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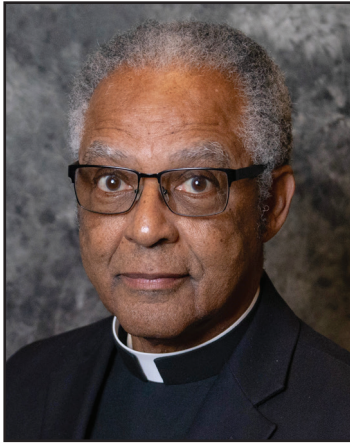
## Retired, but Msgr. Barrett is not done serving Bishop names him director of Office for Black Catholics

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI  
The Catholic Virginian

In September 2021, Msgr. Walter C. Barrett Jr., at the time pastor of St. Joseph, Hampton, and St. Mary Star of the Sea, Fort Monroe, wrote to Bishop Barry C. Knestout letting him know that he wanted to retire in 2022. He did, effective, July 1.

“I was told by an older priest, who is now with God, that I will know in my stomach, know in my belly, when it is time to retire,” the priest said. “When I turned 70 in 2017 — the age at which priests can retire — I didn’t sense that was the time, but this is the time.”

However, this past April, Msgr. Barrett received an email from Father Michael Boehling, the diocese’s vicar general, informing him that Bishop Knestout wanted to meet with him regarding the directorship of the Office for Black Catholics (OBC). The position has been vacant since the death of Deacon Charles Williams in January.



Msgr. Walter C. Barrett Jr.

“I suspect, in light of my age and in light of what I was asked to do, the bishop wants me to be a part of a search committee for a director,” he said. “One of the things Father Boehling said in the email is that Bishop Knestout knows I have a love for the Church and a love for the Black Catholic community. That’s how my name surfaced.”

Msgr. Barrett said that the bishop “painted the big picture” of the concerns he’s facing and which the OBC can help him address, including social justice.

“We live in a culture where our people are divided like the rest of the world. This I can understand as a pastor. You have people who are on different sides of an issue in the same congregation,” he said. “It is the pastor’s responsibility and the bishop’s responsibility to keep the family together, so the people are not fighting in the pews.”

The priest explained why he accepted the part-time position, effective Tuesday, Aug. 2.

He plans to be in the Pastoral Center Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week.

“What we face in our parishes is a microcosm of what a bishop has to face in the diocese. That’s a heck of a vocation. That’s why I said yes because I want to help as much as I can,” he said.

### Church must be welcoming

Listening, according to Msgr. Barrett, is going to be a critical part of what he will do as director of OBC.

“(I will) listen not only to the bishop, but to the clergy and lay leaders in our very diverse and non-monolithic Black Catholic community,” he said.

Msgr. Barrett acknowledged that Black Catholics have had experiences of the Catholic faith that were “not favorable in some instances.”

“There’s a generation that was very tolerant and put up with a whole lot, and then there’s a younger generation that is not tolerant, a generation that is used to more than three channels on TV,” he said. “We talk about cafeteria Catholicism, but there is a generation that is looking beyond

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## Why pope’s trip to Canada was necessary Sought forgiveness from Indigenous peoples

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The remembrance, reconciliation and healing from the Catholic Church’s sins committed against Indigenous populations is a reminder that Christians can find hope amid their sins and failures, Pope Francis said.

Returning for the first general audience Aug. 3 following a monthlong summer break, the pope reflected on his recent visit to Canada, which he said was “unlike the other journeys” he has made.

The main reason for his visit, he said, “was to meet the Indigenous peoples to express to them my closeness and my sorrow, and to ask for forgiveness for the harm done to them by those Christians, including many Catholics, who in the past collaborated in the forced assimilation and

deracination policies of the governments of the time.”

Recalling the motto of the July 24-29 visit, “Walking Together,” the pope said it signified the “path of reconciliation and healing, which presupposes historical knowledge, listening to the survivors, awareness and above all conversion, a change of mentality” in the Church.

While there were some men and women in the Church who were “decisive and courageous supporters of the dignity of the Indigenous peoples,” the pope said that, sadly, there was “no shortage of those who participated in programs that today we understand are unacceptable and contrary to the Gospel.”

His visit “was therefore a penitential pilgrimage. There were many joyful moments, but the overall meaning and tone was one of reflection,

repentance and reconciliation,” the pope said.

Pope Francis said his meeting in Edmonton with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples was not only a remembrance of “the good memory of the 1,000-year history of these peoples in harmony with their lands,” but also “the painful memory of the abuse they suffered, also in the residential schools, as a result of cultural assimilation policies.”

“Accompanied by the sound of drums, we left space for silence and prayer, so that from memory a new path can begin, with no more rulers and subjects, only brothers and sisters,” the pope said.

Indigenous Catholic communities in Canada, he continued, “help us to recover the cosmic dimension of the Christian mystery, in particular of the

See Pope, Page 12



An Indigenous woman displays a cradleboard as Pope Francis meets with a delegation of Indigenous peoples in Quebec City July 29. Indigenous leaders want Pope Francis to help them get information about the children who died at Canada’s residential schools and others who never returned home. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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# What it's like to be pastor of your home parish

When asked what it was like to be assigned to his home parish, Holy Rosary, Richmond, in 2001, Msgr. Walter C. Barrett Jr. exclaimed with a laugh, "Oh, dear God!"

Having returned from sabbatical in Rome at the end of 2000, Msgr. Barrett was in residence at St. Augustine, Richmond. He knew Bishop Walter F. Sullivan wanted him to become pastor of Holy Rosary.

"I did not want to come back to the parish where I used to be a paper boy and altar boy. My family was there. It was just too personal," he recalled.

However, at one of the Masses Msgr. Barrett attended in Rome, the

Gospel was John 21:15-19 in which Jesus tells Peter, "... Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

"I knew then I was going to be assigned to a parish I did not want to go to. I felt that in my heart," the priest said. "So, when the bishop asked me, 'Would you—?' before he could finish, I answered, 'Yes, bishop.' He was surprised because he knew I did not want to go back home."

Noting that he and many of the parishioners were baby boomers, Msgr. Barrett said a priest-sociologist told

him that it would be a good match.

"The people were very supportive of me," he said, "but there were some people who said to me they wished I had not been assigned there for they feared changes that would not be what they had in mind."

Msgr. Barrett described the parish during his youth as "a much more traditional African American parish."

"When I came back, I was an archconservative coming back to a very liberal parish. That's the way some people saw it," he said. "We worked some kinks out, and the challenge for them is that I do things by the book, and the priests who had been there before didn't do things by the book. They were 'loosey goosey,'

as Bishop Sullivan would say."

The parish son said parishioners "were and are very friendly" and that the assignment was a "good fit."

"I stayed there for 10 years. It was in the 10th year I could feel in my stomach it was time to go. I had done all I could do," he recalled. "What I didn't know until almost the end of my term when someone told me was that my mother had prayed that her son would be assigned there. I never knew that. She never told me that. Someone else brought it to her attention. She had forgotten it."

He added, "That was not on my list of places I wanted to go, but I guess God wanted me to be there, so I went."

— Brian T. Olszewski

## Msgr. Barrett

*Continued from Page 1*

the appeal of Catholicism and is looking elsewhere for meaning in life. They're not going to a church where they sit in a pew where someone moves over because of the color of their skin."

The priest said that Black Catholics felt they were "adopted children, the red-haired stepchild," but certainly not monolithic.

"We're all over the place. Some feel very comfortable in a predominantly African American parish. Some feel the opposite; they want to be in a racially diverse parish because we live in a racially diverse culture," he said, referring to a March 2022 Pew Research survey that reported "just 25% of Black Catholics who attend Mass at least a few times a year report that they typically go to a Mass where most other attendees are Black."

Even though Black Catholics have had negative experiences with the Church, Msgr. Barrett does not see that as an excuse to give up on the New Evangelization.

"We'd like to reclaim some of the former Catholics. We'd also like to invite other people into the Church," he said, adding a caution: "But people are not going to come into a church if they don't feel welcome."

The priest noted that according to the summary of the synodal listening sessions in the diocese, "Every parish saw itself as warm and welcoming, and that is not true. But that is the way people see themselves. They're warm and welcoming to the people who look like them and who they feel comfortable with. But they're not as warm and welcoming to someone who is the 'other.'"

Nonetheless, he is hopeful. When he recently celebrated the sacrament of matrimony at St. Peter Pro-Cathedral, Richmond, he took time to sit in the balcony beforehand.

"It brought back memories when I sat in that loft where African Americans sat (because of segregation). We're far from that now," the priest said. "There's much more comingling, and people are talking about race and other subjects that were taboo in times past, so I'm hopeful."

### Parishes — the extended family

In 1967, then-seminarian Walter C. Barrett Jr. served the Mass at which Father Clarence Watkins was the first Black priest ordained for the Diocese of Richmond. Eight years later, Msgr. Barrett became the diocese's second Black priest. For the next 35 years, he would serve in predominantly African American parishes: parochial vicar at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk (1975-1977); pastor of St. Gerard,

Roanoke (1977-1985); pastor (1985-1992) and rector (1997-2000) at the Basilica of the St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception; and Holy Rosary, Richmond (2001-2011).

