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## Vocation as catechist was 'love at first sight'

Emily Filippi retiring after 50 years in diocesan, parish ministry

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

For Emily Filippi, becoming a catechist was love at first sight.

"I loved, loved, loved being a catechist. I flourished. I couldn't learn enough; I was so excited about it," she said of volunteering to teach religious education at St. Joseph, Petersburg, in 1972.

Fifty years later, Filippi, who will retire as director of the diocesan Office of Christian Formation on June 30, is still enthusiastic about providing faith formation to Catholic children, and she credits that to her first experience as a catechist.

"We had a wonderful DRE (director of religious education), a Daughter of Wisdom, Sister Marie Chiodo. She had formation things for us and took us to formation

events. I went to every one," she said. "When I first started teaching CCD, we had textbooks and I would write down every single thing I was going to say just to make sure I got it right. That was such a wonderful start."

With a bachelor's degree in chemistry from St. Joseph College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, Filippi worked as an analytical chemist in the lab at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Hopewell — "the only female chemist in the building," she said.

After she and her husband, Dave, to whom she has been married for 52 years, welcomed their first child, Lisa, Filippi left that job to be a stay-at-home mother. It was when Lisa was getting close to entering kindergarten that Filippi realized, "I don't know how to teach a child religion," which, she added,

was the start of her calling as a catechist.

### 'Couldn't stop learning'

Filippi said part of her "evolution" as a catechist came during a retreat Sister Chiodo led for the catechists in which she wanted them to talk about their relationship with Jesus.

"I had nothing to say because then I had Catholic family life, a mother and father very active in Church, Mass," she recalled of her own faith formation. "My growing up Catholic as a child and into my early young adulthood, being Catholic meant following the commandments, following the precepts of the Church — following the rules because you were earning heaven. I did that!"

The "relationship with Jesus"

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Emily Filippi

## Welcome to the Catholic Church



Father Štefan Migač anoints Lazzara Mazza-Hilway, one of six VMI cadets who came into the Church, Holy Saturday, April 16, at St. Patrick, Lexington. To the left is cadet Stephen Cheng. See story, Page 3. (Photo/Bruce Young)

## No Kyiv trip for pope

CAROL GLATZ  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican will never stop its diplomatic efforts to mediate an end to the war against Ukraine, Pope Francis said.

However, the meeting between the pope and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow planned for June has been canceled out of concern it could cause "confusion," and there will be no papal visit to Kyiv while war rages, the pope said in an interview with the Argentine daily newspaper La Nación April 21.

Pope Francis told reporters April 2 he was considering a possible visit to the Ukrainian capital. But in his latest interview, he told La Nación that "I cannot do anything that puts higher objectives at risk, which are the end of the war, a truce or, at least, a humanitarian corridor."

"What good would it do for the pope to go to Kyiv if the war were to continue the next day?" he said.

When asked about Patriarch Kirill, Pope Francis said, "I am sorry that the Vatican has had to suspend a second meeting with Patriarch Kirill, which we had scheduled for June in Jerusalem." Their first meeting had been in 2016 in Havana, the first time the pope

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# How First Communion, Mother's Day are connected



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

**M**ost Catholics remember their First Communion day. Not only do they remember it, but they can provide many details about it. A woman will tell you about the white dress she wore that day, while men will recall that they wore white shirts and ties, and possibly suits.

When my twin brother and I made our First Communion in 1970, the boys at our parish did not wear suits. We wore a robe that looked very much like a dalmatic — the vestment worn by deacons over their albs when they assist at Mass.

While a 7-year-old boy might not be comfortable wearing a suit, white shirt and tie, I know two who would have preferred that to wearing dalmatics and having to pose for photos in front of the flowering crabapple trees in front of our house — and hoping that none of the neighbor kids would see us! Little did I know at that time that less than two decades later, I'd be wearing a dalmatic as a transitional deacon in my ordained ministry.

It is interesting what we recall about our First Communion day. Beyond what they

wore, decades later, people can often describe, as though it occurred yesterday, the weather, practice processing into church, and a gathering of family and friends for a meal afterward.

The specialness of that day, of course, was receiving the Body of Christ for the first time. It was a major step in our initiation into the Church. We had reached the age of reason — an age when we were expected to understand the importance of who we were receiving.

That understanding, as minimal as it may have been for a 7-year-old, was the result of the catechesis we received at school and, more importantly, the Catholic environment in which we were raised. Both my parents had a significant effect on that environment. But so many of the prayers I learned, participating in Marian devotions and becoming familiar with the traditions of Church came from Mom.

There is no inherent connection between First Communion and Mother's Day, but since most parishes celebrate reception of this sacrament during May, it is often scheduled close to, if not on, Mother's Day, as mine was. The faith commitment of my mother exemplified the important link between receiving First Communion and highlighting and being grateful for the role of moms in our

families, especially in transmitting the faith.

In his catechesis on the family, Pope Francis featured the value of mothers:

"Mothers often pass on the deepest sense of religious practice: in a human being's life, the value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns. It is a message that believing mothers are able to pass on without much explanation: these come later, but the seed of faith is those early precious moments.

"Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth" (Jan. 7, 2015).

As we celebrate with and pray for our First Communicants this month, take time to reflect upon what a gift it was for you to come forward and to receive Jesus' body for the first time. Renew your devotion to making certain that *every time* you receive the Eucharist it is a special time in your life.

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for your mother — the person who fed you at the table in your home and who helped prepare you for coming to the table of Our Lord. As Pope Francis said that day in 2015, "Dearest mothers, thank you, thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world."

## Bishop to ordain 3 transitional deacons

**B**ishop Barry C. Knestout will ordain three transitional deacons during Mass at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, May 21, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. The ordinands are:

**Armando Herrera**, the son of Armando and Lizette Herrera, is a native of Morristown, New Jersey, whose family moved to Roanoke prior to his starting high school. His home parish is St. Andrew.

Co-sponsored by the Archdiocese for the Military Services, he is in his fourth year of formation at Theological College, while enrolled in studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Herrera, 28, is an alumnus of Roanoke Catholic High School and Virginia Military Institute.

**William Buckley**, the son of Christopher and Karen Buckley, is a native of Long Island, New York, who grew up in Rockville Center. Following high school, he enrolled at the University of Richmond where he studied piano performance.

In 2015, Buckley, 29, became the assistant music minister at St. Bridget, Richmond, which he considers his home parish. Two years later, he began formation at Theological College, while enrolling in studies at The Catholic University of America, which he continues to attend.

**Christopher Weyer**, the son of Jim and Judy Weyer, is a native of Jacksonville, Arkansas. He spent his youth moving between Little Rock AFB and the Pentagon.

Weyer, 26, entered Virginia Tech in fall 2013 and left after completing the 2014 fall semester. From fall 2015 to spring 2018, he took classes in philosophy and was in formation at St. John Paul II Seminary. That fall, he entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland, where he continues his formation and theological studies.

The ordination will be livestreamed on the diocesan website, [richmonddiocese.org/livestream](http://richmonddiocese.org/livestream), and YouTube channel, [youtube.com/richmonddiocese1](http://youtube.com/richmonddiocese1).



Herrera



Buckley



Weyer

## Sarah Fogler named diocesan human resources officer

**F**ollowing a national search, Bishop Barry C. Knestout has appointed Sarah Fogler as human resources officer (HRO) for the Diocese of Richmond, effective Monday, May 2.

employee benefits to include multiple health plans and a defined contribution 403(b) plan.

Under the direction of Bishop Knestout, she was responsible for imple-



Dorothy Mahanes



Sarah Fogler

Fogler succeeds Dorothy "Dot" Mahanes, who announced her retirement in November after 17 years of service to the diocese.

Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo appointed Mahanes in 2004 to develop and strengthen the Human Resources Office. During her tenure, she was instrumental in creating the diocese's Office of Safe Environment and establishing compensation structures and guidelines.

In collaboration with the Office of Finance, she pursued technological efficiencies for payroll and expanded

menting EthicsPoint — an independent, third-party reporting system that allows employees, clergy, volunteers or parishioners to anonymously submit concerns about suspected unethical behavior, misuse of resources or financial misconduct. Most recently, she assisted and guided the diocese with policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fogler, who holds a master's degree in administration, training and policy studies from Boston University and a bachelor's

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# VMI cadets in step with God

## Six join Church during Easter Vigil at St. Patrick, Lexington

JOSEPH STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

As dusk descended on a warm Holy Saturday evening at St. Patrick, Lexington, all the usual signs of the Easter Vigil ceremonies were present: flames blazing in a fire pit outside the front doors, the paschal candle awaiting final adornment, small tapers with clear plastic windscreens for each person to hold.

But this night would be different from most other parishes. Only here would two women and four men from the Virginia Military Institute who hope one day to join the U.S. armed forces profess their allegiance to the Catholic faith.

"If there is one reason why your faith is true, why your faith continues... look at our catechumens today and those who will be fully received into the Church and those receiving confirmation," said St. Patrick's pastor, Father Štefan Migač in his homily. "They come to Christ not because he is offering something for free, but because he's offering true faith, true hope and true love."

The cadets accepting that offer were Benjamin Cheng, Faith Guy, Stafford Johnson, Lazzara Mazza-Hilway, John Lightfoot and Bryson Minear.

Lightfoot had two sisters attend VMI, so enrolling was pre-ordained, so to speak. A third year, or sophomore, from Chesapeake, majoring in electrical and computer engineering, he is a baptized Catholic whose faith waned. In his first year, he found VMI "incredibly difficult."

"I remember praying to God to change me, make me better, just off a whim," he said. "All of a sudden, I started going to Mass, and I really felt an inclination to look further and further into the Church and really take it seriously."

### 'Right way to go'

An international studies major from Magnolia, Delaware, Minear said he had no formal religious training, but last fall the sophomore started attending RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) meetings on Monday nights on the VMI post. Initially, he had no intention of becoming Catholic.

"Going through the whole process just opened my eyes," he said. "There's so much more out there, so much more than just your day-to-day life. Having that faith in your life makes life actually a little easier."

*"It really felt like there was something missing before coming back to the Church. It's absolutely one of the most valuable things I've done so far in my life."*

- John Lightfoot

A second-year, or junior, Mazza-Hilway is a mechanical engineering major from Little Falls, New Jersey. She was involved in a non-denominational church growing up.

"Last year, I was going through a hard time especially with my faith, and so I was praying a lot and asking God to show me his will," she said.

"I ended up meeting my boyfriend, who was Catholic, and he was very adamant about bringing me to Mass. I felt that my prayers had been answered and that this might have been a path that I should take to deepen my belief and my faith in God."

Guy, a sophomore, grew up a Lutheran in Statesville, North Carolina, and is studying physics and applied mathematics. As a "rat," the name for all first-year students, she began thinking of becoming a Catholic.

"During the past couple of years, I've been doing a lot of reading about Church history and theology, and I just feel like this is the right way to go," she said. "I do really feel called to become Catholic."

### Questions, answers

For Lightfoot, RCIA helped answer "the question of 'why Catholicism' over any other sect in Christianity, and it's done a very good job of assuring me that this is frankly the way to go. Before God, I was in a miserable place, didn't have a purpose, was very anxious, really afraid. Putting my faith in God, coming back to the Church, has really set my priorities and set my life straight."

Minear also found the sessions

enlightening, no matter how basic the questions.

