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Bishop Barry C. Knestout anoints the hands of Father Armando Herrera with holy chrism at the Mass during which the latter was ordained a priest, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. (Photo/Michael Mickle)

A reason to rejoice

Father Armando Herrera ordained for Richmond Diocese

BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Just in time for Gaudete Sunday, the day during Advent that reminds Christians to rejoice, Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond had a special reason to rejoice as more than 600 people, including 44 priests and 11 deacons, celebrated at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart as Bishop Barry C. Knestout ordained Father Armando Herrera-DosReis, 29, a priest for the diocese on Saturday, Dec. 10.

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese of the Military Services, USA, also concelebrated the Mass. Father Herrera will serve the Diocese of Richmond for three years and then, having been co-sponsored as a seminarian by the Military Archdiocese, serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

Bishop Knestout began his homily by reiterating the Church's instruction regarding the ordination of priests and continued with reflections on the Scripture readings.

He noted that the opening three verses of Isaiah 61, e.g., "He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners..." were the work of all priests.

"[This] brings into reality, in the lives of an often broken hearted and suffering people, the joy of the Gospel and the salvation won for us in Christ's paschal mystery," Bishop Knestout said.

Referring to the teaching in Hebrews 5:1-10, the bishop said, "Each priest is called to bear his portion of the burden of the suffering of his people, to walk with — or accompany, as Pope Francis often says — God's People in the daily struggle and joys of life so that we too become 'a source of eternal salvation' in obedience to Christ, in our priestly commitment and life."

Regarding Luke 10:1-9, — the calling of

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Reflecting on pandemic can build a better world

Pope's World Peace Day message urges solidarity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The interconnected "moral, social, political and economic crises" facing the world cannot be solved if individuals and nations continue to focus only on their own, immediate interests, Pope Francis said in his message for World Peace Day 2023.

"The time has come for all of us to endeavor to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common," the pope wrote in the message, which was released at the Vatican Dec. 16.

The Catholic Church celebrates World Peace Day Jan. 1 and distributes the pope's message to heads of state and government around the world.

The theme for the pope's 2023 message was "No one can be saved alone," and the text urged people to learn from the experience of the global effort to combat COVID-19 and to recognize the poverty and inequalities the pandemic laid bare, especially as regards to access to food, medicine, health care, education and technology.

Pope Francis asked people to reflect on a series of questions: "What did we learn from the pandemic? What new paths should we follow to cast off the shackles of our old habits, to be better prepared, to dare new things? What signs of life and hope can we see, to help us move forward and try to make our world a better place?"

As soon as it seemed the pandemic was nearly over, the pope wrote, "a terrible new disaster befell humanity. We witnessed the onslaught of another scourge: another war."

Russia's war on Ukraine, he said, "is reaping innocent victims and spreading insecurity, not only among those directly affected, but in a widespread and indiscriminate way for everyone, also for those who, even thousands of kilometers away, suffer its collateral effects," including rising fuel prices and shortages of grain.

"This war, together with all the other conflicts around the globe, represents a setback for the whole of humanity and not merely for the parties directly involved," the pope said.

Massive cooperative efforts led to vaccines for COVID-19, he said, but "suitable solutions have not yet been found for the war," even though it is true "the virus of war is more difficult to overcome than the viruses that compromise our bodies, because it comes, not from outside of us, but from within the human heart corrupted by sin."

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The Catholic Virginian

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Renewal begun at Vatican II continues to bear fruit



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

In October, I received a copy of “To Sanctify the World: The Vital Legacy of Vatican II” (Basic Books, New York). Written by George Weigel, a distinguished senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and theologian, who I know from my time in Washington and who addressed members of the legal profession at our diocese’s St. Thomas More Society dinner in 2019, this thoughtful and enlightening book provides the author’s reflections on the Second Vatican Council.

As I read it, I thought about the impact the council has had upon my life. Having been born four months before the council opened in 1962, I am truly a “child of Vatican II.” I made my First Communion in 1970, the year after the Roman Missal was published. The parish in which I grew up was building its church in 1962. The sanctuary was arranged in accord with the liturgical norms established in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and the parishioners expressed themselves as a faith community with the expectations that are part of parish life today.

My dad was involved in the Charismatic Renewal and was ordained to the permanent diaconate — the former was addressed in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and the latter was restored in that same document. As a priest, I worked with Cardinal James A.

Hickey, who, as a priest, served as a peritus — a theological advisor to the council. I benefited from his insights about the work of the council and its implementation in subsequent decades.

Cardinal Hickey and St. Pope John Paul II shared a special bond. They were born six months apart, ordained priests six months apart and died six months apart. Each was immersed in the council — the latter as an auxiliary bishop and then as an archbishop. Their lives were filled with helping the faithful understand the changes that occurred as a result of the council and how, as shepherds, they incorporated them into the life of the Church.

They knew that the liturgical, theological and pastoral impact of the council was enormous. Unlike previous councils, which were often disciplinary, where there were anathemas and efforts to correct errors or difficulties of the past, Vatican II was aspirational. It highlighted the beauty of the faith and the ideals of our universal call to holiness. It promoted the ideal that we are to have a renewed proclamation — a new evangelization — in a modern world that is so secularized and agnostic.

Anytime there is a creative event in the life of the Church, there’s an element of uncertainty and a lack of clarity as these new things are occurring. One might think that 57 years after the closing of Vatican II, all the questions that arose during and after it would be answered, any ambiguities clarified. A quick look at the history of Church councils tells us that it can take many years for a council’s work to

be fully understood and implemented.

Yet, the Church continues to respond appropriately to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at Vatican II with renewed vigor, new tools, new methods and an ardor to live the life of discipleship and to bring the Good News to the modern world, especially as we face the challenges presented by the impact of technology that can lead us to ignore God when we are distracted by the secular and the material.

During the past 60 years, the pastoral life of the Church has been renewed on multiple levels. St. Pope John Paul II emphasized our call to sanctification, our need to be on the path to holiness. Pope Benedict XVI focused on the teaching of the Church and the continuity of that teaching. Pope Francis continues to speak about lives defined by charity and mercy, and about the need for pastoral engagement throughout the world. *All of these* are the fruit of the Second Vatican Council.

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout, bishop of Richmond, has announced the following clergy appointment effective Dec. 10, 2022:

OFFICIAL

Father Armando Herrera, newly ordained, to parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg.

Two Washington priests named auxiliaries for archdiocese

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Pope Francis has appointed two Washington archdiocesan priests, Msgr. Juan R. Esposito-Garcia and Father Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, as auxiliary bishops of their archdiocese.

Bishop-designate Esposito-Garcia, who turns 49 Jan. 10, is currently serving as an official in the Dicastery for Bishops at the Vatican. Bishop-designate Menjivar-Ayala, 52, is currently pastor of St. Mary Church in the Washington suburb of Landover Hills, Maryland. Their appointments were announced Dec. 19 in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican nuncio to the United States. They both will be ordained bishops Feb. 21.

Born in Argentina, Bishop-designate Esposito-Garcia was ordained a priest for the Washington Archdiocese June 14, 2008. He has been a dicastery official since 2018 and was named a monsignor

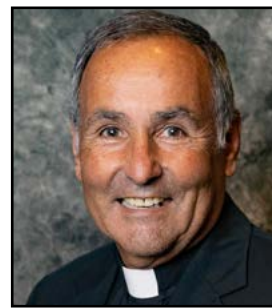
in 2020. From 2014 to 2017, he was an adjunct judicial vicar and judicial vicar for the Washington archdiocesan tribunal.

Bishop-designate Menjivar-Ayala was born in Chalatenango, El Salvador, and came to the United States with his brother as a teenager because of the violence and unrest in his home country, while his family remained in El Salvador. Ordained for the Washington Archdiocese May 29, 2004, he has been pastor in Landover Hills since 2017.

