



# The Catholic Virginian

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Above: Architecture firm Glavé & Holmes' digital rendering of the new Saint Gertrude High School. The 51,000 square-foot building includes a belltower and overlooks the James River. Groundbreaking was in 2020 and the goal is to have students start the 2023-2024 school year in the new building.

Right: Inspired by the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the original school building, the Great Hall features 30-foot-tall windows, a stone fireplace, and a café.

(Images submitted)



## New school building combines history with the future

### Saint Gertrude celebrates 101 years of faith and education

KRISTEN L. BYRD  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

For nearly a century, Saint Gertrude High School, Virginia's only all-girls Catholic preparatory day school, was a staple of Richmond's Museum District, the students in their signature green uniforms a common sight on the city's sidewalks.

In 2020, Saint Gertrude and Benedictine College Preparatory, an all-boys Catholic high school, unified under the umbrella of Benedictine Schools of Richmond. Saint Gertrude then relocated to Goochland County, where its brother school had moved several years earlier.

After sharing the same academic building for the past three years, Saint Gertrude is soon to have a new building of its own, all while paying

homage to its first home.

The school's internal design team started planning for the building in the spring of 2020. They met with several architectural firms before selecting Richmond-based Glavé & Holmes to build the 51,000-square-foot structure overlooking the James River.

"We chose Glavé & Holmes because they demonstrated the best understanding of what our internal design team wanted to accomplish: honor the Catholic and periodic architectural traditions of the original Saint Gertrude building, develop a modern school building to meet a high standard of pedagogical and technological support, and expand the building's functionality to further reinforce the Rule of Saint Benedict,

See Saint Gertrude, Page 10

## Spreading the Light of Christ

### Mass for consecrated religious, Feb. 2

LILY NGUYEN DUNKLE  
The Catholic Virginian

When Bishop Barry C. Knestout celebrates Mass for men and women religious on the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life, celebrating with them for the first time in the Diocese of Richmond will be three members of the Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hanoi (LHC) — Sisters Hong Bui, Nhan Vu and Linh Do. With the bishop's permission, the order began serving the community at Our Lady of Vietnam Catholic Church, Hampton, this past summer.

The Diocese of Richmond is served by 114 women representing 20 religious communities.

In addition to the convent in Hampton, LHC members serve in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Wisconsin in education, health-care, evangelization and social work.

In instituting the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life as an annual observance in 1997, St. Pope John Paul II said it was "intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord."

Bishop Knestout will celebrate Mass on the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life on Thursday, Feb. 2, 5 p.m., at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond.

St. Pope John Paul II specifically designated that day, which is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, as "an eloquent icon of the total offering of one's life for all those who are called to show forth in the Church and in the world, by means of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus — the chaste, poor and obedient one."

*Editor's note: Please contact Nazia Shafi, Director of Safe Environment/Coordinator, Women Religious at nshafi@richmonddiocese.org for more information.*

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# Proclaim persuasive truth of Gospel to change hearts



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

This past Friday, thousands of people descended upon Washington for the 50th Annual March for Life. Some might wonder, since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision that abortion is not a constitutional right, why march?

Advocating for the sanctity of life remains an ongoing concern at the national level as members of the legislative branch, with support from those serving in the executive branch, continue to align abortion with health care and, even more preposterously, human rights. Thus, our work on behalf of the unborn is far from finished.

Because legislatively the right to life is now in the purview of the states, our advocacy efforts must be attentive to and focus on what is being done at the state Capitol. Thus, our diocese, the Diocese of Arlington and the Virginia Catholic Conference are participating in *Defending Life Day* on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington will give remarks and I will say a prayer at the gathering, which includes the Virginia March for Life. (More information is available at [vacatholic.org](http://vacatholic.org)).

As Catholics and Christians, we have a civic responsibility to be advocates for the sanctity of human life, especially the unborn. We need to be vigilant in monitoring the work of our elected officials and use the avenues available to us — including the voting booth — to express our views about the dignity of human life.

Because of the agnostic, secular culture in

which we live, we know that there are many who do not share our views about the sacredness of human life. Thus, we do not always get the legislative outcomes for which we continue to work. That's a reality with which we must deal, and which should be a matter on which we reflect.

If we are concerned about the outcomes of our advocacy, we may have to do some self-examination as well as confront our opponents. How is it that we fall short in convincing our neighbor and others within the culture about the dignity of the human person? How can we remedy that?

The remedy is most likely found in witnessing to the charity, mercy and love God has for us, and to express that in our words and actions toward others. It also requires us to listen with the "ear of the heart," as Pope Francis said in his message for World Day of Social Communications last year.

When impatient advocates become bitter ideologues, they lose their ability to convince others. As Pope Francis notes, our "refusal to listen often ends up turning into aggression toward the other." No one is going to be won over by force and fear. To convince those who do not embrace the sanctity of human life, they should see that we respect them, even when we abhor the wrong they are doing and the harm they are causing.

Some might disagree. They might insist that we get more confrontational in our approach. However, our faith is a faith where we seek to convince people of the truth through our example of charity and mercy.

If we use rhetoric that condemns or if we are too compacted in our approach, it is unlikely that we will make headway because that method

requires defeating the other rather than winning them over. Our faith calls us to bring people to the Gospel and not simply dismiss them and their concerns. Our faith inspires us to use the truth, goodness and beauty of the Gospel and to express them with our words and actions.

As we prepare for *Defending Life Day*, we can and should examine how we proclaim the persuasive truth of the Gospel to change hearts.

## Diocese in compliance with US bishops' charter

StoneBridge Business Partners, Rochester, New York, has notified Bishop Barry C. Knestout that the Catholic Diocese of Richmond remains in compliance with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The independent auditor reviewed data collection for the 2021-2022 audit period. The diocese has been in compliance with the Charter since the initial audit in 2004.

The findings demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the diocese to the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse. As part of this commitment, diocesan policies on creating safe environments and conduct are routinely reviewed to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the diocese.

Stonebridge Business Partners conducts the yearly audits for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Office of Child and Youth Protection.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father Stephen J. McNally



Bishop Barry C. Knestout and priests of the Diocese of Richmond concelebrated a Funeral Mass for Father Stephen J. McNally on Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2023, at Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke. Father McNally, 69, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Jan. 4.

A native of the Bronx, New York, Father McNally was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond on May 17, 1986. His first parish assignment was parochial vicar at Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach. In 1988, he was named parochial vicar of Church of the Epiphany, Richmond, until later that year when he served in the same role at St. Bede, Williamsburg, until 1991.

Father McNally's first pastorate was at St. Paschal Baylon, South Boston, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Brookneal, 1991-1995. From 1995-2001, he was stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn, Germany, as the chaplain to the U.S. Mission while serving the St. Thomas More Catholic Community.

Upon his return to the diocese, Father McNally became pastor of Holy Name of Mary, Bedford, until 2009. That year he was named pastor of the Church of the Transfiguration, Fincastle, and St. John the Evangelist, New Castle. In February 2011, he was given pastoral oversight of St. Joseph, Clifton Forge, and Sacred Heart, Covington.

Father McNally served as national chaplain of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. He was also chaplain of the Father Lynch Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Fincastle Fire Department, and Roanoke Police Department. He additionally served as a public safety chaplain of Bedford County.

He is survived by his sister, Jean Macedonio (Sal) of Stony Brook, New York; brothers Tim McNally (Donna) of Patchogue, New York, and Matthew McNally (Lynn) of Massapequa, New York, and sister-in-law, Mey McNally of Queens Village, New York. He is further survived by eight nieces and nephews and many loving friends.

Father McNally was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph L. and Ida Callegari McNally and by his brother, Terry.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Church of the Transfiguration Capital Building Fund, 7624 Roanoke Road, Fincastle, VA 24090, or to St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, 99 Second Street, New Castle, VA 24127.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father Charles A. Saglio, Jr.



A memorial service will be held for Father Charles A. Saglio, Jr. at 11 a.m., Friday, Feb. 3, at St. Jerome, Newport News. Father Saglio, 80, died Friday, Dec. 30, 2022.

A native of New Britain, Connecticut, Father Saglio was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Richmond on May 4, 1974.

