la novedad de Dios y nos lleva a amar a los demás sin cansarse.» (Francisco, *Homilía para el domingo de la Palabra de Dios*, 23 de enero de 2022).
- Este fundamento en la vida de la Palabra, corramos el riesgo de caminar en la oscuridad y nuestras reflexiones podrían convertirse en ideología. En cambio, poniendo en práctica la Palabra, construiremos la casa sobre la roca (cf. *Mt 7,24-27*) y podremos experimentar, al igual que los discípulos de Emaús, la luz y la guía sorprendentes del Señor Resucitado.
- Esforcémonos para que *este camino se caracterice por la escucha y la aceptación mutuas*. Incluso antes de los resultados concretos, ya son valiosos el diálogo profundo y los encuentros veraces. De hecho, son muchas las iniciativas y las potencialidades de nuestras comunidades, pero con demasiada frecuencia las personas particulares o los grupos, corren el riesgo del individualismo y la autorreferencialidad. Jesús, con su nuevo mandamiento, nos recuerda que «En esto conocerán todos que sois mis discípulos, si tuviereis amor los unos con los otros.» (Jn 13,35). Como pastores podemos hacer mucho para que el amor cure las relaciones y sane las heridas que a menudo afectan al tejido de la Iglesia, para que vuelva la alegría de sentirnos una sola familia, un solo pueblo en camino, hijos de un mismo Padre y, por tanto, hermanos entre sí, empezando por la fraternidad entre los sacerdotes.
- Cuidar que el *viaje no nos lleve a la introspección, sino que nos estimule a salir al encuentro de todos*. El Papa Francisco, en la *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos ha estimado el sueno de una Iglesia que no teme ensuciarse las manos implicándose en las heridas de la humanidad, una Iglesia que camina en la escucha y al servicio de los pobres y de las periferias. Este dinamismo en “salida” hacia los hermanos, con la brújula de la Palabra y el fuego de la caridad, cumple el gran designio original del Padre: «que todos sean uno» (Jn 17,21). En su última Encíclica, *Fratelli tutti*, el Papa Francisco nos pide que nos comprometamos a ello junto a nuestros hermanos de otras Iglesias, a los fieles de otras religiones y a todos los hombres de buena

voluntad: la fraternidad universal y el amor sin exclusión, que debe abarcar todo y a todos. Como servidores del Pueblo de Dios, estamos en una posición privilegiada para que esto no se quede en una orientación vaga y genérica, sino que se concrete allí donde vivimos.

Queridos hermanos sacerdotes, estamos seguros de que, partiendo de estas prioridades, encontraréis también el modo de dar vida a iniciativas concretas, según las necesidades y las posibilidades, porque la sinodalidad es verdaderamente la llamada de Dios para la Iglesia del tercer milenio. Ponerse en camino en esta dirección no estará exento de interrogantes, dificultades e interrupciones, pero podemos confiar en que nos devolverá el centuplo en fraternidad y en frutos de vida evangélica. Basta pensar en el primer Sínodo de Jerusalén (cf. *Hechos 15*). ¿Quién sabe cuánto esfuerzo hubo por detrás! Pero sabemos lo decisivo que fue ese momento para la Iglesia naciente.


Nos gustaría concluir esta carta con dos pasajes del Documento Preparatorio que pueden inspirar y acompañar casi como un vademécum.

«La capacidad de imaginar un futuro diverso para la Iglesia y para las instituciones a la altura de la misión recibida depende en gran parte de la decisión de comenzar a poner en práctica procesos de escucha, de diálogo y de discernimiento comunitario, en los que todos y cada uno puedan participar y contribuir» (n. 9).


«Recordamos que la finalidad del Sínodo y, por tanto, de esta consulta no es producir documentos, sino “hacer que germinen sueños, suscitar profecías y visiones, hacer florecer esperanzas, estimular la confianza, vendar heridas, entretejer relaciones, resucitar una aurora de esperanza, aprender unos de otros y crear un imaginario positivo que ilumine las mentes, enardecza los corazones, dé fuerza a las manos”» (n. 32).

Agradeciendo vuestra atención, os aseguramos nuestras oraciones y os deseamos, a vosotros y a nuestras comunidades, un feliz y fructífero camino sinodal. ¡Sabed que os acompañamos en este viaje! Y acoged, a través nuestro, la gratitud del Papa Francisco que os siente muy cerca de él.

Encomendando a cada uno de vosotros a la Santísima Virgen María del Buen Camino, os saludamos cordialmente en el Señor Jesús.



Mario Card. GRECH
Secretario General
del Sínodo de los Obispos



† Lazzaro You Heung Sik
Arzobispo-Obispo em. de Daejeon
Prefecto de la Congregación para el Clero

Dialogue

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serve “as pseudo-religions.”

The archbishop, in videotaped comments for a conference in Madrid last November, said these movements can even be replacements and rivals to traditional Christian beliefs” because “they claim to offer what religion provides.”

