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Participants in the African Mass, Saturday, June 4, at Holy Rosary, Richmond, bring the offertory gifts to the altar. Nearly 200 people participated in the celebration. (Photo/Cheryl Curbeam)

Celebrating faith, African cultures

CHERYL CURBEAM
Special to The Catholic Virginian

There were no Parthians, Medes and Elamites in the congregation. However, on Saturday, June 4, the day before Pentecost, nearly 200 people “born in Africa, descendants of Africans, or loved Africa so much that they came to celebrate together in unity,” in the words of Father Tochi Iwuji, gathered at Holy Rosary Church, Richmond, for an African Mass at which he was the principal celebrant and homilist.

Colorful flags representing all the African countries adorned the church while worshippers dressed in brightly patterned African clothing spoke languages from the countries of their birth. The International Choir from Christ the King sang vibrant, melodic songs in English, French, Lingala (Congo), and Ewe (Togo).

During his homily, Father Iwuji, administrator of St. Theresa, Farmville; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Blackstone; and Sacred Heart, Meherrin, told the congregation “that unity is not the same as uniformity. We are to come together with all of our diversity to unite in

solidarity as we celebrate the Eucharist and become one with Christ. Christ has given us a living example in the flesh of how to unite and bring light to others. Do something good. Bring friendship. See people as people. That is exactly what Christ does for us at the Eucharist. We become unified and we become one.”

Concelebrating with Father Iwuji was Father Joe Wamala, pastor of Christ the King, Norfolk. They were assisted by Deacon Frank Nelson from Holy Rosary. Other clergy participating in the celebration were Fathers Jay Wagner, John Bosco Walugembe, John Kazibwe, Ernest Bulinda, Paul Kkonde, Henry Ogu and Maxwell Appiagyei. Bishop Barry C. Knestout was unable to attend due to illness.

“This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the unity of the Church, the universality of the Church,” said Sister of Mercy Cora Billings. “It was great to celebrate with people who are coming from a continent of my ancestors.”

Father Walugembe saw it as an “opportunity to come together to show the oneness of the

See Celebrating, Page 16

Still possible pope might visit Ukraine

Kyiv archbishop: ‘Work is being done on this’

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Marking the 100th day of Russia’s war against Ukraine, Pope Francis again called for international efforts to stop the aggression, respect human life and end “the macabre destruction of cities and villages” in the country.

According to the popular Italian blog Il Sismografo, the pope’s June 5 plea was the 52nd time he spoke publicly about the war, which began Feb. 24. But, again, he did not name Russia as the aggressor or lay blame for the tragedy at the feet of Russia President Vladimir Putin.

Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, is not so reticent. He has been publishing a video message each day during the conflict, condemning Russia and accusing its troops of following “a genocide manual.”

The pope’s decision not to name and shame Russia has caused confusion for many people inside and outside Ukraine.

So, why the difference?

“The pope is the pope. He is the pastor of the universal Church, and we are Ukrainians, we are the pastors of the Ukrainian people,” Archbishop Shevchuk told Catholic News Service May 30. “Obviously, we are the voice of our people. We live through the pains and joys of our people with them.”

The pope has a different role.

“The Holy Father has condemned the war, he’s pointed explicitly to who is guilty for it, how international law and human dignity are being violated today, in Ukraine in particular,” the archbishop said. “But he is the universal pontiff so he uses a language that, on the one hand, can fulfill the prophetic mission of the Church and on the other, can open all possible paths to dialogue, to communication. So that’s why the pope speaks as he does, though you could ask him,” he added with a smile.

Meeting children, including from Ukraine, June 4, Pope Francis also said again that the idea of him visiting Ukraine was still under study.

“Work is being done on this,” Archbishop Shevchuk said, without giving away details. “Let’s say, the communication between the Apostolic See and Ukraine is quite intense and solid. And I think that we are all working so that one day the Holy Father will visit us here in Kyiv.”

See War, Page 11

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Inside This Edition

Why we need a Eucharistic Revival
Page 2

‘Tugging at heart’ led Deacon Bruce to priesthood
Page 3

Outreach from Roanoke Valley to Eastern Shore
Page 8

Why we need a Eucharistic Revival



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

This Sunday Catholics throughout the United States will celebrate the annual Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, commonly known as Corpus Christi. We are reminded that Jesus is the bread of life, and that he is the spiritual nourishment for our journey to heaven. The Eucharist is, as the Second Vatican Council stated, “the source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen Gentium, 11) and which was reiterated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1324).

However, the concerning reality is that nearly 70% of Catholics, according to a 2019 Pew Research Center survey, do not believe that the Eucharist — the bread and wine consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ — is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ. Since the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life,” this truth of our faith urgently needs reviving.

Revival is often associated with other religious denominations, particularly those whose leaders view Scripture literally. Revivals are often teeming with emotion and energy as participants embrace what they hear and commit to living it.

Given that polling indicates less than a third of our members believe in the Real Presence of the Eucharist, our Church needs that emotion, energy and, most importantly,

“The Eucharist is living, it is how we develop and deepen our relationship with Christ and how we are nourished to be missionary witnesses to his Gospel.”

renewed catechesis about the Eucharist. We need a revival.

I will process with the Blessed Sacrament at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart following the 11 a.m. Mass this Sunday. Other parishes will continue their tradition of holding eucharistic processions on their grounds, too.

Clearly, we want to highlight and not be ashamed of lauding and demonstrating our eucharistic devotion. But remember, the sole purpose of these processions is to renew our focus on and love for the Eucharist. They are not to be used as occasions for making political or some kind of ideological statements that might cause scandal or division.

In our encounter with the Real Presence, we are praying about and reflecting upon the

salvation he offers us and answering the call to holiness that flows from that. We are offering honor, praise and thanksgiving to our Lord for the gift he has given us in the sacrifice of his body and blood.

Our processions this Sunday alone do not constitute a revival. We need more if we are to recognize the reality of the Eucharist and to open our hearts to the grace it provides. To that end, the U.S. bishops have made a three-year commitment to a National Eucharistic Revival. It begins, fittingly, with our observance of Corpus Christi.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, head of the bishops’ Committee for Evangelization and Catechesis who is overseeing the revival, has said, “We want to start a fire, not a program.” Very simply, the Eucharist, along with our devotion to and our love for it, cannot and should not be packaged into a program. The Eucharist is living, it is how we develop and deepen our relationship with Christ and how we are nourished to be missionary witnesses to his Gospel.

During the coming months, you will be receiving information about how the National Eucharistic Revival will evolve in our diocese, parishes and nationally. You can learn more about it by visiting <https://eucharisticrevival.org>.

In the meantime, let us begin the revival within ourselves today by calling upon the Holy Spirit as we reflect on Jesus’ words: “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst” (Jn 6:35).

Permanent diaconate inquiry sessions planned for fall

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

As the diocesan Office for the Permanent Diaconate prepares to begin a formation cohort for no more than 19 men on Aug. 27, it is already planning for the cohort that will begin in August 2023.

Men who might have a calling to ordained service to the Church and the bishop as a permanent deacon, and who are interested in discerning that calling while learning about the commitment it involves, are invited to contact their pastors.

This is the first step in the diaconate office’s process for establishing the next cohort of men to be formed for service as permanent deacons.

“We work closely with our pastors in order to identify qualified men who might have a calling to the diaconate — and who have the support of their wives in discerning that call,” Deacon John Kren, director of the Office of Permanent Diaconate, said.

After a brief meeting with a man who expresses interest, the pastor will present his name and contact information to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate by Sunday, July 31. That date is nearly two months earlier than last year.

“The reason we moved the

date to July is that last year we announced a September deadline in August. We were told it impacted people’s calendars and that they could not make the meetings,” Deacon Kren explained. “This year, we’re giving everyone more time.”

Those whose names are presented by the pastors to the Diaconate Office will be invited to attend three meetings, one each in October, November and December, at the Pastoral Center.

“These meetings will address what the diaconate is, what are the responsibilities of the deacon and what is involved in the formation program,” Deacon Kren said. “They are not signing on for anything; this is just information.”

If the inquirer is married, his wife must attend all three meetings with him. The reason, according to Deacon Kren, is that the diocese wants the wife to be “fully informed” about the commitment to formation her husband would be making and the impact it would have upon her and their family.

Qualifications for formation to the permanent diaconate include, but are not limited to the following:

- A Roman Catholic for a minimum of five years at time of application;
- Registered parishioner within the Diocese of Richmond for five

years at the time of application, and active in the parish community;

- Between the ages of 30 and 59 at the time of application;

- Committed to and living out values of justice, charity and service;

- Demonstrates grateful fidelity to all that the Church teaches, openness to formation and has

demonstrated leadership.

Deacon Kren’s suggestion to someone sensing an ordained vocation: “If you feel the call, talk to your pastor.”

Editor’s note: Further information about the permanent diaconate can be found at <https://richmonddiocese.org/office/permanent-diaconate/>.

‘Snapshot’ of diaconate in US

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In the Catholic Church, permanent deacons “are entrusted with the unique responsibility of bringing Christ to every corner of society,” said the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. They carry out their ministry “in imitation of Christ the servant and impelled by the spirit of charity,” said Bishop James F. Checchio of Metuchen, New Jersey.

He made the remarks on the unique role deacons have in the Catholic Church in a statement issued June 2 with the results of an annual survey that provides a portrait of the permanent diaconate in the U.S.

“By virtue of their ordination, deacons witness to Christ in the workplace, within their families and among the members of

their community, especially the poor,” Bishop Checchio said. “The Church is grateful to all permanent deacons who extend Christ’s mercy and healing to all those in need.”

Conducted for the USCCB by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University since 2005, the study provides a detailed snapshot of the state of the permanent diaconate in the United States.

Findings include the percentage of active vs. nonactive deacons; the archdioceses/dioceses and eparchies with the largest number of permanent deacons; sociocultural demographics; and ministerial involvement. The report estimated there were as many as 20,888 permanent deacons in the United States in 2021-2022.

The full study can be found online at <https://bit.ly/3mhEyqP>.

'Tugging at heart' led Deacon Bruce to priesthood

Staunton native planned to be an engineer; God had another plan

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

Deacon Dillon Bruce knew what he wanted to do. He had it planned.

After graduating from Stuarts Draft High School in 2012, he went to Virginia Tech with the intention of becoming an engineer.

"I love figuring out the how and why things work and to make things efficient," he said. "I imagined myself working in a manufacturing plant figuring out neat ways to produce different products."

That was his plan, but God had another one.