"Why God made us, why God made the world, what his purpose in that was, certain teachings of marriage and having children, why you do certain things at the Mass," he said. "A lot of that was very new to me and very eye-opening."

"Having that deeper understanding of what a relationship with God looks like and what it feels like going about my every day with God is very comforting and very relieving," said Mazza-Hilway.

Guy said she learned some practical ways to live a deeper life.

"I feel I've been given a lot of tools to carry out my faith and carry out my devotion," she said. "All the things you do - going to Mass, praying the rosary - I feel like that really means a lot to me," she said. "It's not just going through the motions... It's a whole experience, honoring God with all of those traditions."

### Guides for the journey

Leading the sessions were parishioners Bill and Carey Wyatt. Both are experienced in faith formation and campus ministry from previous work at Blessed Sacrament and James Madison University in Harrisonburg.

"They're just a great group and so faithful, all the different personalities, but all so courageously faithful," said Carey of the cadets.

"There've been plenty of questions over the course of the year where we didn't really know the answer, so we went and found it," said Bill, who is VMI's director of communications and marketing. "Just to sit around and talk about our faith and share that in a way that is personal and hopefully applicable to their lives, it's something that helps us grow in our faith as well."

Some of those questions focused

on the role of women in the Church.

"They had all kinds of pre-conceived notions about what Catholics thought," Carey said. "And it was fun to explain to them what the Church actually thinks about women and how much the Church reveres women, and they were just so pleasantly surprised by that."

### 'God's plan'

The Wyatts are hoping the cadets will take part in Bible study and continuing education in their faith; the cadets appear more than willing.

"It really felt like there was something missing before coming back to the Church," said Lightfoot. "It's absolutely one of the most valuable things I've done so far in my life."

"I think a lot of people in our generation get very lonely, very easily," said Minear. "Having God in your life, not only the Catholic Church but any church, believing in God, believing in someone higher, gives you someone to talk to when you're alone."

"On Sundays, coming here and being able to get down on my knees and praise God and then going about my day after that is refreshing. It's relieving," Mazza-Hilway said.

"It reminds me that I have a bigger purpose than everything that I'm doing now," said Guy. "All the menial and stressful things in my life, they're all for a reason because God has a plan."

As they recessed from the vigil to meet family and friends, the new Catholics and their sponsors easily fell in step.

Father Migač has no doubt he'll be seeing them at liturgies quite often.

"We are very blessed at St. Patrick's to have an amazing core of cadets and students...who truly live their faith in Christ," he said. "Faith of our cadets and students is truly an inspiration for me and St. Patrick's parishioners!"



From left: Bryson Minear, John Lightfoot, Bradlee Katherine Suggs (partially blocked), Faith Guy, Stafford Johnson, Lazzara Mazza-Hilway, Jesse Gordon and Benjamin Cheng participate in the Easter Vigil at which they were welcomed into the Church, Holy Saturday, April 16, at St. Patrick, Lexington. All but Suggs and Gordon are cadets at VMI. (Photo/ Bruce Young)



# Eucharist is source, summit, sustenance for jubilarian

## Father Collins grateful for parishioners' work during 50 years of priesthood

JANNA REYNOLDS  
The Catholic Virginian

The vocation of priesthood for Father Thomas R. Collins, who will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination on May 13, has not unfolded in the way that he originally thought it would.

"But that's a beautiful thing," he said. "You find as time goes on, your basic paradigm shifts, and it's not a shift in terms of just adapting to something, but in appreciating different dimensions of our faith and how it really applies to us."

Growing up, Father Collins attended Catholic school, and his family, who relocated to northern Virginia when the priest was about 12 years old, was "always very much involved" with the Church.

Father Collins said that reading about missionary priests while he was in grade school helped kindle a desire to pursue a vocation to the priesthood.

"The missionary fathers were very, very good examples to us of that missionary spirit," he said, adding that the pastor of St. John in McLean, Virginia, where his family attended Mass, had been a missionary who served in China.

"Originally, I was thinking about becoming a missionary, but picking up languages is not my strong point," he said with a laugh. "So I ended up staying with the American Church."

### Solidifying vocation

Father Collins attended St. John Vianney Minor Seminary, Richmond, for high school, which he called a "natural progression" from the Catholic education he had already received.

"We were very blessed to have Msgr. (Chester) Michael as the rector. He was very good as far as psychology and everything else helping with developmental stages for youth. He did a good job that

way," the priest said. "They had a good staff over there."

While attending St. John Vianney, Father Collins began to seriously consider a vocation to the priesthood.

"Basically, I could see in the world that there was a real need for coming to a deeper appreciation for the richness of the faith," he said. "I guess the thing is seeing that Jesus Christ and his love

and his truth are changeless – it was the same yesterday and forever. And for people to be really grounded, we have to have a common point of reference," he said.

He attended St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland, for two years and finished his undergraduate education at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He then earned a Master of Divinity from St. Mary's in 1971.

### Multiple parish assignments

After being ordained a priest by Bishop John J. Russell on May 13, 1972, Father Collins was assigned as associate pastor of Sacred Heart, Richmond.

In 1973, he became associate pastor of Assumption Parish in Keyser, West Virginia, which at that time was part of the Diocese of Richmond.

When the current diocesan boundaries were reformed in 1974 – when the Dioceses of Arlington and Wheeling-Charleston were established – Father Collins was serving at St. Paul, Weirton, in the western part of West Virginia.

"Then one of the priests of the Wheeling Diocese wanted to return to Wheeling, so I was traded back to Richmond and went from Weirton in West Virginia down to Holy Trinity in Norfolk," he recalled.

He served as associate pastor at Holy Trinity until 1976 and at St. Paul, Richmond, for the following two years.

Father Collins was assigned to

his first pastorate in 1978 at Sacred Heart, Covington. Other pastorates include St. Anthony, Norton (1990-1996); Church of St. Mary of the Holy Family, Richlands (1996-2005); and Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, Grundy (1999-2005).

Between 2005-2010, Father Collins was on a leave of absence, but he said he was "helping out at different parishes" during that time.

"Eventually when there was a need for priests over in Covington again, I got reassigned over at St. Joseph in Clifton Forge," he said.

Father Collins served as parochial vicar of the cluster parishes of Sacred Heart, Covington; St. Joseph, Clifton Forge; and Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Hot Springs, until he reached retirement age in 2018.

"Since 2019, I've been up here in Hot Springs, and basically the arrangement is that I have most of the Masses up here, and once a month, Father Augustine (Lukenge) comes up just to check on things and make sure everything is running smoothly, and I go down to cover the Masses in Covington and Clifton Forge," he said.

### No 'salmon spirituality'

The jubilarian said that a real success of his priesthood has been "good people stepping in and helping out" with repair projects and various other needs – of which there are many, according to Father Collins.

"I find the real strong point is growing in appreciation for the way in which parishioners step in to help take care of things and to make up for my inadequacies," he said. "I realize how much we really need one another."

Father Collins identified "having an appreciation of the eucharistic Christ" as a key component of him remaining happy in his 50 years of priesthood.

"A lot of times, you hear about the Eucharist being the source and summit of the Church's life, but I've found great spiritual solace in adding another word: the Eucharist is the source, the sustenance and the

summit of the Church's life," Father Collins said. "We are nurtured not just eucharistically, but also by the Mystical Body of Christ, so I find there's a great analogy between Mystical Body of Christ and eucharistic body of Christ. It's very, very rich. If you leave out sustenance, you end up in the danger of what I call 'salmon spirituality.'"

He explained that salmon spend most of their lives in the ocean and return to the rivers where they hatched to lay their own eggs and die.

"The thing is, we are called not to be salmon in our spirituality, but to abide in the midst of the Eucharist and all of its beautiful and transformative dimensions."

### 'Great gift' for priests

Father Collins said that Isaiah 55, in which the faithfulness of God's word to humanity is explained, has been "a key point of reference for discerning what's the best course of action to take in certain situations."

Being able to administer the sacrament of reconciliation has been "a great gift" for the priest "due to the fact that the Church really grows by means of a deepening repentance."

"I like to see it in the sense of the grace of God whereby we seek to love beyond our ability... that means growing in virtue," he said. "Any virtue I seem to have is merely my showing gratitude for what has been entrusted to me by the prayers and sacrifices of others and through them seeking repentance in terms of loving beyond their ability, in terms of having enough courage and humility to ask for help."

To mark his anniversary, Father Collins said he will get together with some of his friends, and that there will be "little celebrations here and there."

"But," he added, "the real celebration is found in the real zeal in Catholics who, in spite of all the problems and chaos we've had (in the Church and the world) over the years, seek to be faithful to Christ."

## Bishops back 'Uniting for Ukraine'

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the chairman of its Committee on Migration have voiced their support for the Biden administration's "Uniting for Ukraine" initiative to welcome Ukrainian refugees coming to the United States.

"Many European countries have shown great concern for Ukrainians, welcoming them with open arms, and we should do the same," said an April 22 joint statement from Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB president, and Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, Migration Committee chairman. "We are particularly concerned with the most vulnerable and hope that support will be given to separated families, the elderly, and those with urgent medical needs," they said. "This sort of initiative requires that the federal government provide an array of services for arriving families, in addition to those supplied by individuals and private institutions, such as churches."

## Appointment

*Continued from Page 2*

degree from the University of New Hampshire, has worked as the director of the diocesan Office of Human Resources for the last 12 years in various capacities. She has been assistant director of human resources; senior recruiting, training and project manager; benefits and as payroll/HRMS (Human Resource Management Systems) manager. Previously, she worked for Capital One Financial for eight years.

"Sarah brings more than 20 years of strategic human resources manage-

ment and leadership to the diocese," said Bishop Knestout. "I am grateful to have someone of Sarah's expertise, principles and management skills to assist our hardworking professionals who work for our local Church."

"I look forward to the continuity she will bring to the office and the ongoing strengthening of our operations and employee recruitment that will build upon the caliber of work Dot Mahanes brought to the diocese."

Like Mahanes, Fogler is certified by the Human Resource Certification Institute as a Senior Professional in Human Resources.



# Catholic Charities' program helps prevent child abuse

State grant assists in addressing range of issues in Roanoke, Norton areas

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

The colorful images of children, decorated by children, peered from windows and walls in the Roanoke and Norton areas during April — National Child Abuse Prevention Month — as a reminder that any child in any neighborhood may need help and protection.

The project was the brainchild of Commonwealth Catholic Charities' (CCC) foster care programs in Roanoke and Norton, which increased their service this spring to include child abuse prevention education. The service, offering classes and other resources to families at risk, focuses on the causes of child abuse and neglect in order to prevent them from occurring by providing case management and parent and community education.

"There is a focus nationally and in Virginia to expand child abuse and neglect prevention services, to look at how to equip families and communities to prevent it from happening in the first place," said Lydia Strawbridge, treatment foster care programming manager for CCC in Roanoke.

The children's artwork program aims to involve everyone in spreading the word about prevention and to raise awareness about how to support families in need of help.

In Roanoke, children in the after-school program at the Kirk Family YMCA colored pictures to display at CCC's offices throughout the month. In the Norton area, elementary, middle and high school students decorated three-foot-tall "cardboard kids" — child-sized cutouts — which were then placed in the windows and on walls of local buildings around town.