His first assignment was as associate pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes, Richmond, 1974-1976. Subsequent service as an associate pastor/parochial vicar included Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg, 1976-1979; Church of the Resurrection, Portsmouth, 1980-1981; St. Therese, Chesapeake, 1981-1983; St. Pius X, Norfolk, 1983-1991; St. Paul, Portsmouth, 1991-1992; and St. Jerome, Newport News, 2000-2006.

Father Saglio was administrator of Immaculate Conception, Hampton, for part of 1992; the Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk, 1992-1993; and Holy Comforter, Charlottesville, for part of 1993. From 1993-2000, he served as chaplain at Mary Immaculate Hospital, Newport News.

For the latter part of 2005, Father Saglio served as administrator of St. Peter the Apostle, Ebony, and St. Richard, Emporia. He was a priest in residence at Shrine of the Infant of Prague and St. Jude, both in Franklin, for the first part of 2006. In 2007, he was named pastor of the shrine and the parish, serving until his retirement in 2021.

The priest, who held a doctorate in education, also taught at St. Leo University's Fort Eustis campus.

Father Saglio is survived by his sister, Rita S. Rourke (James) of Deep River, Connecticut, along with other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles Albert Saglio and Angeline Scalise Saglio.

# New editor hopes to share 'beauty and joy' of Catholic faith

## First woman, Vietnamese-American leads The Catholic Virginian

**BRIAN T. OLSZEWSKI**  
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Lily Nguyen Dunkle is the daughter of parents who came to the United States as refugees after the fall of Vietnam in 1975, a wife, mother of eight children, a TV news producer with 20 years' experience and, in her words, "one of many families just trying to live and grow in the faith."

As of Tuesday, Jan. 10, she is also the fifth editor of The Catholic Virginian — the first woman to hold that position in the more than 90-year history of the paper.

Born and raised in Alexandria, Nguyen Dunkle is a 2000 graduate of The College of William & Mary with a bachelor's degree in English. Although she had an initial interest in print journalism, Nguyen Dunkle began her career in 2001 as a producer of TV newscasts at WVEC-TV 13, Norfolk. In 2019, she was hired as the senior news producer at WTKR/WGNT-TV, Norfolk.

A year later, she was named executive producer, supervising the station's entire nightside news staff.

"I've always had a love for storytelling and that's how I got into local TV," she said of her career.

Nguyen Dunkle and her husband, Heber, director of liturgy at their parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newport News, homeschool their children, ages 2-17.

"I learned from my parents how to live with a quiet, strong, steadfast faith. They taught me to work hard and always give thanks to God," she said. "Once I got married and had children, my faith became even more important to me. I started to think about ways I could use my skills to glorify God, especially once I started homeschooling my children."

Nguyen Dunkle credits her husband and children with taking her love of Catholicism to the next level.

"I've grown to see there's so much joy and beauty in our faith. That beauty is always evident in



Lily Nguyen Dunkle

Catholic tradition, the sacred part of our faith, and the things we see in church, but what I've seen after becoming a mother is there's also much joy that can be shared in modern, everyday life."

Lest life in their household sounds as idyllic as that depicted in a '50s TV sitcom, Nguyen Dunkle put it in context.

"There are definitely daily struggles, but I am a firm believ-

er that every single person in the family plays an important role in the household," she said. "It is difficult having a big family, but it is also a great way to teach your kids that working hard is holy and can be a prayer. Everyone can help with school, chores, and taking care of one another. And those contributions, big and small, no matter a person's age, help make a happy and peaceful home, though not necessarily the tidiest."

While Nguyen Dunkle doesn't consider her own story "amazing," she is interested in having The Catholic Virginian tell stories of Catholics living their faith in the Diocese of Richmond.

"Inspiring acts come in all forms," she said. "I'm excited to share stories that showcase the everyday beauty and joy of our faith in parishes, homes, and communities."

*Nguyen Dunkle can be reached at [lnguyen@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:lnguyen@catholicvirginian.org).*

## 'Pew and Pulpit': Transforming a parish through love and beauty

**FATHER MICHAEL RENNIER**  
OSV News

There are Sundays I barely hear my voice when I'm preaching. The gentle drone of toddlers drowns me out.

When we surveyed our parish, we discovered that the median age was only 25 years old, thus Mass at our parish is crawling with children, who are highly engaged. Altar servers debate fiercely over who gets the best tasks, storming the sacristy before Mass to claim coveted jobs. The children in the pews whisper loud commentary to their mothers, explaining that the Host looks like bread but is, in fact, Jesus. One little boy, in a symbolic act, once rolled an apple towards the altar. The toddlers squeal when the sanctus bells ring. A number of teenage girls sing in the schola. We're one big family at prayer.

It wasn't always this way.

When I arrived in the parish, there were very few children. At some Masses, none at all. I love parishioners of all ages and particularly delight to chat with older parishioners after daily Mass, but a parish lacking the younger demographic lacks a future, so I asked visiting young families what was missing. They replied that they desire reverent worship. They want to be challenged by beauty and immerse their children in the fullness of Catholic culture and devotion. They

want their children not only to be told that Jesus loves them, but for them to see, hear, smell, and feel it.

I set out to offer a Mass that would appeal to children as well as adults. We started using incense, gave the altar servers cassocks, fixed up the unused organ, and added some Latin and chant. We reintroduced colorful old devotions like veiling statues in Lent, the Rorate Caeli Mass, and Eucharistic processions. In short, we used the already-existing liturgical treasures of the Church to curate a sense of imaginative wonder. The goal is not a consumerist worship experience but, rather, a transcendental one.

This is all it took. In five years, our parish has almost doubled in attendance and overflows with people of all ages. Every Sunday we give God our most beautiful liturgical gift, incarnating our worship into poetic prayer because the Mass is a lived reality, an open door to eternity. The sacramental grace of the Eucharist reveals itself to even the smallest child and draws us into the universal embrace of God's love.

God is Truth, but he is also Beauty. These two virtues are linked, which is why the mediaevals referred to beauty as the splendor of truth. For our worship to be truly life-altering, it cannot merely hold to intellectual truth about Jesus, it also must give body to that truth by revealing his beauty.

The proper language of the Mass is poetic. A poetic mindset looks to the future with hope and grasps unnamed realities. It explores inner landscapes, timeless and wide, beauty beyond the reach of everyday language. The Church has always understood that the Mass is less a catechetical lesson and more a dizzying encounter with a Beauty, ever ancient, ever new.

Our parishioners have difficulty expressing why the Mass affects them so deeply. They only know it does, even as the children are busy with their own boisterous prayers. They only know they want to tell their friends about it.

I consider that guarding sacred beauty is my fatherly duty. As priest, my intent at Mass is to fade away so Christ might increase, drawing each soul into his gravitation toward the great center. The insistence for imaginative beauty is not something our parish has invented as a matter of personal taste. It's already present in the ancient Mass. Our task is to be attentive, to reach out and touch the hem of Our Lord's garment.

It's interesting that this seemingly impractical insistence on the poetic has resulted in quite measurable results — a growing parish, enthusiasm for evangelization, and lives changed. Our choice for beauty has had stunning results, none more than the dawning knowledge of each parishioner who comes to Mass that they are known and loved.

## Pope: To be pastoral, look to the Good Shepherd

**JUSTIN McLELLAN**  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christians must develop a pastoral heart to care for those who have not heard the Gospel or who have left the fold, Pope Francis said.

"By being with Jesus, we discover

that his pastoral heart always beats for the person who is confused, lost, far away," the pope said at his weekly general audience Jan. 18. "Jesus never said, 'Let them sort themselves out,' he went out to find them."

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to model themselves on Jesus,

the Good Shepherd, longing for those who have left the church just as a shepherd longs for lost sheep, rather than treating them as "adversaries or enemies."

He encouraged the pilgrims and visitors gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall to reflect on

how God seeks out those who distance themselves from him.

"The Lord suffers when we distance ourselves from his heart," he said, "but in response to this suffering he does not withdraw, rather he risks. He leaves the 99 sheep who are safe and ventures out for the lost one."