"Not only did I offer the sacraments, but I found myself, not just in Roanoke, but in Norfolk and Richmond, going to city jails and correctional institutions, the courts, as a character witness," he said. "Whereas being pastor of a (Peninsula) cluster that is more racially diverse, with fewer African Americans, that was a very rare experience. In my 11 years in the Peninsula Cluster, I've gone to city jail three times in 11 years. In the past, I was going four to five times a year. That speaks a lot about how the African American relationship with the criminal justice system is different."

As he reflected upon his parish ministry, Msgr. Barrett repeatedly referred to family.

"What stands out for me is that I'm surprised by how impactful the presence of a priest on the life of a person or family can be," he said. "I know that married couples especially have been very complimentary to my lifestyle as a celibate priest. The parishes I pastored became an extended family. Seeing them as extended family has been very rewarding."

Msgr. Barrett noted his focus on family has changed.

"In my training, your own biological family was always considered secondary to the needs of the Church. That's the way it's always been. It was not until my parents began to age gracefully that I began to focus on the biological family. Now that I am at this point in life, I've observed that when a priest is ill, it's his biological family and his parishioners who are there in the hospital with him," he said. "Families are important — so important. I've always felt that I have been successful as a parish priest because I see the parish as an extended family."

### Listen, be respectful

Asked the qualities of a good pastor, Msgr. Barrett highlighted listening.

"They need to listen to their people, they need to get to know their people. Respect the local customs and traditions of the people," he said. "In the last 11 years, I've had 14 parochial vicars, and the international priests are much more respectful of the local customs and peculiarities."

He continued, "Our home-grown priests need to take more time to respect local customs. They don't. They want to change things immediately, and people find that disruptive and not respectful of their own sense of ownership. The Church isn't just the priest with the collar. There's a whole community."

When Msgr. Barrett was assigned to the Penin-

sula Cluster in 2011, he said he saw race.

"It dawned on me that the congregation was no longer predominantly Black. It was a sea of white faces, and that sea of white faces over the course of time became melted into personalities because then I no longer saw race," he said. "I saw this particular person whose mother I buried and that particular person, a couple whose wedding I celebrated or that child whom I baptized. I began to see personalities."

He added, "There isn't anything wrong with seeing race because we are different racially, but when I left that cluster, I left family just as I left family at other parishes, too."

Msgr. Barrett said that listening was important because people "were all over the place."

"I said to myself I wanted to buy a T-shirt that said, 'I survived the Peninsula Cluster' because there was a whole lot of diversity there and a whole lot of division. It takes a while to come together but that's what people are looking for — stability. That's what the Church offers them," he said. "Listening and getting to know the people. Respecting them. Out of that grows love."

## Those who have led the Office for Black Catholics

When Bishop Barry C. Knestout appointed Msgr. Walter C. Barrett Jr. to be director of the Office for Black Catholics (OBC) on Aug. 2, 2022, the recently retired pastor became the first priest to head the office that Bishop Walter F. Sullivan established July 1, 1980.

The first director was Marianist Brother Matthias Newell, who served until 1982. That year, the bishop appointed Sister Cora Marie Billings, a Sister of Mercy, to head the office, which she led for 25 years.

She was succeeded by Dawn Crutchfield, a member of St. Gerard, Roanoke, who led the office from 2007 until 2009. In 2010, Pam Harris, a member of Holy Rosary, Richmond, became director and served until 2018. Deacon Charles Williams, whose diaconal ministry included the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and St. Paul, Richmond, was appointed director of the OBC in 2019 and served until his death on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022.



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

Bishop Knestout's column is scheduled to return in September.



# VT couple's faith leads to international service

Maureen and Alex Fuller will apply engineering skills, share Gospel

JOSEPH STANIUNAS  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Most students who have graduated from Virginia Tech with engineering degrees are joining companies that pay them for their work. Armed with a B.S. and M.S. in civil engineering, Maureen Fuller is joining a group that asks her to raise her own living expenses. She's happy to do it because she believes it's the path God has set for her and her husband, Alex — to use their talent for infrastructure design to help people in other countries.

"Some people are called to use their professional gifts at work and bring Christian values to their office and industry, and then on the side do ministry work, whatever they're called to in their spiritual lives and share that with others," Maureen said. "But I especially have felt very called to use the education and engineering services that I've been blessed to learn to also share the Gospel."

By mid-August, she'll be in Colorado Springs to begin a 2-3-year fellowship with Engineering Ministries International (EMI), a non-profit Christian organization that sends architects, engineers, surveyors and other professionals to design and build hospitals, schools and water systems in developing countries.

The first Catholic accepted for the fellowship program, Maureen's interest is designing water and sanitation projects. Over the next 18 months or so she'll work toward her engineering license, observe and assist on current projects, and take Bible study and theology courses. Then, she and Alex will most likely work overseas.

"We do have Catholics in the organization working in other offices, but she is the first American Catholic at EMI to my knowledge," said EMI personnel and discipleship manager Jeff Austin in an email interview.

"I first met her nearly three years ago, and she was coming off of a short-term internship with EMI in Nicaragua," Austin continued. "Even then, she had a lot of professional talent and a passion to use that talent for the care and betterment of others. In the years since then, growing both as an engineer as well as a follower of Christ, we see that talent and passion all the more."



Maureen and Alex Fuller, alumni of Virginia Tech who married in July 2021, will be applying their engineering skills to sustainable design projects by volunteering through Engineering Ministries International (EMI). She will begin a fellowship with EMI this month in Colorado Springs, while he will return to Tech to complete research for his master's degree after which they will serve together in a yet-to-be-determined location. They are pictured at Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke, where, following a recent Sunday Mass, they spoke about their journey and sought financial support. (Photo/Joseph Staniunas)

## Strong faith foundation

Raised a Catholic in northern Virginia, Maureen was active in her parish — Nativity Catholic Church in Fairfax County — throughout high school: singing in a youth choir, taking a mission trip to Haiti and even serving as one of two youth representatives on the parish council in her senior year.

"I can't pinpoint an exact moment when I wanted to connect service, education and faith," she said. "But in high school, when I was discerning what college to go to or what I wanted to major in, it was definitely in my mind that I want to pursue some-

thing that leads to service. My late pastor always said that we should serve across the street and around the world, and I've really taken that to heart."

Virginia Tech had the right combination of courses, social life and Catholic campus ministry that she wanted. The university's honors college recruited her, provided some

scholarship money and a chance for a fellowship that would allow her to "expand on my course knowledge and combine engineering education with language study, cultural immersion and some other goals that the honors college wanted students to pursue."

Maureen found an organization in the Dominican Republic to work with, which seemed a perfect fit and was all set to go when their offer fell through, and though disappointing, she now sees as "a God moment." She found EMI through a fellow Hokie and did her honors internship through them in Nicaragua.

"It was so much better than I ever could have anticipated for wanting to combine engineering and service because I also got to incorporate faith," she said. "I had an amazing experience. I really felt such a purpose in my work there, just 10 weeks in Nicaragua, but I felt like everything that I had been learning and seeking before then was all fulfilled."

That experience has led to this other opportunity with EMI.

Although she has considered some of the Catholic organizations that work in developing countries, she found their focus was on faith formation, education or healthcare "which is wonderful" but stayed with EMI because it was "one of the few Christian organizations or non-prof-

its in general that focus specifically on engineering design services."

## 'That I may serve'

A native of Hampton, Alex grew up in a non-denominational church and after high school worked for a skydiving company. He always liked taking things apart — though he's "a lot better now at putting things back together" — and decided to pursue engineering, enrolling in a community college program that guaranteed admission to Virginia Tech.

"It did make me realize I wanted to use my gifts and talents to serve others, and I think that's what we're called to do no matter what field we're in," he said.

He met Maureen through a salsa dancing club at Tech. She asked him to go to Sunday Mass, and as they spent more time together, their relationship deepened as they found they shared the same personal, professional and spiritual interests. They were married July 24, 2021, at St. Mary, Blacksburg. The Virginia Tech motto, "Ut Prosim" (That I may serve) is etched in their wedding bands.

"Whether you're religious or not, that's a very important value to develop," Maureen said. "But because we do have the goal of sharing the Gospel, 'that I may serve' has really turned into 'that I may serve the Lord through serving others.'"

Alex has gone through RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) but is still discerning if he wants to join the Church. In the meantime, he joins Maureen at Mass every Sunday at Holy Spirit, Christiansburg.

Alex will be with Maureen for the initial orientation at EMI in Colorado but will need to return to Blacksburg to finish the research project for his master's degree. Since he's not in the fellowship program, he'll be working on his own and may do some volunteer work on EMI projects. But wherever Maureen is eventually assigned — she hopes to return to Nicaragua — he'll be going, too, since the organization wants couples to serve together.

"We are a team; we do want to pursue this together in the same location as much as possible, but we will make it work," Maureen said.

After the Masses one weekend last month at Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke, Maureen shared the journey they're on and asked for support. As she talked with people leaving church, many were eager to meet a young couple aiming to live out the words of the closing hymn they had just sung, that "God has chosen me, God has chosen me to bring good news to the poor." And... good design.

*Editor's note: Anyone who would like to contact the Fullers can reach them at [Maureen.Fuller@emiworld.org](mailto:Maureen.Fuller@emiworld.org).*

*In high school, when I was discerning what college to go to...it was definitely in my mind that I want to pursue something that leads to service."*

— MAUREEN FULLER



# New CCEVA president, CEO lives faith at work

## Tracy Fick sees agency's outreach as example of evangelization

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

**T**racy Fick is excited about her new role as president and CEO of Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA) because it will allow her to lead an organization that “gives a voice to the voiceless” as it serves more than 10,000 families a year.