## 'Worsened situations'

Last fall, CCC received a grant from the Virginia Department of Social Services for a year of preparation, training and resources to implement the new program, which launched during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Although CCC has several offices across the state, two localities were chosen for the funding because of specific needs: refugee and immigrant families in Roanoke and rural families in the Norton area.

The timing was critical, as needs have risen precipitously, Strawbridge noted.

"The ongoing pandemic has worsened many of these situations," she said.

These underserved populations are dealing with a range of issues, Strawbridge explained. Unemployment and under-employment, housing and transportation problems, mental health needs, and substance abuse are ongoing and often interrelated issues, as well as the frequent trauma, stress and cultural challenges experienced by refugee and immigrant families.

Referred families, who have children from infancy to age 12, come through CCC's resettlement and immigration offices in Roanoke and the Departments of Social Services, schools, health-care providers and counseling centers in Norton. Classes are part of a package of services offered, depending upon a family's needs.

Norton's director of operations Cassandra Collins added that the program also benefits parents whose children have been placed in



**"Cardboard kids" decorated by local students for Commonwealth Catholic Charities were displayed at the CCC office in Roanoke to raise awareness during April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month.**

(Photo courtesy of Commonwealth Catholic Charities)

foster care — a reality that also has grown in recent months.

"Some parents whose children are in foster care look at this as a stepping stone to get help and be reunified with their children," she said. "This program is another set of eyes to guide their parenting skills."

Group classes are held in CCC offices for eight weeks, with at least five families per group attending a two-hour class weekly at each location. Transportation is available as well.

## In-home support

Program specialists have been trained to use the "Triple P" ("Positive Parenting Program") model, a broad-based intervention that is widely used and supported by evidence-based research.

The grant enabled foster care specialist Candy Campbell in Roanoke and child abuse prevention specialist Kimberly Lawson in Norton to receive several months of training for the prevention model certification.

Parents participate in a range of exercises and assessments before and after the program. Besides curriculum-based discussion and education, parents also receive information on local resources to help them upon completion of the classes.

Furthermore, specialists will work one-on-one with individuals and families if their needs are identified as higher than a group setting might address.

In addition, in-home services will provide extra support for participants to learn and practice healthy parenting skills in their home setting, Collins explained.

"In-home parenting support will be offered to families who are considered to be at higher risk for child maltreatment," she said. Those families may refer themselves, be referred through DSS or court systems, or request support services after completing group education classes.

The classes have been well received so far by the eight families in Roanoke and seven in Norton who are participating in the program, Campbell said. Due to privacy issues, those families declined to comment.

## 'Strengthened faith'

In Roanoke, interpreters help bridge the language barrier, and participants are gaining trust and sharing their concerns and struggles.

"I'm not there to judge them; I'm there to work with them," said Campbell. "I tell them I'm a parent, too."

"Our goal is making it comforting to the parents," added Lawson. "I'm a special-needs mom myself. We really support and encourage them, and we put ourselves out there with them."

CCC's emotionally hard work is worth it because it makes such a difference, observed Campbell. "Every year, someone reaches out to me to say how this kind of help changed their lives, and that gives me hope. It has strengthened my faith."

Strawbridge agreed. "Doing this humbling work with my colleagues — helping with the pain and struggles of others — gives us all a sense of moving forward together and serving something bigger."

The program's increased visibility through the art projects, as well as a community-wide expo held on April 30 in Norton in partnership with Wise County and the City of Norton's Department of Social Services and Scott County's Imagine Fostering, is helping to make it better known and accessible.

"We really need to continue to draw communities' attention to these issues," Strawbridge said. "The more light that shines in dark spaces, the more we can help people."

*Editor's note: For more information and resources, visit [www.cccofva.org](http://www.cccofva.org).*



# What synodality teaches us about listening

**GUEST COMMENTARY**  
BISHOP BRENDAN J. CAHILL  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

I remember attending a workshop given by Father John Kemper in the early 2000s focused on the theme of teaching “Gen Xers.” At the time, I was teaching in a seminary, and it seemed that often we teachers would enter into conversations about the “young seminarians” and how hard it was for us to understand them.

I still have my notes from the talk that day, and the memory I want to share with you is that he told us, “When a student asks a question, it probably is just a question.”

That observation wouldn’t appear to be so enlightening to many people, but for someone who often perceived a question as a challenge to authority, it changed a way of looking at questions. For example, I realized that if a seminarian asked me why I celebrated the Mass in a certain way, I simply needed to respond to the question.

One of the 10 themes listed in section 5.4 of the “*vademecum*” for the synodal process observes that “listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.” One way to look at this theme is to consider the areas in which I may have closed my mind and heart to another person or group, and even judged them before they opened their mouth to ask a question.

Using the story mentioned above, we could ask ourselves, “How do I listen to those in my ‘classroom?’” and then follow with, “What are the labels or judgments I have placed on them?” and “Who do I keep out of the ‘classroom?’”



The most basic attempt at the first question might reveal that there is a tendency to listen more closely to those who agree with me. There also could develop a tendency to shut down an alternate view or even a simple question, maybe without even realizing it.

Father Henri Nouwen wrote about this spiritual problem years ago in his book “*Reaching Out*,” observing how often a teacher spends time answering questions that aren’t being asked.

Father Nouwen called for a spiritual movement in the classroom toward hospitality, in which students can be heard and appreciated for the questions they present. This image of the classroom can serve as an image for the different levels of relationships in my life. It could be at work or at home, in the larger community of schools and civic involvements, even in the Church.

The process of synodality has been challenging each of us to not immediately shut down any

voice, and to listen to the questions that are being asked. In the process, I am becoming aware of my preconceptions and judgments. I’m learning to listen without immediately responding.

The process challenges each of us to come to a greater appreciation of who we have been cutting off or who we may be talking about in a dismissive way. The process reminds each of us that often we don’t need to give an answer, we can simply sit and acknowledge another person’s humanity.

Beyond the people I may have been dismissing in my environment are those I don’t even know. It could be different cultures, languages, political views, ages, experiences or other categories.

The process of synodality outlines a path for each of us to go beyond stereotypes and what we hear about another group of people. Hopefully there will be a moment in which each of us can listen to someone from a “new” group.

A beauty of the process can be in the realization that whatever group we belong to, many of us have similar questions, hopes and dreams.

Recently Pope Francis consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in communion with the bishops throughout the world. A part of the prayer of consecration acknowledged our own sins before God, including when “we grew indifferent and caught up in our own selfish needs and concerns.”

May we develop listening hearts whose only concern is the salvation of all souls, especially those in most need of God’s mercy.

*Bishop Cahill has headed the Diocese of Victoria, Texas, since 2015.*

## Appreciated bishop’s outreach at Easter

What a blessing to open the Richmond Times-Dispatch on Easter and see the compelling half-page ad placed by the Richmond Diocese. The message to Catholics (and others) was elegant in its simplicity: the words of Our Lord, “Peace be with you,” followed by, “Been away? We’d love to see you this Easter season.”

The graphic, the crucifix viewed from the back and below, seems to call the endangered faithful to come home, to view the crucifix in its proper perspective above the altar.

It nudges the viewer into thinking, “This is not properly focused. Maybe I’m not focused. Instead of closing him out of my sorry life, I want to go back to my church and receive him face-to-face.”

Many of us Catholics devote much prayer time to friends and family who have forgotten God and his Church. Thank you, Bishop Knestout, for your public prayer for them on the day of resurrection.

— Pat Kile  
Colonial Heights  
Editor’s note: The ad, in

*Spanish, also appeared in the Tidewater Hispanic News.*

## Are ‘enhancements’ witness to the faith?

When the new St. Bede Church was built in 2003, no one envisioned that its arts and furnishing would include spending \$30,000-\$50,000 apiece for 34 mosaic panels at a cost of close to \$1.5 million.

However, a group of generous, financially fortunate and influential donors, and the pastor, agreed to install the expensive array of 260-pound panels of “liturgical art” to create Saints of the Americas “worshiping in celestial hierarchy with our congregation,” according to a 2016 information sheet.

The plans for this venture were not widely shared; the anticipated cost was never publicly discussed; parish-wide opinions were not solicited; the concerns of conscientious objectors were dismissed; some on the parish staff were embarrassed by the cost; fundraising is continuing; and few identifiable saints are visible from any pew in the nave.

Who can pick out the patron saint of anesthesiologists or philanthropy? We

are directed to some obscure website to discern who is who.

One wonders how Saints Francis, Benedict, Ignatius, Oscar Romero, Mother Teresa, Sister Bernice, Dorothy Day, our mission parish priests and parishioners, or our Holy Father would view this.

St. Bede and its House of Mercy are enormously generous to the poor. But some of us wonder whether these “enhancements” to our worship space are witness to our faith — or to our self-indulgence, however well intentioned.

An effort displaying a little more humility would be equally capable of connecting us to the holy men and women of the past. I pray that a simple, modest commemoration of an array of beloved saints might prayerfully be discerned going forward.

— Tim Murphy  
Williamsburg

## ‘Issue was great’

I am not sure if it is the joy of the Easter Season or not, but I wanted to share with you that for whatever reason, I found the April 18, 2022, issue of The Catholic Virginian one of the best since we moved here and subscribed about three and a half years ago.

It was so nice reading something about our fellow Catholics from Bristol to Williamsburg to Portsmouth as well as the Richmond area. As a retired English teacher, I enjoyed the update on SVVA and I always hear the voice of our Bishop Knestout as I read his column. I could go on and

comment on every article that was included as they all provided me inspiration and gratitude for my gift of faith.

This is not to say that the other issues were not good, only that I felt this one was great!

— Mary Lou Wentzel  
Henrico

## CV letters policy

The Catholic Virginian welcomes signed letters to the editor that can be considered for publication *and/or* posting on The Catholic Virginian website. Submissions should be no more than 270 words and include the writer’s name, address or email, and phone number as all submissions are acknowledged. At the editor’s discretion, submitter’s name may be withheld from publication/posting. Letters should address topics reported in The CV or other topics relevant to Catholics. Personal attacks are not published. Letters may be edited for style, length or content. Opinions expressed by letter writers do not necessarily reflect those of The Catholic Virginian or the Diocese of Richmond.

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# Pro-life marchers voice optimism at annual event

## Bishop terms advocacy for unborn ‘more necessary than ever’

JANNA REYNOLDS  
The Catholic Virginian

Signs declaring “The future is anti-abortion” and “Equality begins in the womb” were exclamation marks from the hundreds of people who gathered in downtown Richmond on Wednesday, April 27, for the fourth annual Virginia March for Life.

Due to construction on the Capitol grounds, the March for Life rally, which preceded the march, was held at the bell tower on the lawn of Capitol Square.

The crowd’s enthusiasm was palpable as pro-lifers of all ages waited for the first of several speakers to take the podium.

Bishop Barry C. Knestout provided opening remarks, telling those gathered that their advocacy on behalf of the unborn “was more necessary than ever.”

Quoting from a statement of the U.S. bishops, he said, “As our nation awaits the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, we join together in prayer and expectant hope that states will again be able to protect women and children from the injustice of abortion.”

Following his remarks, the bishop prayed, “May those, who you have granted the authority to govern, recognize the fundamental human right to life, that they use their positions, to advance laws and policies, that protect each person’s right to life, from conception to natural death.

“Let your gentle hand, with all those who are instruments of your healing, aid women in pregnancy, especially those in the midst of crisis and doubt, to bring their children safe and sound to the light of day.”