"I just knew — he helped me to know that the way he was calling me more profoundly and in a particular way — he had made me to be his priest," Deacon Bruce said. "I distinctly remember being in the chapel at the Newman community at Virginia Tech, praying to God about my plan, about what I wanted to do, who I wanted to be with, and I just got the clear sense from him, 'That's not what I want for you.'"

Deacon Bruce, 29, followed that call — what he termed a "tugging at my heart" — and will be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond 10:30 a.m., Saturday, June 25, in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

More chapel talk with God

That wasn't Deacon Bruce's only chapel talk with God.

"We were having a baking party, and a friend invited me to go to the chapel before playing volleyball. He said, 'Let's just pray for a little bit,'" the deacon recalled. "I get up there and am talking to (God) about my life, and I just knew it was the greatest certainty I ever had in my prayer life — not just a sense but having a certainty that these things are God saying, 'This is what I want for you. Remember the priesthood.' I knew it was going to define my life."

Deacon Bruce noted that he did not say yes immediately.

"It took me a few days to say yes to that and some time to also make certain it wasn't just a notion or that I was drawing away from anything," he said.

He attended Duc in Altum, a retreat sponsored by the diocese's Vocations Office for men 18 and older discerning a call to priesthood.

"During that retreat, I was really praying about how great it would be to be married and all the blessings that go with that and all the difficulties that go with that," Deacon Bruce said. "In the next holy hour, I was praying about being a priest and all the blessings that go with that and all the difficulties

that go with that."

In the final holy hour, he prayed, "If I didn't have one of those, what would be my reaction?"

"Just a feeling of loss came. I was imagining myself being married, but not being totally for the Lord in this way. There was an emptiness," the deacon said. "I've got to pursue what fulfills, what the Lord put as that desire."

'Blessings' in Rome

During the retreat he made his decision.

"I'm going to the seminary to discern and to allow the Church to discern for me because I'm convinced the Church is the Church of Jesus Christ, the instrument through which he continues to work in the world," Deacon Bruce said.

After completing an undergraduate degree in philosophy at The Catholic University of America in 2017, Deacon Bruce began studies at the Angelicum — the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas — in Rome where he earned a bachelor's degree in sacred theology and is working toward a licentiate in sacred theology, which he is scheduled to receive next year.

He spoke of the opportunity to study in Rome as a time of "blessings."

"Many of our professors at the Angelicum are Dominicans, and I'm so grateful to be steeped in the Thomistic theology that is presented there," Deacon Bruce said, noting he looks forward to sharing what he has learned. "Thomas Aquinas' systematic and logical theology has really spoken to me and my heart with the clarity he provides and the Church promotes. It has been a wonderful part of my education."

He termed his formation at The North American College "really wonderful," especially "the practical preparation we receive for homilies, confessions, anointing of the sick."

Another of the blessings Deacon Bruce has received by studying in Rome is an up-close experience of Pope Francis' leadership.

"I've been inspired by his desire to dialogue and to encounter people where they're at and not always expecting them to be where we want them to be," the deacon said. "We're also bringing them toward what the Lord is asking us to share with them and what the Church invites them to."

Deacon Bruce noted that serving Mass with the pope (See



Deacon Dillon Bruce

sidebar) gave him a "great example of how much he cares about the liturgy."

"In the motu proprio ('Traditionis Custodes' on the Use of the Roman Liturgy Prior to the Reform of 1970") the comment about the Mass and the forms of the Mass, one thing that par-

ticularly stands out he is saying is to make sure you're celebrating the Mass the way the Church has asked us to," the deacon said, "because we don't know how to worship God by ourselves. God reveals to us how to worship him through his Church. When we're following what the Church is asking us to celebrate, then we're really able to worship God in the way he knows is best for us."

'Inspiring, supportive family'

The oldest of Brian and Jeanette Bruce's three sons, Deacon Bruce credits them, as well as his brothers Derek and Karson, as being "nothing but supportive" of his vocation.

"I remember my mom's reaction. I was coming back for Thanksgiving break, and I was telling my mom, 'I think I'm being called to be a priest.' And she said, 'I knew it! You should have told me; I didn't even know myself,' he recalled with a laugh.

He cited his parents' example and the family's prayers for him.

"I remember my mom's rosary beads being out and my dad coming down as we got ready for school and the Bible would

be open," Deacon Bruce said.

"They've been inspiring and supportive, and I love them so much."

Another person who has nurtured his vocation is Father David Sharland, campus minister at Virginia Tech since 2013.

"He was so supportive in helping me discern," the deacon said. "He gathered a group of other men to discern. During my time, there have been five or six men from that ministry who have entered into the seminary to discern a call to priesthood."

That discernment came by his participation in the Melchizedek Project, a program that, according to Father Sharland, helps groups of young men who are trying to explore what is it that God wants of them.

"It doesn't mean everybody is going to become a priest," said Father Sharland, who established the program that meets seven times each semester and of which Deacon Bruce was an early participant. "It's a safe place where guys can speak from their hearts, where they can listen to one another, where they can laugh, too. It's about their journey of discernment."

'Joy is evident'

In Deacon Bruce's time at Virginia Tech, two things about him were evident to Father Sharland.

"Dillon has a great heart of service. He never had to be prodded or pushed to help out with something," the priest said. "He always naturally wanted to serve when there was an opportunity."

The other noticeable attribute, according to the priest, was the deacon being "naturally inclined to prayer."

See *Priesthood*, Page 16

Mom's present from Pope Francis

On Jan. 1, 2019, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Deacon Dillon Bruce was the crozier bearer for Pope Francis at the holy day Mass the pope was celebrating. He also brought items to the Holy Father as he was vesting for Mass.

Once vested, the pope came out and greeted the seminarians who were serving.

Deacon Bruce recalled their brief conversation.

"I used Google translate the night before to know how to say in Italian, 'Please pray for my mother because today is her birthday.' He asked, 'What's her name?' I told him, 'Jeannette.' He said, 'OK, I'll pray for her.'"

"So, I got to call my mom on her birthday and say, 'For your birthday, I got the pope to pray for you.'"

Deacon Bruce called meeting the pope "special," not only because of the prayers for his mother.

"I got an experience of him in his role as the pope," he said. "He's very joyful when he's meeting people but then he goes into the vesting room and his face just changes and he becomes solemn."

The deacon continued, "Throughout any Mass, he has a very solemn face. That tells you the importance he places upon the Mass and what is happening there."

— Brian T. Olszewski

Simple rural apostolate marks 75 years of service

Roanoke's Madonna House part of worldwide outreach to the poor

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

When Catherine de Hueck Doherty founded Madonna House, a house of prayer and service in the wilderness of Combermere, Ontario, on May 17, 1947, she may not have expected it to grow into a worldwide ministry. A Russian-Canadian Catholic social worker and activist, Doherty established a simple rural apostolate that includes more than 200 consecrated single laywomen and laymen, as well as some priests, who live together in community to serve the poor in 18 locations worldwide.

One of those sites is in Roanoke, in an old brick house that stands in the heart of the city and which once served as the convent for Our Lady of Nazareth Parish.

On Tuesday, May 17, in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of Madonna House's founding in Canada, St. Andrew, Roanoke, celebrated a special Mass and reception to honor the work of local Madonna House residents who serve and live among the urban poor, offering a house of listening, hospitality and prayer.

"The laity are called there by God and are led by the spirit of the Gospel," said Father Kevin Segerbom, St. Andrew's pastor, in his homily. "They work from within as a leaven. Their work bears fruit in many ways." He cited several Madonna House guidelines, the first of which is: "Everyone is called to holiness in everyday life."

Madonna House member Marie Therese McLaughlin urged those gathered for the celebration: "Let's all be leaven, so we can raise up the world."

She was joined during the Mass by the two other women who live with her in the Roanoke house. Anne Marie Murphy sang with her in harmony and Viva LeBlanc read from Romans 12:1-13, which included these words: "Rejoice in hope . . . persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones. Exercise hospitality."

The Mass, concelebrated by area clergy, was followed by a public reception in the social hall. The gathering was a joyful example of another Madonna House guideline: to live in widespread communion with others as a family.

"I see Catholics and non-Catholics alike here, from many different local churches," McLaughlin said.

121 years combined service

Madonna House is "a Catholic community of men, women and priests, dedicated to loving and serving Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life," as stated by the

"mother house" in Ontario. The 18 "field houses" are found in Canada, the U.S., England, Belgium, Grenada and Russia, which Doherty fled in 1919. Each is different, ranging from rural farms to urban soup kitchens, and each has its own mandate.

The mandate for the Roanoke house originally was "to insure a prayer presence in the diocese," as written by the late Bishop Walter F. Sullivan in 1979. Updated by Bishop Barry C. Knestout in 2019, it now is also to proclaim the Gospel and practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, as well as to be generous to all who visit, "especially anyone needing a listening ear to discern the signs of God in our midst."

The Roanoke location has had only women since it opened. The three current residents – McLaughlin, Murphy and LeBlanc – together have served for 121 years.

All Madonna House members take a vow of poverty, chastity and obedience, and wear large silver crosses bearing the words "Pax" and "Caritas" ("peace" and "charity"). They depend entirely upon donations and go wherever the motherhouse assigns them, staying months or years before being moved to another location.

"We just pack our two suitcases and go," McLaughlin said with a smile.

She comes from a Canadian family with 10 children and assumed she would marry and raise a family herself. But after completing her university studies in 1974, a priest approached her after Mass one day and told her she was being called to contemplative life. She kept her plan to teach high school English, French and religion in Newfoundland for a year, then visited Combermere.

"I saw the Gospel lived there," she said. "I asked Catherine Doherty if I should join, and she said yes."

McLaughlin went to the chapel and prayed for a sign.

"And that same priest showed up there, and he remembered me and what he had told me a year before," she said.

She soon began her journey to joining, and after the required period of discernment, took her final "promises" in 1976.

Murphy, from New Brunswick, Canada, joined in 1984. She was working in medical research in 1981 in Nova Scotia when she felt called to a different life, and, after visiting Madonna House, knew that was her path.

"Catherine Doherty's idea that you can pray through whatever you are doing in daily life, like doing the laundry — that was new



Above: Father Louis Benoit celebrates Mass at Madonna House, Roanoke, Saturday, May 28. Madonna House members host Masses in their house for the public twice a month. (Photo/Karen Adams)
Left: Guitarist Delores Azar harmonizes with Madonna House residents Anne Marie Murphy and Marie Therese McLaughlin at the Madonna House 75th anniversary Mass celebrated Tuesday, May 17, at St. Andrew, Roanoke. (Photo/Beth Derringer)

to me," she said. "And I loved the commitment to serving the poor."