Services of CCEVA, now in its 90th year, include pregnancy, parenting and adoption support, mentoring initiatives, mental health counseling, financial and housing counseling, public and private guardianship, and senior services. The organization primarily serves families living at or below 200 percent of the poverty level, and most clients aren't Catholic.

“I love that I get to live out my faith at work. I get to pray, and we get to talk about God and our faith and hopefully attract a lot of people to faith through our service,” she said. “At CCEVA, we believe the best evangelization occurs when we act as the hands and feet of Christ to all those who walk through our doors.”

Fick earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio. She is also a HUD-certified housing and financial counselor and trained in disaster response.

Fick has devoted more than 20 years working in the nonprofit sector. Before coming to CCEVA as a grants administrator in 2013, her work included public information specialist for Crittenton Family Services in Columbus, Ohio; director of development at I Love A Clean San Diego in California; and development director at Exchange Club Family Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

After serving as the grants administrator at CCEVA for about a year, she became the director of marketing in 2014 and associate director, chief programs officer, in 2018. On July 14, she was promoted to president and CEO.

Board chair Stephen Fuschetti said in a press release that Fick “is a true servant leader and has been instrumental in growing the organization to meet the ever-changing needs of families in our community.”

Fick, one of eight siblings, was raised in the Catholic faith in Akron, Ohio. She attended Catholic school from kindergarten through high school, and she said her parents set a good example by attending daily Mass regularly, in addition to weekend Masses.

Her mother, concerned about the elderly at church who didn't have anyone to assist them, helped them in such ways as taking Communion to them, making holiday meals for them and even inviting

them to have holiday meals with her family, Fick said.

“We definitely saw our parents living the faith.”

Likewise, Fick said she and her husband, Greg, strove to instill faith in their four children, who are all adults now. The family went to Mass regularly, prayed together before meals and went to several March for Life events in Washington. She and her husband were active at their former parish, St. Gregory the Great, Virginia Beach, and currently at Holy Trinity, Norfolk.

“I hope that Greg and I have been able to make our faith very real for our kids and for them to see that faith is not just something you talk about. It's something you live,” she said. “I believe strongly that how we treat others, especially those most in need, and how we use our gifts is the best way to share our faith.”

“Jesus gave us the best example of servant leadership by washing the feet of the disciples, and I am very fortunate to be a part of an organization that ‘washes the feet’ of so many families every day,” Fick continued. “Hopefully, every person who comes to our doors leaves feeling that their life is valued and appreciated.”

### Immediate needs

Fick said her first priority will be to work on the organization's strategic plan “to guide our work and growth toward our centennial anniversary.”

She said one of the greatest needs facing clients is inflation, so another focus will be “to develop and secure the resources necessary to meet the increasing needs of hard-working families in our community right now.”

“The costs of housing, gas and groceries have skyrocketed, and wages are not keeping up, and those on fixed incomes are even more vulnerable with costs rising,” she explained. “We want to be able to meet the increasing need of those seeking our help and be poised to grow our programs to best help families reach platforms of self-sufficiency.”

Fick cited CCEVA's mentoring programs, Strive and Aspire, which focus on moving women and their families out of poverty through efforts such as goal setting, financial counseling and addressing other concerns like family life, health, education and career.

Through these programs, both of which are in partnership with Women United of United Way of South Hampton Roads, participants have increased their credit scores on average by more than 100 points in a year, increased earnings on average of more than \$20,000 annually and are helping many individuals become first-time homebuyers, which helps them become “eco-



Tracy Fick

nomically independent and build wealth,” she said.

“We will always strive to meet the needs of the most vulnerable by providing guardianship for those that are incapacitated and have no family to care for them, distributing diapers and baby clothing, and providing rent assistance, but we are also focusing on moving families out of poverty through our mentoring initiatives,” Fick said. “Giving families the tools they need to reach their own goals is beautiful to watch. Families are better able to navigate crisis and go from just surviving to thriving.”

### Support for women

Fick also said “one of greatest callings right now” is to support women who are choosing life. In addition to continuing present services for them, she hopes CCEVA will be able to provide housing stipends for rent to those

women at risk of homelessness. Some existing services are pregnancy counseling, adoption services, help with making parenting plans and referrals to community resources addressing needs such as housing, employment, insurance and education.

She feels her most challenging and rewarding work at CCEVA occurred in 2019 when the organization provided case management to the 16 families whose loved ones either died or were injured in the mass shooting at the Virginia Beach municipal center.

“Hopefully we helped them in the darkest moment of life get through that tragedy. Nothing can take away that kind of pain, but hopefully again they felt loved and cared for and accompanied during that very difficult time,” she said.

Fick explained that many of their clients “come to us on their worst day” and it's important “to be able to meet people in that hard space.” She hopes CCEVA gives them “the hope and help that they need to see a way out and that we can accompany them on that journey so they don't have to go through life's hardest struggles on their own.”

“That's really our mission and how we bring the faith to our work,” she said. “We want to make sure everyone feels the love of God, knows they are made in God's image and likeness and are valued; we want to make sure those without a voice have one and that no one has to go through tough times alone.”

*Editor's note: For further information about Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia, visit <https://cceva.org> or call 757-456-2367.*

## Kentucky churches help flood victims

LEXINGTON, Ky. (CNS) – Lori Helfrich, the parish life director at Mother of Good Counsel Church in Hazard County, Kentucky, had just come from volunteering at the food pantry that her parish helps support. They were cutting up melons to distribute to people hit hard by the torrential rain and flooding that has followed in the southeastern region of the state.

“Northfork Local Foods (the food pantry Hazard's parish is part of) has a lot of melon and is distributing it so people have some fresh food,” Helfrich said in a mid-afternoon conference call July 29 arranged by the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky. “A lot of people don't have water and electric. As community partners and churches, that's what we're working on – trying to connect people where we can,” she said.

The rains began late July 27

and went into the next day, causing massive flooding that destroyed hundreds of homes and wiped out entire communities, according to news reports. As of Aug. 1, 660 air rescues and hundreds of boat rescues had been conducted. By mid-morning Aug. 2, the death toll had reached at least 37 people, with hundreds still missing. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear called it “one of the worst, most devastating flooding events” in state history.

*Editor's note: The needs of victims are great, both for the short term and in the long term, according to Meg Campos, executive director of Catholic Charities, Kentucky. The best way to help is to donate money so Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Lexington can purchase needed items. Go to [catholiccharitieslexington.org](https://catholiccharitieslexington.org), hit the tab “Donate Now” and designate contributions for disasters.*



# How Church leaders can address systemic racism

## Emphasize listening, catechism's teaching

CHAZ MUTH

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — When deadly, racially motivated violence erupted in a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina, a Pittsburgh synagogue, a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, and most recently in Buffalo, New York, Catholic Church leaders have responded.

Such high-profile reminders of the tragic carnage of racism prompts women religious, deacons, priests and bishops to condemn the violence and gather people in prayer — not only to plead for God's mercy, but to bring awareness to a culture of hate.

But racially inspired mass shootings — such as the May 14 killing of 10 Black people at a Buffalo grocery store — are only the most visible aspect of racism and many Catholics believe Church leadership has a responsibility to help society find a way to eradicate the scourge of bigotry.

"This is an evolving process," said Charisse Smith, chair of the diversity committee of Lawrenceville, New Jersey's Notre Dame Catholic High School's school board, who pointed out there are many approaches to leading on this issue that may help in one area, but not in others.

"It's strategic, it's planning, things come up and things need to be handled with care," Smith told Catholic News Service. "Sometimes things need immediate action and we're not always going to get it right."

### 'Racism is sin'

Many see that systemic racism is woven into just about all systems and institutions in American society, some of it is blatant, but much of it is subtle. There also are many white Americans who don't believe systemic racism exists.

"I don't think any institution in the United States is adequately engaged in addressing racism," said Bishop John E. Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky, who gave a speech in 2021 called "Why Black Lives Matter: A Catholic Perspective on Racism."

"I don't think the Church in the United States has given it priority enough, nor do I think we have convincingly taught our members what our catechism teaches, that racism is sin," Bishop Stowe said in an interview with CNS.

"And I don't think we understand the concept of systemic racism yet," he added. "Both how we operate from it and — God forbid — you use a phrase like 'white privilege,' because that is even more contentious than to talk about systemic racism."

### Awareness through listening

Bringing awareness to racism and white privilege and how to discuss it without further alienating people may be one of the areas where Church leaders can be most effective, said Robin Lenhardt, a law professor at

Georgetown University and one of the founding faculty of Georgetown's new Racial Justice Institute.

The enormous megaphone the Church has in parishes, service groups, diocesan schools, the diocesan centers, universities, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and even the Vatican can be used in multiple ways to help more people understand white privilege, systemic racism, and how to really embrace racial harmony and equality, Lenhardt told CNS.

Following the 2020 killing of George Floyd — a 46-year-old Black man who died in the custody of a white Minneapolis police officer — and the subsequent nationwide protests that followed, prompted Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez to establish an archdiocesan Commission for Racial Healing to address systemic racism within the Church and society at large.

"Just being uncomfortable with the uncomfortable is what I'd like to see from the Church," said Azzeiza Beadle, a 2017 graduate of Notre Dame High School in Lawrenceville, who was a leader in that school's Shades Club, a group that helped address racism on campus.