### ‘Excitement, hope’

Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, said her biggest goal for the day was that “someone’s heart is changed more in the direction of life.”

Just as important, she said, was for the state to “move in the direction of life, especially as it regards babies who receive a poor prenatal diagnosis.”

She explained that Virginia allows more exceptions to abortion than many other states. Since April 27 was also Veto Day in Virginia, which relates to the state budget, marchers would be texting their legislators and “asking them to stop” those exceptions.

She said that the beautiful weather was reminiscent of the first Virginia March for Life in 2019, but she noted that Virginia’s current pro-life administration had made this year’s event “extra exciting.”

For the first time, the state’s governor was present at the Virginia March for Life. Glen Youngkin joined the march as the crowd left Capitol Square.

Joan Andres, a parishioner of St. Andrew the Apostle, Clifton, believes “there’s still a lot of work to do, especially in the state,” but felt that the governor’s presence was a “source of a lot of excitement and hope.”

“We have more hope now than we’ve had in a long time, so I think that the Holy Spirit is at work,” she said.

Connor Mancuso attended the Virginia March for Life for the first time; he has attended the national march twice.

“I believe that our actions here will imprint upon others who see us that we are trying to make a difference... and show that all life is sacred, all life is unique, all life is valuable,” he said.

### ‘Protecting the innocent’

Attending his first March for Life, Joe Deffner, a member of St. Thomas More, Lynchburg, said he admires Abby Johnson’s pro-life conversion after the “wake-up call that only the Lord can give you – and prayers.”

“I admire her stance and the grief that she took when she made that change of faith,” he said of the former Planned Parenthood employee.

He was joined by his brother, Bill Deffner, who was visiting from Portersville, Pennsylvania.

“I traveled to Richmond because I get the opportunity to spend some time with my brother and drag him to the March for Life,” he said as Joe laughed.

Bill added, “It’s energizing to see the excitement in the youth because they’re all survivors.”

“It really is all about pro-life and really protecting the most innocent and the most vulnerable, which are the unborn. It’s life at all levels from conception to the grave,” said Robert McBride, pro-life director of the St. Michael, Glen Allen, Knights of Columbus council.

McBride called the nearly 1 million babies lost to abortion in the U.S. each year “a tragedy,” and said he believes one solution could be “a matter of education” for people to fully understand what happens when a baby is conceived.

“It really is a matter of human dignity at all levels,” he said. “The loss of life, in particular among minorities and young women – those are the groups targeted, literally targeted, by Planned Parenthood especially... it’s an abomination.”



Hundreds of pro-life advocates gathered at Richmond’s Capitol Square for the fourth annual Virginia March for Life on Wednesday, April 27, 2022. (Photo/Michael Mickle)



Bishop Barry C. Knestout gave remarks and the opening prayer at the Virginia March for Life rally on Wednesday, April 27, before joining the march around downtown Richmond. (Photo/Michael Mickle)

### Living the faith

Andres brought her 10- and 8-year-old daughters to the rally and march to make “the treasure of human life normal to them so there’s never a doubt in their mind what truth is.”

Magdalena Brier, parishioner of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Lake Ridge, also brought her two daughters, ages 9 and 7, to the march and rally – the first March for Life she has attended.

“So this year in particular, after homeschooling for the last two years, it just makes everything come together. And it’s not just something that’s happening far away; it’s something that we talk about all the time with our faith, so it’s great to be able to come out

and live that faith.”

William Clough, a student at Virginia Commonwealth University who attends the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, said that he was “marching to help end abortion and save the lives of many infants in our country and especially the state.”

Clough, whose home parish is St. Agnes in the Diocese of Arlington, said it saddens him to know that “many children won’t be able to live life” due to abortion, but he hopes that rallies like the one held in Richmond will continue to have a positive impact upon society.

“I’m hoping that if we pray hard enough and we have a big rally, that hopefully we can overturn *Roe v. Wade* soon,” he said.



# As funds dwindle, supplies for Ukraine are scarce

## At Caritas warehouse in Poland, food needed for refugees

CINDY WOODEN

Catholic News Service

LUBLIN, Poland — In a cavernous warehouse on the edge of Lublin, Piotr Piskorski sees too much empty space, especially near the pallets of baby formula, canned soups and vegetables and individual servings of instant noodles.

He didn't mention the lone box of extra-large jars of dill pickles.

Caritas Lublin moved its Ukrainian aid distribution center to the warehouse in mid-March when donations from around Poland and across Europe made Lublin "the largest hub for Catholic humanitarian aid to Ukraine," said Piskorski, a Caritas logistics manager.

Archbishop Stanislaw Budzik of Lublin told Catholic News Service April 22 that Caritas Lublin sent the first semi-truck into Ukraine hours after Russia began bombing the country Feb. 24. So far, he said, they have sent 135 trucks carrying 2,700 tons of goods valued at 11 million zloty (about \$2.5 million).

Initially, the archbishop said, the trucks were filled with "whatever people from Lublin brought — nothing was purchased centrally."

"As time went on, we organized better and things began arriving from all over Poland and Europe," the archbishop said.

But the donations have slowed. On April 22, Piskorski and two other workers unloaded four shipments from France and one from Germany.



A pallet of instant noodles is seen in the Caritas warehouse in Lublin, Poland, April 22, 2022. Caritas Lublin is running a distribution hub for humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Since the start of the war, Caritas Lublin has sent 135 trucks carrying 2,700 tons of goods valued at 11 million zloty (about \$2.5 million). (CNS photo/Adrian Kowalewski)

The donations included blankets and sleeping bags, boxes of bandages and pallets wrapped in black plastic and labeled "hygiene."

Next to a hill of new, plastic-wrapped beds that could fill a shelter for the displaced, there were four opened boxes of packing tape. "This is for us," Piskorski said. "It's very helpful."

But he is worried about the section of the warehouse where food is stacked ready to be sent on to Ukraine. The piles are petite compared to the stacks of boxes of used clothing and shoes, labeled men, women or children.

Lublin is less than 60 miles from the Dorohusk border crossing; Caritas Lublin staffs a reception point there for refugees 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the archbishop said.

The crossing also is where the

trucks, driven by Ukrainian drivers, cross into Ukraine and head for one of three sorting sites.

Archbishop Budzik said the speed with which Caritas Lublin was able to organize the shipments and its continuing ability to send humanitarian aid is thanks to close relationships with people in Ukraine, both Latin- and Eastern-rite Catholics, and their Caritas operations.

"It would have been difficult if we sent our own drivers because they do not know the roads," he said. Local knowledge is even more important now that Russia has destroyed so much of Ukraine's infrastructure and scattered so many landmines around.

"Kharkiv is 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) away," the archbishop said. "The driver must know the roads and which bridges are out,

but even now it is possible to reach."

The Ukrainian Caritas operations and other charities send lists of needed supplies to Lublin and, depending on what is available at the warehouse, trucks are loaded up and sent in. At one of the distribution sites in Western Ukraine, they are divided up, put onto smaller trucks or vans and sent to cities under siege.

The people in Ukraine keep asking for food and for medical supplies. That weighs on the archbishop and on Piskorski at the warehouse.

"The war has shocked everyone," Archbishop Budzik said. "A half a year ago, no one could have believed Russia would attack in such a brutal way."

He stepped out of the meeting room for a moment and came back with what looked like a dark gray rock. It was a piece of the bomb that struck the roof of the chancery of the Diocese of Kharkiv-Zaporizhia March 1, he said.

"Thanks to social media and new

See Ukraine, Page 13



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



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# Remember what Blessed Mother, our mothers taught



**IN LIGHT OF FAITH**  
BARBARA HUGHES

Few things invigorate me more than opening the windows on a spring morning. Amid the sight of birds nesting, bees pollinating and lawn mowers humming, the clarion call to get to work rings loud and clear.

I suspect this annual burst of energy may be rooted in childhood memories of spring cleaning that was almost sacred to my mother. As recruits to the annual ritual, my sisters and brother, armed with buckets, squeegees and furniture polish, were instructed to remove every speck of dirt that somehow escaped the weekly cleaning that took place on Fridays.

Having coerced my brother into helping her turn and vacuum mattresses, my mother would assign my sisters and me to the kitchen where we would wash and dry the “good dishes,” used only on special occasions.

After adding a fresh look to the inside of our kitchen cabinets, replacing old shelf paper with newly purchased paper lining, we would await the approval of my mother.

Although the term “domestic engineer” had yet to be coined, it would definitely be an appropriate title for my mother. More important than any title, my mother took

housekeeping seriously, and in the process taught us the importance of doing seemingly insignificant tasks well. It’s a lesson that has stayed with me through the years, despite the advent of modern conveniences.

More than yearning for old ways that required more time and energy, remembering the loving attention that my mother gave to every detail is what I treasure most. Whether watching her knead dough that would later fill the house with the amazing aroma of freshly baked bread, waiting impatiently as she put the finishing touches on a dress that she was making for me, or helping her plant and weed the vegetable garden that graced our backyard, my mother’s example had a positive influence on my becoming the person I am today.

Although she is no longer physically with us, I often feel her presence, and perhaps no more so than on Mother’s Day.

I admit that as a child, and even as an adult, I didn’t always appreciate all that she tried to teach me, or even the person that she was. And yet, there are times when I say or do something that is clearly reminiscent of her, reminding me of the many ways that she continues to form me.

In many ways, my mother and I are as different as day and night and yet, one of the greatest things she has passed on to me is my faith. I recall accompanying her to church



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on Friday evenings for weekly devotions to our Sorrowful Mother. At the time, I couldn’t have known how those memories would linger and impact my life decades later.

Perhaps the one regret I have is that I didn’t take the time when she was alive to let her know how truly thankful I am for her presence in my life. Fortunately, as part of the Communion of Saints, she is still with me and so it’s never too late for me to say a prayer of thanksgiving to her and for her.

As we celebrate Mother’s Day, may we all take a few moments to remember and thank our mother for

life — our most precious gift. While not everyone has been blessed with a mother who is the source of happy memories, we have all been given the Blessed Mother to whom we can turn for comfort.

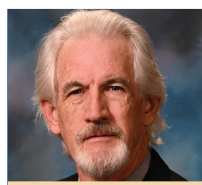
During May, the Church pays special tribute to our heavenly mother who sacrificed so much for her Son and for her children. Although she is in heaven, her heart continues to remain with her children on Earth, a fact that is evidenced by her many apparitions, one of which is celebrated on May 13 in commemoration of her appearances at Fatima.

In a world where human life is deemed disposable by many and where motherhood is often undervalued, let us continue to pray that one day life and motherhood will be regarded as so sacred a gift that abortion will be unreconcilable, not only with the law of our land, but with the heart of every man and woman.

May we make a special effort this month to turn to Mary to learn what it means to be a holy mother and to be obedient children of God and faithful disciples of her Son. And so we pray, “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!”

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

## Covenant with Christ makes us one with him, others



**BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY**  
DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

During the Triduum, we celebrated in a special way the new covenant God has made with us through Jesus. As we continue to celebrate this new covenant, we are reminded of two great truths on this Good Shepherd Sunday. We are told that Jesus and the Father are one, and of the universality of the flock Jesus gathers together in God’s Kingdom, in heaven and on Earth.