LeBlanc, a former social worker and educator from Louisiana, joined in 1988. She was studying evangelization at St. Mary's in North Dakota when she heard about "Madonna House on the prairie," at a location in Saskatchewan.

She visited the motherhouse and was drawn to that life but returned to her studies. Yet, when her spiritual director asked her how she felt about Madonna House, she surprised herself with her reply: "It's an immense treasure."

"As soon as I said that, I knew I was meant to stay," she said.

Guided by the Blessed Mother

Gardens on site provide fresh produce for many of the houses, and there is a farm in Combermere. In Roanoke, a statue of the Blessed Mother also stands among the backyard garden beds, within a small wooden shrine made by a local Catholic friend and encircled

by flowers.

Each Madonna House building has a blue front door, in honor of the Blessed Mother.

"We are named for the Mother of God, whose presence permeates all our actions," McLaughlin explained. "Anyone that comes through the blue door gets a blessing from Our Lady."

No two days are alike at Madonna House in Roanoke. The residents attend daily Mass together at one of several local Catholic churches, and on two Saturdays each month, Mass is celebrated at their own in-house chapel by a rotation of local priests and followed by a potluck brunch for those who attend.

They eat all of their meals together, pray throughout the day and sing; tend to the house and grounds; and greet whoever comes through their blue door — friends and strangers alike.

"People need to talk and pray and have someone listen to them," said McLaughlin, who is trained in

See *Apostolate*, Page 16

Ascension celebrates 50 years of 'walking together'

Virginia Beach parish highlights welcoming spirit, gifts of faithful

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

A banner hangs in the hall of the Church of Ascension, Virginia Beach — a memento of “Sandal Day,” when the parishioners all wore sandals to Mass, commemorating the church’s 50th year of walking with Christ. “Kuyumba Halumo,” it reads in Nyamwezi, a language of central Tanzania. “We walk together.”

The words capture the spirit of the large suburban parish, where everyone walks together and where everyone lends a hand.

“The people here are very welcoming,” Father Daniel Malingumu, pastor of Ascension, said, “and they want to walk together. If they have anything to contribute, they do so. The spirit of volunteerism is very strong here.”

“We are a family,” he said. “Each one is a treasure to me, and each one brings something to make a difference.”

On Sunday, May 22, Ascension celebrated the conclusion of its golden jubilee with a Mass held on the parish lawn. A gathering of more than 800 filled a large white tent for the occasion, with Father Malingumu and Bishop Barry C. Knestout presiding.

“Father Daniel speaks of us as family; he always says that we walk together as a family,” said parishioner Tom Steffens, a sentiment that has been true for him since 1977.

His career in the Navy has brought his family to Hampton Roads five times over the decades, he said, “and each time we came home, that’s just what it was. We came home to our family at Ascension.”

Bright beginnings

In June 1972, the Diocese of Richmond created a new parish to serve the growing Kempsville area of Virginia Beach. Although the original 70 families had no permanent building, they worked together, opening their homes for religious education classes and holding fundraisers for the construction of a church, which was dedicated April 6, 1975.

“We were starting a church, and there was an excitement that came with it,” parishioner Edna Constand said. “Everyone had to pitch in, everyone had a job to do. And that’s what formed all of the wonderful friendships that have lasted for 50 years.”

Constand served as a church secretary — first as a volunteer, then as an assistant, then as parish secretary — for all five of Ascension’s pastors: Fathers Robert French, Bill Dale, Jim Parke, Charles Briendel and Malingumu.

“They all had different gifts,” she said. “They each brought something new to Ascension.”

Welcoming spirit

She’s seen changes over the years, Constand said, but the parish’s spirit of welcome remains the same.

“Everyone is encouraged to find a ministry — to get involved with something,” she said.

For Constand and her husband, that came early on in the parish’s formation, during a five-year planning meeting.

“We had come up with five goals for the next five years, but there was no youth group,” she said. “I asked, ‘Where’s the future of our Church?’”

The committee put the question to a vote, and the idea was voted in — with the caveat that she and her husband should lead it.



Above: In a tent erected in the parking lot, Bishop Barry C. Knestout was the principal celebrant at the Mass during which more than 800 members of Ascension, Virginia Beach, celebrated the parish’s 50th anniversary, Sunday, May 29. Below: Before their church was dedicated in 1975, Ascension parishioners celebrated Mass in the cafeteria of Kempsville Elementary School. (Photos provided)



Tony Constand took up the mantle, and YOA, Youth of Ascension, was formed — a group which is still active today.

Lisa Liedl, Ascension’s director of administration and one of YOA’s founding members, recalled the sense of inclusion that the group afforded to her and the teens of the parish’s early days.

“It gave us an avenue,” she said. “Being with a group of people of the same faith — who were trying to be faithful but who also lived in the real world — meant a lot at that age.”

‘A loving community’

Like so many at Ascension, Joanne Schihl shared a story of being invited into ministry.

“I was in the church office one day, when our social ministry director stopped me and asked, ‘What would you like to do when you grow up?’” she said, laughing.

Schihl became her assistant for four years before assuming the job herself, serving as social justice minister for 26 years until her retirement in 2016.

“No doubt about it. It’s been a big part of my life,” she said. “We all pitch in; everybody gets involved in doing something. We have a long list of ways to get involved, whether it’s the food pantry or the welcoming committee.”

“I feel like it’s such a loving and supportive community,” Amy Petersen, chair of the parish council, said.

She’s served in many ministries since she began attending Ascension in 1997. Lately, she has adopted the care of the parish garden, which grows fresh produce to supplement the food pantry.

“I said to myself, ‘I’m a gardener, and I can do this. This is something I can do,’” she said.

Whether the task is large or small, she said, with more than 60 ministries at the parish, there is a place for everyone to find their niche — and to grow in their faith.

Much to celebrate

Ascension has hosted 40 events and service projects over the past year in celebration of its golden anniversary.

In November, more than 50 children from the parish’s religious education classes dressed as their favorite saints for Mass. In February, an anniversary dinner-dance featured music from the past five decades.

The parish held 50 hours of eucharistic adoration during Lent, and, in May, it dedicated a Mary garden at a ceremony accompanied by a choir of 50 children.

Steffens, who served as coordinator for the year-long observance, said he managed the schedule by relying on the parish’s spirit of volunteerism. “We had so many people come forward,” he said. “Everyone was happy to help.”

It’s been a time for collecting old photographs, for working to meet the present needs of the community, and a time to look forward, too, Petersen said.

The parish council has consulted with 20 ministries over the past months to craft a vision statement for the next half century, called Ascension 2072: “We are a thriving, Spirit-filled faith community transforming lives for Christ.”

“There is much reason to celebrate, much faith manifested for so many years here, at the Church of the Ascension,” Bishop Knestout said at the anniversary Mass — a Mass that concluded with the parish children, all dressed in blue, gathering to join the recessional, leading the congregation out of the tent and into the next 50 years.

Birthright will continue to help women in need

To the letter writer wondering (Catholic Virginian, May 16) what the pro-life advocates will do when (or if, as of this writing) Roe v. Wade will be overturned, I'm sure many on the left side of this issue wonder the same. Perhaps I can be of help.

For me, I will continue to volunteer at Birthright as I have for years. I share most of the concerns you have, and I am doing my best, along with a host of others, to lift up local women in need. Birthright predated Roe, and it will exist after Roe so long as women in troubled pregnancies are in need.

Concerning the future of activism, it may interest you that Birthright's charter prohibits involvement in that activity lest we lose our ability to provide unbiased counsel. Personally, I do not enjoy casting attention onto my ministry, lest I sound boastful. But upon prayerful reflection, I saw an opportunity.

If anyone is so concerned about the issue of women in troubled pregnancies, I invite you to seek out ways in which you can help them and their babies. Women have a right to give birth, and babies have a right to be born.

And to Dr. Morgan, since you have shown both interest and effort, perhaps you would like to start a local chapter of Birthright in your area.

– Name withheld by request
Chesapeake

God calls us to mercy

While meditating on recent tragedies, God has led me to understand more deeply that he is not here to take away our earthly suffering; rather, he gives us a model of love for getting through it.

As much as we would like God to miraculously intervene to stop evil, he rarely does so. Instead, he turns our eyes to Jesus who, through his own example, shows us how to hold love in our hearts even in the midst of pain and death.

I feel anger, sadness and frustration — mere shadows of what the families directly affected must be feeling — at our society that holds others' lives in such low regard. Why do we not understand that our "right" to our bodies ceases to be all-inclusive when we have a life growing inside of us, and that our "right" to own assault weapons must cede to the right of innocent children and adults to live?

Yet, even in the face of injustice, God calls us to mercy. As I

do what I can to make the world right, and weep heartbroken alongside Mary when evil seems to triumph, I try to turn my anger into love.

To anyone struggling to find hope, I would recommend "Our Lady of Kibeho" and other books by Immaculée Ilibagiza, who lost most of her family in the Rwandan genocide, yet, through God's grace, managed to genuinely forgive the perpetrators.

– Dr. Teresa Hancock-Parmer
Salem

For whom do we mourn?

Are each of the 1,500 babies who are on average brutally murdered each day in abortions of less worth than each of the 19 children who were brutally murdered on May 24? If so, regulating guns takes precedence over abortion.

This mindset implicitly assumes that there is a subjective valuation of life than an objective one. Since all of our lives are valuable in the eyes of God, our lives have objective, not subjective, value. Consequently, the criteria for objectively weighing different methods of murder of the innocent is reducible to comparison of numbers. Since everyone can agree that two murders are worse than one murder, 1,500 daily murders are worse than 19.

Which is objectively worse — being condemned to hell for all eternity by dying in a state of mortal sin (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1033) or dying in a state of sanctifying grace and going to heaven for all eternity? We ought to mourn the permanent loss of sinners dying in mortal sin more than a temporary separation from our loved ones no matter how subjectively painful. The pain gives us great indication on how much those 19 children are loved.

Ought we to love the 1,500 aborted babies and unrepentant sinners just as much? What does it say about us when we mourn more over those 19 children that we see than the 1,500 that we don't see or the unrepentant sinner?

– Timothy Olmsted
Farmville

Support life at all stages

Dr. Frank Morgan's letter (Catholic Virginian, May 16) sums up my thoughts excellently. All life is sacred and worthy of support, not just the unborn. His call for life-affirming mission at all stages for all people is straight on.

– Jerry McCarthy
Richmond

Disagrees with Cardinal Cupich

I have to respectfully totally disagree with their belief that guns are the problem, not the shooters (Catholic Virginian, May 30). A gun was what stopped the shooter from killing more children.