As auxiliaries, the bishops-designate will join Auxiliary Bishops Roy E. Campbell Jr. and Mario E. Dorsonville in serving the archdiocese alongside Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington. The cardinal said the pope has blessed the archdiocese by appointing two new auxiliaries “to serve all of Christ’s flock in this local Church.”

IN MEMORIAM

Msgr. Joseph P. Lehman III



A funeral Mass was celebrated for Msgr. Joseph P. Lehman III at St. Bede, Williamsburg, on Monday, Dec. 19, 2022. Msgr. Lehman, 68, died on Tuesday, Dec. 13.

A native of Newport News, Msgr. Lehman attended St. Mary Star of the Sea School, Hampton, and was a 1972 graduate of St. John Vianney Minor Seminary, Richmond. He received his bachelor’s

degree from St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Indiana in 1976. He continued his formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, graduating in 1980, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond on Aug. 16 of that year.

Work through the Virginia LARCUM (Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Methodist) Committee, on which he served as ecumenical and interreligious officer, and the Virginia Council of Churches was an integral part of Msgr. Lehman’s ministry. He was given the pontifical honor of being named a monsignor in 2002 for his work in this area.

In July 2019, Msgr. Lehman was named pastor of St. Bede, Williamsburg, where he was serving at the time of his death. He was also rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Williamsburg, since August 2019.

His previous pastorates include Holy Cross, Lynchburg (1980-1984); Resurrection, Moneta (1984-1988 and 2005-2009); Holy Name of Mary, Bedford (1984-1988); Christ the King, Norfolk (1988-1997); Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke (1997-2019); and St. Francis of Assisi, Rocky Mount (2005-2009).

He is survived by his mother, Beverly Lehman; sisters, Ann L. Hart, Chris M. Clark and Teresa J. Lehman; brothers, John T. Lehman and Tim J. Lehman; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Lehman Jr.

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Left: After being ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond on Saturday, Dec. 10, Father Armando Herrera blesses his nephew, Abner Tan. Above: Father Herrera receives the fraternal kiss, also known as the sign of peace, from Bishop Barry C. Knestout as a gesture of welcome into the priesthood of Jesus Christ. (All Photos/Michael Mickle)

Priesthood

Continued from Page 1

the 72 — Bishop Knestout said, “What the Gospel makes clear is that this priestly mission of evangelization is meant to be a ministry of peace, not creating, or placing burdens on those we encounter, but lifting their burdens with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, the teaching, and sacraments of the Church.”

Following Mass, Father Herrera gave his first blessing as a priest to Bishop Knestout.

Father Herrera’s first assignment as a priest will be as parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg.



Above: Father Armando Herrera lies prostrate before the altar as the more than 600 people in attendance at his ordination Mass sing the Litany of Supplication. Pictured left to right behind the priest are his family members: parents, Armando and Lizette Herrera; sisters, Ariana Herrera and Bianca Tan; and brother-in-law, Randall Tan.



Above: Father Herrera prays the Eucharistic Prayer during his ordination Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. Right: Father Jim Rafferty, Father Herrera’s spiritual director who vested the newly ordained priest, imposes hands on Father Herrera at the ordination Mass on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022.



'One of a kind' CCC employee retires after 32 years

Marge Thornton has overseen hundreds of adoptions

JOSEPH STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

A sallow complexion, unwashed hair, thin arms and legs. The little girl from Romania looked like a child who had been in a bed her entire life.

"She'd never had a toy, never had the sun on her face, never had the opportunity to walk," said Marge Thornton, program manager of adoption services for Commonwealth Catholic Charities.

With Thornton's help, this 2-year-old had hope for a new life. She is one of countless children Thornton, a native of Roanoke, has placed with new families. Now Thornton is starting a new life, retiring Dec. 30 after more than 32 years with the agency.

Reflecting on her career the day after a surprise retirement lunch, she said "everyone should have the opportunity to have work that is as fulfilling as adoption is."

"Being able to see families formed and working with kids, especially international adoption. Kids who come in are so wounded, they've been through so much," she continued. "Then you see them blossom, you see these families formed, you see these kids grow up. Where else can you do that kind of work?"

Getting started

In high school, a guidance



Marge Thornton

counselor asked Thornton take part in a peer support program, mentoring other students.

"Working with her and seeing what she did, I decided that I wanted to go into social work," Thornton said.

But not for some years. She married a minister and became a stay-at-home mom. Once her last child was in school full-time, she pursued a degree in social work from Ferrum College in Franklin County, Virginia. She later earned a master's degree in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

During one college internship, she worked for a state office in Martinsville that managed adoptions.

"I just loved it," she said. "I knew this was what I wanted to do."

In May 1990, what was then Catholic Charities of Southwest Virginia had an opening for an international adoption coordinator, and Thornton was hired right after graduation. Since then, she's been involved in helping unwed mothers place their babies with families, continued to supervise international adoptions and helped children in foster care find homes.

'The light in the room'

For several years, Commonwealth Catholic Charities has partnered with the state social services department to provide and increase adoptions.

"Marge was critical in not only establishing that partnership but maintaining it and making sure we stayed one of the best providers in the business," said CCC CEO Jay Brown.

He said he and others in the agency will not only miss Thornton's grace and compassion, but also her deep knowledge of adoption law.

"She just breathes this work," he said. "She is such an expert that it's a huge loss for us to see her go. She's done a tremendous job in building a remarkable team, and I think that's the other thing that makes her truly special, truly one of a kind."

"She has the biggest heart," said

Taylor Mills, post-adoption supervisor. "She is amazing at this work that she does. The families love her, birth parents love her, all of her colleagues love her. She's just hands-down a great person."

Thornton was one of the people involved in setting up Seton Housing, a program that started last year to provide support to new mothers and their children who may be facing homelessness. Among the first participants were Kyrsten and her daughter, Avianna.

"Marge is always the light in the room," Kyrsten said in an email; for privacy reasons, her last name is not being used. "She takes charge, makes sure your head's on straight. She's really taught me patience and that there are still kind people in this world."

Kyrsten said she was crying as she was typing, as she thought about how much Thornton has meant to her and her baby.

"She's made me the mom I am today, and I'll never forget her. She holds such a special place in my little family that it hurts to think I won't be able to contact her anymore. But I hope she has the most successful retirement because she's absolutely worth every minute of it." (For more about Krysten's story, go to bit.ly/3s2FbIR.)

See Thornton, Page 7

Local Knights of Columbus help keep Christ in Christmas

Nativity placed on state capitol grounds for first time in memorable history

JANNA REYNOLDS
The Catholic Virginian

For one hour on Friday morning, Dec. 9, Virginians were invited to gather around the Nativity scene at the historic bell tower on the state capitol grounds.

The Nativity set was displayed during a prayer service sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Msgr. Francis J. Byrne Council from St. Bridget Parish, Richmond. It was the first time in memorable history that a Nativity scene was displayed on Virginia capitol grounds.

"A lot of activities and decisions get made in that General Assembly that affect Christians (and) Catholics throughout the state," said Doug Lynch, grand knight of the Msgr. Francis J. Byrne Council. "It's really important that people realize we're here."

Lynch said he had "done some searching" in preparing for the event, and there is no record of anyone receiving "outright permission from the state to bring the Nativity to the state capitol" dating back to the 1600s.

In September, American Nativity Scene, a nonprofit organization that seeks to display Nativity scenes in every state capitol in the United States, contacted Shirley Jaeger for assistance with bringing a nativity to Richmond.