In ancient cultures, covenants were a way of life and a number of elements were included in these covenants. Three aspects of these covenants were the comingling of blood, a permanent reminder of the covenant, and promises or agreements made by the parties to each other.

The parties to a covenant would cut themselves, mingle drops of their blood with wine and drink this mixture of wine and blood, indicating unity, oneness and a common purpose. Then they would put something in the cut to create a scar, a permanent reminder of the

covenant. A third aspect would be promises or assurances made as a consequence of adhering to the covenant.

At the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus says, “This is the new covenant in my blood” (Lk 22:20). Jesus gives us his body and blood in the Eucharist and in his passion and death. Every time we receive Eucharist, we comingling the precious body and blood of Jesus with our being, thereby saying yes to the covenant.

### Fourth Sunday of Easter

**Acts 13:14, 43-52;**

**Ps 100 1-2, 3, 5;**

**Rev 7:9, 14b-17;**

**Jn 10:27-30**

celebration of the Mass, every time we receive Eucharist, every time we look upon a crucifix, we are reminded of this covenant.

The permanent mark of this covenant for us is our baptism, which joins us to God and makes us one with him. The offering of our entire self to God, in service to others through prayer and sacrifice, is also sign and symbol of our acceptance of this new covenant.

In this covenant we are given promises and assurances. The Scripture readings tell us those who remain in covenant with Jesus are assured that no one can take them away from God, and those who have been “washed in the blood of

the Lamb” will rest in the presence of God. Psalm 100 also assures us the Lord’s “kindness endures forever... his faithfulness to all generations.”

This new covenant is for all people. In Acts, Paul affirms that this new covenant is offered to the Gentiles as well as the Jewish people. Revelations speaks of “a great multitude from every nation, race, people, and tongue... who have been washed in the blood” (7: 9,15).

In this covenant, we are called to be one with Christ, collectively and individually. If my life is intertwined with Jesus’ and your life is also intertwined with Jesus, then our lives are woven with one another through Jesus.

If we are totally immersed in the person of Jesus, washed in the blood of this covenant, it causes a permanent change in our consciousness and we become one with Jesus. Jesus welcomed all people as equals, and if we become one with Jesus, how can we treat others differently?

How can we hate or discriminate, allow racism and bigotry to exist? As people whose lives are so intimately connected with Jesus, how are we called to live in relationship with others?

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



# Catholic leaders thankful for mother's stay of execution

## Texas bishops advocated on behalf of Melissa Lucio

CAROL ZIMMERMANN  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic leaders were thankful that death-row inmate Melissa Lucio was granted a last-minute stay of execution April 25, but they also said her sentence shows a failure in the use of capital punishment in this country and stressed that they would continue to pray for Lucio and her family and advocate on her behalf.

Lucio, 53, a Catholic mother of 14 and a grandmother, was scheduled for execution April 27 for the 2007 death of her 2-year-old daughter, Mariah, that Lucio has maintained was due to her daughter's accidental fall down a stairwell.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, which issued a stay of execution, ordered the 138th Judicial District Court of Cameron County to consider the new evidence presented by Lucio's legal team.

Lucio will remain on death row while her case goes back to trial court to examine new evidence her attorneys say shows that the toddler's death was an accident caused by an undiagnosed injury sustained after falling down the stairs two days before she died.

"I am grateful the court has given me the chance to live and prove my innocence. Mariah is in my heart today and always," Lucio said in a statement through her attorneys. "I am grateful to have more days to be a mother to my children and a grandmother to my grandchildren."

Lucio heard the news of the stopped execution in a phone call with state Rep. Jeff Leach, a Republican, and began sobbing when she heard it, attorneys told reporters in an April 25 Zoom call.

Lucio's sister, Sonya Valencia, told reporters that the family members were thankful for support they had been given and added: "Our faith has gotten us through this."

The Texas Catholic bishops had joined a broad coalition of faith leaders, Latino organizations, anti-domestic violence groups and the Innocence

Project in urging state leaders to commute Lucio's sentence and conduct a meaningful review of her case.

An application for clemency submitted March 22 by her attorneys included new evidence not only about Lucio's daughter, but information the jury never heard that shows Lucio was a victim of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

The evidence also said Lucio's confession was just repeating what officers said during her five-hour interrogation and that she asserted her innocence more than 100 times during that interrogation. It included statements from four jurors who said they have grave concerns about evidence withheld from them at the trial.

"We give thanks to God that Melissa will not be executed this week and that she will soon have the opportunity for a new trial to prove her innocence," said Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director of Catholic Mobilizing Network.

In an April 25 statement, she added that with Lucio's case, "we see clearly how deeply flawed our capital punishment system is, and how it places innocent lives at risk. Her story also reveals how this system targets the most vulnerable among us, including people of color and those with histories of serious trauma."

Vaillancourt Murphy said Lucio is "a Mexican-American mother, a devout Catholic and a lifelong victim of sexual and physical abuse. It has been disturbing to learn how, after suffering the unimaginable loss of her young daughter, Melissa was then further victimized and retraumatized by our legal system."

She also thanked the Catholic bishops of Texas for their "committed advocacy on Melissa's behalf."

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops similarly commended the state court for intervening for Lucio but emphasized that her case "highlights the serious flaws in our justice system

that allowed her to be condemned to death on the basis of a dubious conviction."

Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille and longtime opponent of the death penalty, echoed this view, tweeting April 25 that she was "so thankful that a court finally stepped in today and stopped Melissa Lucio's execution."

"The death penalty is always horrific, but executing a mother for a crime that never even happened? Melissa was coerced into making a false confession 15 years ago. May the truth come out now," she said.

She also said that those in the criminal legal system "should prioritize accuracy and getting to the truth."

"Isn't that the least we should expect? What does it say about priorities in the system when police and prosecutors fight tooth and nail against reforms to prevent false confessions?" she tweeted.

In a recent court appeal filed by Vanessa Potkin, an attorney for Lucio and director of special litigation at the Innocence Project, said: "There is just too much doubt. We cannot move forward in this case and risk executing an innocent woman."

Attorneys for Lucio have sought relief multiple times to no avail. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit said Lucio had been denied her right to fully defend herself but that procedural rules barred the court from overturning her conviction. The Supreme Court has declined to take up Lucio's case.

The Innocence Project, in a brief filed with the Supreme Court, questioned the manner of interrogation used on Lucio about her daughter's death. "Interrogation may sometimes psychologically pressure even innocent people to confess to crimes they did not commit," it said, adding that the risk of a false confession is "heightened when the interrogated suspect is a battered woman."

Follow Zimmermann on Twitter: @carolmaczim



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# What Maryland site reveals about Catholic colonists

## How the faithful of St. Mary's City survived government oppression

**ZOEY MARAIST**  
Catholic News Service

ST. MARY'S CITY, Md. — While English colonists who arrived in the New World were looking for greater opportunities, many of the Catholic colonists who arrived in Maryland also were looking to escape religious persecution.

Historic St. Mary's City, a living history museum in southern Maryland, keeps the story of those Catholic colonists alive while its archaeologists are still digging up clues to the past.

In 1634, the ships the Ark and the Dove landed on the shores of Maryland carrying more than 100 English Catholics and Protestants, led by the Catholic Leonard Calvert. The newcomers settled in a fort before gradually building up St. Mary's City, a metropolis in southern Maryland that would serve as the colony's first capital.

For decades, religious tolerance for Christians was the law of the land. But the colonists weren't free of the political and religious strife that rocked society in Europe. In the late 1680s, England's Glorious Revolution replaced a Catholic ruler with the staunchly Protestant King William and Queen Mary. Soon, Maryland was no longer controlled by the Catholic Calvert family but instead became a royal colony where the Church of England was the state religion.

In 1695, Francis Nicholson, the royal governor, moved the capital to Annapolis, a more centrally located city where fewer Catholics lived. St. Mary's City became a shell of its former self, and the site of that original fort was lost to history.

### Tough time for Catholics

Fortunately, archaeology has helped uncover much of the old city's mysteries over the past few decades.

"There was no map of St. Mary's City, other than one map with no street layouts, no buildings, no nothing," said Peter Friesen, director of education at the living history museum. "It's through the 50 years of archaeology that we were able to figure out where a lot of these buildings are that we've reconstructed."

One of those buildings is a Catholic church. The first group of colonists to come to Maryland included Jesuit Fathers Andrew White and John Altham, and other priests followed over the years.

At first, they used an old wicket, a type of Native American



**Above: A replica of the Catholic church that served Maryland colonists is seen in St. Mary's City, Md., March 16, 2022. Right: One of the latest discoveries at St. Mary's City is this Caravaca cross.**

(CNS photos/Zoey Maraist, Catholic Herald)



dwelling, to celebrate Mass, then a wooden chapel, then a cruciform brick chapel with windows and a stone floor. But the building survived for only a few decades.

In 1704, the Maryland legislature passed the "Act to Prevent the Growth of Popery," which banned Catholics from voting or holding office, taxed them twice and only allowed them to worship in their homes.

The St. Mary's City sheriff locked the brick chapel so that it could no longer be used for worship.

"Then the Jesuits (took) the chapel apart brick by brick and used the bricks to rebuild a different chapel on private property that they owned at St. Inigoes, which is five, six miles south of (St. Mary's City) and is now part of a (military) base," said Friesen.

To replace the loss of churches, Catholics began to add "Mass rooms" to their homes, and several are still in existence, including one at the Doughoregan Manor near Ellicott City.

### Finding the fort

The foundation of the original brick chapel was discovered in 1938 and more than 50 years later was extensively excavated by archaeologists. The chapel was rebuilt in the style of other Jesuit churches of the time.

Though the historians were learning more about the colonial town, one thing remained elusive: the location of the original fort.

Their more than 50-year search often was sidetracked by other discoveries, such as the uncovering of three lead coffins buried in one of the transepts of the brick chap-

el. But last year, Historic St. Mary's City announced they had finally found the fort after a geophysicist used magnetometry, ground-penetrating radar and other technology to identify the post holes of the fort's walls. Excavation has helped them learn more about life inside the fort, and has uncovered Catholic artifacts.

A silver crucifix, rosary beads and a medal of Aloysius Gonzaga, a future Jesuit saint, all were discovered at Historic St. Mary's. Two identical medals were found, one inside the fort, of five saints who were canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622: St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Philip Neri and St. Isidore the Farmer, who stands in the center holding a farming tool.

"Medals like this were becoming very popular in the 17th century as a consequence of multiple things," said Jennifer Ogborne, curator of collections. "People wanted items of devotion they could carry with them as part of the Counter-Reformation. It became much easier to make them in the late 16th and early 17th centuries so they could be produced for a wider audience."

### More than religious history

One of the latest discoveries from the fort site is a small metal Caravaca cross. For centuries, pilgrims have visited the Spanish town of Caravaca to venerate a piece of the true cross. The relic is displayed in a cross with two horizontal bars, and the artifact has the same shape.

There is still lots to learn about the tiny devotional object that was plucked from the Maryland dirt, said Ogborne. "We are very excited about that cross."

Historic St. Mary's City explores more than just religious history. Visitors can see a tobacco farm, a replica of the Dove, the ship that brought the colonists, and models of period Native American homes.

But for Catholics and other people of faith, St. Mary's City is notable for its radical commitment to religious tolerance. The ideals the early colonists espoused lived. Within 100 years of Maryland's legal penalization of Catholics, the First Amendment enshrined freedom of religion as a fundamental American right.