After 9/11, we did not do away with airplanes. The cockpits were secured. Security in the airports was increased. Therefore, the schools need to be secured and security increased. A would-be shooter who is determined will obtain a gun any way possible.

Cain killed Abel with a rock. God did not take away the rocks.

– Beverly Trent
Rustburg

Americans need to transfigure society

The USA inherited from England a mostly Protestant and anti-Catholic worldview and political system; our society has since degenerated into what I once heard Francis Cardinal George call a "post-Christian" society. We Americans may be living as Unitarians, or pagans, or Fascists who deify their country, but we are not a Catholic society.

When our bishops offer what they consider to be principled

– Anthony Rago
Newport News

Catholic advice on national and state policies, they should remember the conditioning within the audience's soul and mind. Why should they be taken seriously by people immersed in a post-Christian culture that despises the faith and the bishops?

Our bishops are commissioned the chief evangelists of their dioceses and eparchies. "Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins." Clothe yourselves in a life of God's supernatural grace. This message at the core of the bishop's authority is what our American people need to transfigure American society.

Prayer is not enough

Terrible news in Texas from the latest school shooting. Heart-breaking.

I'm mad, sad and everything in between.

I will say it again: prayer is not enough. Sorry, it's just not.

The country needs to have a serious discussion on gun violence, obsession of guns, effects of social media and basic morals just to name a few, none of which are occurring.

– Eddie Baird
Ashland

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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BSH raising funds to complete renovations

Couple's commitment way to keep late granddaughter's 'spirit alive in this world'

KRISTEN L. BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

It all started with a little girl named Arabella. She was shopping with her grandmother, Kathleen Brower, when she saw a balloon with a butterfly on it. She called it a "flutterfly" and proclaimed she wanted to be one when she grew up.

In 2015, teenage Arabella died in her sleep. Her death served as an impetus for a massive transformation that is taking place right now at her beloved Blessed Sacrament Huguenot Catholic School (BSH) in Powhatan.

Arabella's grandparents have dedicated much of their recent life to ensuring their granddaughter's legacy lives within the walls of BSH. Their relationship with the school has grown in the years following Arabella's death.

"Suffice to say that BSH is one of the most important relationships that Kathleen and I have, an extension of family in every conceivable way," said Arabella's grandfather, retired Col. Keith Brower.

They have donated several million dollars to help fund various projects at the school. One of the first was "Flutterfly Park," a large, state-of-the-art playground that was completed in 2019 and dedicated to Arabella.

Since then, the Browsers have not stopped advocating for the school. BSH is in the midst of a campaign aimed at raising \$8.5 million to expand and renovate the school. Of that, \$6.5 million has already been raised by the Browsers, a grant from the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, and existing school funds.

On June 1, the school began "The Knight's Charge," a campaign to raise the \$2 million needed to complete the endeavor. The Browsers have offered to match donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$1 million.

The Browsers see each task, no matter the size, as a way to honor their granddaughter.

"We continue to support the school because it is the best way we know how to make a measurable difference in young lives and because the school continues to be a balm for our hearts and a way to keep Arabella's spirit alive in this world," explained Col. Brower.

Wishes will come true

BSH has identified dozens of projects it hopes to complete in the next few years.

"We always knew how special our school was based on the magic that happens on the inside, but we needed the exterior to match that," said Head of School Paula Ledbetter who, along with the School Advisory Board, created a wish list and worked with various contractors and architects to make those wishes come true.

A 2,700-square-foot visual arts center will feature large workspaces, polished concrete floors, critique and inspiration boards, pottery wheels and a kiln. This will mark the first time the school has had a new structure built since the 1960s.

The innovative two-story student center will serve students in a variety of ways. Athletes will be able to work on their game by using the basketball/volleyball practice court and weight room. Students can eat in the cafeteria, learn in one of the classrooms or shop in the bookstore.

The green screen studio will give journalism students the opportunity to produce live morning announcements and other news productions, while the black box theater will provide a much-needed rehearsal and performance space for theater students.

There will be an additional classroom in the student center dedicated to STEAM. This space will encourage students to think critically as they utilize 3D printers, robotics equipment and more. An art space specially designed for elementary school students will also be included.

The school's Parker Gym is the site of volleyball and basketball games, musical and drama performances, assemblies, Mass and graduation. It is getting completely revamped with bleachers, paint, lighting and a new roof. The school will also hire a full-time athletic director to oversee the school's various sports programs.

Other projects include purchasing science equipment, repairing sidewalks, procuring a bus for athletic use and installing air conditioning units. Classrooms will be updated with paint, LED lighting, and flooring and doors; custom bookcases and a reading



Head of School Paula Ledbetter speaks to students, parents, donors and other guests at the groundbreaking for the addition to Blessed Sacrament Huguenot School, Wednesday, June 1. The \$8.5 million project marks the first time since the 1960s the school has done a building project. (Photo/Tyler Snidow)

nook will be added to the library; and the front office will receive some aesthetic enhancements.

Enhancing the curriculum

Tyler Snidow, the school's publicist, explained that BSH is not just improving the school's physical structure, but improving the students' educational experience as well. It has dedicated funds to enhance the school's curriculum by adding several dual-enrollment college courses for juniors and seniors.

Partnering with Reynolds Community College, these classes will focus on biology, history, English, math and chemistry.

"With these changes, a senior graduating in 2024 could already have their entire freshman year of college completed. That adds up to real value for students and their families," said Snidow.

Funds will also be used to support faculty and staff by increasing salaries, paying for teacher certification and hiring employees in order to help meet the needs of BSH's growing student population.

Enrollment rose 30% between spring and fall of 2020. There are several reasons for this, according to Ledbetter, including the faith-based education, emphasis on values and small class sizes.

Another reason is COVID. Although the pandemic affected supply chain issues and caused delays for the renovation, one positive byproduct is that it also helped increase enrollment.

"First and foremost, we have found that families are seeking a traditional, values- and faith-based education. Parents want their

children to receive an education free of political influence and bias. In 2020, it was evident that parents wanted their children to attend school in-person," said Ledbetter. "Now, we are seeing that it wasn't just a temporary solution; parents want their children at BSH for the long-term."

'A great thing'

This is a far cry from several years ago, when Ledbetter said BSH was on the verge of shutting down. The donations couldn't have come at a better time.

"It's important to me that people understand that yes, a major gift is life-changing for BSH, and equally as important are the people who have devoted their lives to working at our school," said Ledbetter. "I am enormously grateful for those who kept the faith, who never gave up on hoping for a future of our school. It takes heart, commitment and purpose to keep going, and I am lucky to work with people who live that each day."

BSH welcomes students from all faiths and backgrounds. The Browsers are not Catholic, but they realize the benefits of a Catholic education and see their contributions as an investment in the future.

"We have traveled the world for the last 50-plus years, and we know a good thing when we see it — and BSH is a great thing," said Col. Brower.

Editor's note: Further information about The Knight's Charge is available at <https://bshknights.org/giving/knights-charge>.

"We have traveled the world for the last 50-plus years and we know a good thing when we see it — and BSH is a great thing."

— Col. Keith Brower

Migrant ministry outreach resumes in Roanoke Valley

Four parishes' collection for Eastern Shore workers 'gifts from mountains to sea'

JOSEPH STANIUNAS
Special to The Catholic Virginian

For the past two years, the annual collection of items for migrant workers by the four Catholic parishes in the Roanoke Valley has lain fallow, suspended by restrictions on access to the camps on Virginia's Eastern Shore during the pandemic.

But now, the harvest of clothes, household items and toiletries is back, and the workers to sort and pack it all were many in number.

"The amazing thing to me is we never have to have a sign-up for sorting and packing night because people just show up, and we always have a lot of help," said Mary Jo Truskey, who has been involved in this ministry for about 12 years.

The donation boxes have been filling up since the end of May at Our Lady of Nazareth, St. Andrew and St. Gerard in Roanoke, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem. On Pentecost evening, June 5, coordinator Mary Branisteanu watched a rented truck fill with "gifts from the mountains to the sea."

"I can't tell you how happy they are knowing that the Roanoke Valley is sending donations this week," she said a few days earlier. "It's always heartwarming to see the generosity of all the parishioners, and I really feel that this is what the four parishes enjoy most — that we're all able to work together."

Like parents fetching hid-



Nearly 30 volunteers from parishes in the Roanoke Valley and Onley help pack dozens of boxes containing donated goods for Eastern Shore migrants, Sunday night, June 5, at Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke. The boxes filled a 20-foot truck. (Photo/ Joseph Staniunas)

den Christmas presents, people brought bags and boxes of donations into the OLN fellowship hall. About 30 volunteers sorted the men's and women's clothing, household goods like pots and pans, religious items like rosaries and crucifixes, rows of soap and shampoo, and packed everything in cartons.

In a couple of hours, the 20-foot rental truck from St. Peter the Apostle, Onley, was full.

"The need is tremendous," said Branisteanu. "The workers do save their jeans and jacket that they

will get and maybe a cap. They will fold them up and put it under their bed at the camp with the hope that they will be able to return next year and pick again."

For some volunteers, migrant ministry is almost year-round work.

"They begin to shop the sales, they begin to collect T-shirts and caps and toiletries, and they're ready for us and begin asking about us when late winter comes," Branisteanu said. "They enjoy the friendship. They enjoy the involvement, and it's also a multigenerational activity that people can enjoy together."

St. Peter parishioner Kathy Bredimus is a seasoned hand at migrant ministry, making her first visits to the camps more than 20 years ago. She said about 1,600 workers are coming to the Eastern Shore this summer, part of some 300,000 workers with temporary agricultural visas expected in America's fields, orchards and canning plants this year.

"We go out to the camps one day a week and distribute material goods," she said, before joining the sorting. "And then we have Mass at the camp one day a week. We stress that we are the face of the Catholic Church when we go into those camps. We bring prayer, we bring the Mass, we bring counseling for people that need it."

Most are men from Mexico; some are from Haiti. Older women arrive, too, to work in the processing plants. The field workers come in April for late spring planting and may stay through October, which could mean working in cold, damp weather. Migrant ministry supplies blankets and hoodies, too. The picking of tomatoes and watermelon will be done in the summer heat, six days a week, even in the

rain unless lightning appears.

Almost all of the workers try to send money to their families. That's much easier to do when their clothes and other basic items come from the Church instead of from their own pocket, though Bredimus said she and other migrant ministers stress that "everything we bring you comes from God. It's not our goodness and our richness flowing onto you. It comes from God."