"Being aware that there are people in your (Church) community, there are things that they see they may not like, and it's OK for them to not like those things," she said, referring to pastors and bishops in the U.S. hearing from people of color in their dioceses.

"Listen to them, try to get where they are coming from and try to see how you can maybe shift a little bit to make sure that the community that you have is a good one for everyone who is in it," Beadle added.

### Different experiences

This is something Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, has been trying to do within his diocese in recent years.

Bishop Burbidge has held listening sessions throughout his diocese to hear the experiences in the lives of the people in his region, especially those of racial minorities.

He said this has been especially important for him, acknowledging that as a white man he isn't subjected to discrimination or systemic racism and the signs of it aren't organic to him in nature.

"You have to listen to the experience of those you serve, with those of whom you work, or colleagues," Bishop Burbidge told CNS in a 2020 interview. "You could in good faith think that, 'no, this is not the reality in my diocese. This is not the reality in my parish, or in my company.' Until you begin to listen to some stories ... and maybe you were not aware of that."

He said this is why the bishop's 2018 pastoral letter against racism,

"Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love," encourages the U.S. bishops to conduct these listening sessions so that they can better understand how racism impacts their diocese and all of society.

"You are hearing directly from people whose experience might be very different than yours," Bishop Burbidge said, "or even very different than what you perceive is the reality."

### Vatican's message

Ongoing racism in the U.S. appears to be on Vatican's radar and several recent episcopal appointments by Pope Francis has placed more Black bishops to lead dioceses in regions with historically notable race tensions, particularly in the South.

"I think Pope Francis is sending a very strong intended message," said Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, the only Black cardinal in the U.S. "That if we as the United States, are a community of immigrants ... the episcopate should reflect that diversity. I think Pope Francis is being very intentional about these appointments."

"He wants men who are pastors, compassionate, generous, approachable servants of the Church," Cardinal Gregory told CNS in a May interview. "I think he wants them to reflect the face of the Church in the United States."

### 'Pay attention to what is said'

Church leaders can be champions in helping society at large confront systemic racism in the systems of

criminal justice, education, housing, health care, seminaries and parishes, but most importantly, they can help people understand what white privilege is and how it impacts society, Bishop Stowe said.

The topic of white privilege is delicate, frequently misunderstood, and it often puts white Americans on the defensive, especially when they don't identify any kind of privilege in their own lives.

"The reality is there's a social structure in place that privileges white people over people of color and the Church has benefited from that — not always wittingly — but the Church certainly has benefited from that," Bishop Stowe said.

"If we want to promote unity, if we want to promote reconciliation," he said, "if we don't want to have to march in the streets and see the kind of violence that comes from when people are oppressed, then we need to pay attention to what's being said."

"We have a significant Catholic African American population that we always refer to in the Church as 'those people,' as 'other,'" Bishop Stowe said. "We don't even acknowledge them as members of the Church. We do it subconsciously, but it's the 'Black Church' as though it's different than the Blacks who are part of our Church."

To that point, Oblate Sister Marcia Hall suggests that Church leaders begin teaching in U.S. seminaries how systemic racism reaches all levels of society, including the Church, to better prepare the priests of the future.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father John Adam Abe



A funeral Mass was celebrated Monday, Aug. 1, at St. Mary, Richmond, for Father John Adam Abe. Father Abe, 65, died on Sunday, July 24.

Born in Washington, D.C., Father Abe attended Catholic schools in Arlington before enrolling in Virginia Tech, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics and finance. He began seminary studies at the Theological College in 1979, earning a master's degree in theology in 1984 — the

year he was ordained a priest.

His first three pastoral assignments were as parochial vicar at Immaculate Conception, Hampton (1984-1986); St. Mark, Virginia Beach (1986-1988); and St. Andrew, Roanoke (1988-1989).

His first pastorate was at St. Francis of Assisi, Staunton (1989-2005). Subsequent pastorates included St. Bede, Williamsburg (2005-2010) and St. Matthew, Virginia Beach (2010-2017).

Father Abe served as associate state chaplain of the Virginia Knights of Columbus and was an active member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Survivors include his mother, Elizabeth Abe; brother, Joseph (Gail) Abe; and sister, Mary Abe. He was preceded in death by his father, Alfred Abe, and brother, Douglas Abe.

Memorials in Father Abe's name may be sent to St. Francis Home, 65 W. Clopton St., Richmond, VA 23225 or online at [bit.ly/SFHDonations](http://bit.ly/SFHDonations).



# Why our common culture has collapsed

## GUEST COMMENTARY

DR. WILLIAM A. DONOHUE, PH.D.

Let's look at technology's contribution to polarization. Not to be misunderstood, I am not against technology; my observations deal exclusively with its ineluctable effects on our culture.

When I was growing up on Long Island, we had ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and three local channels on TV. I later learned that having seven channels was actually a high number compared to other parts of the country. This meant that most Americans pretty much watched the same news shows, and while differing views were commonplace, we could all agree on what the news of the day was.

We still get news from ABC, CBS and NBC, but they carry far less weight than in the past, with far fewer people watching them. Many prefer to get their news from cable TV, but the people who watch Fox News and Newsmax, which appeal to conservatives, seldom watch CNN or MSNBC, which appeal to those on the left, and vice versa.

The big difference is not the slant — it's the stories that are not covered. For example, CNN and MSNBC will not cover stories that upset its liberal viewers, the result being that their audience is often in the dark about major events.

It used to be that families disagreed over the news of the day. Now one side doesn't know what the other side is talking about.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, families were big, houses were small and cars were few, if non-existent. Now families are small, houses are big and cars are everywhere.

Think of the row houses in big cities at that time. There was no TV and no air conditioning. So where did everyone go during the summer? They hung out on the stoop, the sidewalk and the street. The neighbors knew each other, and the kids played games while adults partied and had a few cold ones. They actually talked to each other.

Now family members have several rooms to isolate from each other. They don't have to be outside; they can stay inside in the AC and watch TV, play video games and engage in social media all by themselves. They don't have to talk to anyone.

How sad. What we are witnessing is the collapse of a common culture. People get their news and entertainment from a multiplicity of sources and are content to absorb themselves on their phones.

Email is a fast and effective way to communicate with others about everyday matters, but it is a lousy way to communicate when it comes to serious issues. It is easy to misinterpret someone when the issue is a hot one.

When we are with someone, we can pick up on facial expressions, body language and the like, and we have an opportunity to get instant clarification. This is not true of email, which is why we often come away hurt.

It is easy to be mistaken. Did he really mean what I think he meant? Did she not get back to me because she's angry at me? It is so easy to mistake the sentiments of someone when we are not with them.

There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction. That takes time and effort, but it's worth it, especially when the issue is sensitive.

Gen Z (1997-2012), the youngest segment of our adult population, is known for many things, but none is more disturbing than the high degree of loneliness that so many are experiencing. It is a major problem, and it affects girls worse than boys. Indeed, social media is a big generator of loneliness among young girls.

When I was a kid, if I saw someone walking down the block with earphones talking to himself, I would be tempted to call the asylum. Now I look away. Similarly, when I was young and took a train or bus, people spoke to those near them. Now they speak on their phone to someone no one can see. And because we are a captive audience, we all have to hear the conversation of these narcissists.

No wonder we are a divided people. We no longer have anywhere near the same common experiences. We have plenty of autonomy, but the underside is we lack a sense of community. Unfortunately, when that goes, much is lost.

*Dr. Donohue is the president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights [www.catholicleague.org](http://www.catholicleague.org).*

## Real Presence cause for entering the Church

Reflecting on Robert Mosby's letter regarding the Real Presence (Catholic Virginian, July 25), I was encouraged to pen my understanding of the Church's teachings on the Eucharist and the Real Presence. As a Protestant examining Scripture, it was that understanding (actually epiphany) of the Real Presence that caused me to enter the Catholic Church.

What does Scripture say?

First are Christ's words: "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day'" (Jn 6:53-54).

Second is Christ's initiation of the Eucharist at the Last Supper: "... this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19).

Third is St Paul's Lord's Supper discourse: "For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself" (1 Cor 11:29).

The Church understood and taught the Real Presence from the beginning as she is compelled to do, and this former Protestant was compelled to enter fully into that institution which faithfully taught and practiced that Real Presence.

Mosby's letter is timely considering a 2019 Pew poll which found that 69% of self-professed Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence. Whether those Catholics are culpable or, as Mosby opines, poor Catechesis is the culprit, let us pray for those 69% to come to understand the substance of

the Eucharist.

— Sack Johannesmeyer  
Charlottesville

## 'School choice' must be accessible, transparent

The recent Supreme Court decision allowing private religious schools in Maine to receive public money will undoubtedly energize the push by Catholic school advocates for vouchers and other "school choice" structures.

As a product of Catholic schools and a career public school educator, I have no problem with this concept, with some caveats:

■ Catholic or other private schools benefitting from public funds must be required to have open or lottery-based enrollment or serve a student population that is at least 20% economically disadvantaged based on eligibility for the federal school meals program.

Further, economically disadvantaged students must receive no-cost meals, books, transportation and uniforms.

■ Catholic or other private schools benefitting from public funds must not exclude students based on intellectual or physical disabilities. These special children of God in particular deserve a faith-based Catholic education if their families so desire.

■ Catholic or other private schools benefitting from public funds must be required to administer all mandated state tests, with the results reported to the public by school and broken down by race and socioeconomic level.