# Cardinal Pell's faith, suffering remembered at Vatican funeral

CINDY WOODEN  
OSV News

VATICAN CITY – The death of Australian Cardinal George Pell was a shock because just five days earlier he had concelebrated the funeral of Pope Benedict XVI and “seemed in good health,” said Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals.

In his homily at Cardinal Pell's funeral Mass Jan. 14 in St. Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Re described the Australian prelate as often being “a strong-willed and decisive protagonist” with “a strong temperament that, at times, could appear harsh.”

Cardinal Pell died of a heart attack Jan. 10 at a Rome hospital after undergoing hip surgery. He was 81. His burial was scheduled for Feb. 2 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, where he had served as archbishop before Pope Francis chose him as prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy.

The pope, who had praised the cardinal for keeping his faith “with perseverance even in the hour of trial,” arrived in St. Peter's Basilica at the end of the Mass to preside over the final rite of commendation, as he usually does for cardinals who die in Rome.

“The last years of his life were marked by an unjust and painful condemnation,” Cardinal Re said, referring to Cardinal Pell's conviction on charges of sexual abuse and his 404 days in jail before the Australian high court overturned the



**Pope Francis leads the final commendation during the funeral Mass for Australian Cardinal George Pell in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Jan. 14, 2023. Cardinal Pell, former prefect of the Vatican's Secretariat for the Economy, died Jan. 10 in Rome at the age of 81. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)**

conviction.

Cardinal Re told mourners at the funeral that the court “exonerated him with a sentence of full innocence, and he was finally able to leave prison.”

Cardinal Pell's trust in God amid such suffering, Cardinal Re said, is an example of “how to accept even unjust punishments with dignity and inner peace.”

The cardinal's three-volume “Prison Journal” made clear “how much faith and prayer” helped him, and the books could help others who “suffer unjustly,” Cardinal Re said.

“A man of God and a man of the church, he was characterized by a deep faith and great firmness of doctrine, which he always defended without hesitation and with courage, concerned only with being faithful to Christ,” Cardinal Re said. “As he repeatedly pointed out, the weakening of faith in the Western world and the moral crisis of the family grieved him.”

Cardinal Re ended his homily saying, “To God, who is good and rich in mercy, we entrust this brother of ours, praying that God may welcome him into the peace and intimacy of his love.”

## Relief workers face extreme danger providing aid in Ukraine

JONATHAN LUXMOORE  
OSV News

KRAKOW, Poland – Catholic aid organizations are warning that increasing attacks by Russian missiles are preventing supply access to Ukraine, after 44 civilians, including four children, were killed when a Russian missile struck an apartment block in Dnipro Jan. 13. A week earlier, a Catholic volunteer lost a leg delivering food in the embattled Bakhmut in the Donbas region.

“Our 200 Ukrainian order members have disbursed humanitarian relief throughout this war across the country, right up to the front line,” said Krzysztof Sietczynski, spokesman for the Knights of Columbus in Poland. “Although we'll continue sending aid, Moscow's missile campaign is obviously impeding our work, and we can't reach areas controlled and occupied by the Russian army.”

The charity worker spoke as last-ditch efforts continued to find dozens still missing after the attack on the multistory block in Dnipro, which also left 75 Ukrainians injured.

In a national message Jan. 15, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, said the attack on Dnipro, where three days of mourning were declared, had been the “most tragic” of 57 weekend missile strikes against Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities.

In an OSV News interview, Sietczynski said the Knights of

Columbus — a U.S.-based Catholic brotherhood that has 2 million members globally and is one of the world's largest charities — was cooperating closely with Poland's church-owned Caritas network in supplying aid via the western Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Sietczynski added that the crippling of Grazyna Aondo Akaa, who worked for Klika, a sister organization run for the disabled by the Dominican order in Krakow, Poland, had highlighted the dangers facing volunteers in the increasingly vicious conflict.

Akaa, a special needs expert from Krakow's Pedagogical University, remained hospitalized in Lublin, Poland's Health Ministry confirmed, after losing her leg from a mortar shell while delivering humanitarian supplies Jan. 6 to the disabled in the besieged town of Bakhmut.

In a Jan. 11 Facebook post, Akaa said her life had been saved by a fellow volunteer, who applied a tourniquet and kept her conscious, adding that she had been evacuated to Poland by ambulance after emergency surgery at Pavlograd.

She added that around 120 Bakhmut residents were “paying daily with their lives and health” for Russian attempts to capture the town, and said she had later made a short video “to remind the world this isn't some computer shoot-out.”

“My own price is relatively light — I knew what I was doing, and have phenomenal medical care and support from fantastic people around

me, and good prospects for my future life,” the Klika volunteer said in her post.

“Some of the people who've stayed in Bakhmut are absolutely helpless and alone, unable to manage with nowhere to go. Disability and war are a combination that makes survival very, very difficult — and without outside support, there's no chance. There's no way to help these people unless one is there with them.”

In an interview with OSV News, Szymon Czystek, the Knights' director of international growth in Europe, described Akaa as a “true hero” and “ambassador for the disabled,” who had earlier helped evacuate Ukrainians in wheelchairs from basements in Kharkiv “when there was no one else to get them out.”

Akaa's husband, Bawer Aondo Akaa, also is disabled, and Czystek added that now, as the wife of a man in a wheelchair, Akaa will be “on the other side,” which for me makes her story somewhat out of this world, something that really only in the context of faith we're able to process and transform into even more good.”

However, Sietczynski told OSV News there were now real fears about the “serious, continual dangers” facing aid workers in Ukraine.

He added that the Knights of Columbus had set up a fund to enable humanitarian supplies to continue to be distributed, but said it was becoming harder to elicit public donations and offers of help as the war dragged on.

“Over 140 years of existence, the

Knights have gained aid distribution experience in various wars — but the Russians are trying to discourage Ukrainians from continuing the war by destroying morale, and some people are risking their lives every day by coming close to the front,” the Knights of Columbus spokesman said.

“Our brothers are in regular contact with the Ukrainian army, finding out where they can travel to supply aid, and which communication lines are reasonably secure,” he said. “But those seeking to help others, including women and children with no food, electricity or heating, are totally defenseless against the missiles, which can strike at any moment with little if any warning.”

In a Jan. 16 statement from Brussels, the New York-based International Rescue Committee said its own staff members in Ukraine were safe, but could not “provide life-saving assistance under a barrage of missile strikes,” adding that each attack impeded “the delivery of critical aid, while the world bears witness to the cost innocent civilians continue to pay for the war.”

Meanwhile, a priest of the Society of St. Paul in Lviv, Father Mariusz Krawiec, told Poland's Catholic Information Agency (KAI) that Ukrainians see the presence of outside volunteers as “a sign of hope and solidarity” that they were “not left alone in their suffering and fight for freedom,” but confirmed that many were risking their lives as delivering “desperately needed humanitarian aid” has become “extremely dangerous.”





# Advocating for life, dignity, common good in 2023 session

**COMMENTARY**  
JEFF CARUSO

The 46-day 2023 Virginia General Assembly session began Wednesday, Jan. 11. As in 2022, there is a “divided government” in the legislature, with a narrow Republican majority in the house and a narrow Democrat majority in the senate. As a result, any legislation will need at least some level of bipartisan support in order to pass.

As of the date this article was written, Sunday, Jan. 15, many bills have been introduced but additional ones will continue to surface. Of the bills that have already been filed, some will move forward quickly and others will not get traction. Though the full picture is still emerging, what is certain this year and – every year – is the strong stand the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) will take for life, religious freedom, families and protecting the poorest and most vulnerable across a wide spectrum of issues. During the 2023 session, some of the issues on which the VCC will be especially focused are:

- Advancing state policies that provide unborn babies and their mothers the protection, care and resources they need;
- Opposing assisted suicide;
- Protecting religious freedom;
- Promoting marriage and parental rights;
- Expanding Virginia’s Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits (EISTC) program;
- Curbing marijuana’s risks to children, health and public safety;
- Creating a state adoption tax credit; and
- Providing vital assistance to the poor and vulnerable.

As bills impacting key areas of VCC advocacy continue to be filed, the VCC will be on the lookout for emerging opportunities and challenges.