Several Catholic groups signed petitions urging the archbishop to apologize for his remarks. Other Catholics defended the archbishop, saying he was “clearly objecting” to a broader worldview on groups “often explicitly hostile to traditional Christianity.”

Affirmation for the marginalized

Archbishop Gomez’s comments did not sit well with Olga Marina Segura, opinion editor at the National Catholic Reporter and author of “Birth of a Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church,” published last year by Orbis Books.

Segura told CNS in February that the archbishop’s “strong rhetoric to denounce this movement” was “extremely disillusioned” and disappointing for her as a Black Catholic “who is trying to push this Church to engage with this movement more fully.”

Archbishop Gomez did not single out Black Lives Matter in his address to the Madrid conference, but he did discuss the tragedy of “the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by a white policeman.” As a Mexican American, he said, it was “a stark reminder that racial and economic inequality are still deeply embedded in our society.”

For Segura, the Black Lives Matter movement is “very much a secular version of our Catholic social teaching” particularly with its focus on “affirming the most marginalized people,” standing with workers and supporting families.

“For me, that is exactly what we are called to do; this is what our faith calls us to do,” she said.

“I think that if the Church entered into dialogue with any social justice movement that is currently happening,” Segura said a lot of young Catholics would look at the Church differently, recognizing that it’s paying attention to where young people are organizing and finding fulfillment.

‘Agree on core things’

Robin Lenhardt, a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center and one of the founding faculty members of the university’s Racial Justice Institute, similarly said there are many areas where Catholic Social Teaching is in harmony with stated principles of the Black Lives Matter movement. She also said the movement could benefit from dialogue with leaders

of many faith traditions.

“We’re not in a place where we’re able to be so picky,” Lenhardt told CNS in a March interview. “We don’t have to agree on everything, but you agree on the core things. Let’s start there.”

Father Stephen Thorne, chairman of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Commission for Racial Healing, similarly said he didn’t believe the areas of conflict between the Church and Black Lives Matter should prevent dialogue or collaboration.

“I want to work with anybody who wants to work for justice,” Father Thorne told CNS in March. “That’s where the conversation happens. That’s where the encounter happens. That’s where we begin to realize where we can agree and what can we do together.”

The priest said this is especially important in addressing issues with younger people in the Church “who are very much moved by what has been happening specifically in the past few years with racial unrest in our country. We’d be foolish to disconnect ourselves from those conversations.”

“Dialogue is just that, it’s dialogue,” he added. “We may not agree with everything, but we can find points of connection for the greater cause.”

Tent approach or not?

That was also the view of Sister Marcia Hall, an Oblate Sister of Providence, the first congregation of Black women religious in the United States.

“I think the Church has to make up its mind whether it’s going to take the big tent approach: Everybody is welcome, everybody is included, or we’re only going to talk to people that are like us,” she said.

Sister Hall, who is Black and is the vocational director for the Oblates, said it bothers her that in 2022 we are “having to still say, ‘Black lives matter.’” She also said if Church leadership wants to understand the issues the movement is talking about, then it needs to be in dialogue with those involved.

Even if they were to walk away saying: “I don’t know that I can support everything that Black Lives Matter stands for, but I have a better understanding of why they are saying ... then I feel affirmed,” she said.

The 65-year-old sister, who was a college professor before joining the order, had hope during the protests of 2020 when people said: “Whoa, wait a minute. This is not right,” about Floyd’s death.

Today, she said that hope has dimmed with challenges to voting rights rising around the country.

“The idea that I might have to fight for my right to vote literally just never dawned on me,” she said, “but I think that that’s more and more a possibility.”

New president named for CUA

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Catholic University of America’s board of trustees has selected Peter K. Kilpatrick as the 16th president of the university, effective July 1.

His appointment was announced March 29.

He succeeds John Garvey, who has served as president for 12 years.

“We could not have asked for a better candidate to lead Catholic University. Peter Kilpatrick is both a distinguished researcher and a creative administrator who sees research at the service of the human person in keeping with his Catholic faith,” Victor P. Smith, chairman of the university’s board of trustees, said in a statement.

Smith chaired the search committee to find a successor to Garvey, who announced last September that he would step down from the role he described as “an honor and a privilege” at the end of June.

Since 2018, Kilpatrick has been provost and vice president

for academic affairs for the Illinois Institute of Technology, a private research university in Chicago.

“Serving as president of The Catholic University of America is a dream job for me, bringing together faith and reason in service to the human person and human dignity,” he said in a statement.

“I look forward to working with the faculty and community to continue moving Catholic University forward as a top tier research institution that also embraces its excellence in theology and the arts,” he added.

According to a news release about his appointment, “combining research and faith is important to Kilpatrick,” who became Catholic as an adult.

Kilpatrick is a scholar and an experienced higher education leader and administrator. He has published more than 100 refereed academic articles, and delivered more than 150 lectures.

Easter inspiration.

Holy Saturday, April 16.

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