Catholic schools have a recognized legacy of excellence, and public funding for them should not require any change in curriculum, instructional methods or emphasis on religious teaching. However, public funding does necessitate expanded access, due

process and public accountability.

Publicly-funded "school choice" must be accessible and transparent. Otherwise, it is simply taxpayer-supported exclusion.

— Dr. Frank E. Morgan  
Glen Allen

## Make positions consistent with Church teaching

In his letter (Catholic Virginian, July 25), Rick Kurek argues that political advocacy divides the Church and hinders the spread of the Gospel. However, he erroneously concludes that the Church ought to cease teaching on politically controversial topics.

Christ obliged the Church to teach "all nations... to observe all the commandments which I have given you." These commandments include the principles of divine and natural law as well as derived conclusions.

If the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) advocates for following divine and natural law regarding legislation on gun control, then the VCC's political advocacy is a necessary consequence of the Church's teaching office.

A better critique considers whether the VCC advocates for positions

consistent with the entirety of Catholic teaching. Does the VCC's advocacy on guns articulate the objective truth of Catholic teaching or reflect the subjective views of the VCC's staff?

St. Thomas Aquinas writes in the Summa "that it is natural to everything to keep itself in 'being,' as far as possible." Consequently, there is a God-given natural law right to proportionate self-defense that is curiously unarticulated by the VCC.

If there locally exist criminals with firearms, then justice requires availability of sufficiently countering firearms. Eliminating firearms from society requires eliminating the problem of criminals with guns first.

Where does this place Kurek? He and others hear partial Catholic teaching from the VCC on one issue satisfying the ears of only one side of the political aisle. This partiality damages the trust given to the VCC to advocate for Catholicism applied to Virginia legislative advocacy. Neglect of any part of Church teaching divides the Church and hinders the spread of the Gospel.

— Timothy Olmsted  
Farmville

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# Bishops say HHS proposal violates religious freedom

Call it threat for Church ‘to carry out our healing ministries’

**JULIE ASHER**  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The chairmen of four U.S. bishops’ committees said July 27 that proposed regulations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on abortion, transgender services and other procedures threaten the Catholic Church’s ability “to carry out our healing ministries” and others’ ability “to practice medicine.”

They called the proposed regulations — a 308-page document released July 25 by HHS — “a violation of religious freedom and bad medicine.”

“They mandate health care workers to perform life-altering surgeries to remove perfectly healthy body parts,” the bishops said. “Assurances that HHS will honor religious freedom laws offer little comfort when HHS is actively fighting court rulings that declared HHS violated religious freedom laws the last time they tried to impose such a mandate.”

They added: “The proposed regulations announce that HHS is also considering whether to force health care workers to perform abortions

against their will or lose their jobs. We call on HHS to explicitly disavow any such intent.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released the joint statement from Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco, chairman, Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; and Cardinal

Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman, Committee for Religious Liberty.

The proposed HHS regulations would apply to implementation of the Affordable Care Act’s Section 1557, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex — including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity — in covered health programs or activities.

In 2020, the Trump administration put in place a final rule that eliminated the general prohibition on discrimination based on gender identity and also adopted abortion and religious freedom exemptions for health

care providers. But the courts blocked this rule change.

In 2021, shortly after he was inaugurated, President Joe Biden issued an executive order declaring that his administration would apply the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2020 ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County* in all areas of government — including the ACA.

In a 6-3 ruling, the court held that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is necessarily also discrimination “because of sex” as prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Biden administration’s so-called “transgender mandate” required that doctors and hospitals perform gender-transition procedures on any patient despite any moral or medical objections of the doctor or health care facility.

Last year a number of Catholic health care organizations filed a lawsuit challenging the mandate. A federal court blocked it last August, granting the plaintiffs’ request for a permanent injunction.

The court permanently enjoined HHS, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and all HHS-related divisions, agencies and employees “from interpreting or enforcing Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.”

Also last year, lawyers for the plaintiffs discovered a 74-page legal memorandum attached to a court filing from a consortium of 30 sexual rights groups revealed that HHS had promised to revise its mandates on health plan coverage and performance to include surgical abortion, cross-sex hormones, gender-transition surgeries, gender-affirming cosmetic surgeries and voice modification — along with a host of

*See Threat, Page 12*

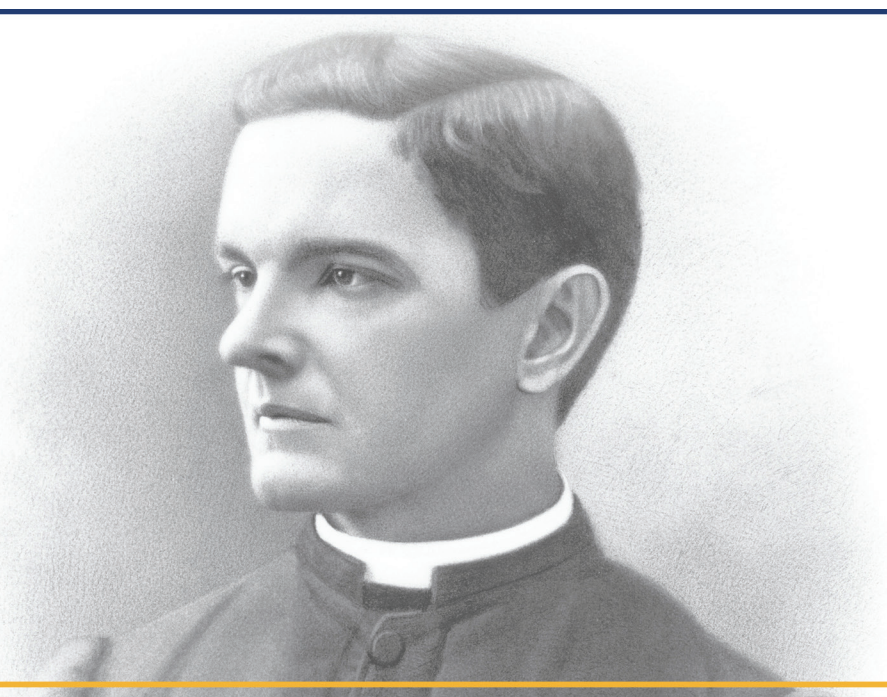
***“They mandate health care workers to perform life-altering surgeries to remove perfectly healthy body parts. Assurances that HHS will honor religious freedom laws offer little comfort when HHS is actively fighting court rulings that declared HHS violated religious freedom laws the last time they tried to impose such a mandate.”***

— CHAIRMEN OF FOUR USCCB COMMITTEES

## Feast Day Mass of Blessed Michael McGivney

Saturday, August 13

AT THE  
Saint John Paul II National Shrine



This event is free but for planning purposes, please RSVP by August 11

[www.jp2shrine.org/events](http://www.jp2shrine.org/events)

Scan for more info or to RSVP





# Science invites us to celebrate dependence on God



IN LIGHT OF FAITH  
BARBARA HUGHES

During a training session for hospice volunteers, the facilitator asked trainees to describe what they imagined heaven would look like. I recall one person telling the group that for her, the word that came to mind was “crowded.” As you can imagine, her answer got a laugh from the group, but as I watched images from the James Webb space telescope televised a few weeks ago, I remembered her response and all I could think of was how limited we humans are when it comes to thinking about heaven.

It’s no wonder St. Paul wrote, “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9).

In 1990, when the Hubble Telescope was sent into space, scientists were astounded by what they identified as trillions of galaxies. How much more amazed must they have been as they looked through the James Webb, which offers an even clearer image of stars, black holes and gases that navigate within particular galaxies?

If nothing else, science should expand our sense of awe and wonder regarding the grandeur and incredible omnipotence of God. Yet, after this most recent telescope was launched and deemed a success,

it was disappointing that none of the scientists who were interviewed mentioned God or said anything about the presence of a supernatural being as the Creator.

As they gazed into infinity, how could they not be moved to fall on their knees? How was it that they did not want to cry out with the psalmist?

*“O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the Earth! You have set your glory above the heavens... When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God” (Ps 8:1-5).*

How easy it is to lose sight of the fact that we are not God. At a cost of \$10 billion, untold hours of research and hands-on engineering, a dream had come true, but even amid all that success, human limitations are evident.

A few weeks after the launch, the James Webb was hit by a micrometeor about the size of a grain of sand that collided unexpectedly with the telescope, causing irreversible damage to one of its mirrors. It serves as a much-needed reminder that some things still remain beyond the control of humans, and that should give us pause.

It’s been reported that toward



the end of his life, Albert Einstein looked at all he had discovered and wrote, “I feel as if I’m standing in a cloud, and I’m surrounded by what I can only call Mystery.”

Though he never claimed to be a religious man, Einstein’s respect for mystery and miracles is well documented. When addressing young people, he advised them: “Never lose Holy Curiosity” and again “The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science.”

This explains why the Catholic Church has never debunked authentic science because it should always lead us to the realization that only a Supreme Being could orchestrate a world that is so complex and yet so

profound. If gazing into the heavens while here on Earth is a source of awe, what must it be like for those who see the world from the realm of the Beatific Vision?

Failing to see God in the wonders of creation reminds me of another quote from Einstein: “Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I’m not sure about the universe.”

When science leads us deeper into the heart of God, we are on solid ground because it invites us to acknowledge and celebrate our dependence on God, who has promised that new heavens await us.

In the Second Letter of Peter, we are reminded, “While waiting for this, make every effort to be found without stain or defilement, and at peace in his sight” (2 Pt 3:14).