**To make a difference this session:**

**Connect:** Visit [www.vacatholic.org](http://www.vacatholic.org), where you can click “Join us!” to sign up to receive VCC email alerts, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. We will provide action alerts throughout the session – easy and effective ways for you to contact your legislators before they vote on key bills.

**Engage:** Act on VCC action alerts. Legislators must hear from their constituents.

**Be a powerful presence:** Attend Virginia Pro-Life Day on Wednesday, Feb. 1, in Richmond. Join pro-life advocates from across Virginia for a full day of advocacy, witness and prayer for life. Visit [vaprolifeday.org](http://vaprolifeday.org) to register and learn more.

*Jeff Caruso is the executive director of the Virginia Catholic Conference, public policy arm of Virginia’s Catholic bishops.*

### Don’t change God’s word to fit popular views

Re: “Church should evolve view of same-sex marriage” (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 12)

I feel constant amazement at those who not only believe, but who insist, God’s word should be changed to fit current political or popular view. Perhaps reading of the Bible is in order as it contains something about the acts of same-sex interaction being an abomination to God.

As to “same-sex love does not hurt anyone,” this love, being against God’s word, damages the soul of those who practice it. Condoning such interaction by an individual, or the Church, would be the same as approval, leading to more experimentation by those not previously exposed to it because it would now be “OK,” thus hurting more people.

As to the rise in violent crime against the gay, lesbian and transsexual community, this, too, is a sin. We are all made in God’s image and are all God’s children loved by God. But we were given free will and what we choose to do with it is — right or wrong — up to us.

God loves us, but he may not love what we have chosen to do with our lives.

– A.J. Bates  
Lovington

### God made marriage for man and woman

What Philip Russo does not understand is that God and God’s word does not need to conform to social standards, but social standards need to — and should — conform to God’s laws (Catholic Virginian, Dec. 12).

Catholics do meet, talk to and befriend members of the LGBTQ community. God loves all of his children. But you cannot pervert the marriage contract by socially making it acceptable to marry your own sex. That is morally unacceptable.

God pronounced judgment on two of the worst morally degenerate towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, for doing just what our society is accepting as “fine.” It is not “fine.”

God still loves all people, but he made marriage for a man and a woman to form a united family and to raise children that come from that union. Period.

No one denies same-sex couples can raise and love children as much, but the issue is that is not what marriage was created by God for.

The Church does not have to “evolve” to society. God created moral and social laws for his people. All of us are his people, but his laws do not change. They don’t have to.

Society has no business trying to make societal values that God instituted null and void as man thinks it should be.

– Louise Laukhuff  
Richmond

### Catholics need to lobby for Born-Alive Act

I am in favor of women’s rights and “my body, my choice” stance. However, I strongly encourage our senators to vote in favor of the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 26). I urge all Catholics to contact their senators to voice outrage at the possibility of this bill failing in the Senate and to ask them to vote “yes” when the vote comes up.

Here are my reasons: (1) Once a child is born alive after an abortion attempt, it is no longer “my body, my choice.” It is a citizen of the U.S. and at that point, as Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi so stated, “Democrats believe everyone deserves the freedom to access reproductive health services – without fear of violence, intimidation or harassment.”

(2) The abortion rights of the mother have not been denied but once a child is born alive, doctors have a duty under their medical oath to do everything they can to preserve life. If having a child is such a hardship for the mother, she can sign away her rights to this child if born alive – many are waiting to adopt.

I cannot understand how one can possibly support the barbaric act of killing a child born

alive. I cannot even believe I need to write my senators over this issue which is so blatantly murder. I truly believe that the majority of Americans are opposed

to this ending of life no matter what their stance is on abortion and women’s rights.

– Maryelle Coderoni  
Richmond

## 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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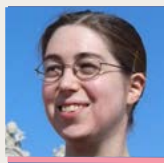
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# Anxiety, confusion about confession; why holy days differ



**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**  
JENNA MARIE COOPER  
OSV News

**Q.** I have not gone to confession in years, and I'm anxious about it. Will the priest be angry with me? (Ohio)

**A.** Most priests will be happy to welcome you back to the sacrament, and not angry at all. You finally making it to confession is what is important. The priest asks how long it has been since your last confession only to gain some context, so he can better understand your situation and thus counsel you more effectively.

If you are nervous, there are practical ways you can find a confessional situation with which you are most comfortable. If you feel like you need to just dive in and talk, you can simply go to your parish at the normally scheduled time for confessions which are typically found in the parish bulletin or on its website. But if there is a specific local priest whom you think would be an especially gentle confessor, it's fine to reach out to him directly and ask to make an appointment.

On the other hand, if you want your confession to be as anonymous as possible, you can go to a parish other than your own, even one in another town. If you have a shrine or pilgrimage site within driving

distance, these places will often offer confessions as well, with priests you're unlikely to run into in your day-to-day life.

You may find it useful to review the process of the sacrament of reconciliation and its prayers ahead of time. Know, however, that if you get flustered in the reconciliation room, you can ask the priest-confessor to remind you of what to do. Many reconciliation rooms even provide printed copies of the Act of Contrition.

As you prepare for your confession, it might be helpful to read and reflect on the parables in chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel, all of which illustrate the joy God takes in those who repent and return to him. These include the parable of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, and the woman who rejoices over finding a lost coin.

Jesus concludes the parable of the lost coin by saying: "In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Lk 15:10).

**Q.** Why must I confess to a priest when I can just talk to God? (Newark, New Jersey)

**A.** Jesus told his Apostles: "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn 20:23). Bishops are the direct successors to the Apostles and, together with their priests, they share the same mission and sacramental powers given to the original Twelve.

However, while Jesus gave priests and bishops the authority to forgive sins, he didn't also give them the ability to read minds. To offer sacramental absolution, it is necessary for priest-confessors to be made aware of the penitent's sins. This typically happens through a spoken confession.

Additionally, one requirement for absolution within the sacrament of reconciliation is true sorrow for our acts and a resolve to avoid sin in the future. Confessions spoken aloud give the penitent the opportunity to express real contrition.

While we know for sure that sins are forgiven through the sacrament, God is of course free to extend his grace beyond even what he has promised. If circumstances prevent you from getting to the sacrament of reconciliation in person, you can always directly, prayerfully petition God for the forgiveness of your sins in the meantime.

**Q.** Why do holy days of obligation differ from year to year, diocese to diocese, and around the world? (Los Angeles)

**A.** Holy days of obligation — days when Catholics are obligated to attend Mass — are discussed in canon 1246 in the Code of Canon Law. This canon first describes Sundays as the "primordial holy day of obligation" for the entire Church throughout the world, as Sundays are the day which traditionally —

from the time of the Apostles — the Church makes a special point to recall Christ's resurrection.

Canon 1246 adds that besides Sundays, universal holy days of obligations include: "the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, [Christmas] the Epiphany, the Ascension, the Body and Blood of Christ, [Corpus Christi] Holy Mary the Mother of God, her Immaculate Conception, her Assumption, Saint Joseph, Saint Peter and Saint Paul the Apostles, and All Saints."

However, section two of this same canon tells us that, with prior approval of the Holy See in Rome, local bishops' conferences can: "suppress some of the holy days of obligation or transfer them to a Sunday." In other words, a bishops' conference can make some holy days of obligation non-obligatory for the faithful in their territory, and/or move the celebration of that feast to a Sunday, when the faithful will already be attending Mass.

This is generally done for pastoral reasons. For instance, a country with a large, spread-out rural population might find it genuinely burdensome to travel to the nearest Church twice in one week.

*Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.*

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# Cross, discipleship go hand-in-hand for popes



## IN LIGHT OF FAITH

BARBARA HUGHES

Following the death of Pope Benedict XVI, I found myself reflecting on the seven men who occupied the Chair of Peter during my lifetime. In retrospect, each of these pontiffs have helped form my spirituality in ways that continue to this day.

During my childhood and through adolescence, Pope Pius XII served as Vicar of Christ. My most vivid memory of his pontificate was his proclamation in 1950 about Mary, Mother of God, who, following the course of her earthly life, was assumed into heaven body and soul.