During the two-year hiatus, Branisteanu said the OLN migrant ministry sent some money to the Eastern Shore parishes to make up for the loss of donated goods. Those involved in the collection program said this can be more effective than cash handouts.

"The parishes in the valley are very, very generous," said Truskey. "And I believe that with all of the donations we get in all of the different categories, we can provide so much more that way than through a monetary donation."

The line of boxes leaving the fellowship hall grew shorter as the pile in the van climbed higher. The turnaround was quick. The truck needed to be back in Accomack the next day; the distribution of the donations would be done by the end of the week.

Along with the other shore parishes — St. Charles, Cape Charles, and St. Andrew the Apostle, Chincoteague — Bredimus said St. Pius X, Norfolk, and Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, have active migrant ministries. If others are interested, Branisteanu said her group would coach them along "because it is a wonderful way to live the Gospel. We're doing what we're supposed to be doing. It is all about kindness, it's all about generosity, and it's about caring for those who need our help."

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Cost of love is faith, price of discipleship is the cross



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

Among the saints canonized May 15 by Pope Francis were two men whose lives exemplify what our world desperately needs, which is to recognize all people as children of God regardless of race, color or creed.

Carmelite Father Titus Brandsma and Father Charles de Foucauld, a Trappist, were 20th century priests who died for the faith, but their ministries couldn't have been more different.

Brandsma was a Dutch priest who entered Carmel at the age of 17. He studied at the Gregorian University in Rome where he earned a doctorate in 1909 and returned to the Netherlands, where, as a writer, he translated the works of St. Teresa of Avila into the Dutch language.

In 1923, he became one of the founders of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, served on the faculty, specializing in philosophy and the theology of mysticism. When Hitler rose to power, Brandsma served as chaplain to the National Union of Catholic Journalists and was unrelenting in his condemnation of Nazi ideology.

Committed to the truths of the Catholic faith and to the independence of the press, he urged Catholic editors to avoid publish-

ing propaganda pieces for National Socialism. Following the German conquest of Holland in 1940, Brandsma urged Dutch bishops to speak out against Nazi human rights violations, which included the persecution of Dutch Jews.

He personally distributed a letter from the Dutch to Catholic editors, which instructed journalists to disregard the regulation requiring Catholic newspapers and magazines to print official Nazi documents and articles.

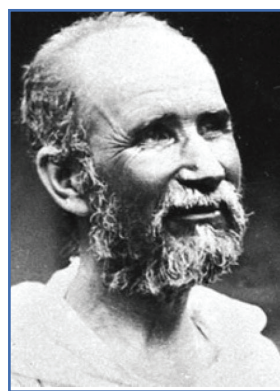
Arrested by the Gestapo in 1942, Brandsma wrote, "I am already quite at home in my little cell...I am alone, certainly, but never has the Lord felt so near to me... Now he is my only refuge, and I feel secure and happy...I would stay here forever." It was not to be. Eventually, the priest was transferred to the concentration camp at Dachau where he was executed.

Testifying at his beatification, the nurse who administered the lethal injection credited her return to the Church to him. Before he died, she told him that she was a "lost Catholic." He responded by giving her his rosary and told her that he would pray for her.

At the age of 18, de Foucauld enrolled in a military academy and served in the French army. He was a lapsed Catholic but was so inspired



St. Titus Brandsma



St. Charles de Foucauld

by the faith of devout Muslims in the country where he was stationed that he decided to return to the Church.

Upon leaving the military, de Foucauld became a Trappist brother and worked as a carpenter for a group of Poor Clare nuns in Palestine. At the suggestion of the religious, he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest, though he continued to live a hidden life in imitation of the hidden years of Jesus in Nazareth.

After receiving permission from his superiors to live among the Muslim population in Tamanrasset, Algeria, he befriended Muslims in the region, where he was esteemed by them as a holy man. He died as a casualty of World War I at the hands of local tribesmen enlisted in the struggle for power.

In the confusion of a raid in which he was to be taken hostage, the priest was killed by a 15-year-old boy, which was believed to be

an accident. In a written meditation, found after his death, the saint imagined Jesus speaking to him saying, "It is love which should recollect you in me, not distance from my children. See me in them and like me at Nazareth, live near them, lost in God."

Their canonizations couldn't be timelier. At a time when racial divide has led to discrimination and death for people of color and journalism is often marred by opinion, misinformation and conspiracy theories, these men stand as beacons who reached beyond the boundaries of culture, religion and ideologies. Their prophetic voices bear witness to the world regarding the importance of the two greatest commandments: "To love God with our whole mind, and soul and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves" (Mk 12:30-31).

Clearly, we stand on the shoulders of saints, who were willing to live the Gospel mandate without compromise. May we never forget that the cost of love is faith, and the price of discipleship is the cross. May we take courage in their example and ask them to intercede before God for a world that is desperately in need of finding its way to our Creator God not through violence, but through love.

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

If we are not transformed by the Eucharist, then what?



BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY
DEACON CHRISTOPHER COLVILLE

As we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, it is important to talk about what we celebrate and what that means for us as practicing Catholics.

As Roman Catholics, we hold the belief of "transubstantiation." This is the belief that the bread and wine offered as our gifts become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. They are *not* symbolic. They are *not* a representation of Jesus' body and blood.

Through the words of institution spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper and commanded by him to be continued in his memory, the bread and wine become the Real Presence of Jesus Christ — a miracle that happens at every Mass.

If we celebrate this on Holy Thursday and at every Mass, why do we need or have this solemnity? If I were to ask, "What do you remember from the Mass on Holy Thursday?" what

would be your response?

Probably the first response most people have is, "The washing of the feet." It might be the procession and reservation of the Eucharist at the end of Mass or maybe the time in adoration before the Eucharist.

The institution and importance of the Eucharist seem to get lost with all the sacramentals of Holy Thursday. This Sunday's solemnity was established to highlight the great importance of our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, his precious body and blood, in the Eucharist.

It is even more important to reaffirm that belief and the importance of this sacrament for us today. A Pew Research Center survey in August 2019 showed only 31% of U.S. Catholics

say they believe that "during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus." (<https://tinyurl.com/23a-7jcex>)

As important as this belief in Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is, there is another transformation that needs to take place in the celebration of the Eucharist. We are called to become that of which we partake, so through us others may experience Christ in their lives.

"The Body and Blood of Christ are given to

us so that we ourselves will be transformed in our turn. We are to become the Body of Christ, his own flesh and blood." (Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Marienfeld, Twentieth World Youth Day, Aug. 21, 2005.) We need to become the presence of Jesus in the world and to do what Jesus did.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells the Apostles, "Give them some food yourselves." They reply, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have." Seven represents perfection in the Scripture, and these seven items of food are all they have. Their perfect gift is all they have.

Our perfect gift is all we are, and our all is enough for God to work miracles. When we are transformed, it is Jesus who lives in us (Gal 2:19), and through us, others can experience Jesus in their lives.

The Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Jesus is important to us as Catholic Christians. It reminds us of Jesus' great gift to us. It reminds us that we are called to be transformed so others might experience God through us.

If we are not transformed in the reception of the Eucharist, what does the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus mean for us?

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

Bethlehem hospital ‘making reparations to the Holy Family’

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
The Catholic Virginian

If you ask Michele Rowe about Bethlehem, don't expect her to provide you with a Christmas card image.

“The poor Blessed Mother had to deliver her baby in a manger accompanied by animals, and you can only imagine the shame of poor St. Joseph,” she said.

Rowe, as the Order of Malta's ambassador to Palestine and president of the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation on whose board Bishop Barry C. Knestout serves, sees the services provided by the hospital as “reparations to the Holy Family.”

“Every day we work in service not only to the mothers and babies of Bethlehem, but to the Holy Family,” she said. “This is to say that never again will a woman need to deliver in the accompaniment of animals.”

Ten days prior to speaking at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart the weekend of June 11-12, she spoke to The Catholic Virginian about the hospital and why it is critical to life in Bethlehem.

“It's a touchstone — a beautiful old building, gorgeous green grass, olive, lemon, orange trees — for women to deliver their babies and for older women who are suffering from menopausal symptoms to be able to have their health and dignity restored through some sort of surgery or treatment,” she said, noting that over 70% of the area's babies are delivered there.

The hospital serves a greater good in a community that is still feeling the economic effects of COVID.

“Since the COVID pandemic happened in Bethlehem, it's become a devastating crisis,” Rowe said. “The impact is just incredible. The stores are closed. The hotels are closed. Bethlehem is 90% dependent economically on the pilgrimage



Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem delivers more than 70% of the babies in the area — more than 4,000 annually. Those that are sick or premature are treated in the hospital's NICU. (Photo/Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation)

industry and the pilgrimage industry hasn't come back.”

Holy Family Hospital is Bethlehem's largest employer with 191 employees — all Palestinians.

“We provide hope not just through good health care, but through good employment,” she said. “So when our employees go out into the community they can help people. They can pay their rent, buy their groceries — we source everything at the hospital that we can locally. We're an employer of choice, a good neighbor and good corporate citizen.”

Those are the fortunate ones.

“Ninety percent of the workforce has been without salaries since March 2020,” she said. “Families have been sharing, making their tables

longer, but after two years, it's running out.”

Rowe said that taking care of people's health addresses only part of the problem. Care must extend “systemically.”

“We have delivered babies as small as 1 pound, and we're seeing more of them because of the stresses, the lack of nutrition, food insecurity,” she said. “So, if you save a 1-pound baby, you can't pat yourself on the back for a great job because after four, five, six months, when that baby goes home, what are they going home to? A family that can't feed them.”

To help remedy that, the hospital has developed a program with the local Catholic parish and their social workers to help provide groceries, medication, formula, diapers and electricity.

“None of this is done with cash. You have food coupons,” Rowe said. “We have arrangements with stores who have been generous, giving a 20% discount, so there has been a multiplier effect.”

According to Rowe, “Our unwritten goal is to keep Christians in the Holy Land, because how can we run a Catholic hospital, how can it remain Catholic, without Catholic employees?”

The best way to keep Christians from leaving the Holy Land, Rowe said, is to have a better economy.

“The reason why they leave is because of the lack of an economic future,” she said.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and with other issues in the Middle East, Rowe is concerned that Bethlehem is being forgotten.

“As the first Christians, we owe them, in my opinion, the right to be able to stay in their country, the right to be able to live with a future for their children and grandchildren, and to continue that very important witness to the faith of the Christian community,” she said.

Editor's note: For further information about the Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation, visit www.birthplaceofhope.org or call 202-785-0801.