No one exhibited this better in her life on Earth than Mary, who was assumed into heaven body and soul. Her assumption into heaven prefigures the final resurrection of the just, whose souls will be reunited with their bodies. Then, like Mary, these souls will enjoy the fullness of the Beatific Vision of God.

Let us pray that when the time comes, we will be numbered among them, and will at last realize the full glory of God.

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

## In risking discipleship, we are not alone in serving God



BELIEVE AS  
YOU PRAY  
MELANIE CODDINGTON

This Sunday’s readings give us a glimpse — or two or three — of the risks involved in radical obedience to God’s call. Prophetic types, who, like Jeremiah and Jesus, speak the hard truth, especially to power, inevitably meet resistance and frequently rejection, even from family and community.

In the first reading, we meet Jeremiah at a desperate moment. Out of favor with the dueling powers-that-be due to his dire warnings of destruction, Jeremiah has one last chance to change his tune. Instead, he delivers a decidedly unpatriotic message: “Thus says the Lord: He who remains in the city shall die by sword, or famine, or pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be spared as booty, and he shall live. ... This city shall certainly be handed over to the army of the King of Babylon; he shall capture it.”

In a nutshell: Surrender or die. Let go of power or watch Jerusalem burn to the ground. This sets the stage for the part of the story we hear at Mass.

The princes, whose collective power rivals that of King Zedekiah, reject Jeremiah’s doomsday declaration. Threatened by his truth, they demand his death. Hapless Zedekiah gives in to their wishes, and the princes throw Jeremiah into a courtyard cistern, where he sinks into the mud. We can imagine his desperate prayers from the bottom of the pit.

It seems Jeremiah has one last friend in high places. A court official, Ebed-Melech the Cushite, i.e., the Ethiopian, intervenes and persuades the king to draw Jeremiah up from the pit, delivering him from certain death.

The dramatic rescue portrayed in verses one and two from Psalm 40 fits hand-in-glove with Jeremiah’s tale. In the Lectionary translation, the repetition “waited, waited” implies the urgency and immediacy of the verb in the original Hebrew, echoing the desperation of the prophet in the pit.

Verse three mentions a “new song,” signaling a real-life transformation apparent to others: “And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God. Many shall look on in awe and trust in the Lord.” This suffering one, now delivered, has become a living sign.

For most of us, most of the time, change happens, but soon enough life settles back into some version of the status quo. The “new song” of Psalm 40 indicates a more radical shift — to a

whole new place, or a new plain of existence, as might occur in the wake of a death or a birth.

The revered Scripture scholar, Walter Brueggemann, calls this place New Orientation and explains that getting there requires a break with old ideas and ways of doing things, a letting go of the past.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus sees what lies ahead — the “baptism” of his passion and death. His great anguish comes through as he warns his disciples of the cost of following him: Once reliable bonds of blood or kinship by marriage will break down, as the message of the Gospel hits home. Once stable communities will fracture as the truth meets rejection.

The Letter to the Hebrews offers some solace. In taking the risk of discipleship, putting all that we are in the hands of God and at the service of God’s reign in our world, we are not alone, but “surrounded by... a cloud of witnesses.” More importantly, Jesus has gone before us, through the worst that the world can dish out — through rejection, betrayal, suffering and death, and has come to a new and glorious place at the right hand of God.

With our eyes on him, and his Spirit flowing through us, we, too, can face the perils of the journey, bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel in our words and actions, and accepting the consequences as our share in the sufferings of Christ.

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

### Twentieth Sunday Ordinary Time

**Jer 38:4-6, 8-10; Ps 40:2, 3, 4, 18;  
Heb 12:1-4; Lk 12:49-53**



# Pope: 'Greed causes wars'

**JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES**  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Unbridled greed for wealth and possessions is a sickness that is the driving force behind wars and conflicts in the world, Pope Francis said.

The "hunger for possessions creates an addiction" that enslaves people and ultimately causes "an injustice never before seen in history: where few have so much and so many have little or nothing," the pope said July 31 during his Sunday Angelus address.

"Let's consider wars and conflicts as well. The lust for resources and wealth are almost always behind them. How many interests are behind war! Certainly, one of these is the arms trade. This trade is a scandal that we must never resign ourselves to," he told an estimated 12,000 pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

Before praying the Angelus prayer, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Luke in which Jesus warns a person quarreling over an inheritance to "take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

The incessant desire to be rich, he said, "is an illness that destroys people" because "those who have a lot are never content; they always want more and only for themselves."

"Jesus teaches us that at the

heart of all this are not only some who are powerful, or certain economic systems. The greed that is in everyone's heart is at the center," the pope said.

Christians, he continued, must reflect on their relationship with money and ask themselves whether they are happy with what they have or complain about not having enough.

"Material goods, money, and riches can become a cult, a true and proper idolatry," he added. "This is why Jesus warns us with strong words. He says you cannot serve two masters, and — let's be careful — he does not say God and the devil, no, or even the good and the bad, but, God and wealth."

However, Jesus' warning does not mean "no one should desire to be rich." In fact, "you can" and it is even "right to want it."

"It is beautiful to be rich, but rich according to God! God is the richest of anyone. He is rich in compassion, in mercy. His riches do not impoverish anyone, do not create quarrels and divisions. It is a wealth that knows how to give, to distribute, to share," the pope said.

Pope Francis said true wealth is not in "accumulating material goods" but in fostering good relationships "with God, with others and with those who have less."

"May Our Lady help us understand what the true goods of life are, the ones that last forever," the pope said.

## Deceased priest added to clergy list

The Diocese of Richmond added a deceased priest, Father Joseph J. Pucci, a religious order priest of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to the diocesan list of clergy against whom a credible and substantiated claim of sexual abuse involving a minor has been made.

The name was added Friday, July 22, after a review was completed in consultation with the diocesan Office of Safe Environment and the Diocesan Review Board. Father Pucci was ordained for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1941 and died in 2000. He served at St. Ann, Ashland, in the 1960s, during which time the abuse took place. Father Pucci did not serve at other parishes within the diocese.

The complete clergy list, originally printed in February 2019 after a comprehensive review of clergy files, can be found on the Richmond Diocese's website at <https://richmonddiocese.org/list>.

In keeping with its pledge

to help victim survivors in their healing, the diocese remains committed to respecting the privacy of all victim survivors. As with the diocese's previous announcements regarding its list, the diocese will not release specific details regarding the victim survivor or the abuse.

Anyone who has been sexually abused by a priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the diocese is urged to report abuse directly to law enforcement, including Child Protective Services (CPS) at 800-552-7096, and by calling the Virginia Attorney General's Clergy Abuse Hotline at 833-454-9064. Individuals are also encouraged to contact the 24-hour confidential diocesan Victim Assistance Reporting (VAC) number at 877-887-9603 or email [vac@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:vac@richmonddiocese.org).

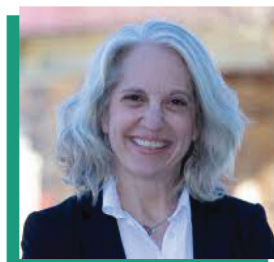
*Editor's note: Further information about the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Father Pucci is available by contacting the Oblates at 202-529-4505.*

# AGEISM UNMASKED

Exploring Age Bias and How to End It

Thursday, September 29

6 PM - 7 PM



LOCATION:

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
9505 Gayton Road  
Richmond, VA

Dr. Tracey Gendron, chair of the Department of Gerontology at VCU and executive director of the Virginia Center on Aging, will discuss topics from her book and share strategies to help create an anti-ageist society.

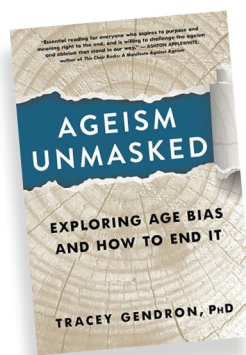
Join us for a pre-event reception at St. Mary's Woods before the discussion!

4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Refreshments and light hors d'oeuvres.

Community tours will be available.

Please park at St. Mary's Catholic Church where a shuttle will be provided.



Tracey will answer audience questions and sign copies of her book, which will be available for purchase.

RSVP to Connie Salinas at 804-360-1960.

A free public event sponsored by:

**Our Lady of Hope Health Center**  
[ourladyofhope.com](http://ourladyofhope.com)

**St. Mary's Woods Retirement Community**  
[stmaryswoods.com](http://stmaryswoods.com)

Find us online @ [catholicvirginian.org](http://catholicvirginian.org)



Coordinated Services Management, Inc. - Professional Management of Retirement Communities since 1981





## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Benedictine Schools of Richmond** (Benedictine College Preparatory and Saint Gertrude High School) seeks a director of scholarship giving to successfully develop and implement an innovative annual fund, scholarship and planned giving strategy that will increase the school's endowment and its contributions to the school. For more information or to apply, please visit our website: [www.benedictineschools.org/about/employment-opportunities](http://www.benedictineschools.org/about/employment-opportunities).

**Portsmouth Catholic Regional School** has the following openings: First grade teacher, third grade teacher, middle school language arts/social studies teacher. The successful candidate must instruct through engaged, hands-on teaching and learning, utilize 21st century teaching skills, possess good communication skills and be able to work collaboratively with an instructional team. Please send résumé, diocesan application ([bit.ly/36ndEsX](http://bit.ly/36ndEsX)) and a copy of your teaching license to Portsmouth Catholic Regional School, 2301 Oregon Ave., Portsmouth, VA 23701 or email: [priscillataylor@portsmouthcatholic.net](mailto:priscillataylor@portsmouthcatholic.net). For questions, call 757-488-6744.