In declaring as doctrine a fact that was generally accepted by most Catholics, Pius XII wished to engender hope during a time when so many cares and anxieties weighed upon people. The same could be said for us today. We can look to Mary as a prototype of what awaits the faithful, not as an escape from this life, but as the end for which we were created.

Following the death of Pope Pius XII, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was elected pope. He took the name Pope John XXIII, and although his pontificate was short lived (only five years), his impact upon 20th century Catholics was immense.

Shortly after assuming the papacy, he convoked the Second Vatican Council, explaining, "The Church has always opposed errors. Nowadays, however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity."

Although he died before the council ended, his deathbed comment has endured: "It is not that the Gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better."

His successor, Pope Paul VI, presided over the conclusion of Vatican II. Hailed as one of the great milestones in the Church, the council advanced the role of the laity through active participation in liturgy and ministerial roles. It opened the door to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, an initiative that Paul VI highlighted by insisting that "Nostra Aetate" be published as a stand-alone document rather than attaching it to an existing one.

Yet, Pope Paul VI is most often identified by his encyclical "Humanae Vitae." At a time when many Catholics were expecting the pope to allow married couples to use artificial contraception, he came down against it. What many Catholics may not know is that he was simply reaffirming what previous popes had already expressed in encyclicals regarding procreation.

In 1978, Albino Luciani was elected pope and chose the name Pope John Paul I as a gesture of respect to the two men who preceded him. Known as the "smiling pope," he is remembered for having one of the shortest papacies in history. Thirty-three days after taking office, he died of a heart attack. (In 1590, Pope Urban VII died 12 days after being elected pope.)

He was succeeded by Pope John Paul II who served for more than 26 years – the second longest papacy after that of Pope Pius IX's 31-plus years. His accomplishments and popularity are well known, but they did not shield him from an attempted assassination.

John Paul II's appeal to the youth of the world was as unprecedented as his charismatic personality, which earned him the moniker of

"rock star pope."

In contrast to his outgoing personality, his successor, Joseph Ratzinger, was a theologian, scholar and academic who was naturally shy. Having served as the prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI surprised his critics with his first encyclical, "God is Love." His books about Jesus of Nazareth remain a testimony to his broad appeal to ordinary people as well as to scholars.

However, his decision to resign from office – the first pope in almost 600 years to do so and undoubtedly a sign of his humility – will remain a lasting footnote to his papacy.

In a world where so many politicians vie for power and go to extremes to remain in power, Pope Benedict's example bears witness to the Gospel paradox that meekness is a sign of strength. As pope emeritus, he dispelled the idea that the papacy is a lifelong commitment.

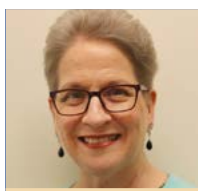
Each pope had supporters as well as detractors, which should come as no surprise. The only way to avoid criticism is to do nothing, and these popes were men of action. Likewise, Pope Francis has no shortage of critics nor of enemies.

Not unlike the saint whose name he bears, who was called troubadour, fool, madman and saint, one might ask: how could it be otherwise for these servants of God? The cross and discipleship will always go hand in hand, a lesson instilled in me by each of these saintly men, by the way they lived and died.

May they rest in peace and may God bless Pope Francis!

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

## Put your giftedness at the service of others



## BELIEVE AS YOU PRAY

MELANIE CODDINGTON

This Sunday, the Scripture readings for Mass fall into rare alignment. We can usually detect a link of theme or language among the first reading, responsorial psalm, and Gospel, but most often in Ordinary Time, the second reading comes from left field. Read in course from one of the New Testament epistles, it rarely supports the others as firmly as it does this Sunday. Note: "In course" means two or more passages from one book appear on consecutive Sundays in the same order that they appear in the Bible.

The expressions "humble of the earth" in Zephaniah, "those who were bowed down" in Psalm 146, "the weak of the world" in 1 Corinthians, and "the poor in spirit" in St. Matthew's Beatitudes all seem to speak of the same humble folk, rejected by the world but cherished by God.

Humble circumstances are viewed as a blessing, not a curse, because persons who cannot make it from one day to the next without complete reliance upon God have an advantage on the journey toward holiness.

Today's readings open with a daunting mes-

sage from the prophet Zephaniah. God seems to be giving God's people one last chance. We hear, "...seek justice, seek humility. Perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger."

I recall a cartoon from The New Yorker, clipped and displayed by my late husband Jim, featuring a lonely, raggedy person, walking the city streets holding a one-word sign, Repent. With that image in mind, consider the Book of Zephaniah, one of the shortest in the Bible, with a message similarly unwelcome, and share my wonder that it ever made it into the canon.

Helpful headings in the New American Bible highlight the emphases of Zephaniah's three chapters, portraying the day of the Lord as one of doom, judgment, and finally, reproach and promise for Jerusalem. Our Lectionary selection plucks a verse from chapter two and finishes with two from chapter three. As it reads, our hope lies in seeking justice and humility, and in the witness of the faithful remnant, who "do no wrong and speak no lies." Here we look not to the rich and influential, but to those others, persons with whom we might not ordinarily associate.

Psalm 146 provides a list for our consideration: the oppressed, hungry, imprisoned and otherwise bowed down; strangers, widows and orphans. We sing of these lowly ones who haunt our lives with their own generous remnant of divine presence.

Jesus captures the witness of the remnant in the Beatitudes, teaching his disciples to seek and find the reign of God at the margins and on the underside of human experience. St. Matthew begins and summarizes his list with the "poor in spirit," those who know, regardless of their earthly circumstances, that their existence depends on God's ongoing grace.

Most of us enjoy some level of esteem, some modest share of the riches of the world. We can easily feel a little more secure, a little less reliant on the one God who creates and saves. Humility can be a challenge.

In my younger years, humility puzzled me. My gifts were apparent, downright showy. My peers interpreted shyness as snobbery, display of talent as conceit. False modesty — downplaying my gifts to fit in — felt wrong. It seemed an ungrateful denial of what God had given me.

Over a lifetime, I have learned from wise and humble teachers. One imparted this handy adage: "Humble people do not think less of themselves; they think of themselves less."

Humility is not about putting ourselves down or denying our gifts to make others feel more important; it's about putting our giftedness at the service of others.

For example, whatever we possess in esteem or respectability powers our honest affirmation of others, especially young people, who may not recognize their own gifts. One word of encouragement can make all the difference.

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

**Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Zep 2:3; 3:12-13**  
**Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10**  
**1 Cor 1:26-31**  
**Mt 5:1-12a**

## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Cluster Parishes of Portsmouth and Chesapeake** are seeking an engaging, enthusiastic and disciplined person for the job of religious education coordinator for children. This person would work with children Pre-K through fifth grade and be responsible for first sacraments, RCIA for children, Vacation Bible School and children's formation. Experience preferred, but not necessary. Bilingual a plus. Submit résumés to Father Anthony Morris at pastor@clusterparishes.com.

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond Pastoral Center**, in Richmond, is seeking a full-time parish and school auditor. For full listing and how to apply, please visit <http://bit.ly/3VZIPyE>. For any questions please contact Kelly Shumate, HR Generalist / Recruiter at jobs@richmonddioocese.org.

**Church of the Redeemer, Mechanicsville**, is seeking a passionate disciple of Christ to fill our full-time position of minister of evangelization and communication. This person will be responsible for ensuring that we are living out our mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. The minister is tasked with using traditional and modern means to invite others to discover the Catholic faith. This work includes collaboration with clergy and staff members. The minister would form and equip our parishioners to be evangelists in their homes and communities. The minister would also handle developing and implementing a plan for communicating faith and sharing information

to the community. Must be willing to learn new technologies or already have competency in social media platforms, Flocknote and Adobe Suite. A bachelor's degree in theology, Catholic studies, religious education or a related field or equivalent experience required. Three to five years' experience in Catholic parish ministry is preferred. Must supply three (3) references. Qualified candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and diocesan application to the attention of Father Jim Cowles at jcowles@churchredeemer.org. Applications are being reviewed immediately.