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War

Continued from Page 1

In the meantime, the archbishop is doing some visiting of his own, checking on the people, priests and churches in towns liberated by the Ukrainian army.

"I visited our church in Irpin for the second time and was able to enter it after the (military) sappers had cleared it. They found several exploded mines and one mine that hadn't exploded so it was good that during the first visit we listened to the advice of our military and didn't go inside (any of the buildings), particularly the rectory," he said.

"We have not had any reports of priests dying" because of the Russian attacks, the archbishop said. And as for property damage, it is too early to tell. "For example, it is said that the town of Volnovakha doesn't exist anymore, and we definitely had a church there. But we don't have information about the state of these buildings now."

Archbishop Shevchuk said he began his daily video messages to let people know that he was still alive and that the Church was with them. "As time went on, of course, we were looking for a way to speak not only about breaking news and how, let's say, we survived the last night and day, but also to share the Word of God."

The war clearly is "a fight between good and evil," he said, so he wanted to offer "brief reflections about various aspects of our life, our reality and the teaching of the Church because it is very important for us to live through this tragedy in

a Christian way."

In some parts of the country, the archbishop said, people are returning to their homes, if they can.

"Those who are back need their priests to be present, they need a spiritual life and help, including humanitarian aid," he said.

One interesting thing, he said, is the ecumenical cooperation "in these towns where tragedies have happened. For example, our priest in Irpin returned but cannot live in his house because it was damaged. So, the Roman Catholic priest hosted him. He's staying there while trying to repair his house near our church and while waiting for his family to return."

"I am personally very grateful to the evangelical Christians, the Baptists, whose church is called the Irpin Bible Church, if I remember it right. Thanks to their pastor, this community evacuated our priest with his family and a lot of our parishioners," he said. "As I've told the priest, I'd like to meet this pastor one day to shake his hand and thank him for such an active Christian love."

Of course, the archbishop and his staff did what they could to help, too, including by opening the Cathedral of the Resurrection and its basement as a shelter when Kyiv was under constant bombardment.

Because there were so few suitable shelters in that part of Kyiv, he said, "there were days when close to 500 people were staying there overnight."

"Our shelter also spontaneously became a kindergarten and a zoo — we had all kinds of animals there: cats and dogs and hamsters and parrots and fish," because people brought their pets with them, he said.



Adetunji Henry, 15, one of the victims of the attack by gunmen during Pentecost Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church, receives treatment at the Federal Medical Centre in Owo, Nigeria, June 6, 2022. (CNS photo/Temilade Adelaja, Reuters)

Attack in Nigeria called attack on 'entire Church'

NEW YORK (CNS) — The brutal attack on people at a Catholic church in Nigeria on Pentecost Sunday is "an attack on the entire Church," said a U.S. official of Aid to the Church in Need, an international Catholic charity.

According to the Reuters news agency, gunmen fired at people inside and outside St. Francis Xavier Church in Owo, located in the southwestern state of Ondo. At least 50 people were reportedly killed during Mass June 5. Dozens more were injured and rushed to nearby hospitals.

"We extend our prayers for the victims, the wounded, their families and the entire Catholic community of Owo," said George Marlin, chairman of the board of Aid to the Church in Need/USA, which is based in New York. "We stand with the Diocese of Ondo to help treat the wounded and those traumatized by this horrible tragedy."

"This is the latest in the ongoing wave of brutal attacks on Nigeria's Christians," he said in a June 6 statement. "Political and religious leaders around the world must condemn this barbarism and put pressure on Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to do what it takes finally to stop the violence and protect the Nigerian people."

Marlin called it "imperative" that the U.S. State Department "reinstate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern that violates religious freedom. Christians are not the only victims of faith-based violence in Nigeria, but they are the principal target," he stated.

On Nov. 17, 2021, as required by the International Religious Freedom Act, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken identified 10 "Countries of Particular Concern" — those who are in severe violations of religious freedom — but he omitted Nigeria. The announcement was met immediately with severe criticism by human rights and religious rights organizations.

On June 2 of this year, in releas-

ing the State Department's 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom, Blinken noted that in Nigeria, "several state governments are using antidefamation and blasphemy laws to punish people for expressing their beliefs."

No group had claimed responsibility for the attack in Owo as of June 6.

Aid to the Church in Need, which serves "the suffering and persecuted Church" around the world, "will come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in Nigeria in solidarity of prayer and support," Marlin added.

In other U.S. reaction, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York also noted that the attacks in Owo are the latest "in a growing number of attacks on Christians in Nigeria," but he called the June 5 attack "especially horrific" because at least 50 worshippers "were slaughtered merely for gathering to celebrate the great feast of Pentecost," recognized traditionally as the "birthday of the Church."

"We pray for the repose of the souls of those who lost their lives in this attack, and for the comfort of all who mourn for them," the cardinal said in a June 6 statement.

He added that New York Catholics' prayers "are all the more fervent" as they recall that Bishop Jude Arogundade of Ondo was "a beloved pastor here in the Archdiocese of New York" before he returned home to Nigeria to serve as bishop.

Cardinal Dolan called "on the world community, including the United States, to take notice of this rising tide of anti-Catholic and anti-Christian attacks taking place in Nigeria, and work to restore protection for the fundamental right of religious liberty wherever and whenever it is threatened."

Father Roger Landry, national chaplain for Aid to the Church in Need/USA, noted that the vestments a priest wears to celebrate Mass on Pentecost are "red, signifying the fire of the Holy Spirit."



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For the Class of 2022 the recipients are:

Clare O'Herron - Valedictorian; Jacob Foster - Salutatorian;
Ify Osuorah - Celtic Cross; Anna Maria Lund - Celtic Cross

Please join our Administration, Faculty, and Staff in congratulating these four exceptional students and individuals, on this distinguished honor.



Congratulations on being named a member of the "Celtic Cross"!

'Life and Dignity for All' theme of Religious Freedom Week

WASHINGTON — "Life and Dignity for All" is the theme of this year's Religious Freedom Week of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The observance opens June 22, the feast day of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, both English martyrs who fought religious persecution. The week ends June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, and includes the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, which is June 24.

"This year, as we approach the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*," the USCCB "is especially mindful of the debates around our country about abortion," said a news release about Religious Freedom Week. "The Catholic Church plays a crucial role in bearing witness to the Gospel of life and serving all who will be affected by these discussions and their outcomes."

The *Dobbs* case involves a Mississippi law banning abortion after the 15th week of pregnancy. An initial draft of a Supreme Court opinion in the case that was leaked May 2 indicated the high court is set to overturn its *Roe v. Wade* decision, which 50 years ago legalized abortion nationwide.

The court also is expected to overturn its 1992 ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which affirmed *Roe* and prohibited regulations that created an "undue burden" on women seeking an abortion.

If the final ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturns *Roe* and *Casey*, the issue of abortion would be returned to the states.

Another major area of concern continues to be protecting the religious freedom of U.S.



RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM
WEEK

Catholic institutions, such as schools, hospitals and child welfare service providers, "to carry out their missions with integrity" and in accordance with their religious beliefs, the USCCB news release said.

"In particular, protecting Catholic adoption and foster care will become even more vital, as we take new steps in building a culture of life and dignity for all in the United States," it said.

"To build a culture of life and dignity for all," the Catholic Church "must support women and children," the release added.

To that end, the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities in 2020 launched the "Walking with Moms in Need" nationwide initiative. Its aim is "to engage every Catholic parish in providing a safety net to ensure that pregnant and parenting moms have the resources, love and support they need to nurture the lives of their children."

In starting the initiative, the U.S. bishops said they want to ensure "our Catholic parishes are places of welcome for women

facing challenging pregnancies or who find it difficult to care for their children after birth, so that any mother needing assistance will receive life-affirming support and be connected to appropriate programs and resources where she can get help."

Among its goals is to help Catholics "recognize the needs of pregnant and parenting moms in their communities, enabling parishioners to know these mothers, to listen to them, and to help them obtain the necessities of life for themselves and their children."

Another focus of Religious Freedom Week is international, the USCCB release said. The USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty has collaborated with the Office of International Justice and Peace "to raise awareness about religious liberty in China and in solidarity with people throughout the world who suffer for their faith."

The USCCB provides "Pray-Reflect-Act" resources at www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek. Each day focuses on different religious liberty topics and this year's daily themes intersect with life issues.

"Through prayer, education and public action during Religious Freedom Week, the USCCB continues to advocate for the essential right of religious freedom for Catholics and for those of all faiths," the release added.

Editor's note: To connect with the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty, text FREEDOM to 84576 and sign up for First Freedom News, the committee's monthly newsletter.

Help create a brighter future today.

CCC helps refugees fleeing violence, war, and persecution to rebuild their lives.

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www.cccofva.org



Did you know June 20 is World Refugee Day?
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Richmond • Roanoke • Newport News

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Good people doing good things I: The MOMs group at St. Andrew, Roanoke, recently demonstrated what it means to be a witness to the Gospel. When a client in Commonwealth Catholic Charities' Seton Housing program for pregnant women and experiencing homelessness moved into a permanent house, she had nothing. CCC reached out to MOMs and they responded by providing the woman with a crib, mattress, pots, pans, gift cards and help in paying some of her bills.

Good people doing good things II: In the April 4 Catholic Virginian, Karen Adams wrote about Casa Alma — the Catholic Worker community in Charlottesville. Part of Casa Alma is Carlton House, which provides reduced-rent living for low-income residents.

Well, the article touched at least one reader who sent Casa Alma a check for \$10,000 to help with Carlton House. In addition, the Notre Dame Club of Charlottesville was recently awarded the Lennon Life Prize of \$5,000 for their partnership with Casa Alma and plans to sponsor rooms at Carlton House.

That's what we refer to as good news based upon the Good News.

Still no word: Thank you to everyone who has called or written asking about a question-and-answer columnist now that Father Kenneth Doyle has retired. We anticipated that Catholic News Service was going to name a replacement soon, but then the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops announced that it is closing the domestic offices of CNS at the end of the year, so we're not sure if/when that is going to happen. We'll let you know as soon as we know.

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

Victim-Survivor Support Group Meetings

The Office of Safe Environment will be hosting Support Group meetings on **Wednesdays, June 15 and June 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the Meyera E. Obendorf Central Library**, in Virginia Beach. All victim-survivors of sexual abuse by clergy residing in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond are welcome to participate. Spouses or other support persons are also welcome. This will be an ongoing initiative by the Diocese of Richmond to encourage victim-survivors and their families to share personal experiences, feelings and coping strategies. Light refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Karen Loper, at (877) 887-9603 or by email at vac@richmonddiocese.org.



SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for June 19, 2022

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 / Luke 9: 11b-17

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Cycle C. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE LORD	NIGHT	BREAD
THANKS	BROKE IT	MY BODY
REMEMBRANCE	THE CUP	SUPPER
BLOOD	OFTEN	DRINK IT
DEATH	TWELVE	VILLAGES
PROVISIONS	DESERTED	LOAVES
TWO FISH	BUY FOOD	FIFTY

ALL ATE

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

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OPPORTUNITIES

Editor, The Catholic Virginian

The Diocese of Richmond seeks a highly qualified editor to oversee the strategy, direction and operations of The Catholic Virginian, a biweekly publication, with specific attention to its editorial content and daily updating of its website.

The editor will be responsible for conveying and supporting the teachings, policies and positions of the Catholic Church, the U.S. bishops and the diocesan bishop to readers of the publication.

The editor will also be responsible for managing freelance writers and article assignments, managing The Catholic Virginian budget and supervising the paper's production costs. This position will collaborate regularly with the director of communications, the bishop/publisher, the Virginia Catholic Conference and other diocesan entities and ministries. The editor must have a proven track of story telling as the position will also write news and feature articles for publication and maintain content for The Catholic Virginian website and other digital platforms.

Qualifications: A bachelor's degree in English, journalism, mass communications or related field is required, with seven years' experience in diocesan press and/or other Catholic media preferred. However, we will consider experience in other print or communications media. Must have supervisory experience managing the business and production side of publications.

The ideal candidate should have working knowledge of all phases of the newspaper operation: writing, editing, budgeting, photography, designing and production, as well as advertising and circulation. Must have ability to analyze, interpret, multi-task, delegate assignments and use sound judgment regarding news, issues and events. Strong interpersonal skills, collaboration skills and teamwork are required. Impeccable written and verbal communication skills a must.

The editor must be able to establish and maintain working relationships with parishes, schools, diocesan leadership and other diocesan agencies and organizations. Proficiency with various PC software, including Adobe suite, website and social media required. A practicing Catholic in good standing, along with strong working knowledge of the structure and teachings of the Catholic Church is required.

Applications are being reviewed immediately. If interested apply at <https://rb.gy/fo2t6c>.

Holy Spirit Catholic Church, a vibrant and diverse parish community in Virginia Beach, is seeking a full-time director of faith formation.

The director of faith formation works in close collaboration with the pastor and the coordinator of youth and young adult evangelization to provide Christian formation and sacramental preparation to members of the parish faith community. As we implement and maintain an integrat-

ed "whole of life" formation program at the parish, the director coordinates and forms catechetical programs for parents, elementary school age to eighth grade youth.

Candidates should be an active Roman Catholic with a deep and growing personal relationship with Jesus; be an effective communicator, public speaker and team player willing to demonstrate creativity in problem solving and promoting the mission of the parish; show strong spiritual leadership skills from a servant-leader perspective; possess an undergraduate/graduate degree in theology, ministry, catechesis or equivalent; experience in catechetical leadership and evangelization, particularly with respect to parish ministry; be able to meet the physical demands of the ministry, proficient with various computer software, social media and audio-visual equipment. Pay is commensurate with experience and in keeping with classifications and guidance from the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Interested applicants should submit the Diocese of Richmond application, along with a cover letter and résumé, to our pastor, Father Matt Kiehl at thermatt@holyspiritvb.org.

The Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC), the public-policy agency of Virginia's Catholic bishops and their two dioceses, seeks applicants for a part-time social and digital media outreach specialist to expand the VCC's digital presence and outreach. The successful candidate will be joining a collaborative, dedicated team in a flexible work environment while making an impact on policy issues central to the Catholic faith. Candidates must be practicing Catholics in good standing. For more information about the position's requirements and responsibilities, and the degree to which responsibilities can be performed remotely, please visit www.vacatholic.org. To apply, please send cover letter and résumé either to: Jeff Caruso, executive director at jeff@vacatholic.org, by mail to Virginia Catholic Conference, 919 East Main Street, Suite 1140, Richmond, VA 23219 or fax 804-225-0166

St. Ann Catholic Church, Ashland, is seeking a youth minister who would also serve as the campus minister for Randolph-Macon College in Ashland. This position is 30 hours/week with benefits. As youth minister for St. Ann Parish, this person would work collaboratively with the pastor and minister of Christian formation in providing primary leadership for the development and implementation of a comprehensive youth ministry program for our middle school and high school youth to help lead teens and their families closer to Christ.

As campus minister for Randolph-Macon College, this person would be responsible for developing and coordinating programs for the college students to help them grow in their faith which may include, but is not limited to, small group gatherings, retreats, service/outreach opportunities, as well as prayer services. The ideal candidate actively lives the Catholic faith; has a heart to serve youth and young adults; is able to build relationships with teens, adults and parish

staff; is organized, energetic and an effective public speaker. A bachelor's degree is required with a master's degree preferred. Experience in pastoral work, preferably campus/youth ministry, is preferred. To apply, please send a cover letter, completed diocesan application and résumé to office@stann.scc.org.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is looking for an associate director for marriage, family, and life for the Office for Evangelization. The ideal candidate would possess a vision for how to support parish ministries, and how to provide content and programming on a diocesan level. This multi-faceted position oversees "Unveiled" — the diocesan marriage preparation program, marriage enrichment opportunities, supports families as they strive to be the living domestic Church, and guides the Respect Life activities of the diocese. This position works within a framework of collaboration in the Office for Evangelization and is guided by the office's goal to support parishes, campuses, families and individuals in their desire to know Jesus and spread the Gospel.

Qualifications: Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. A master's degree is strongly preferred with 3-5 years of pastoral ministry experience. This is a full-time exempt position on a salary basis. Salary is commensurate with experience and diocesan pay scale. Interested applicants can apply at <https://bit.ly/3ag0Y9k>

SHORTTAKES

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

15 Glennwood Dr., Rocky Mount, VA is holding a yard sale, Saturday, June 25, 7 a.m. -3p.m. Sale items include dishes, glasses, kitchenware, decor, knickknacks, small tables, chairs and much more. Items are still arriving. All are invited. Please contact Donna at 540-721-4343 for more information.

The Knights of Columbus Council at St. Paul Catholic Church

is pleased to offer a bus trip to the Atlanta v. Washington baseball game, Saturday, July 16. The cost is \$100 per person, which includes game

ticket, transportation and tip for bus driver. Seats are in Gallery Section 305. Transportation is on a James River Transportation bus. The bus will leave from the parking lot of All Saints Catholic School, 3418 Noble Ave. at 12:30 p.m. Game time is 4:05 p.m. The bus will return to Richmond at approximately 10 p.m. Please contact John Tucker at jtucker@saintpaulscc.com for complete details.

All are welcome to join Monsignor Patrick Golden on a Pilgrimage to Scotland and Ireland, May 16-28, 2023, for a profoundly moving spiritual experience. This is a 13-day tour for \$4,899 includes airfare, 4-star hotels, daily Mass, local tours, breakfast and dinner, and much more! Some places on the itinerary include Blarney Castle, The Ring of Kerry, Knock, where Our Blessed Mother appeared in 1879, and Dublin. In Dublin, one can admire the 9th-century Book of Kells, one of the most famous medieval manuscripts. The tour moves to Edinburgh, which will serve as a base for trips outside the city to explore Scottish history and natural beauty. Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited. For further information, please contact Alba Kim at tours@albastours.com or 804-298-4035.

Visit our website albastours.com.

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Waynesboro

has limited spaces available on its parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Feb. 6-17, 2023. Over the span of 12 days, under the leadership of Father Rolo Castillo and Jeanne Branch, we will walk in the footsteps of Jesus, visiting Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Cana, Capernaum, Baniyas-Caesarea Philippi, Magdala, the Baptismal Site, Jericho, Bethany, Bethlehem and the many sacred places in Jerusalem. Pricing and complete details are available at: <http://www.gocatholictravel.com/23010>. Registration closes July 31, 2022 or sooner if the spaces are filled. Contact Jeanne Branch jbranch@stjohnnevan.com with questions.

Bishop Barron going to Minnesota

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Francis has named Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles to succeed Bishop John M. Quinn as bishop of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota.

Bishop Barron, 62, is a Chicago native who has been a Los Angeles auxiliary bishop since 2015. He is the episcopal vicar of the Santa Barbara pastoral region, one of the Los Angeles Archdiocese's five pastoral regions. He also is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. The changes were announced in Washington June 2 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S. Bishop Quinn said he was "filled with

joy" that the pope has appointed Bishop Barron as his successor and the ninth bishop to head the southern Minnesota diocese.

"His commitment to evangelization and missionary discipleship will bear great fruit in the coming years," the retiring prelate said in a statement.

"I am overjoyed and humbled to receive this new assignment," Bishop Barron said. "I look forward immensely to getting to know the good people, priests and pastoral ministers of the diocese." He added, "I will have to brush off my Chicago winter coat, which has remained unused for the past six years in Santa Barbara!"

El Papa: Den un rostro a la caridad laboriosa de la Iglesia hacia los migrantes

En un mensaje dirigido a la Comisión Católica Internacional para las Migraciones, Francisco insta a la Iglesia a “servir a todos” y a “trabajar incansablemente por la construcción de un futuro de paz”.

CECILIA MUTUAL - CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

Un sincero agradecimiento por el trabajo realizado en los últimos 70 años, en particular, por la ayuda a las Iglesias para responder a los desafíos del desplazamiento masivo causado por la guerra en Ucrania, “el mayor movimiento de refugiados que se ha producido en Europa desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial”: es el que expresa el Papa Francisco en un mensaje a los participantes en el Consejo Plenario de la Comisión Católica Internacional para las Migraciones, reunido en estos días para “elegir el nuevo cuadro directivo de la Comisión, aprobar los nuevos estatutos y determinar las líneas operativas para los próximos años”.

En el texto, el Papa también menciona “a los millones de solicitantes de asilo, refugiados y desplazados en otras partes del mundo, que necesitan desesperadamente ser acogidos, protegidos y amados”:

“Como Iglesia queremos servir a todo el mundo y trabajar incansablemente por la construcción de un futuro de paz. ¡Ustedes tienen la posibilidad de dar un rostro a la caridad laboriosa de la Iglesia para con ellos!”

Una red para ayudar a migrantes y refugiados

En primer lugar, Francisco recuerda el objetivo de la Comisión, fundada por el Venerable Papa Pío XII, en 1951: “formar una red entre las Conferencias Episcopales del mundo entero, que pudiera asistirles en su servicio pastoral a los migrantes y refugiados”.