Jaeger, a member of St. Bridget since 1987, said her name had been mentioned to the organization "as someone who could possibly know the meaning of Christmas." She told the representative, "I can't promise you anything,



Father James O'Reilly, parochial vicar of St. Bridget, Richmond, blesses the Nativity set and wooden silhouette that were displayed on the state capitol grounds Friday, Dec. 9, 2022. (Photo/Doug Lynch)

but I will try."

She approached the parish's Knights of Columbus council to ask them to be an organizational sponsor for the permit. Lynch helped secure the permit after garnering support from the Knights of Columbus Virginia State Council and the Supreme Knights of Columbus.

"Ultimately, the reason for the season is Christ," Lynch said. "The Knights pride themselves on activities that keep Christ centered in the Christmas celebration."

The Nativity set used for the event was

provided by American Nativity Scene. A wooden silhouette of the Nativity made by Knights of Columbus Council 11172 at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen, and donated for the event by John Schutrumpf, grand knight of Council 395, was used as a backdrop "so that people could see it easier," according to Lynch.

More than 40 participants prayed, sang hymns, and heard Scripture readings and remarks from various speakers.

Among those gathered were a representative from the House Speaker's office, a chief of staff for a delegate who serves on the Virginia General Assembly, members of three local Knights of Columbus councils, State Deputy Patrick Roland and District Deputy Stephen Day.

Father James O'Reilly, parochial vicar of St. Bridget Parish, blessed the Nativity scene and wooden silhouette, and provided a reflection.

The priest, who is a third-degree Knight of Columbus and chaplain of the St. Bridget council, spoke about the importance of signs in everyday life, like traffic signs, and those that people can show "a type of reverence." The American flag, for example, is venerated and loved in the United States of America, Father O'Reilly said, "but it doesn't mean we worship the flag in and of itself."

Similarly, the Nativity provides inspiration for Christians and serves as a reminder of the true meaning of the Christmas season.

"The Incarnation and the Nativity happened

See Nativity, Page 7

Parish has ‘plarn good way’ to support homeless center

St. Mark, Va Beach, ministry provides friendship, support

WENDY KLESCH

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Helping hands

Friends who crochet together and pray together, stay together. Five years ago, a group of women from St. Mark, Virginia Beach, set out to learn how to make sleeping mats out of “plarn” — yarn made from plastic bags. Besides a calling to a new ministry, they also found friendship and laughter.

Today, the group meets every Thursday morning to help the St. Mark Justice and Peace Committee in its efforts support People in Need, a center for the homeless located at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront.

“I saw an event on Facebook, back in June of 2017,” Chris McGrath, founding member of the group, said, “for those wanting to learn how to make mats out of plastic bags. I went to that meeting, and I thought: maybe this is something that our church might be interested in doing.”

She spoke to St. Mark Justice and Peace Coordinator Joyce Gridley, who invited her to present her idea to the committee and to interested parishioners.

“When we started, it was supposed to be just a one-time thing, so that people could learn how to make the mats at home,” McGrath said. “But then the group really bonded together, so we just kept meeting, every week.”

As the group celebrates its 5th anniversary, it is going strong.

“It turned into a real group of friends, a real support system,” volunteer Cheryl Hummer said.

Father Anthony Mpungu, pastor of St. Mark, said that not only do the women work to help the PiN ministry, but the parish as well, infusing quiet weekday mornings with a spirit of friendship and building a stronger sense of community.

“We need to connect in order to build,” he said, “because building is not one man’s chore. We all have a part to play.”

The group begins each meeting with prayer, asking God’s help for those who are afraid and hopeless, without friends or family to take them in, or even the simple comfort and security of being able to come home after a long day.

Then, the crafters settle at long tables in the parish hall to begin work on the mats — mats that are waterproof and bugproof, making for soft but durable barriers against the damp ground of Hampton Roads. The group also makes tote bags, giving those who are homeless a lightweight means to carry their belongings.

“Every three months or so, we gather all of the things that we’ve done,” McGrath said. “Father blesses them, and he blesses our hands, and we deliver the things to the PiN ministry.”

The group has sold some of the mats at church craft fairs for use as picnic mats, Hummer said.

“Men also like to use them in their garages, when they are working on their cars,” she said.

The crafters have raised more than \$1,200 selling their mats and tote bags, all of which they have donated to the PiN ministry.

“We don’t know where the work of our hands will go, who the mats will go to,” Father Mpungu said. “We don’t always see the impact of our work, but we are all connected in ways that we do not always see.”

Waste not, want not

There’s a donation box at the church, where parishioners can drop off plastic for the group. Thus far, the Plarn Ministry has made 352 mats and 88 tote bags from the unwanted bags.

The ministry also makes use of the scraps left from their projects, as well as other types of plastic, by participating in a program sponsored by Trex, an outdoor furniture



Volunteers Lois Conery and Micky Fisher look over a completed tote bag made of plarn on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022. The St. Mark Plarn Ministry repurposes plastic bags to create waterproof mats and tote bags for the homeless. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)

company. Through the program, a nonprofit group can earn a park bench for every 500 pounds of plastic it recycles.

The plarn group has kept 1,005 pounds of plastic waste out of area landfills, enough to earn to two park benches.

“We have one here at St. Mark’s, and the other, the group has donated to the PiN office, to make the center more welcoming,” Hummer said.

The crafters have found that there’s a lot one can do with trash, volunteer Mickey Fisher said.

“Or, that is, garbage,” she corrected, laughing.

Fisher said she’s volunteered all of her life, beginning as a child in Havana, where her father was stationed with the military. There, she collected milk cartons to turn into Easter baskets to fill with candy for a nearby orphanage.

“If you look, and get a little creative, you’ll find that you don’t need a lot of money to make something useful,” she said.

The art of giving

The volunteers try to make each mat unique. First, they sort the bags by color and by thickness. Commissary bags are heavier than those from local chains, Hummer explained, so those are set aside to be used for handles, to make them stronger.

Then, the crafters flatten the bags, smoothing out all the wrinkles, before folding them in half and then in half again, making them into long strips. The handles are cut off and discarded. Each strip is cut with

scissors or a rotary cutter every two inches, creating a small pile of two-inch-wide loops.

The crafters tie the loops together using a lark’s head knot, creating long threads of “plarn” that can be crocheted, just like yarn.

It’s a painstaking process; it takes about 500 to 700 bags to make one mat. As the bags are crocheted, store logos become splotches of dappled color. Some crafters use blue and brown bags to make striped mats, or the odd yellow or purple bag to fashion decorative rosettes for the tote bags.

Hummer displayed a finished mat, created by volunteer Lydia Nobriga, who chooses an assortment of bags, giving her mats a marbled effect.

Trisha Doherty, who joined the group when she moved to Virginia from Pennsylvania five years ago, said she once tried a technique of braiding the plarn, rather than crocheting it.

“I thought it would be easier, but let me tell you,” she said, laughing. “It wasn’t.”

As the group works, they share stories and catch up with one another, discussing books, exercise routines, grandchildren and the day’s news.

“It’s a chance to meet with friends and laugh and have fun while doing something that helps others,” volunteer Diane Girardo said.

For Gigi Schuler, the group is a perfect way for her to give back to the church while her grandchildren are at school.

“I don’t crochet, but I can straighten and cut up the bags,” she said. “I enjoy the company and the friendship we’ve created, not only helping the church but those who are in need.”