*Maraist is a staff writer at the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Diocese of Arlington.*

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# Pope encourages young, old to read Book of Ruth

Says 'salvation, hope, joy flow through this connection'

CAROL GLATZ  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — If young people recognize all that they have received with gratitude and older people take the initiative of re-launching hope in young people for their future, then nothing can stop the flourishing of God's blessings among people, Pope Francis said.

Urging visitors to make sure they help bring young and older people together to talk and connect, the pope said, this is a "bridge that we have to reestablish more strongly," because it is through this connection that salvation, hope and joy flow.

The pope made his remarks April 27 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square, where he also asked that people "persevere in praying constantly for peace."

In his greetings to visitors after his main catechesis, the pope asked that people pray for weapons to be silenced "and may those who have the power to stop this war listen to the cry for peace of all of humanity."

The pope continued his series of talks dedicated to the meaning and value of "old age" and focused on how important it is that there be an "alliance" between old and new generations, highlighting the widow Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, as an example.

***"If the young open themselves to gratitude for what they have received and the elderly take the initiative of relaunching their future, nothing can stop the flourishing of God's blessings among peoples!"***

— Pope Francis

The story, presented in the Book of Ruth, of "these two faithful women shows that, in God's providential plan, the covenant of love and fidelity uniting the generations can prove immensely enriching for families and for the growth of a society that respects the dignity and gifts of each of its members, however young or old," according to the summary of the pope's catechesis.

Pope Francis said Ruth's devotion helps Naomi stop being so pessimistic and even inspires her to take the initiative to help Ruth build a new future, by guiding and encouraging her.

"In some cases, the tendency of the elderly toward pessimism needs

to be countered by the affectionate pressure of the young," he said.

There are all sorts of clichés and prejudices when it comes to family members, especially between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, he said.

Pope Francis, known for cracking jokes about mothers-in-law, said — jokes aside — it is important to recognize and honor their role as the mother of one's spouse.

"She is a mother, she is older. One of the most wonderful things about grandmothers is them seeing their grandchildren. When their children have children, they come back to life," he said.

The pope asked that families take special care in maintaining a good relationship with their in-laws, even if they sometimes act like they are "a little bit special."

The parents of one's spouse have still sacrificed a lot, he said, and families can at least try to make their in-laws happy, so they can live out the rest of their years in joy, he said.

"And if they have some kind of flaw, help them to correct it. And to all the mothers-in-law out there, let me say, be careful with what you say, because the tongue is one of the ugliest sins of mothers-in-law. Be careful," he said.

The pope asked that people "rediscover the Book of Ruth," especially its reflections on love and its

catechesis on the family. "This short book also contains valuable teaching on the alliance of the generations: where youth shows itself to be capable of restoring enthusiasm to mature age, and old age discovers it is capable of reopening the future to wounded youth."

"If the young open themselves to gratitude for what they have received and the elderly take the initiative of relaunching their future, nothing can stop the flourishing of God's blessings among peoples!" he said.

When greeting Polish pilgrims, Pope Francis recalled that April 27 marked the eighth anniversary of the canonization of St. John Paul II. "We pray for his intercession so that we might be faithful witnesses to Christ and his merciful love in the world, our families and places of work."

He apologized for needing to sit during the meet-and-greet portion at the end of the audience.

"This knee just will not get better, and I can't be on my feet too long," he said.

Reporting previously that he has a strained ligament and swelling of the knee, the pope was having even more difficulty than usual walking from the popemobile to his chair at the audience. He has had to cancel a number of scheduled meetings and appointments due to his doctor's insistence he rest.

## Post-abortion healing ministry founder remembered

Vicki Thorn's work 'essential aspect of Church's pro-life ministry'

MILWAUKEE (CNS) — Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI said the life and work of Project Rachel founder Vicki Thorn, who died unexpectedly April 20, stand "as a living testimony to an unwavering and unconditional defense of life at all stages, and to the mercy of God's love."

Thorn was 72. The Catholic Herald, Milwaukee's archdiocesan newspaper, reported that she died of a massive heart attack.

As the founder of the post-abortion healing ministry Project Rachel, she single-handedly created a post-abortion healing ministry at a time when none existed. She maintained an office at the Milwaukee archdiocesan pastoral center for 37 years.

During that time, her ministry expanded across the U.S. and around the world. Now overseen by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Project Rachel is a diocesan-based network of specially trained priest confessors, mental health professionals, spiritual directors and others who provide ongoing, one-on-one confidential post-abortion care.

In an April 20 statement, Archbishop ListECKI said he and the pastoral center staff offered "our deepest condolences" to Thorn's husband of 50 years, William, and the couple's six children.

William Thorn is associate professor emeritus of journalism and media studies/Institute for Catholic Media at Jesuit-run Marquette University's Marquette University's Diederich College

of Communication.

"Our hearts are breaking as we mourn Vicki Thorn, founder of the post-abortion healing ministry Project Rachel, & recipient of the 2021 Notre Dame Evangelium Vitae Medal. May she rest in peace," tweeted the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture at the University of Notre Dame.

Thorn, who also was executive director of the National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing, received the Evangelium Vitae Medal at a Mass and banquet in April 2021.

COVID-19 caused the presentation to be delayed a year; she was to receive the honor in April 2020, but in March of that year, the World Health Organization declared coronavirus a worldwide pandemic.

When he announced the honor for Thorn in October 2019, O. Carter Snead, the William P. and Hazel B. White director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, said that she had dedicated her life "to caring for women and men who have been wounded by abortion."

He called her work "a living witness to the unconditional love and mercy that lies at the heart of the culture of life."

The annual honor is always announced on Respect Life Sunday, the first Sunday of October, and usually presented the following spring. The award consists of a specially commissioned medal and \$10,000 prize.

Thorn, a certified trauma counselor and spiritual director, started Project Rachel in 1984 while working in the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The first training workshop for a small group of attendees was held Sept. 19, 1984.

She was the author of "Progetto Rachele, il volto della compassione" ("Project Rachel, The Face of Compassion"), published in 2009 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana. She wrote numerous article and spoke internationally about Project Rachel and the effects of the aftermath of abortion on women, men and family members and about the post-abortion healing process.

With her husband, she was inducted in 2008 into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. In 2009, she received the People of Life Award from the USCCB for her pro-life service to the Catholic Church, and in 2017, Pope Francis reappointed her as a corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life. She was first named to the academy in 2011.

In a statement on her Notre Dame honor, Richard Doerflinger, retired associate director of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, said at the time that Thorn "not only championed the cause of post-abortion reconciliation and healing" but saw it become "an essential aspect of the Catholic Church's pro-life ministry

See Ministry, Page 13



## Cathedral organ dedicated



Daniel Sañez, director of music and liturgy at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, plays the choir organ that was blessed by Bishop Barry C. Knestout, background, during the 11 a.m. Mass, Sunday, April 24. (Photo/Michael Mickle)

## Ministry

Continued from Page 12

in the United States and around the world.”

He called Thorn “a leader in showing how the Church’s vision of human sexuality is supported by the findings of medical science, helping young people to turn away from behaviors that lead to the tragedy of abortion,” added Doerflinger, who received the inaugural Evangelium Vitae Medal in 2011.

Thorn had a degree in psychology from the University of Minnesota. She was a bereavement facilitator trained by the American Academy of Bereavement and a perinatal loss facilitator certified by Resolve Through Sharing.

She earned her certification in trauma

counseling at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and was a longtime member of the Association of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health.

Additionally, she wrote and spoke about the sociological changes in society since 1960 and “the spiritual and psychological wounds” carried by Gen X and Gen Y as a result of those changes. She also wrote about the role of stress in making abortion decisions and ways to help women in crisis pregnancies.

Lately, she had been giving presentations to high school groups, college students and adult groups on her recent research on the topic of the “Biology of the Theology of the Body.”

Thorn was a member of St. Catherine Parish in Milwaukee. Besides her husband and children, she is survived by 19 grandchildren.

## Pope

Continued from Page 1

and Moscow patriarch had met personally.

He explained that the Vatican’s diplomatic team understood that such a meeting “at this time could lead to much confusion.” Personally, he said he seeks to promote fruitful interreligious dialogue because mutual understanding or agreement “is better than conflict.”

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, had confirmed April 7 that Pope Francis wanted to meet with Patriarch Kirill in a “neutral place,” but that the patriarch’s support for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his war on Ukraine could make a meeting inadvisable.

In early March, soon after the invasion, Cardinal Parolin had told the Italian news agency ANSA, “Kirill’s words do not favor and do not promote an understanding, on the contrary, they risk igniting tempers even more and going toward an escalation and not resolving the crisis peacefully.”

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of

external relations for the Russian Orthodox Church, told reporters April 22 that “the events of the past two months necessitated adjustments to the plans and postponement of the meeting.”

“Too many problems would now arise during its preparations” in terms of security, logistics, coverage of the meeting in the public space, he said, according to Interfax. “We will wait for a better time for this event.”

Pope Francis told La Nación that he is willing “to do everything” to end the bloodshed.

He said he decided to visit the Russian ambassador to the Holy See Feb. 25 on his own accord after a sleepless night “thinking about Ukraine.”

“I went alone. I didn’t want anyone to accompany me” on a visit he felt was due out of a sense of his own personal responsibility.

He said the visit was a clear indication “to the government that it can end the war” at any moment. “To be honest, I would like to do something so that there will not be even one more death in Ukraine. Not one more. And I am willing to do everything.”

# Vatican clears cardinal of abuse cover-up allegations

CAROL GLATZ  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican has wrapped up its own investigation and dismissed allegations that Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz had covered up cases of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy in his archdiocese.

In a written statement released April 22, the Apostolic Nunciature in Poland said the Vatican found the cardinal had been “correct” in his actions after it examined the findings of an investigation led by Italian Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco.

Following a request by the Vatican, Cardinal Bagnasco, the retired archbishop of Genoa, was in Poland June 17-26, 2021, “to verify certain cases related to the actions of Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz” while he was archbishop of Krakow from 2005 until his retirement in 2016, the statement said.

“The analysis of the collected documentation made it possible to assess these actions of Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz as correct and, therefore, the Holy See decided not to proceed any further,” it said.

In his own written statement released the same day, Cardinal Dziwisz said, “I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to a responsible response to the allegations made against me” and gratitude to the Vatican “for having judged the case fairly.”

Cardinal Bagnasco “made every effort to clarify the aforementioned allegations, which are undeserved and painful for me,” said the Polish cardinal,

who turns 83 April 27.

He said he hoped the announcement from the nunciature would “contribute not only to clarifying the matter but also to restoring peace of mind to all those who have felt affected by the accusations I have faced.”

Cardinal Dziwisz, who served as St. John Paul II’s personal secretary for 39 years before leading the Krakow Archdiocese, was accused in a November 2020 TVN-24 documentary of ignoring abuse complaints after becoming archbishop in 2005.

The cardinal dismissed the claims in a TV interview, citing his four decades of “service to the Church, pope and Poland,” but said he counted on a “transparent investigation” and “proper presentation of the facts.”

In a January 2021 statement, the Krakow prosecutor’s office said it had found no “evidence of criminal activity” against Cardinal Dziwisz, since the legal obligation to report abuse allegations to police had only entered into force in 2017. The cardinal retired as archbishop of Krakow in December 2016.