**St. Andrew Catholic Church, Roanoke**, is seeking a full-time facilities maintenance coordinator to supervise all aspects of maintenance of its historic buildings. The coordinator will be responsible for overseeing cleaning, repairs, landscaping and special projects, including, but not limited to, tasks related to HVAC, electrical, carpentry, plumbing, security, safety, custodial, office electronics and facility use coordination. Interested applicants should have a high school diploma or equivalent, and at least three to five years' experience in facilities management. A "team-player" attitude, excellent interpersonal and communications skills and a strong work ethic are a must. Qualified candidates should send a letter of interest, résumé and completed diocesan application to Timothy Heffron at theffron@standrews.va.org.

**The Catholic Diocese of Richmond Office of Finance** is seeking a full-time finance project manager &

auditor. This position is anticipated to last 18 months to support special projects. This position supports the Finance Office by providing monthly analysis of diocesan Catholic school financial statements, serving as financial analyst on parish and school specific projects and by performing parish and school internal audits on a cyclical basis as needed. This position will be an accounting resource and will serve as ParishSoft subject matter expert. The finance project manager & audi-

tor is a full-time position (35 hours per week) scheduled for 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. Occasionally, extra hours may be required. In-state travel is required. Must maintain a good driving record. Hybrid remote telework is available after orientation period. Interested candidates should provide a cover letter, résumé and completed application ([bit.ly/3GQsokh](http://bit.ly/3GQsokh)). For additional questions, please contact Kelly Shumate, HR generalist/recruiter at jobs@richmonddioocese.org.

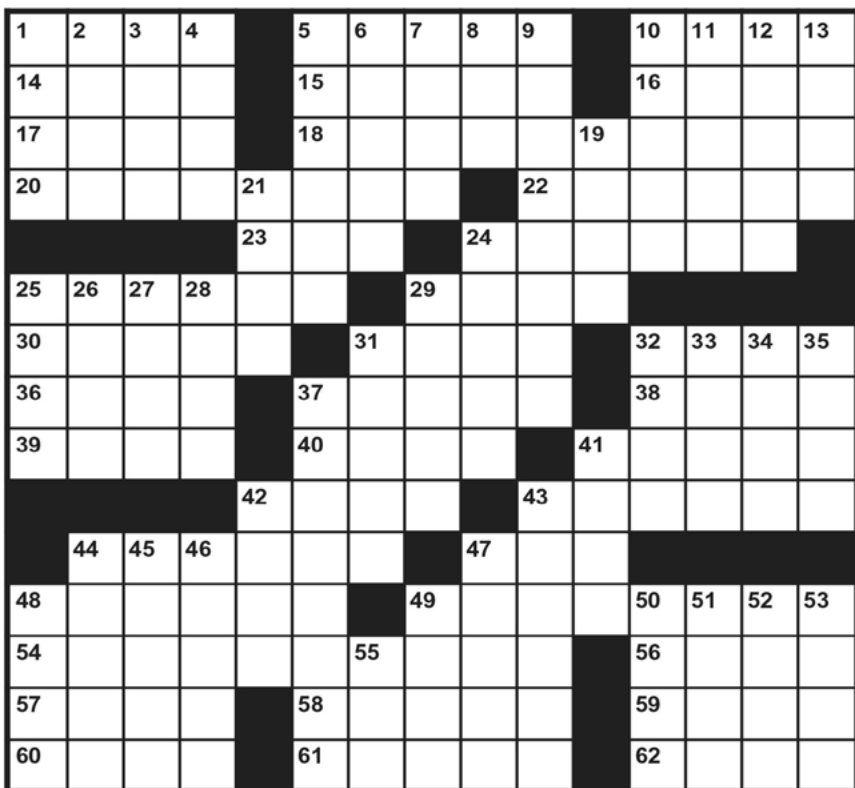
## SHORTTAKES

**The Deacon Charles Williams Speaker Series on Racial Healing** at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend the speaker series honoring the memory of Deacon Charles Williams and continuing his mission to educate groups and individuals on racial injustice, racial healing and preserving the history of the Black Catholic experience in the Diocese of Richmond. The speaker for Black History Month is Sister Cora Marie Billings. Her presentation is "May I Present Some Black Women Religious?" The evening will begin with Mass at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner in the parish hall. The presentation will begin at 7:30 p.m. with Q&A and discussion finishing at 8:30 p.m. To reserve your seat, go to [bit.ly/3Gulz53](http://bit.ly/3Gulz53). The presentation will be livestreamed on the Cathedral Facebook page. You do not need to register or be a member of Facebook to watch the livestream.

**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](mailto:tours@albastours.com) or 804-298-4035, or visit [albastours.com](http://albastours.com). Reservations available now.

**Join Father Thomas Mattingly** of St. Olaf, Williamsburg, and Deacon David Reaves from the Peninsula Cluster Parishes on a spiritual journey of Poland, Sept. 24 – Oct. 4, 2023. It will be a spiritual journey of discovery. We will visit some unforgettable places, take time for prayerful reflection and to learn and have fun! Brochure and registration form: <http://www.gocatholictravel.com/23044>.



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com  
Puzzle answers on page 10

**ACROSS**

- 1 Eve's second
- 5 What the game was, according to Holmes
- 10 Retrievers, for short
- 14 Northern European
- 15 Hotelier Helmsley
- 16 Inter \_\_\_\_
- 17 Medieval Spanish chest
- 18 Small separate building or part of the church

- 20 Humility
- 22 Scottish nobility
- 23 Scrap of food
- 24 Indicates a direction
- 25 Nihil \_\_\_\_
- 29 Coil
- 30 Chow holder
- 31 The Lord appeared to Moses in this

- 32 Abbreviation, abbreviated
- 36 Bank contents
- 37 Changed the décor of
- 38 King mackerel
- 39 Mob follower?
- 40 Type of sch.
- 41 The pharaoh had one about fat cows and lean cows
- 42 Décor finish?
- 43 Patron saint of England
- 44 Mary, Ever-\_\_\_\_
- 47 Spanish Mrs.
- 48 Straight
- 49 Companion of Daniel
- 54 Mary, at Guadalupe
- 56 Garfield's pal
- 57 Sign on again
- 58 Jewish month of Passover
- 59 Litigious type
- 60 Skills
- 61 Merrily
- 62 Long fish

**DOWN**

- 1 Husband of Eve
- 2 Uncovered
- 3 Differ ending
- 4 Pipe problem
- 5 Catholic sovereign of Monaco (with II)
- 6 Solemn holy day
- 7 Exclamation of mild dismay
- 8 MI neighbor
- 9 Fitted
- 10 Rite in the Church in the West
- 11 On one's toes
- 12 "... the fish of the sea, the \_\_\_\_ of the air..." (Gen 1:26)
- 13 Speaks
- 19 Mizzen or moonraker

- 21 He took the animals two by two
- 24 The Feast of Lots is also called this
- 25 Auto innovator
- 26 "They shall \_\_\_\_ their swords into plow shares..." (Isa 2:4)
- 27 Surfeit
- 28 Former Russian ruler
- 29 Apple juice
- 31 Criminal
- 32 Height (comb.)
- 33 Ale
- 34 Boast
- 35 The pope's see
- 37 Shy
- 41 "...come again in glory to judge the living and the \_\_\_\_"
- 42 Culture medium
- 43 Mommy's mommy
- 44 Venomous snake
- 45 Data entered
- 46 Harvests
- 47 Shallow water
- 48 Julie's "Doctor Zhivago" role
- 49 Enthusiastic okay, in Seville
- 50 Peruvian saint
- 51 Together, musically
- 52 Parisian heaven
- 53 Possessive pronoun
- 55 Madre's hermana

Read All About it!

@

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# La justicia de Dios no es pena ni castigo, sino misericordia que salva

Compartir las cargas de los demás, mirarse con compasión, ayudarse mutuamente, no dividir sino compartir: así es como los cristianos están llamados a ejercer la justicia en la Iglesia y en la sociedad. A la hora del Ángelus el Papa Francisco se refirió a la misión de Jesús: no condenar a los culpables, sino salvar a los pecadores y hacerlos justos.