Gigi Schuler and Zulma Spatz, volunteers with the St. Mark plarn group, cut plastic bags into strips that will be turned into plarn — plastic yarn — on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022. The St. Mark, Virginia Beach, Plarn Ministry meets in the parish’s great hall every Thursday. (Photo/Wendy Klesch)



US churches called to 'national reckoning of soul'

Data shows rising religious hate crimes against Jews in recent years

GINA CHRISTIAN
Catholic News Service

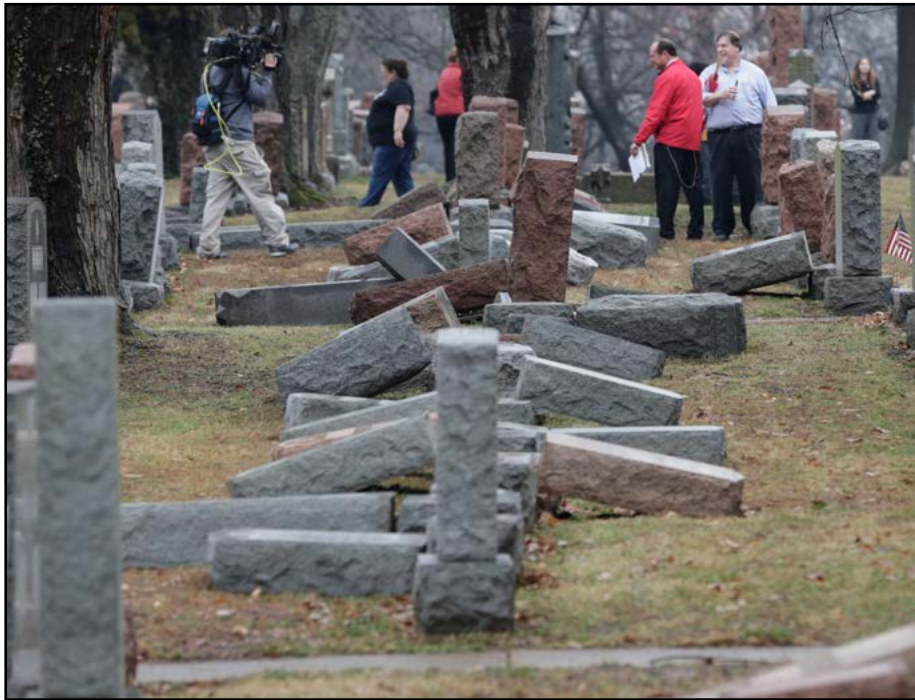
PHILADELPHIA – Scholars of Jewish-Christian relations are urging churches in the U.S. to “a national reckoning of the soul” amid what they are describing as “the greatest crisis of public antisemitism in a century” in the U.S.

The Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations issued a Dec. 14 statement calling on churches “to take concrete actions at this critical moment” and “redouble efforts to denounce antisemitism publicly.”

The statement, “A National Reckoning of the Soul: A Call to the Churches of the United States to Confront the Crisis of Antisemitism” was unanimously endorsed by 30 of the group’s member organizations, most of which are based at colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Multiple data sources confirm a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in recent years throughout the nation. The Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism reported a 34% increase from 2020 to 2021, which saw the highest number on record since the group began its monitoring in 1979.

FBI director Christopher Wray said in a Nov. 10 address to the Anti-Defamation League that “a full 63% of religious hate



Local and national media in University City, Mo., report on more than 170 toppled Jewish headstones Feb. 21, 2017, after a weekend vandalism attack on Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery near St. Louis. (CNS photo/Tom Gannam, Reuters)

crimes (in the U.S.) are motivated by antisemitism,” targeting “a group that makes up just 2.4%” of the U.S. population.

On Nov. 28, the U.S. bishops issued a statement deploring the “reemergence of antisemitism in new forms,” while affirming the “shared spiritual patrimony” between

Catholics and Jews emphasized in the Second Vatican Council’s declaration “Nostra Aetate.”

Yet “we are living in a strange time when there is both a blessed and growing friendship between Christians and Jews alongside a resurgence of antisemitism and neo-Nazism,”

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Pope prepared resignation letter in 2013

Document given to Vatican official in case of physical, mental impairment

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis said he wrote a resignation letter in 2013, his first year in office, to be used in case he became physically or mentally impaired and unable to fulfill the duties of the papacy.

In an interview published Dec. 18, the day after his 86th birthday, Pope Francis said that during the time that Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone was Vatican secretary of state, a position he left in October 2013, he gave a resignation letter to the cardinal.

“I signed it and said, ‘If I should become impaired for medical reasons or whatever, here is my renunciation. Here you have it,’” the pope told the Spanish newspaper ABC.

Pope Francis joked that now that the letter’s existence has been made public, someone will go after Cardinal Bertone and say, “Give me that piece of paper!”

But he also said he was certain Cardinal Bertone gave it to Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who succeeded him as secretary of state.

The interviewer also noted that Pope Francis had named several women as secretaries or undersecretaries of Vatican offices, but that he had not appointed a woman to lead a Vatican dicastery. His reform of the Roman Curia says it is possible for a layperson to head a dicastery.

Pope Francis responded that he has been thinking of appointing

a woman to lead “a dicastery where there will be a vacancy in two years.” He did not say what office that was.

“There is nothing to prevent a woman from guiding a dicastery in which a layperson can be a prefect,” the pope said.

However, “if it is dicastery of a sacramental nature,” presumably like the dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith, for Bishops, for Clergy or for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “it has to be presided over by a priest or a bishop,” the pope said.

Asked if he worries about active Catholics who may feel neglected by the pope paying so much attention to people who feel far from the Church, Pope Francis responded, “If they are good, they will not feel neglected.”

But if they do feel shunned, he said, they may share the fault of the elder son in the biblical parable of the prodigal son, echoing his complaint to his father, “I’ve served you for years and now you take care of him and don’t pay any attention to me.”

That attitude, the pope said, is “an ugly sin, one of hidden ambition, of wishing to stand out and be considered.”

Pope Francis also told ABC that he believes the Church is making progress “little by little” in tackling clerical sexual abuse and in becoming more transparent in handling

the cases.

Asked what he would say to Catholics whose faith in the Church falters every time a new case is made public, the pope said, “It is good that you feel outrage about this.

That leads you to act to prevent it, to make your contribution.”

“It doesn’t scare me,” the pope said. “If their faith is faltering, it’s because it is alive. Otherwise, you would feel nothing at all.”

CV letters policy

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

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PCRS students help feed the community



Students and families of Portsmouth Catholic Regional School donated 1,389 cans, boxes and bags of food for the school's "Canning Hunger for CANstruction" event throughout November. On Tuesday, Nov. 29, collaborative classroom teams composed of a younger grade and older grade used the goods to build structures and inspirational messages, which were judged the following day. Donated goods were given to Oasis Social Ministry in Portsmouth. Over 800 meals will be provided for people in need thanks to PCRS families putting their faith into action. (Submitted photo)

Pandemic-era border policy stays in place for now

CAROL ZIMMERMANN
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – Chief Justice John Roberts temporarily stopped the Biden administration from ending a pandemic-related border restriction with a one-page order Dec. 19.

It gives the Supreme Court time to consider the emergency request filed by 19 states asking the justices to keep in place what is known as Title 42 of the federal Public Health Services Act.

The Trump administration used the public health measure during the pandemic to allow U.S. border officials to expel migrants quickly without giving them an opportunity to seek asylum in the United States.

Roberts' administrative stay ensures the policy – which a trial judge had ordered be ended by midnight Dec. 21 – could stay in place while the full court considered it. His order also asked the Biden administration to respond Dec. 20 by 5 p.m. (EST).

The Republican state attorneys general opposing the discontinuation of this policy warned that if the court did not block a federal judge's order to end the policy it would "cause a crisis of unprecedented proportions at the border."

The Biden administration had extended the policy last August, but this April they announced plans to end it, saying it was no longer necessary to protect public health.

Migrant advocates, including Catholic Church organizations, women religious and Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic

Bishops' migration committee, have strongly supported ending Title 42.

Texas border cities, like El Paso, had been preparing for the surge of new migrants as the pandemic-era policy was scheduled to end.

In October, Bishop Seitz issued a statement expressing his disappointment that Title 42 had been expanded to Venezuelans seeking to cross the border.