In 2019, the Catholic Church in Poland listed cases of 382 clergy accused of abusing 625 minors in its first report covering the years 1990 to 2018.

A second report, released in June 2021, added allegations made to Church authorities between July 1, 2018, and Dec. 31, 2020, listing 292 clergy who allegedly abused more than 300 minors from 1958 through 2020.

Following Pope Francis’ May 2019 motu proprio, “Vos Estis Lux Mundi,” revising and clarifying norms and procedures for holding bishops and religious superiors accountable for protecting abusers, 10 mostly retired bishops have been sanctioned by the Vatican for ignoring abuse complaints in Poland, where allegations of past cover-ups have been surfacing.

In 2013, the bishops’ conference appointed a child protection coordinator and established a foundation for prevention and victim support.

## Ukraine

Continued from Page 8

technology, everyone has images of these atrocities in their homes, and they react,” the archbishop said. “We have such a massive tragedy so close to home.”

When the war began, he said, “we reacted so generously — probably out of shock — but we must maintain this support.”

Now, the archbishop said, collecting funds to purchase specifically needed items is important.

As Ukrainians continue to defend their West-looking independence and democracy, they need support from their friends and neighbors, Archbishop Budzik said. “We are living at a decisive moment in the history of Europe.”

Editor’s note: For information on how to donate go to <https://lublin.caritas.pl/help-ing-ukraine-current-informations/>



# OPPORTUNITIES

**Christ the King School, Norfolk**, is seeking to fill the following positions for the 2022-2023 school year:

**Enthusiastic Instructional Assistants.** Will assist with providing care, supervision and learning activities to children in a preschool and elementary environment. Qualifications: A minimum of high school diploma or equivalent with experience working with preschool aged children. Complete a background check and VIRTUS training.

**Front Desk-Registrar.** This person is the first face for staff, students and visitors to the school. As a place of faith, learning and growth, the office staff has a wide range of responsibilities including verbal, written and electronic correspondence, maintaining supplies and keeping vital student records. The ideal candidate will be fluent in English and Spanish, possess an associate degree or equivalent, be proficient with databases and the Google/Microsoft office suite, and have three or more years of school environment experience. Candidates must be willing to complete all necessary screening and education for the protection of children.

**Technology Instructor.** Will provide basic technology and coding skills using Tynker to students in Kindergarten through grade 8. In addition, the technology teacher will work closely with classroom teachers to integrate the core curriculum of the Richmond Diocese into the development and planning of all technology lessons. The successful candidate must instruct through engaged, hands-on teaching and learning, utilize 21st century teaching skills, possess good communication skills, including behavior management and social-emotional strategies, and be able to work collaboratively with an instructional team. In addition, the candidate will consistently model Catholic values and the school's mission to the community, develop positive relationships with students, parents and colleagues, and exude professionalism. We offer a competitive salary, full benefits and a retirement plan for vested employees. Please send an updated résumé and diocesan application via email to Mrs. Kim V. Callahan, principal, kcallahan@ctkparish.org.

**Star of the Sea Parish, Virginia Beach**, is seeking a full-time (36 hours/week) music coordinator. The music coordinator will collaborate with the pastor and other staff members in implementing and providing music for all parish liturgies and other parish celebrations. Must work well with others to plan, evaluate and set objectives, with the

specific focus on music. They will recruit and schedule musicians for all Sunday and other major liturgical celebrations. They will plan and organize appropriate music for Sunday and seasonal liturgical celebrations with the pastor and those involved with liturgy. They will also recruit, train and support the instrumentalists, choir members and cantors, while scheduling and holding rehearsals. Assist parishioners needing music for weddings and funerals. They will develop and maintain a list of instrumentalists, organists and cantors available to assist with weddings and funerals. Will work within their budget, help prepare the budget and monitor the authorized expenses to ensure keeping in line with the budget. Must maintain a level of knowledge and skills required for the ministry, through music lessons, reading and attending workshops and conventions. They also participate in regional, diocesan and national professional organizations, as approved and appropriate. Qualifications include being a Roman Catholic participating in regular worship. A degree in music is preferred or equivalent education and experience. Has a developed skill in at least one musical instrument. Demonstrates good organizational skills and has good volunteer leadership skills. Has knowledge of computer skills especially with music software. Please contact Father Steve DeLeon at frsteve@staroftheseaparish.com to apply.

**The Church of St. Therese, Gloucester**, is seeking a faithful and passionate Catholic who loves Jesus and his Church for full-time employment as the coordinator of youth ministry. The successful candidate will be one who strives to lead a life of personal holiness and has a shepherd's heart to search out and lead teens closer to Christ. He/she must have the energy to build a youth program from scratch. Applicants should have at least a bachelor's degree in a related field and a minimum of three years' experience in youth ministry. The position is responsible for overseeing the middle school and high school programs with vision, including sacramental preparation for confirmation, with special attention given to empowering lay leadership among adults and teens. Salary and benefits consistent with diocesan guidelines, qualifications and experience. Send cover letter, résumé and Richmond Diocese application to the pastor, Father Gregory Kandt, at fr.gregory@stthersglo.org. For more information, call Father Gregory at 804-693-9043.

# SHORTAKES

**The 36th annual Lebanese Food Festival** hosted by St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church, Friday-Sunday, May 13-15, on the church grounds next to Innsbrook, 4611 Sadler Road, Glen Allen. More information is available by calling 804-270-7234 or on the church website at [www.stanthonymaronitechurch.org](http://www.stanthonymaronitechurch.org).

**St. John the Evangelist, Highland Springs**, annual Backyard/Bake Sale, Saturday, May 14, 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 15, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m., in the church social hall. Furniture, baby/toddler clothes, household items and more. We also have delicious baked goods for sale. Contact Margaret Owens at 804-795-5090 with questions.

**Mary's Choice RVA** is holding their first yard sale at Church of the Epiphany, 11000 Smoketree Drive, North Chesterfield, Saturday, May 21, 7 a.m. to noon. Volunteers are needed. For more information, to volunteer or to donate items, please call Mary's Choice RVA at 804-878-3215 or email to [helpmaryschoicerva@gmail.com](mailto:helpmaryschoicerva@gmail.com).

**"Emotionally Naked Truth About Suicide"** hosted by the Respect Life Ministry of St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 8901 Winterpock Road, Chesterfield, Saturday, June 4, 10 a.m.— noon. Keynote speaker Anne Moss Rogers will delve into the most taboo of subjects – suicide – including the mental illness and addiction

that often trigger it. The presentation will touch upon her experience of losing her son to suicide and dispels common beliefs about suicide and substance misuse, while empowering people with the skills to prevent this threat to life. Chesterfield County Sheriff Karl S. Leonard will introduce Rogers and provide a law enforcement perspective. Tom Leahy of Beacon Tree Foundation will offer insight into the organization he and his wife Diana started in 2008 after seeing the battles their three daughters faced with mental and emotional issues. Beacon Tree Foundation is a resource that addresses the fear and frustration of mental illness, enabling loved ones to navigate the mental health community and find resources to help pay for treatment. Although not required, we ask interested attendees to email [RespectLifeEvent@gmail.com](mailto:RespectLifeEvent@gmail.com) and indicate the number of people attending to ensure enough seating and refreshments.

## How did your legislators vote?

The Virginia Catholic Conference's newly available vote report shows key outcomes during the 2022 session and the votes cast by each legislator. It also highlights significant progress and features a special section explaining "highly unusual" actions on two bills. Visit [www.vacatholic.org](http://www.vacatholic.org) to view the results and see how your state senator and delegate voted.

# SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for May 8, 2022  
*Acts 13: 14, 43-52 / John 10:27-30*

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Cycle C: teaching disciples and crowds. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

GRACE TO HEAR WORD GENTILES ETERNAL MY SHEEP PERISH WHOLE CITY CROWDS REJECT IT A LIGHT REGION VOICE FATHER GATHERED JEALOUSY UNWORTHY EARTH DUST KNOW GREATER	KNOW OR REJECT
	G A T H E R E D E C U K
	D R E J E C T I T R N E
	P E E H S Y M K J O W T
	H T R A E F Y Z W W O E
	J F L I T S L H N D R R
	E A Y V B E O C O S T N
	A T A O J L R V I L H A
	L H U I E I D A G W Y L
	O E M C C T D P E G D I
	U R I E A N A U R H R G
	S T J M P E R I S H O H
	Y E C A R G O I U T W T



# Urbi et Orbi: ¡Dejémonos vencer por la paz de Cristo! La paz es posible

**D**irigiéndose al mundo entero en su tradicional mensaje de Pascua, Francisco recordó la guerra en Ucrania, a los países atormentados por largos conflictos y violencia y afectados por tensiones sociales y dramáticas crisis humanitarias. “Que Cristo resucitado acompañe y asista a los pueblos de América Latina que han visto empeorar sus condiciones sociales”

CECILIA MUTUAL — CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

“Queridos hermanos y hermanas: ¡Feliz Pascua! Jesús, el Crucificado, ha resucitado”. Fue el saludo del Papa Francisco a los fieles del mundo entero y a los presentes congregados en una soleada plaza de San Pedro, que participaron hoy en la misa de Resurrección.

Francisco presidió la celebración ante unos 100 mil fieles presentes, tras una pausa de dos años debido a la pandemia, en una coloreada plaza de San Pedro decorada con cientos de arreglos florales y adornos. Finalizada la Santa Misa, dirigió el mensaje Urbi et Orbi (a la ciudad de Roma y al mundo entero) e impartió su bendición apostólica desde el balcón central de la Basílica Vaticana.

## «¡La paz esté con ustedes!»

El Obispo de Roma, remitiéndose al Evangelio de Juan, repitió las palabras pronunciadas por Jesús al presentarse ante “las miradas incrédulas” de los discípulos que lloraban por él y evidenció:

*“También nuestras miradas son incrédulas en esta Pascua de guerra. Hemos visto demasiada sangre, demasiada violencia. También nuestros corazones se llenaron de miedo y angustia, mientras tantos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas tuvieron que esconderse para defenderse de las bombas”*

También a nosotros, afirmó Francisco, “nos cuesta creer que Jesús verdaderamente haya resucitado, que verdaderamente haya vencido a la muerte. ¿Será tal vez una ilusión, un fruto de nuestra imaginación? No, no es una ilusión”. “¡Cristo ha resucitado!”, afirmó.