**St. Joan of Arc, Yorktown**, is seeking a courageous and well-formed Catholic man or woman to be our youth and young adult minister. The youth and young adult minister plans and leads a comprehensive catechetical youth ministry program with various components. The youth minister will organize middle and high school youth events, including service opportunities and social activities within the parish, while also organizing and encouraging participation in diocesan and other youth events. This individual recruits and engages adult volunteers to participate in events and will be responsible for supervising volunteers, including program leaders and support staff. This person will lead the parish confirmation program, which includes facilitating and monitoring retreats and retreat progress. As the young adult minister, this individual will help to enliven the young adult demographic in meaningful worship, formation and social events, and help to ensure that the young adults, 20-35 years old, are fully integrated in the parish life.

Applicant must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. A bachelor's degree in theology or religious studies is required; a master's degree is preferred. The candidate must have experience in establishing and maintaining balanced budgets. The candidate must be a good team player with excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Please send cover letter, diocesan application and résumé to St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 315 Harris Grove Lane, Yorktown, VA 23692, or email to [JoeG@stjoanofarcva.org](mailto:JoeG@stjoanofarcva.org).

**The Church of St. Therese, Gloucester**, is seeking a faithful and passion-

ate Catholic who loves Jesus and his Church for full-time employment as the coordinator of youth ministry. The successful candidate will be one who strives to lead a life of personal holiness and has a shepherd's heart to search out and lead teens closer to Christ. He/she must have the energy to build a youth program from scratch. Applicants should have at least a bachelor's degree in a related field and a minimum of three years' experience in youth ministry. The position is responsible for overseeing the middle school and high school programs with vision, including sacramental preparation for confirmation, with special attention given to empowering lay leadership among adults and teens. Salary and benefits consistent with diocesan guidelines, qualifications and experience. Send cover letter, résumé and Richmond Diocesan application ([bit.ly/36ndEsX](http://bit.ly/36ndEsX)) to the pastor, Father Gregory Kandt, at [fr.gregory@stthers.glo.org](mailto:fr.gregory@stthers.glo.org). For more information, call Father Gregory at 804-693-9043.

**The Catholic Community of St. Mark, Virginia Beach**, is seeking a part-time (25 hour a week) coordinator of religious formation. Under the supervision of the director of religious formation, the coordinator is responsible for the administration of the children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays, the religious formation program for grades kindergarten to fifth, sacramental preparation for the sacraments of first reconciliation and first communion, along with the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults adapted for children, Vacation Bible School and assisting the director of religious formation in any other programs and events.

This person must be an active, practicing Catholic; have at least a bachelor's degree in Church ministry, theology, religious studies, religious education, or equivalent experience in parish ministry; knowledge of the Church's teaching and renewed effort in the New Evangelization. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office and Outlook email; capable of learning Church database; passing a background screening and completion of the VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" course are mandatory. This person must have excellent written and oral communication skills; excel in electronic communication and social media; be capable of working collaboratively as an active member of the pastoral staff team; have ability to work with parishioners in different ministerial settings; have ability to supervise volunteers, be self-motivated, creative and a trustworthy steward of parish resources; be able to plan and execute formation activities. Travel may be required for certain formation-related events.

For a complete job description or to submit a résumé, please contact Father Anthony Mpungu at [franthony@stmark-parish.org](mailto:franthony@stmark-parish.org).

## SHORTTAKES

**Resurrection Catholic Church** will hold its Joyous Junque Summer Sale at its parish center 15353 Moneta Rd. (Route 122) Moneta, VA, Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26 and 27. Sale hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Toys, linens, dishes, housewares, electronics, small appliances, collectables, jewelry, hand tools, lawn/garden, sporting goods and more. For more information, go to [www.joyousjunque.org](http://www.joyousjunque.org).

**Roanoke Catholic High School Multi Class Reunion** — '74, '75, '76, '77, '78 and '79. Friday, Aug. 26, through Sunday, Aug. 28. Just a few of the highlights: Friday Celtic football game, Roanoke Catholic School tour, Big Saturday reunion party, Sunday Mass, outdoor adventure and picnic. Meet your classmates and enjoy the storytelling of years gone by! Sign up and learn more at [www.roanokecatholic.com/resources/alumni](http://www.roanokecatholic.com/resources/alumni). Hosted by the Class of 1977, celebrating their 45th reunion year. Contact Lilli Kelley Winstead at 540-871-3670 or [lilwins@gmail.com](mailto:lilwins@gmail.com); Geralynn Slough Trellue at 540-519-4532; or Joanna Coleman, dean of advancement, at 540-982-3532x1005 or [jcoleman@roanokecatholic.com](mailto:jcoleman@roanokecatholic.com).

**Calling all Curciestas!** This is the 50th year for Cursillo of Central Virginia. It's time to celebrate with memories of 50 years of retreat weekends and a look toward the future. Join them at 2 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 18, at the Benedictine Schools of Richmond (aka The Abbey) for an afternoon of fun, fellowship, spirit and a potluck dinner to follow. If you have any questions, please contact Adria Hogan at [ahogan605@gmail.com](mailto:ahogan605@gmail.com) or leave a message at 804-512-4020.

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, including: 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. The tour then moves to Edinburgh, which will serve as a base for trips outside the city to explore Scottish history and natural beauty. For further information, please contact Alba Kim at [tours@albastours.com](mailto:tours@albastours.com) or 804-298-4035. Visit our website [albastours.com](http://albastours.com). Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited.

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for August 14, 2022

Hebrews 12: 1-4 / Luke 12: 49-53

Following is a word search based on the Second reading and Gospel for the 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

|            |            |               |
|------------|------------|---------------|
| SURROUNDED | SO GREAT   | A CLOUD       |
| WITNESSES  | RACE       | PERFECTOR     |
| THE JOY    | ENDURED    | THE CROSS     |
| SHAME      | RIGHT HAND | THRONE OF GOD |
| BLOOD      | FIRE       | PEACE         |
| EARTH      | RATHER     | DIVIDED       |
| AGAINST    |            | MOTHER        |

### ENDURANCE

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



# NCCHM Conferencia Raíces y Alas 2022



De 26 al 30 de abril, la organización NCCHM (El Concejo Católico Nacional del Ministerio Hispano) celebró sus 30 años de existencia y ministerio con la presencia de líderes y representantes nacionales e internacionales de Sur América, Europa, y el Vaticano.

## Resumen de los resultados de la conferencia en las cuatro áreas ministeriales

### Pastoral Familiar

Algunas de las fortalezas claves de la familia hispana son la importancia de la familia, la familia extendida, la comunidad y la hospitalidad, las que proporcionan un terreno fértil para que ellas sean iglesias domésticas. La gran mayoría de las familias hispanas son creyentes, y su vida de fe en familia se alimenta frecuentemente a través de múltiples expresiones de devoción popular y religiosidad. Los padres y abuelos sienten el llamado a que los niños y jóvenes reciban los sacramentos y se formen en la fe. Al contrario, unos desafíos con respecto a la fe de muchos católicos hispanos, que se han criado en hogares y comunidades culturalmente católicas, es la falta de una comprensión profunda de la fe y muchos son católicos por tradición y no por convicción.

### La Pastoral Juvenil Hispana

Debemos prestar atención a las transiciones en la vida de los jóvenes. Hay que crear itinerarios que favorezcan el paso de una pastoral como adolescentes a una pastoral de jóvenes, y de ésta a una de matrimonios jóvenes o a la pastoral de adultos. Es particularmente urgente que, después de recibir el sacramento de la Confirmación, haya continuidad en la formación de la fe y la experiencia pastoral. Algunos movimientos eclesiales brindan la posibilidad de continuar un camino de formación humana, cristiana y espiritual como adultos, lo que debería ser costumbre también en todas las parroquias.

### Justicia Social

Es muy importante abogar por cambios institucionales y estructurales en la sociedad y en la Iglesia a favor de los pobres, los que sufren y los marginados en las periferias. Formar, equipar y acompañar a los fieles laicos en el ejercicio de liderazgo para la transformación de la injusticia basada en los principios y valores evangélicos, desde su realidad sociocultural y responder a las necesidades inmediatas físicas, emocionales, espirituales y de desarrollo humano en la comunidad, con un amor preferencial para los pobres y los que sufren.

### Formación Pastoral

La formación para todos los ministerios en las comunidades hispanas/latinas exige fortalecer los esfuerzos intencionales para identificar, invitar y formar nuevos ministros/líderes. Una muestra de organizaciones nacionales de formación, colegios e instituciones señalaron que ha habido un aumento en los programas, ya sea completamente hispanos/latinos o con varios componentes de los principios del ministerio hispano, particularmente en las áreas de escucha sinodal bilingüe/español hispano y procesos de planificación pastoral, Talleres bilingües/español/inglés sobre la construcción de competencias interculturales para el ministerio (y más allá), y talleres bilingües/español



de habilidades espirituales/intelectuales/pastorales/formación humana. Sin embargo, todavía hay muy pocos recursos en forma de finanzas, personal capacitado y disponibilidad de programas en todas las áreas de educación, formación espiritual, particularmente cuando los fieles están abrumados por las necesidades básicas (por ejemplo, trabajos, alimentos, seguridad en el hogar, etc).