"Now we must all work harder, especially the faith community, to build a culture of hospitality that respects the dignity of those who migrate, and to continue to press lawmakers and the Biden administration to establish a safe, humane, functioning and rights-respecting system to ensure protection to those in need," he said.

Title 42 is among other immigration policies brought to the Supreme Court this year. In June, the court ruled that the Biden administration could potentially end the Trump administration's "remain in Mexico" policy, which sent those seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border back to Mexico to wait for a hearing in U.S. immigration court.

But the Supreme Court also sent this back to a lower court to determine if the Biden administration's efforts to end the policy complied with administrative laws. In mid-December, a federal judge in Texas put the administration's attempts to end this policy on hold.

In late November, the Supreme Court also heard arguments challenging a 2021 policy that prioritizes certain groups of unauthorized immigrants for arrest and deportation. A ruling is expected next June.

Thornton

Continued from Page 4

Providing support

The biggest change Thornton has seen in her career is the shift in adoption procedure from secrecy to openness. When she first started, she said, birth parents had no idea with whom their child would be living; families had no idea who the parents were. Now, the process is a collaboration.

"The parents who are placing their children for adoption, who are making the adoption plan, they work with us," she said. "They let us know what they are looking for in an adoptive family. They choose which family they want their child to go with, and then they meet. They have an ongoing relationship if they choose. But there's all of that openness and that connectedness."

Overall, children are spending less time in foster care, though "there are still some kids whose needs are just very, very high, and they're very wounded, and it's hard to find a good fit for a family for them," she said.

The agency's policy is that it never turns any child away, no matter the physical or mental problem.

"I have seen her work with some difficult cases," Mills also said of instances in which a family and child were not matched. "... She's there to support them, and she's there to support the birth parents."

Raised a Catholic, Thornton became a Methodist and is convinced that without her faith, without some level of spirituality, she would have a hard time doing this work.

In retirement, Thornton is looking forward to spending more time with Chuck, her husband of 15 years. It was the second marriage for both; their blended family of four sons and two daughters includes 10 grandchildren, with another expected in February.

She'll have lots of those adopted kids to stay connected with on social media. Many are in college or have graduated. One girl from Guatemala and a boy from Mexico have even participated in internships with her at CCC.

But she will miss the home visits, miss seeing children like that toddler from Romania turning pink and healthy, walking and talking within six months, greeting her with "Hi, Marge!"

Nativity

Continued from Page 4

because we needed a savior, and this sign is something that can cut through all the noise and chaos in our world," said Father O'Reilly. "That visual reminder can do a lot of good, and we need to continue taking up space in the public sphere to show Christ the King."

The priest said he wanted to share a message that would resonate with Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Similarly, Jaeger said that her hope was that by showing Christ's presence in the Nativity, others might take that idea of Christmastime away with them.

She said supporting the initiative was important to her because "we've lost that Christ is the one we celebrate."

"If any one person came away after we have done our deed with this, if they remember, 'Yes, Christ really needs to be in Christmas,' it's worth it," Jaeger said.

Lynch said the Knights were very pleased with the turnout and hope to make this an annual event.

"We look forward to coming back next year with a larger Nativity, so you haven't seen the last of us yet," he said with a laugh.

Message

Continued from Page 1

Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, presented the message at a news conference and spoke to Catholic News Service afterward.

“The message gives me hope because it puts a finger on not what some important person needs to do but what each of us needs to do, which is just to take the time to ask ourselves, ‘What did I learn or not learn? And how is my life going to change from there?’ the cardinal said. ‘Hopefully, the lessons will be for the good of everyone.’”

People’s experience of the pandemic, the lockdowns, the possibility of continuing to work and the scrambling for vaccines were different around the world, he said, but that experience loses its power if people do not reflect on it and share it.

The reflection, Pope Francis wrote, should encourage people to change from a self-centered focus to a real commitment to the common good and to promoting solidarity and a greater sense of fraternity.

Cooperative efforts are needed to ensure health care for all, he said. People must work together to combat climate change, overcome inequality, end hunger and create dignified work for all.

“We also need to develop suitable policies for welcoming and integrating migrants and those whom our societies discard,” the pope said. “Only by responding generously to these situations, with an altruism inspired by God’s infinite and merciful love, will we be able to build a new world and contribute to the extension of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of love, justice and peace.”

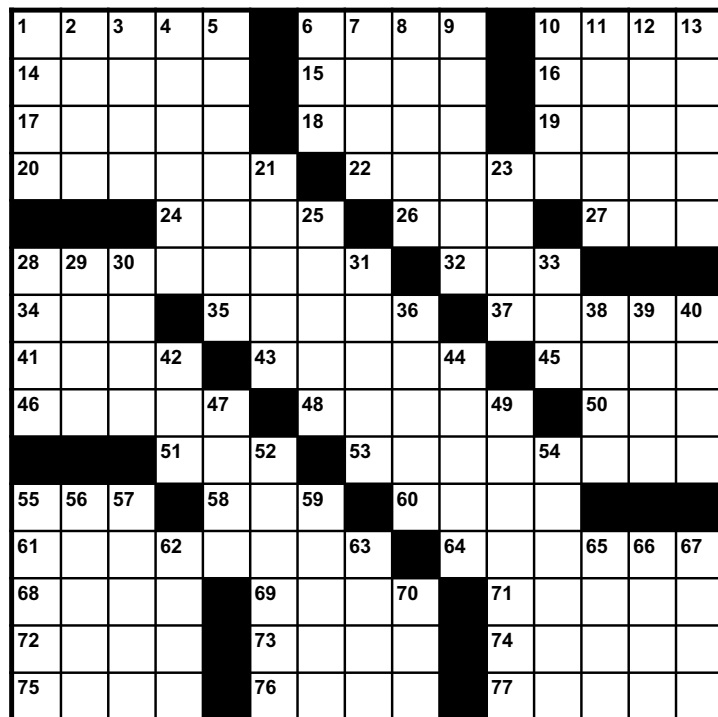
Editor’s note: The full text of Pope Francis’ message is available at <https://bit.ly/3PLwJHR>.

ACROSS

- 1 ___ Youth Day
- 6 First man
- 10 “Yeah, right!”
- 14 Shed ___
- 15 “But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly, bring the finest ___’” (Lk 15:22)
- 16 Wife of a rajah
- 17 Head pest
- 18 Flirtatious girl
- 19 Catholic-raised actor of Leaving Las Vegas fame
- 20 Stayed with
- 22 “And who is my ___?” (Lk 10:29)
- 24 Do a book job
- 26 Color TV pioneer
- 27 Pen
- 28 Scholar’s world
- 32 Latin for “to pray”
- 34 Catholic TV sitcom actor, Newhart
- 35 Negative cash flow
- 37 Holy Book
- 41 Cyberzine
- 43 Relinquish
- 45 Sound of a cat
- 46 Not a winner
- 48 Kind of tot?
- 50 Decease
- 51 Mon. in which All Saints’ Day is celebrated
- 53 Unmusical
- 55 Aves.
- 58 Liquid used in some sacraments
- 60 Musical composition for one
- 61 Jesus said of them, “the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mk 10:14)
- 64 Free from danger
- 68 Pertaining to Mars
- 69 Scottish Celt
- 71 Son of Jacob
- 72 Prefix with watt
- 73 “This ___ sudden!”
- 74 Sea mammals
- 75 Hammerhead
- 76 Home in a tree
- 77 First name in cosmetics

DOWN

- 1 “...___ through the valley of the shadow of death” (Ps 23:4)
- 2 Native American
- 3 Sign on again
- 4 Endured
- 5 Feared greatly
- 6 “He has shown might with his ___...” (Magnificat)
- 7 Murder