*“Hoy más que nunca tenemos necesidad de Él, al final de una Cuaresma que parece no querer terminar. Parecía que había llegado el momento de salir juntos del túnel, tomados de la mano, reuniendo fuerzas y recursos. Y en cambio, estamos demostrando que tenemos todavía en nosotros el espíritu de Caín, que mira a Abel no como a un hermano, sino como a un rival, y piensa en cómo eliminarlo”*

## La paz se logra con las armas del amor de Jesús

Para creer en la victoria del amor y en la reconciliación, necesitamos a Jesús Resucitado, añadió el Papa. “Sólo Él puede hacerlo. Sólo Él tiene hoy el derecho de anunciarnos la paz. Sólo Jesús, porque lleva las heridas, nuestras heridas”. Y explicó:

*“Las heridas en el Cuerpo de Jesús resucitado son el signo de la lucha que Él combatió y venció por nosotros con las armas del amor, para que nosotros pudiéramos tener paz, estar*



El papa Francisco imparte su bendición de Pascua “urbi et orbi” (a la ciudad y al mundo) desde el balcón central de la Basílica de San Pedro en el Vaticano el 17 de abril de 2022. (Foto de CNS/Paul Haring)

*en paz, vivir en paz. Mirando sus llagas gloriosas, nuestros ojos incrédulos se abren, nuestros corazones endurecidos se liberan y dejan entrar el anuncio pascual: «¡La paz esté con ustedes!»”*

## Que se elija la paz de Cristo

“¡Dejemos entrar la paz de Cristo en nuestras vidas, en nuestras casas y en nuestros países!” exhortó el Santo Padre, dirigiendo, como de costumbre, su mirada a todas las realidades del mundo necesitadas de esta paz de Jesús. En primer lugar, Francisco recordó a la “martirizada Ucrania”, tan duramente probada por la violencia y la destrucción de la “guerra cruel e insensata”, dirigiendo un fuerte llamamiento a los responsables de las naciones para que escuchen el grito de paz de la gente:

*“Que se elija la paz. Que se dejen de hacer demostraciones de fuerza mientras la gente sufre. Por favor, no nos acostumbremos a la guerra, comprometámonos todos a pedir la paz con voz potente, desde los balcones y en las calles. Que los responsables de las naciones escuchen el grito de paz de la gente, que escuchen esa inquietante pregunta que se hicieron los científicos hace casi sesenta años: «¿Vamos a poner fin a la raza humana; o deberá renunciar la humanidad a la guerra?»”*

“Llevo en el corazón a las numerosas víctimas ucranianas” aseguró el Santo Padre, “los millones de refugiados y desplazados internos, a las familias divididas, a los ancianos que se han quedado solos, a las vidas destrozadas y a las ciudades arrasadas”. Y mencionando el sufrimiento de los niños ucranianos que “se quedaron huérfanos y huyen de la guerra” el Papa recordó también de manera especial a muchos otros que mueren de hambre o por falta de atención médica, son víctimas de abusos y violencia, “y aquellos a los que se les ha negado el derecho a nacer”.

## Los signos esperanzadores no obstante la guerra

A pesar del dolor de la guerra, Francisco evidenció que no faltan “signos esperanzadores, como las puertas abiertas de tantas familias y comunidades que acogen a migrantes

y refugiados en toda Europa”.

*“Que estos numerosos actos de caridad sean una bendición para nuestras sociedades, a menudo degradadas por tanto egoísmo e individualismo, y ayuden a hacerlas acogedoras para todos.”*

## No olvidar otras situaciones de sufrimiento

El Papa pidió que haya paz en Oriente Medio, “lacerado desde hace años por divisiones y conflictos”, en particular, entre israelíes y palestinos, en el Líbano, Siria e Irak. Pidió también paz para Libia y Yemen, Myanmar y Afganistán. Paz para todo el continente africano, especialmente en la zona del Sahel, en Etiopía y en la República Democrática del Congo. Y que no falten la oración y la solidaridad para los habitantes de la parte oriental de Sudáfrica afectados por graves inundaciones.

Dirigiendo su mirada al continente americano, el Pontífice pidió que “Cristo resucitado acompañe y asista a los pueblos de América Latina que, en estos difíciles tiempos de pandemia, han visto empeorar, en algunos casos, sus condiciones sociales, agravadas también por casos de criminalidad, violencia, corrupción y narcotráfico”. También recordó a Canadá, pidiendo al Señor Resucitado que “acompañe el camino de reconciliación que está siguiendo la Iglesia Católica canadiense con los pueblos indígenas”.

Finalmente, recordó que “toda guerra trae consigo consecuencias que afectan a la humanidad entera: desde los lutos y el drama de los refugiados, a la crisis económica y alimentaria de la que ya se están viendo señales”. Sin embargo, subrayó el Papa, ante los signos persistentes de la guerra, Cristo, “vencedor del pecado, del miedo y de la muerte”, nos exhorta a no rendirnos frente al mal y a la violencia” y exhortó:

*“¡Dejémonos vencer por la paz de Cristo! ¡La paz es posible, la paz es necesaria, la paz es la principal responsabilidad de todos!”*



## Vocation

*Continued from Page 1*

statement was the catalysis for Filippi to study the Bible — first at classes offered at another parish and then at the Presbyterian School of Formation in Richmond.

“I was very excited and really on fire,” she said. “I became more and more zealous as now I couldn’t stop learning.”

When Sister Chiodo’s community moved her to another assignment in 1977, the pastor talked Filippi into becoming the DRE. There was a reason she was reluctant to accept the position.

“I literally did not know what I was doing. I was really in way over my head,” she said, noting that because Sister Chiodo kept good files, she was able to follow what she had done.

Thanks to the associate pastor, whom Filippi described as her “guardian angel who took me under his wing,” she made it through that first year.

### ‘Baptism by fire’

Knowing she needed more theological education, Filippi spent two months in each of the next five summers pursuing a master’s degree in religious education from the School of Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Aside from feeling “inadequate” because she was one of only two people among the 100 people in the program who was neither a priest nor a religious, the first day in a Christology class during her second summer almost derailed her education.

When the priest professor talked about “high descending and low descending,” she was overwhelmed and ready to drop the course. When she went to his office to tell him, she burst into tears.

“I have to drop your class. I don’t know what you said. I don’t understand it. I never heard of it. I don’t think I can take this class,” she recalled saying. “And he said, ‘Yes, you can, and I’m going to help you.’ He made me stay. So that’s my baptism by fire experience. It was like I really shouldn’t be here, but I did stay. It did get better, and he did help me.”

Filippi noted that because the courses didn’t have textbooks, they had to do their studying and assignments in the library.

“I’d have the book we were supposed to read,” she said, while motioning, “and the English dictionary over here and the theological dictionary over here. In every class, I never heard of these words, but that got me through.”

She knew that what she learned at CUA needed a practical application to the parish, so Filippi incorporated the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) into research papers whenever possible. In 1982, after 10 courses and two days of comprehensive exams, she received her degree.

### From ‘work’ to ‘vocation’

Something that was changing as Filippi was completing 10 years as a catechist and DRE was how the Church was viewing lay people’s roles in it.

“Lay people involved with the Church in a paid position was very, very new. Basically, then, you ‘worked for the Church.’ That’s what you would say,” she said, noting it wasn’t called “ministry,” but that people were “volunteers.” “Not until later, what evolved began to be influenced by the clergy. That probably had the most impact growing me up as a catechist.”

She said the clergy recognized she was zealous and interested but, along with other DREs, in need of spiritual support.

“Throughout the years, that was how I evolved, and the Church was evolving, so there were a few more lay people. It took quite a while to get to the stage of not saying, ‘I work for the Church’ but saying, ‘I am called to that vocation.’”

Filippi said that people “were really hungry” to learn more about their call to Church ministry, so she convinced the diocesan director of Christian formation to bring the Loyola Institute for Ministry Extension (LIMEX) to the diocese.

“It flourished,” she said. “Their program was graduate level theological studies. The second part was application to ministry in the parish. It was an important aspect of formation.”

### ‘High time’

Filippi ministered at St. Joseph, Petersburg, until 1992. By then, she and Dave had another child, Michael, and she served as part-time DRE at several parishes. In 1997, when the diocese wanted to develop a strategic catechist training program, she was asked to apply and work with Dr. Pat Clement in developing the first Pathways for Catechist Formation.

“I worked as associate director and formed our commission, and for the first time I started getting acquainted with the whole diocese as our commission moved around,” she said of her nine years in that role. “That was another evolution of recognizing the uniqueness and challenges of our diocese.”

The role of catechist “had really begun to bloom,” according to Filippi.

“There was more attention being given to becoming an effective catechetical leader in our diocese,” she said of the early 2000s. “It was spiritual, theological, human sciences, communication. It was flourishing and very popular. There were many, many amazing, gifted women and men in ministry doing really great, wonderful things. It was a high time.”

### More developments

With the appointment of Bishop Francis X.

DiLorenzo as bishop of Richmond in 2004, Filippi became a full-time employee, eventually becoming director of the diocesan Office of Christian Formation in 2008.

She noted that he encouraged the development of the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI) in 2011.

“Bishop DiLorenzo wanted that for the diocese because he wanted priests, deacons and lay people to have a solid basis of formation,” Filippi said.

Another accomplishment, which she attributes in large part to “the generosity and contribution of our clergy,” were the sacramental instruction booklets for baptism, penance and Communion that she and Melanie Coddington developed beginning in 2012.

“It was an enormous amount of work, but these were needed for a long time,” Filippi said. “Our clergy, in particular, felt confident in what we had done. Everything we put in this book was footnoted; it was important to us to present Church teaching on these things.”

### Gratitude, joy

As she reflected upon five decades of catechetical ministry, Filippi expressed gratitude for those who have accepted the call to be catechists.

“What I’m experiencing now, with staff and parish leadership, is a maturity that is amazing. It’s grounded in their love of God, devotion to spiritual integration of their life and their ministry and a generosity of spirit,” she said. “Through the whole COVID time, you might have thought that catechists would leave by droves, but our leaders were strong and creative. That’s been very rewarding to see the efforts we have for helping form them.”

Her gratitude extends to those who support catechetical ministry financially.

“What we’re able to do is due to the generosity of the people who sit in our pews and contribute to the Annual Diocesan Appeal, as well as the pastors who designate the money for our use,” she said. “Every time we have an event, I publicly thank the people sitting there because their contributions enable us to support people coming to a retreat that costs \$250 but for which you only pay \$50.”

Filippi spoke about the joys she has experienced, especially in teaching children.

“Children will always be my favorite part of ministry because they’re so open, and they have such incredible natural sense of wonder and awe. They can see God in snowflakes. It’s not a problem,” she said, noting that a “treasured part of being a catechist” was writing an RCIA program for children that was published.

She added, “I want to live with joy and gratitude, so the Church, the rituals and the sacraments, the people and, of course, children, are sources of joy for me and sources of God.”

# Archbishop welcomes restoration of environmental rules

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committee welcomed a White House action that will restore regulatory provisions that were in place for decades as part of a key environmental protection law.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, said April 25 that the provisions being restored under the National Environmental Policy Act will serve as “a vital guardrail against ecological and social harm.”

The White House Council on Environmental Quality reinstated three provisions that require federal agencies to consider environmental im-

pacts of infrastructure projects, including those associated with climate change. The restored regulations also will give local communities directly affected by such projects an opportunity for greater input in the approval process.

The council, under President Donald Trump, made broad changes to the NEPA regulations in 2020 to significantly reduce the scope and time frame of federal review under the law.

The Biden White House said April 19, however, that the changes led to challenges for federal agencies implementing them and confusion among stakeholders and the general public.

In announcing that the provisions were to be restored, Brenda Mallory, who chairs the Council

on Environmental Quality, said in a statement they will “provide regulatory certainty, reduce conflict and help ensure that projects get built right the first time.”

Archbishop Coakley noted that the USCCB opposed removal of the policies when they were implemented in 2020.

“At that time, we acknowledged the need to reform NEPA to be more efficient and effective, while also advocating for regulatory continuity,” he said. “We are hopeful, therefore, that this new rule will set a trajectory for long-term stability in environmental regulation as our country continues to take steps towards environmental justice and stewardship,” the archbishop said.