CECILIA SEPPIA – CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

*Cuántas veces hemos invocado y obtenido justicia contra un mal sufrido, un agravio recibido, una calumnia, un abuso de poder, pensando que quien obra mal debe pagar, es más, es justo que pague, tal vez con una sentencia establecida por un tribunal. Esta es quizás la justicia del hombre, pero ciertamente no la de Dios.*

Desde la ventana de su estudio del Palacio Apostólico, en el día en que la Iglesia celebra la fiesta del Bautismo del Señor, Francisco se centró en este tema, iniciando su catequesis con la imagen “sorprendente” que propone el Evangelio de hoy, la de Jesús inclinando la cabeza a orillas del Jordán, para ser bautizado por Juan. Era un rito, el de ir al río a recibir el Bautismo, en el que la gente se arrepentía y se comprometía a convertirse con humildad y un corazón transparente. ¿Pero cuál fue el motivo que impulsó a Cristo a humillarse? “Al ver a Jesús que se mezcla con los pecadores, uno se asombra y se pregunta: ¿Por qué Él, el Santo de Dios, el Hijo de Dios sin pecado, hizo esta elección? Encontramos la respuesta en las palabras de Jesús a Juan: ‘Déjalo por ahora, pues conviene que cumplamos toda justicia’”



## La justicia que proviene del amor

¿Qué significa cumplir toda justicia? Lo preguntó el Papa mientras explicaba que, al ser bautizado, Jesús quiso revelarnos en qué consiste la justicia que Dios vino a traer al mundo. Nada que ver con la idea estrecha y meramente humana de “quien se equivoca, paga”. La justicia de Dios, dijo Francisco, es mucho mayor: “No tiene como fin la condena del culpable, sino su salvación y renacimiento”, la voluntad de hacer justo incluso al más obstinado de los pecadores.

*Es una justicia que nace del amor, de esas entrañas de compasión y misericordia que son el corazón mismo de Dios, el Padre que se conmueve cuando nos oprime el mal y caemos bajo el peso del pecado y de la fragilidad.*

*“La justicia de Dios, por tanto, no quiere distribuir penas y castigos, sino que, como afirma el apóstol Pablo, consiste en hacer justos a sus hijos, liberándonos de las asechanzas del mal, curándonos, levantándonos”*

## Sólo la misericordia salva

Salvar a todos los pecadores, cargar sobre sus hombros el pecado del mundo entero: he aquí, pues, el sentido de ese gesto perturbador que Jesús hace a orillas del Jordán y que deja estupefacto al propio Juan, he aquí la justicia que vino a cumplir.

*“Él nos muestra que la verdadera justicia de Dios es la misericordia que salva, el amor que comparte nuestra condición humana se hace cercano, comprensivo con nuestro dolor, entrando en nuestras tinieblas para traer la luz”*

Francisco citó además a su predecesor, Benedicto XVI, cuyo funeral celebró el pasado 5 de enero, para subrayar la profundidad y la amplitud de esta redención que Dios concede a todos, sin distinción, y que lo lleva a descender él mismo “hasta el fondo del abismo de la muerte, para que todo hombre, incluso el que ha caído tan bajo que ya no ve el cielo, encuentre la mano de Dios a la que asirse” (homilía del 13 de enero de 2008).

## No dividir sino compartir

La tarea más difícil para los cristianos concluyó el Santo Padre, es precisamente la de ejercer así la justicia no sólo en la Iglesia, sino también en la sociedad, en la vida cotidiana, en las relaciones con los demás. ¿Cómo se consigue? Ciertamente no chismorreando sobre los hermanos, acusando, parlotando, porque parlotear divide, es un arma letal.

*“No con la dureza de quien juzga y condena dividiendo a las personas en buenos y malos, sino con la misericordia de quien acoge compartiendo las heridas y las fragilidades de las hermanas y los hermanos, para levantarlos. Me gustaría decirlo así: no dividir, sino compartir”*

*No dividir, sino compartir. Hagamos como Jesús: compartamos, llevemos las cargas unos de otros, en lugar de hablar mal y dividir, mirémonos con compasión, ayudémonos. Preguntémonos: ¿Yo ¿divido o comparto? ¿Soy discípulo del amor o del chismorreo? El chismorreo es un arma letal.*

## Benedicto XVI: Fieles en oración ante su tumba en las Grutas vaticanas

La cripta donde está enterrado Benedicto XVI, entre las tumbas de otros Papas, se abrió al público esta mañana. Una larga fila de peregrinos hizo cola desde temprano para visitar su tumba, situada en el mismo lugar donde inicialmente habían sido sepultados los restos de san Juan Pablo II

SALVATORE CERNUZIO – CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

Una larga fila de fieles esperaba esta mañana en la Basílica Vaticana la apertura de las Grutas vaticanas, a las 9, para visitar la tumba de Benedicto XVI. Hombres y mujeres, familias con niños, monjas y sacerdotes, muchos de los cuales ya habían presentado sus respetos del 2 al 4 de enero al cuerpo del Papa Ratzinger expuesto en la Basílica, hicieron cola junto al Altar de la Confesión para descender a la gran cripta donde reposan los restos mortales de los Papas.

### En oración

Tres chicas italianas de Apulia fueron las primeras en entrar y, casi corriendo, se pusieron de rodillas a rezar ante la lápida de mármol con el epígrafe en negro “Benedictus

PP XVI”, flanqueada por dos jarrones de flores. “Era un Papa importante, sentíamos la necesidad de estar hoy aquí”, dijeron al pequeño grupo de periodistas presentes en las Grutas vaticanas. “¡Nada de fotos, sólo rezar!”, recomendaban mientras tanto los encargados, a medida que aumentaba el flujo de visitantes.

Todos, como ya había sucedido ante el cadáver, permanecieron en silencio, haciéndose la señal de la cruz o inclinando la cabeza, rezando por el que fue Pontífice durante ocho años y Papa emérito durante casi diez. Entre ellos, un hombre procedente de Varsovia que calificó a Benedicto XVI como “uno de los Papas más importantes de la historia”. Detrás de él, un grupo de mujeres de la provincia de Venecia, que querían expresar su “cercanía”: “Benedicto nos da esperanza”.

### En el mismo lugar de Karol Wojtyła

Joseph Ratzinger, como era su deseo, fue enterrado donde estuvo anteriormente la tumba de san Juan Pablo II. Los restos de Wojtyła fueron trasladados en el 2011,



inmediatamente después de su beatificación, a la capilla de San Sebastián, junto a la Piedad de Miguel Ángel.

La inhumación de la tumba de Benedicto tuvo lugar al término del funeral celebrado por el Papa Francisco en la Plaza de San Pedro. El ataúd de ciprés, en cuyo interior se conservan el Rogito, las monedas y medallas de su pontificado y el palio, se colocó dentro de un féretro de zinc, que a su vez se guardó en otro ataúd de roble que luego fue enterrado.



# Saint Gertrude

*Continued from Page 1*

particularly the Rule's emphasis on building 'community,'" explained Jesse Grapes, president of the Benedictine Schools of Richmond.

Respecting the land Lori Garrett, director of Glavé & Holmes, and her team met with Saint Gertrude representatives several times throughout the process, including biweekly walk-through meetings once construction was underway. She said the frequent meetings were essential to understanding and meeting the goals of the school, one of which was not just to be built on top of the land, but to respect it.

"We wanted to take full advantage of the idyllic site location, seating the building on a bluff above the James River and in full view of the travelers on state route 288," said Grapes.

"One of the driving forces for our firm is how architecture can reflect the full context of a project," said Garrett. "We had this incredible site with these amazing views. The architecture really fit in with the topography as well as the historical context."

The groundbreaking ceremony took place in late 2020. Despite being in the midst of COVID, dealing with labor shortages and grappling with supply chain issues, the work never stopped. Neither did the fundraising. The undertaking will cost about \$34 million, \$31 million of which has already been raised by parents, alumni, charitable organizations and other donors. The goal is to have all students begin the 2023-2024 academic year under their own roof.

## Preserving history

Saint Gertrude was founded by the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia in 1922. The Sisters used Spanish Revival architecture in the original structure, and the architects and school design team kept this in mind while planning the new building. The three-story building features a red tile roof, rounded arches and a grand tower adorned with a cross visible from the highway.