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

- 8 Son of Ner
- 9 Our Lady of Guadalupe is patroness of this country
- 10 Diocese opening
- 11 Swedish imports
- 12 Bar
- 13 Intensely ardent
- 21 Measured
- 23 Clothes
- 25 Dalai Lama’s homeland
- 28 Fourth person
- 29 Hot Diggity Catholic singer
- 30 French protest cry
- 31 Target
- 33 Goal
- 36 Along with Timothy, he was a disciple of Paul
- 38 Medieval English monk
- 39 Grandmother of Timothy
- 40 Female sheep
- 42 The flood is found here
- 44 Male voice
- 47 Large crucifix
- 49 Free from confinement
- 52 The Blessed ___ Mary
- 54 Not profits
- 55 Rascal
- 56 Number of Persons in God
- 57 Attack
- 59 Contract
- 62 Bank transaction
- 63 Monster loch
- 65 Converse
- 66 River in Africa
- 67 Gaelic
- 70 Nephew of Abraham



The Bishop Keane Institute presents:

Dr. Shannen Dee Williams

“Why Black Catholic History Matters”



Dr. Shannen Dee Williams is Associate Professor of History at the University of Dayton, and author of *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African-American Freedom Struggle*.



The Bishop Keane Institute
A Ministry of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church



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IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES



“Silent Night” is among the most recognizable Christmas carols, and its origin is a story that’s worth telling. Not only does the song immortalize the most wondrous night of all, but the words pay tribute to the miracle that is as timeless as the One in whose honor it was written.

The origin of the song was discovered only after Felix Mendelson performed it in 1840 at the Court of King William of Prussia to commemorate the birth of Christ. So taken was the king with the song that he wanted to know who wrote it.

After following several clues that led nowhere, its origin came to light through a 9-year-old boy whose father, Franz Gruber, had set the lyrics of the poem to music at the request of Father Joseph Mohr.

According to young Gruber, the lyrics were written on Christmas Eve 1818 by the village priest. On that evening, Father Mohr was working on his Christmas sermon for Midnight Mass when he was interrupted by a knock at the door. A peasant woman asked him to come with her to a home where a baby had just been born.

The priest immediately followed her, and when he arrived, he was deeply touched by the sight of the newborn babe and the peasant couple whose home was the poorest of dwelling places. Upon leaving their home, Father Mohr

was filled with joy over the wonder of what he had seen, and as he walked along in the still of the night, his thoughts traveled to another poor couple who had given birth to an infant in Bethlehem while all the world was asleep.

Later that night, after celebrating Midnight Mass, Father Mohr penned the lyrics that would become one of our most sacred hymns. Although the next day was Christmas, Father Mohr wasted no time in asking his friend Franz Gruber to put the words to music, and so it happened that “Silent Night” was born on Christmas Day.

It seems only fitting that the genesis of the song was wrapped in a human event that mirrors the humility of God who descended to Earth as a newborn babe, to a city about which was written:

*But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel (Mic 5:2).*

That a peasant couple and their newborn babe served as inspiration for a song that would be sung in the court of a king is but one example of how God’s ways are not our ways.

One of the things about the story that touches me most is that the priest responded to the knock at the door immediately. Without a moment’s hesitation, he left behind the sermon on which he had been working to answer the call to serve, and because he did, he was richly rewarded.

How easy it is to get caught up in what we’re doing, putting others on hold. To keep others waiting while we attend to our own agenda is averse to humility.

In Luke’s Gospel, we read how Mary went with haste to the hill country of Judah when she learned that her kinswoman Elizabeth was pregnant. She could have remained in prayer, contemplating how the angel’s message changed her life. Instead, she heeded the call of God without hesitation or

delay, showing us that no matter how worthwhile our efforts, service should come first.

Immediate obedience is a virtue that has long been esteemed in convents and monasteries, where religious are taught to leave behind whatever they are doing at the sound of the bell. They are to hear the voice of God and obey because moments of delay can cost them dearly.

Prompt obedience may sound simple, but practicing it requires acknowledging that the needs of others are just as important – or perhaps more important – than our own. If you’re looking for a New Year’s resolution, why not try seeing God’s voice in the events of everyday life?

If you tend to procrastinate, this practice will definitely help you to plan and manage your time better. If you are a perfectionist, doing and redoing so that you can shine, you will learn that your best is sufficient, since God makes up what we are lacking.

Father Joseph Mohr understood this, and as a result, Christians everywhere are able to lift their voices in heartfelt wonder and sing, “Silent Night, Holy Night,” during one of the holiest seasons of the year.

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

Mary's importance begins with Jesus



BELIEVE AS
YOU PRAY
MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

When I was stationed at St. Anne, Bristol, we hosted an ecumenical discussion on Mary, the Mother of God. It was well attended, and the discussion seemed very fruitful.

However, during one of the breaks, a member of one of the denominations present engaged me in a conversation about the event. He said he appreciated us gathering to talk about faith but wondered why we were spending so much time talking about Mary. He finished by saying he didn’t think about Mary very much; she just wasn’t that important to his faith.

His statement is also a challenge to us as Catholics that we need to be ready to answer. Why do we spend so much time talking about Mary? Why is Mary so important to our faith?

Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen had a powerful answer to this question: “The key to understanding Mary is to not start with her, but instead, begin with Jesus her son! The more we think of him, the more we will think of her. The less we think of Jesus, the less we think of Mary!”

Another answer to that question is that Jesus himself tells his disciples who Mary is and wants us to understand her importance for his disciples:

“Standing by the Cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:25-27).

Someone might counter that the New Testament has only a few references to Mary, and these are primarily in the infancy narratives. But in the Gospel of John, Mary is prominently present at the beginning and the end of Jesus’ public ministry. In Act of the Apostles, she is

prominently present at the birth of the Church on Pentecost.

Even more so, the Old Testament is filled with references to Mary. From Old Testament typology, we see Mary as the New Eve, the New Ark of the Covenant, the Mother of the King/God who is the Messiah. Pope Benedict XVI said, “The image of Mary in the New Testament is woven entirely of Old Testament threads.”

On this Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our first reading tells us that God blesses his people by the invocation of the name of God. Through the angel’s revelation to Mary at the Annunciation, we know that the name we invoke is now the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second reading, we learn from St. Paul that we are now sons of God through the Spirit of the son sent into our hearts — he who was born of a woman.

The Gospel joins us with the shepherds in searching for the one about whom the angels sang. When we find him, we will, like the shepherds, always find Mary with Jesus whom she bore. He will always make us think of her and she will always lead us to him.

Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.

**Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin
Mary the Mother of God
Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67: 2-3, 5, 6, 8;
Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21**

OPPORTUNITIES

St. Mary the Mother of God, Wytheville, is seeking a part-time administrative assistant. The administrative assistant provides support to the pastor and office manager in all matters. This position requires a minimum of two years' administrative assistance experience, high school diploma; associate degree preferred. Also, impeccable communication, planning and organizing skills, extreme attention to detail and pastoral sensitivity along with consistent professionalism, discretion and confidentiality. Proficiency with MS Office Suite and other programs are required and database entry. Ability to work alone, follow directions and complete tasks in a timely manner. Compensation and benefits are in accordance with the policies of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Qualified candidates should send a letter of interest, resume and completed diocesan application (<https://bit.ly/36ndEsX>) to Kim Street at officemanager@stmaryswytheville.org.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, West Point, is seeking applicants for the position of director of music. The successful applicant should have a bachelor's degree in music or equivalent professional experience. They should have a working knowledge of MS Office products and preferred to have bilingual English/Spanish skills. This position is responsible for overseeing the music arrangements for all parish liturgies. This is an 8-12 hour per week part-time position with flexible hours to include nights and weekends, available Dec. 1, 2022. Salary is negotiable based upon qualifications and experience. If interested, please submit a completed Diocese of Richmond employment application with a cover letter to Robert S. Ryalls, business manager, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 207 W. Euclid Blvd., West Point, Virginia 23181 or submit via email to: businessmgr@olbs-catholic.org

SHORTTAKES

Join Msgr. Patrick Golden on a pilgrimage to Scotland and Ireland, May 16-28, 2023. This is a 13-day tour for \$4,899, including: airfare, 4-star hotels, daily Mass, local tours, breakfast and dinner, and 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 or 804-298-4035,

or visit albastours.com. Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited.