La Comisión es una expresión colegial de la acción pastoral, en el ámbito migratorio, de los obispos que, en comunión con el Papa, participan



El Papa Francisco escucha al Padre Leonir Chiarello, Superior General de los Misioneros Scalabrinianos, hablar durante una audiencia con representantes del Global Solidarity Fund en el Vaticano el 25 de mayo de 2022. El Papa pidió esfuerzos para integrar a los migrantes cuando lleguen a sus nuevos países. (Foto del CNS/Vatican Media)

en su “atención a la Iglesia universal en un vínculo de paz, de amor y de unidad” (*Lumen Gentium*, 22).

El Santo Padre evidencia que en la Constitución Apostólica Praedicate Evangelium, la Comisión Católica Internacional para las Migraciones, “es mencionada y colocada entre las competencias del Dicasterio para el Servicio del Desarrollo Humano Integral (cf. Art. 174 § 2), para que su naturaleza y misión sean salvaguardadas de acuerdo con sus principios originales”. Y añade:

En el Consejo Plenario ustedes representan oficialmente a las Conferencias Episcopales que han dado su adhesión a la Comisión. Su voluntad de colaborar juntos para acoger, proteger, promover e integrar a los migrantes y refugiados se ve confirmada por su presencia.

La misión ad intra y ad extra de la Comisión

En la segunda parte del mensaje, el Papa describe la “misión eclesial de la Comisión” que se desarrolla en dos direcciones: ad intra y ad extra. Ad intra, “está llamada a ofrecer una asisten-

cia cualificada a las Conferencias Episcopales y a las Diócesis que tienen que responder a los numerosos y complejos desafíos migratorios de la actualidad”, explica el Pontífice.

Por ello, se compromete a fomentar el desarrollo y la puesta en marcha de proyectos de pastoral migratoria y la formación especializada de agentes pastorales en ámbito migratorio, siempre al servicio de las Iglesias particulares y según sus propias competencias.

Ad extra, precisa, “la Comisión está llamada a responder a los desafíos globales y a las emergencias migratorias con programas específicos, siempre en comunión con las Iglesias locales”.

Además, añade el Papa, “está encargada de desarrollar actividades de promoción como organización de la sociedad civil en el ámbito internacional. La Comisión compromete a la Iglesia y trabaja por una mayor sensibilización internacional sobre las cuestiones migratorias para promover el respeto de los derechos humanos y la promoción de la dignidad de las personas según las orientaciones de la doctrina social de la Iglesia”.

Indulgencia plenaria por la Jornada de los abuelos y los mayores

Con motivo de la jornada del próximo 24 de julio, la Penitenciaría Apostólica concede la oportunidad a quienes participen en la misa presidida por el Papa Francisco en San Pedro, a los enfermos que la sigan desde casa y a quienes dediquen tiempo a visitar a personas avanzadas en edad, especialmente a las que están solas o afectadas por la enfermedad y la discapacidad

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

La Penitenciaría Apostólica, acogiendo la solicitud presentada por el Cardenal Kevin Joseph Farrell, Prefecto del Dicasterio para los Laicos, la Familia y la Vida, con motivo de la II Jornada Mundial de los Abuelos y de los Mayores, ya instituida por el Papa Francisco el cuarto domingo de julio, comunica en una nota la facultad de obtener la Indulgencia Plenaria en las condiciones habituales (Confesión Sacramental, Comunión eucarística y oración según las intenciones del Sumo Pontífice) “a los abuelos, a los ancianos y a todos los fieles que, movidos por el verdadero espíritu de penitencia y cari-



Este es el logo para la Jornada Mundial de los Abuelos y los Ancianos, que se celebrará el 24 de julio de 2022. Los fieles pueden obtener una indulgencia plenaria participando en los actos de ese día. (Foto CNS/Cortesía del Dicasterio para los Laicos, la Familia y la Vida)

dad, participarán el 24 de julio de 2022” en la “solemne celebración que el Santo Padre Francisco presidirá en la Basílica Papal del Vaticano, o en las diversas celebraciones que tendrán lugar en todo el mundo”. La indulgencia podrá aplicarse también como sufragio a las almas del purgatorio”.

Indulgencia también para los enfermos y quienes visitan a los ancianos

La Indulgencia Plenaria, precisa la nota, se concede también el mismo día a los fieles “que dedicaran un tiempo adecuado a visitar, de forma presencial o virtual, a través de los medios de comunicación, a los hermanos ancianos en situación de necesidad o dificultad (como los enfermos, los abandonados, los discapacitados)”.

Además, se concederá la misma Indulgencia Plenaria a los ancianos enfermos y a todos aquellos que, “imposibilitados de salir de su casa por un motivo grave, se unan espiritualmente a las sagradas celebraciones de la Jornada Mundial, ofreciendo a Dios Misericordioso sus oraciones, dolores y sufrimientos de la propia vida, especialmente mientras se difunden por los medios de comunicación las palabras del Pontífice y las diversas celebraciones”.

La nota finaliza con una petición a los sacerdotes “para que se pongan a disposición con un espíritu dispuesto y generoso para la celebración del Sacramento de la Penitencia”.

Apostolate

Continued from Page 4

spiritual direction.

The house also offers two public rooms for “poustinia” (which means “desert” in Russian) – retreat spaces for prayer and contemplation.

‘Consumed by our love of God’

For more than three years, Our Lady of Nazareth parishioner Jerry Guzi has regularly brought roses to Madonna House.

“This place blesses everyone who comes here,” he said.

In February 2019, he felt compelled one day to bring a vase of roses and leave them on the front porch by the blue door. A few days later, he received a thank-you note from resident Ana Sofia Corona Gaxiola, who told him that on that same day, she had just completed a novena to St. Therese of Lisieux.

“She is famous for sending roses as a sign of favor for her intercession,” she wrote.

Guzi has brought roses for each Mass ever since.

He added that the books sold at Madonna House, including the myriad published writings of the founder, are an ongoing blessing.

“I have a book of Catherine Doherty’s that I read every day,” he said.

The apostolate also sells other items that reflect and support their ministry, such as handmade note cards and CD recordings of their own singing.

“We are used to singing; we sing vespers together in harmony,” said McLaughlin.

“It’s part of our communal prayer and our life,” explained Murphy. “You have to learn to sing together.”

At the end of the anniversary Mass, the three invited attendees to sing with them, a capella, “Our Lady of Combermere,” in honor of the founding 75 years ago.

“On this anniversary, people are singing this song all over the world, even in Russia,” McLaughlin said. “Catherine Doherty lit a fire in us. Let us all allow ourselves to be consumed by our love of God.”



Left: The International Choir from Christ the King, Norfolk, sings during the recessional at the African Mass, Saturday, June 4, at Holy Rosary, Richmond. Right: Fathers Tochi Iwuji and Joseph Wamala distribute Communion. (Photos/Cheryl Curbeam)



Celebrating

Continued from Page 1

Church,” adding, “It was a great joy to meet friends from Africa and to experience the beautiful liturgy and singing.”

Emily Filippi, director of the Diocese of Richmond’s Office of Christian Formation, likened the celebration to “a spiritual retreat.”

“It was a powerful homily about

the Eucharist being the source of life and the call to loving the diversity of others,” she said.

For Mary Odindo, a member of St. Elizabeth, Richmond, this was the first African Mass involving other Africans from the diocese.

“We need to spread the word for others to come join us next time,” she said.

Near the end of Mass, Father

Iwuji reminded the congregation of the legacy of the late Deacon Charles Williams who passed away on Jan. 27, 2022. As head of the diocese’s Office for Black Catholics, he had planned for a celebration of an African Mass in 2020, but it was postponed due to the COVID pandemic.

“We all miss the spirit of Deacon Charles, and he would have been proud to be here today,” Father Iwuji said.

Priesthood

Continued from Page 3

“You’d go to chapel at different times, whether it was evening or morning, and there’s Dillon,” Father Sharland said. “There was so much in the heart of one man, so much that he could be a sign of the Lord pulling him to something new, something beautiful.”

Among the gifts Father Sharland sees in the deacon is joy.

“He has a real joyful spirit about him. That’s so important in the priesthood — that we are joyful men, that when we bring the Gospel to people we’re not hammering something over their head or we’re not giving them a list of rules,” the priest said. “We’re inviting them to a relationship with Jesus Christ, and that should naturally bring them joy. That joy is evident in Dillon each day.”

Father Sharland described the deacon as an “excellent communicator who’s going to be a great preacher.”

“He’s bright and articulate and shares the faith in a way that is authentic to him,” the priest said. “He’s going to be great in pastoral settings as well; he has a good heart, and he’s the kind of person who is going to sit and listen and ponder before he gives us a response, particularly for folks who are coming to him in need.”

‘Worthy vessel’ for the diocese

Father Mark Ivany, director of pastoral formation at St. John Paul II Seminary and one of Deacon Bruce’s formators, said he admired how the seminarian not only engaged in the discernment process but how he engaged in his relationship with God, which allowed him “to discern so clearly.”

“With Dillon, one of his strongest attributes was gratitude. He was so grateful not just that he was called to be a priest, that the seminary gave him a place where

he could not just figure it out — it wasn’t, ‘I just need some time to go figure this out’ — but that he needed to grow in his relationship with God,” Father Ivany said. “And once he was in a different place, once he was a little further along the path, then God’s will just became clear to him and he could respond with the great confidence that he did. That was a real joy to see.”

Asked about the kind of priest the diocese is getting, Father Ivany described Deacon Bruce as “a worthy vessel of the belief in the resurrection.”

“They are first and foremost getting a priest who believes in God, and who knows how good God is and who wants to share that truth with others,” he said. “When you have a priest who really believes, it helps other people to believe in God because the world tries to give us a million reasons not to believe and to take our lives into our own hands instead of putting them in God’s. Dillon is someone who’s put his life in God’s hands.”

As he answers the call to priesthood, Deacon Bruce wants people of the diocese to know he wants them to bother him.

“I want the people of God to know that I am there for them, and I hope there is never a time they think that they can’t approach me to help them find healing, help them find the Lord, just have somebody to talk to,” he said. “As (Archbishop) Fulton Sheen wrote, ‘The priest is not his own.’ We don’t live as bachelors; we live as celibate priests who are completely for the people of God so that we can have no other worries than the things of the Lord. So, I hope they never say, ‘Oh, he’s too busy to be bothered.’”

He added, “The priest is ordained to be inconvenienced. I hope I’m in the right place at the right time for people, and I hope they can know the Lord and be near Jesus and that I’m not an obstacle to that bridge.”

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