### Participación y testimonios de la Diócesis de Richmond

El 27 de abril, líderes y representantes de las Diócesis de Arlington y Richmond estaban presentes virtualmente con los senadores del estado de Virginia hablando sobre la importancia del **Estatus de Protección Temporal (TPS)** y el camino directo a la ciudadanía para los que están bajo el estatus de **La Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia o DACA**. Nuestro grupo fue compuesto por el clero, líderes y ministros de diferentes movimientos eclesiales y grupos laicales, y hasta personas que vinieron desde Alemania para poder ver como abogamos por nuestra gente hispana y todas las personas que quedan afectadas por estas dos cuestiones. Tuvimos testimonios de personas que han estado o están bajo la categoría TPS y DACA durante nuestras sesiones con los senadores. Los jóvenes adultos presentes tomaron un puesto muy importante en estas conversaciones y fueron protagonistas en no solo representar sus comunidades sino también, en algunos casos, sus familiares. La abogacía y el cabildeo nos da la capacidad de hablar para esas personas que no tienen voz ni voto. Es muy importante como hispano/latinos que tomemos ese derecho que nos da este país y abogar para el bien y para los derechos que les pertenecen a todos bajo la guía y la dirección que nos da nuestra fe católica.

A lo siguiente leerá tres testimonios breves de personas que vinieron a la conferencia conmigo (Daniel Villar) en Washington D.C., 2 jóvenes adultos y un sacerdote:

#### Isaura Muñoz – Secretaria auxiliar administrativa – St. Gerard Roanoke

Raíces y Alas 2022 ha sido una gran experiencia para mí. Ha sido muy gratificante saber que nuestra Iglesia siempre habla y sale en defensa de cualquiera que lo necesite. Es esta

oportunidad, para pedir una reforma migratoria que beneficie a millones de personas que residen en este país. También me ha abierto los ojos a grandes oportunidades, programas y organizaciones de las que ignoraba y pueden ser de gran beneficio para las parroquias de nuestra diócesis. Quisiera que más jóvenes adultos tuvieran la oportunidad de participar y conocer sobre todo lo que nuestra Iglesia ofrece a través de tantas personas que incansablemente trabajan para el bienestar de las futuras generaciones. Agradezco a la Diócesis de Richmond por tomarse el tiempo de darnos formación y escucharnos.

#### Fr. Joe Goldsmith – Párroco - Catholic Cluster Hopewell, South Prince George, Dinwiddie

En el trigésimo aniversario de crecimiento y desarrollo, la Conferencia Raíces y Alas entregó testimonio de clase mundial, defensa y unidad de corazones y mentes. La sala tembló de pasión, visión y testimonio. Obispos, clérigos, laicos profesionales, académicos y directores de todo el mundo participaron en cuatro días repletos de contenido, ya orando hacia el futuro con raíces y alas. Estamos enraizados porque soñamos junto con el Señor. Tenemos alas porque estamos enraizados en la memoria auténtica de la Revelación de Dios. Raíces y Alas es un presagio de muchas cosas buenas por venir. ¡Felicitaciones a nuestros increíbles organizadores y alabanza a Dios todopoderoso!

#### Emily Portillo – Feligresa joven adulto – Church of the Sacred Heart South Prince George

Durante el tiempo que participé en Raíces Y Alas 2022, pude escuchar a las personas compartir sus historias y luchas con situaciones y circunstancias de inmigración. Juntos debemos de luchar por un mejor camino hacia la ciudadanía y mejorar la vida diaria de los inmigrantes en los EE. UU. Además, estuve rodeada de personas que comparten mis mismas opiniones sobre la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana y me dieron una voz sobre lo que creo y lo que debe cambiar dentro de nuestras comunidades católicas. Fue divertido y alentador, y una experiencia maravillosa en general.

Para leer más sobre Raíces y Alas 2022:  
<https://ncchm-us.org/rya-es/>



## Religion roundup in Norfolk



**Above:** Participants in Catholic Kids Camp sing and dance to a praise song during the July 18-22 event at "Trinity Ranch" aka Holy Trinity, Norfolk.

**Right:** Holly Trinity (Ellen Erickson) and the ranch hand, Rowdy (John Erickson), introduce the daily lesson to the children. Themed "Saddle up with God's Word," the camp included Bible stories, crafts and skits. By making donations throughout the week, the children were able to contribute \$400 to Birthright. (Submitted photos)



## Threat

*Continued from Page 7*

expanded services dealing with fertility treatments, contraception, abortifacients and sterilizations.

Once the newly released HHS proposed regulations are published in the Federal Register, a period for public comment will begin. HHS said this period will be 60 days after publication. As of July 27, the HHS proposal had not yet been published on the website <https://www.federalregister.gov>.

"Catholics have been called to care for the sick since the earliest days of our faith," said the USCCB committee chairmen. "Today, the various agencies and social service ministries of the Catholic Church taken together are equivalent to the largest non-profit health care provider in the country."

The Church does "this work in fulfillment of the direct command of Jesus Christ

and in imitation of his divine ministry here on Earth," they said.

"Catholic health care ministries serve everyone, no matter their race, sex, belief system or any other characteristic," the bishops continued. "The same excellent care will be provided in a Catholic hospital to all patients, including patients who identify as transgender, whether it be for a broken bone or for cancer, but we cannot do what our faith forbids. We object to harmful procedures, not to patients."

The bishops said they "will continue to review these proposed regulations and will file more thorough comments at the appropriate time."

*Editor's note: The HHS announcement about its proposed regulations can be found at <https://bit.ly/3zzYBZ8>. The full text of the proposed regulations can be found at <https://bit.ly/3b7PF3C>.*

## Pope

*Continued from Page 1*

cross and the Eucharist."

Pope Francis said he affirmed the Catholic Church's commitment in promoting "appropriate spiritual paths" while respecting the customs and languages of Indigenous peoples.

However, he also warned of the "colonizing mentality" that exists in today's world in "various forms of ideological colonization" that threaten "the traditions, history and religious bonds of peoples, erasing differences, focusing only on the present and often

neglecting duties toward the weakest and most fragile."

"It is therefore a matter of recovering a healthy balance, a harmony between modernity and ancestral cultures, between secularization and spiritual values," the pope said.

"May the fortitude and peaceful action of the Indigenous peoples of Canada be an example for all Native peoples not to close themselves up, but to offer their indispensable contribution for a more fraternal humanity that knows how to love creation and the Creator," he said.

# Court backs school in Church doctrine case

CHICAGO (CNS) — The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit in Chicago said July 28 that a Catholic high school in Indianapolis and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have a constitutional right to hire staff who will uphold their core religious teachings.

The case, *Starkey v. Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis*, involves Lynn Starkey, a former guidance counselor at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, who sued the school and the archdiocese in 2019, after her contract was not renewed due to her same-sex marriage.

School officials said her marriage was a violation of her contract and Church teaching. Starkey argued she had been discriminated against based on her sexual orientation.

She appealed her case to the 7th Circuit after a federal District Court threw out her lawsuit last year.

In dismissing the case, the District Court judge said the school employee's case did not stand up to the principle of ministerial exception that protects a religious school's hiring and firing practices from government intrusion.

The 7th Circuit ruled the lawsuit must be dismissed for the same reason.

"Religious groups have a constitutional right to hire individuals who believe in their faith's ideals and are committed to their religious mission," Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at Becket, said in a statement.

"Our justice system has consistently ruled that the government cannot intrude on a religious organization's choice of who will pass on the faith to the next generation," he said.

Becket, a religious liberty law firm representing the Indianapolis Archdiocese, argued that both federal law and the First Amendment protect religious schools' right to make hiring decisions based on religious doctrine.

The firm also has noted Roncalli High School asks its employees to "sign agreements to uphold the Catholic Church's beliefs in their personal and professional lives."

In its opinion, the 7th Circuit drew on the Supreme Court's decisions in *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru* in 2020 and *Hosanna-Tabor Lutheran Evangelical School v. EEOC* in 2012. Both are prior Becket cases.

The 2020 ruling said religious schools had the leeway to dismiss teachers for poor performance because they serve as ministers, and the 2012 ruling said ministerial exception frees religious schools from employment discrimination laws.

"Catholic schools are tasked by the Church to uphold the dignity of every human person and teach the fullness of the Catholic faith," Goodrich said. "The 7th Circuit's decision ensures that religious schools can remain faithful to their mission."

In her 2019 lawsuit, Starkey, who had worked at Roncalli for almost 40 years, said the school and the archdiocese discriminated against her because of her sexual orientation and subjected her to a hostile work environment.

Starkey, who married in 2015, was asked at the start of the 2017 school year to sign an employment contract with the ministerial language clause included. In 2019, she was told she would not be offered a new contract.

In response to Starkey's initial lawsuit against the school and the Indianapolis Archdiocese, the archdiocese said in a statement: "As head guidance counselor, Ms. Starkey signed a contract acknowledging her role as a leader and committing to promote Catholic teaching, including the traditional Catholic teaching on marriage."

It added that she "knowingly violated that contract" and that her disagreement with Church teaching on marriage demonstrated she would "not be able to uphold and model it for her students."

The archdiocese said that many families "have sacrificed so their children can attend schools where they will learn the Catholic faith. They rely on the archdiocese to uphold the fullness of Catholic teaching throughout its schools, and the Constitution fully protects the Church's efforts to do so."