All are welcome to join Father John Kazibwe from the Church of the Epiphany on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jordan April 19-29, 2023. This 11-day tour to two countries for \$4,399 includes round-trip airfare, 4-star hotels, daily Mass, breakfast and dinner, and much more! A few places on the itinerary include the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Basilica of Agony, the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu. In Tiberias, we will sail through the Sea of Galilee, tour Nazareth, and witness the site of the Transfiguration. Pilgrims can also go to the Dead Sea. We will spend two nights in Amman and visit Petra. For further information, please contact Alba Kim at 804-298-4035 or tours@albastours.com. You can also visit <https://www.albastours.com>. Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited.

Join Father Peter Naah from St. Matthew, Virginia Beach, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jordan, April 17-27, 2023. This 10-day tour for \$3,800 includes round-trip airfare, 5-star hotels, daily Mass, breakfast and dinner, and more. Itinerary includes a visit to the Basilica of the Transfiguration, the Basilica of Agony and the Dead Sea. We will spend five nights in Bethlehem and visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. For further information, contact Eddie Abufarha at 810-394-5291 or email: ttravels@gmail.com. You can also visit trinitytourtravels.com. Reservations are available now.

Correction

In the story about Rachel's Vineyard that appeared in the Dec. 12 issue of The Catholic Virginian, Maggie Carlson was incorrectly named as Maggie Colson. Additionally, Marty Montgomery-Jennings is a licensed therapist, not Matt Freeman.

MORE
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Antisemitism

Continued from Page 6

said the statement by the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations, noting "so-called 'Christian' nationalists openly declare that true Christians hate Jews."

Recognizing "the Jewishness of Jesus (as) a historical fact ... invalidates claims that Christians must oppose Jews and Judaism," said Philip Cunningham, professor of theology and co-director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. The university group is a member of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations.

In a 1975 statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations, the U.S. bishops lamented that "Christians have not fully appreciated their Jewish roots," due to a "de-Judaizing process" in early Christian history that "dulled our awareness of our Jewish beginnings."

"The fact that Jesus' own spirituality was thoroughly Jewish contradicts the idea that the Old Testament is obsolete," said Cunningham. "That is why it is part of the Christian Bible."

As part of the ongoing implementation of "Nostra Aetate," the U.S. bishops in 1988 issued the document, "God's Mercy Endures Forever," which pro-

vided specific guidelines on the presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic preaching.

Cunningham said scriptural readings and lessons should not be "framed in such a way as to either reduce the Old Testament to a mere preparation for Christianity, without any subsequent value for either Jews or Christians."

He pointed to St. John Paul II's 1997 address to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, where the pope said Jesus was "an authentic son of Israel" who "nourished his mind and heart" with the Hebrew Scriptures.

The relationship between Jews and Christians "has progressed to the point where many ... are able to see the holiness and richness of each other's traditions," said Adam Gregerman, an associate professor at St. Joseph's University and co-director of the school's Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations.

"There no longer need be an adversarial relationship, where one side has to be right and the other side has to be wrong," he said.

"We can learn from each other's ways of reading sacred texts, even if they differ from our own, and even with historically divisive texts such as the writings of the prophets."

"We also can learn from each other's teachings about ethical living, above all, how we treat all people as made in the image of God," he added.

Wishing You and Your Family
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El Papa da los 3 consejos clave para ser verdaderos discípulos y misioneros

El Santo Padre recibe a la comunidad del Pontificio Colegio Pío Latinoamericano y les recuerda que significa ser discípulo y ser misionero, para que cuando vuelvan a sus pueblos de Latinoamérica, sigan siendo “pastores del rebaño” y no “clérigos de Estado”.

MIREIA BONILLA – CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

“Estos años en los que ustedes están en Roma son un tiempo de gracia que el Señor les concede para profundizar en su formación, no sólo a nivel intelectual, académico, sino, además, para experimentar la riqueza y la diversidad de la Iglesia universal”. Con estas palabras el Papa Francisco ha iniciado su discurso dirigido a los miembros del Colegio Pío Latinoamericano, a quienes ha recibido esta mañana en la Sala Clementina del Vaticano. El Papa, en primer lugar, ha centrado su discurso en el significado de dos términos: discípulos y misioneros. Después, ha dado tres consejos clave para convertirse en uno de ellos.

¿Qué significa ser discípulos?

Francisco les ha explicado que, siguiendo el ejemplo del evangelio de Juan, en el que vemos que Andrés fue uno de los primeros discípulos de Jesús, están llamados a “renovar siempre ese encuentro con el Señor, cotidianamente, compartamos su Palabra, permanezcamos en silencio ante Él para ver qué nos dice, qué hace, cómo siente, cómo calla, cómo ama”.

“Dejémoslo que sea “Verbo” en nuestras vidas y, si me permiten la imagen, dejémoslo “conjugarse” en nosotros y a través nuestro. No le impidamos que actúe en nuestro ministerio en primera Persona. ¡Que Jesús tenga voz activa en cada una de nuestras decisiones! Somos ministros suyos, pertenecemos a Él y nos llamó para “estar con Él”. Esto es lo que significa ser sus discípulos”.

¿Qué significa ser misioneros?

Siguiendo con el ejemplo del evangelio de Juan, el Papa recuerda que el encuentro de Andrés con Jesús no lo dejó tranquilo y de brazos cruzados, sino que lo transformó, ya no era el mismo de antes, no podía más que ir a anunciar lo que había vivido y al primero que encontró para decírselo fue a su propio hermano, a Simón Pedro. “De este modo, Andrés se “estrenó” como misionero” dice el Papa. Por eso, afirma: “También a nosotros nos esperan nuestros hermanos y hermanas, especialmente los que aún no han experimentado el amor y la misericordia del Señor, para que les anunciemos la Buena Noticia de Jesús y los conduzcamos hacia Él. Salir, movernos, llevar la alegría del Evangelio, eso es ser misioneros”.

Los verbos “estar” y “salir” resumen el sentido de nuestra vida

El Papa también señala como ejemplo



El Papa Francisco visita una escena de la Natividad durante una audiencia con los donantes del árbol de Navidad para el Vaticano y las escenas de la Natividad, en la sala Pablo VI del Vaticano el 3 de diciembre de 2022. (Foto CNS/Remo Casilli, Reuters)

el evangelio de Marcos en el que resume la llamada de Jesús a ser discípulos y misioneros: “llamó a los apóstoles para que estuvieran con Él y para enviarlos a predicar” dice el Papa, centrándose en esos dos verbos: “estar” y “salir”:

“Ese es el sentido de nuestra vida. Se trata de un camino “de ida y vuelta”, que tiene a Jesús como punto de partida y de llegada. No olvidemos que “estar” con Jesús y “salir” a anunciarlo es también estar con los pobres, con los migrantes, con los enfermos, con los presos, con los más pequeños y olvidados de la sociedad, para compartir con ellos la vida y anunciarles el amor incondicional de Dios. Porque Jesús está presente en esos hermanos y hermanas más vulnerables, ahí Él nos espera de un modo especial” ha afirmado Francisco.

“Y no se olviden de volver a Él, cada noche, después de una larga jornada —pero ojo, a Él, no a la pantalla de un celular—.”

Primer consejo: No sean adictos al celular, sino al encuentro con Jesús

El Papa Francisco ha señalado en primer lugar la importancia de conectar, al final del día, con Jesús, y no con la pantalla del celular que “nos atiborra de cosas”. “Por favor, no sean adictos a ese mundo de escape. No sean adictos. Son diversos pasos que te van quitando la fuerza. Sean adictos al encuentro con Jesús, y Él sabe lo que nos hace falta y tiene una palabra para decirnos en cada ocasión” ha explicado.

Segundo consejo:

No negocien nunca la pastoralidad

Francisco les ha dicho al principio de su discurso que cuando vuelvan a Latinoamérica sean “pastores del Pueblo de Dios” y no “clérigos de Estado”, e insiste una vez más: “Por favor, no negocien nunca la pastoralidad. Pastores del Pueblo de Dios, no clérigos de Estado. No caigan en el clericalismo, que es una de las peores perversiones. Estén muy atentos, el clericalismo es una forma de mundanidad espiritual. El clericalismo es deformante, es corrupto, y te lleva a una corrupción, una corrupción almidonada, con la nariz parada, que te aparta del pueblo, te hace olvidar el pueblo de donde saliste”.

Tercer consejo: Sean pastores del pueblo, no clérigos de Estado

El tercer consejo que da el Santo Padre es que no caigan en “la peste del clericalismo”: “Por favor, cada vez que se hacen más “exquisitos” en el sentido verdadero de la palabra, o sea, más alejados del pueblo, cada vez que hacen eso, se apartan de la gracia de Dios y caen en la peste del clericalismo. Pastores del pueblo, no clérigos de Estado”. Por tanto, antes de concluir su discurso les ha exhortado a “pedir la gracia de saber estar siempre delante, medio y detrás del pueblo, metidos con el pueblo del cual Jesús los sacó”.



Nota del director del Ministerio Hispano: Daniel Villar

Las palabras del Papa Francisco son claves para el desarrollo espiritual y ministerial del pueblo de Dios. La Sagrada Escritura nos dice que la fe sin obras es muerta (Sant. 2, 14-17). Entonces, si debemos obrar por medio de la

fe y la fe se distingue por la obra, ¿cómo deberemos empezar y continuar en este camino? Entender lo que significa el ser discípulo misionero, vivir los verbos “estar” y “salir”, y seguir los consejos de nuestro Vicario de Cristo.

DC-area Catholic school alum wins Heisman Trophy

Former teachers say Caleb Williams was determined, humble in reaching goals

WILLIAM MURRAY
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – Caleb Williams, the star quarterback at the University of Southern California who won the Heisman Trophy Dec. 10, earlier made his mark at two Washington-area Catholic schools he attended for middle school and high school.

Before graduating from Gonzaga College High School in Washington in 2021, Williams attended St. Pius X Regional School in Bowie, Maryland, a D.C. suburb.

“We love Caleb!” a group of purple-clad Gonzaga students chanted during a Heisman Trophy watch party at the Jesuit boys’ high school.

Williams had just become the first Washington-area native to win the Heisman Trophy.

Four years earlier in November 2018, Williams, as Gonzaga’s sophomore quarterback, had lifted the Eagles to their first Washington Catholic Athletic Conference football title since 2002 with an improbable 46-43 win over DeMatha.

The stunning game included a last-second 53-yard “Hail Mary” touchdown pass from Williams to leaping wide receiver John Marshall to seal the victory at The Catholic University of America’s Cardinal Stadium.

After a yearlong stay at the University of Oklahoma, where Williams led the Sooners to a come-from-behind win over archrival Texas, Williams transferred to USC. This season, his first at USC, he threw for more than 4,000 yards with a 66% pass completion rate, 37



Caleb Williams, quarterback for the University of Southern California, reacts after winning the Heisman Award at the Lincoln Center in New York City Dec. 10, 2022. (CNS photo/Todd Van Emst, Heisman Trust, Pool via USA TODAY Sports, Reuters)

touchdowns and only four interceptions in leading the Trojans to a No. 8 AP ranking and an 11-2 record.

Williams had transferred from Norman, Oklahoma, home of the Sooners, to USC in Los Angeles, after former OU coach Lincoln Riley took the top job at USC in 2021.

Debbie Corradini, a resource teacher at St. Pius X Regional School, remembers Williams for his qualities off the gridiron from when he attended St. Pius in the seventh and eighth grade.

“We taught him, but in a lot of ways, he taught us (more) about being hardworking, kind and humble,” she told the Catholic Standard, Washington’s archdiocesan newspaper. “He was very well-mannered and kind to his peers.”

A 36-year veteran of the St. Pius

X Regional School staff and the mother of four children, Corradini cried during the Heisman presentation, feeling proud of Williams.

She recalled Williams during his middle school years as “having the drive to be the very best at everything he did.”

He enjoyed other activities, such as biking, fishing and swimming, but ironically found relaxation in the rough and tumble contact sport of football, she recalled.

Corradini remembered him overcoming doubts about whether he was big enough to be an effective quarterback.

During his middle school years, Williams decided to focus on football as a sport, and he and his father, Carl Williams, would venture out for 5:30 a.m. workouts at the Prince

George’s Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Maryland, not far from FedEx Field, the home stadium of the Washington Commanders.

“He has a great mom and dad,” Corradini said. “They did a great job keeping him humble.”

Even in middle school, Williams had set his sights on winning a Heisman Trophy and eventually becoming a professional football player, something she sometimes hears from young students, Corradini recalled.

During recess, she remembers Williams “throwing the football with his buddies,” including a couple who matriculated to Gonzaga and played football with him there.

Luke Casey, a fifth-grade teacher at St. Pius and an assistant football coach at DeMatha, helped privately coach Williams in the quarterback position, which requires a great deal of athleticism, leadership and mental dexterity.

Jesuit Father Joseph Ligan, who became president of Gonzaga in 2021, paid tribute to “Caleb’s leadership both on and off the field, his charitable nature, and his gracious and humble character,” in a statement the school released after the Heisman Trophy announcement.

“Caleb and his parents embraced all that Gonzaga has to offer,” the priest said. “He graduated as an integral community member who both contributed to and benefited from our extraordinary school.”

“On behalf of the entire Gonzaga community, congratulations Caleb! You will always be an Eagle! Continue to make us proud!” Father Ligan added.

Bishop kicks off Simbang Gabi novena



Bishop Barry C. Knestout was the principal celebrant for the opening Mass of Simbang Gabi at Holy Cross, Lynchburg, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022. Simbang Gabi is a novena of night Masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary that is traditionally celebrated by Filipino Catholics during Advent. The novena is an opportunity to express faith, joy and excitement for the birth of the Christ Child. (Submitted photo)

Father Pavone laicized Says Vatican did not notify him

WASHINGTON (CNS) – In a live morning broadcast on Twitter Dec. 18, Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, said he was not told directly by the Vatican that he has been laicized.

Pavone said he learned about it from Catholic News Agency in an email asking him for comment about the Vatican returning him to the lay state. Late Dec. 17, CNA broke the story that “Father Pavone has been dismissed from the clerical state for ‘blasphemous communications on social media’ and ‘persistent disobedience of the lawful instructions of his diocesan bishop.’”

The news outlet said it had obtained a Dec. 13 letter about the matter – “confirmed by multiple sources as authentic” – that Archbishop Christophe Pierre, U.N. nuncio, sent to U.S. bishops.

It said the priest was given

many opportunities to defend himself in the canonical proceedings and “submit himself to the authority of his diocesan bishop.”

“It was determined that Father Pavone had no reasonable justification for his actions,” and there is “no possibility of appeal,” the letter said.

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