The Benedictine Sisters of Virginia were included in the design team, as were teachers, the head of school, president of the Benedictine Schools of Richmond, Saint Gertrude and Benedictine alumni, and architectural and construction experts.

The firm also spoke to the students to learn what they wanted for their school. Garrett asked several of them to write a "love letter" and a "break-up letter" to their old school, listing things that they loved and things that they didn't love about the former building. The architects used these letters in



Architecture firm Glavé & Holmes' rendering of the Rotunda in the new Saint Gertrude High School, Richmond, featuring a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding young Jesus. (Photo supplied)

their planning and development process.

The students wanted the building to focus on natural light and community gathering spaces, as well as include a chapel reminiscent of the original chapel in the old building.

The chapel includes a confessional space and a porch for individual contemplation. The original 1922 altar will be relocated to the new school, as well as the original stations of the cross. Stained glass and rose windows similar to those found in the original chapel will also be included.

## 'Inspiring hearts, souls'

Throughout the building, attention was paid to details. Railings and floors are adorned with medals of St. Benedict. Religious figures have been sculpted in bas relief and statuary. A display of the school's history is located in the rotunda. Trusses intersect to form crosses.

The rotunda connects the Great Hall, dining hall, main staircase and chapel. A custom-designed statue of Mary holding a young Jesus will be in the center of the rotunda. Grapes explained why the design team thought this was important.

"Obviously, most of the academic and leadership work we are doing at the school will prepare young women for their careers," he said. "However, we also want them to know the beauty and love from a vocation as a mother. None of us would be here without the love of our moms!"

The Great Hall is a large space that will host the school's morning gatherings, where all 215

students meet, pray, celebrate achievements and coordinate daily events. Thirty-foot-tall windows, a stone fireplace, sofas and chairs accentuate the space. Students will also be able to grab a cup of coffee at their own café.

There are several informal socialization spaces throughout the school. Four "locker lounges," one for each academic grade, serve not only as a drop-off and pick-up point for books, but also as spaces to study, rest and eat together. Students can also eat in the dining hall — something the old school lacked.

A large terrace stretches the length of the school, with the James River running below it. The expansive library includes another outdoor terrace where students can read and study in a natural setting. Garrett said she has noticed a palpable shift in clients' mindsets ever since COVID started keeping the world indoors. "People have really started valuing outdoor spaces more. Over the past couple years, they have recognized the restorative power and enjoyment of connecting with nature and being outdoors," she noted.

"We wish to inspire the hearts and souls of the young women learning at our school," explained Grapes. "Little accents appear throughout the building. You won't notice them at first, only if you look closely, but that's the point. The more you peel back the layers of the building (and our faith), the more beauty you will find."

*Editor's note: To learn more about Saint Gertrude High School, visit [saintgertrude.org](http://saintgertrude.org)*

# Nun, oldest known person in world, dies in France at age 118

PAULINA GUZIK  
OSV News

TOULON, France – Sister André, a Daughter of Charity and the world's oldest known person, died at age 118, a spokesman of the nursing home where she died told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"There is great sadness, but... it was her desire to join her beloved brother. For her, it's a liberation," said David Tavella, speaking for the Sainte-Catherine-Labouré nursing home, told AFP.

Sister André, a Catholic convert raised in a Protestant family, was born Lucile Randon Feb. 11, 1904. It was 10 years before World War I, Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States, New York opened its first subway line, and



Sister André (OSV News photo/courtesy EHPAD Sainte Catherine Labouré)

U.S. Army engineers began work on the Panama Canal. She also lived through the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and through 10 pontificates.

Sister André died Jan. 17 in her sleep at her nursing home in Toulon, on France's Mediterranean coast, Tavella said.

An avid listener of Vatican Radio, the French nun sent well wishes to the radio operation on the occasion of its 90th anniversary in 2021. Sister Andre, who was blind, was a "dedicated listener of the radio that offers her a window of the world" and supports her prayer life, Vatican News reported Feb. 11, 2021.

Last year, for her 118th birthday, Sister André received a birthday card from French President Emmanuel Macron.

In April 2022, she met reporters over tea in the house where she lived.

"People say that work kills. For me, work kept me alive," she said. "I kept working until I was 108."

Sister André used to say the

biggest joy of her life was when two of her brothers returned home from World War I.



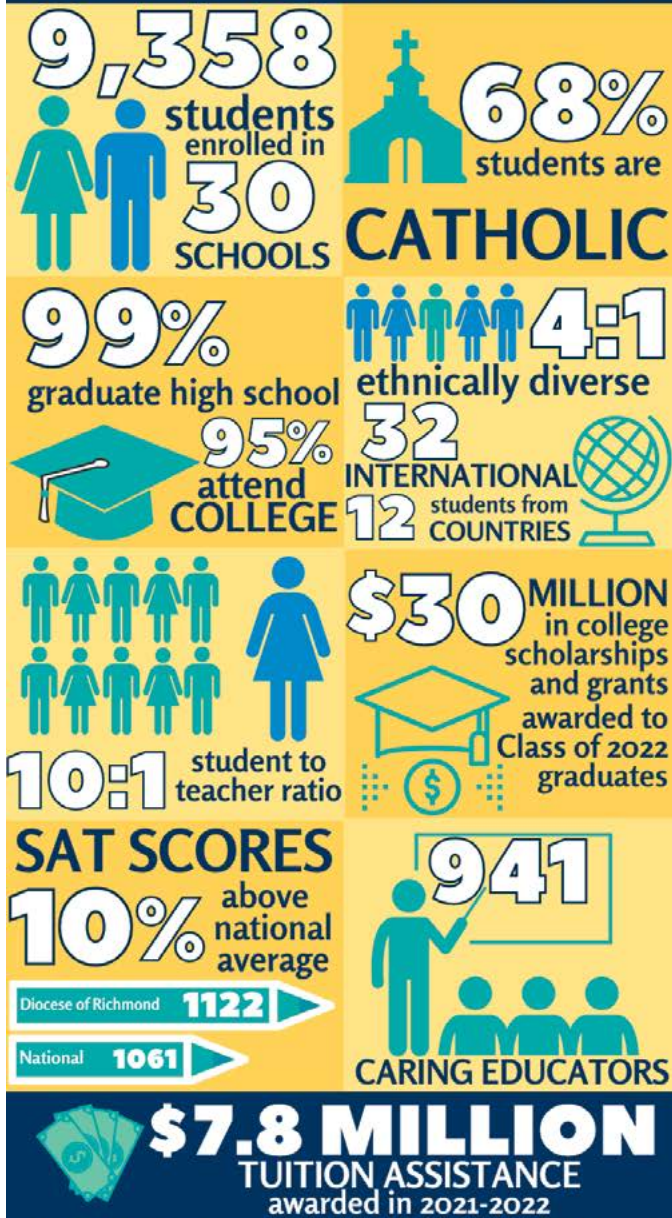


# THE VALUE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION



**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
DIOCESE of RICHMOND

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SINCE 1876



Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools  
**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate National Catholic Schools Week, I am grateful for the teachers, staff, parents, parishioners, volunteers, and donors who support our schools. Our schools are rich in history and founded on the traditions of the Catholic church. We invite you to explore the benefits of a Catholic education and ways you can support the schools in your community.

Faith, hope, and opportunity come from the gift of a Catholic education. Our schools provide a strong foundation that gives students the tools needed to chart a future path based on strong, well-defined morals and beliefs. Schools within the Catholic Diocese of Richmond are committed to providing this gift. Our students have opportunities to develop their God-given talents. It is truly a gift that keeps giving.

We are proud to celebrate our students' academic performance on their standardized testing this year summarized in the chart below. Learning is more than that which is found in a textbook or measured on a test. It is a safe and nurturing environment, one that models Gospel values and respect for all. It is one that has rigorous curricula standards that challenge each student to think critically and interact globally, all within the teachings of the Church.

Last year, we announced our Learn to Lead Campaign which continues to build new support for Catholic Schools throughout the Diocese of Richmond. There are now 13 schools with active local campaigns and special support has been raised from individuals and families that will strengthen every school in the diocese. With great gratitude, I can report that the total amount raised through the campaign now exceeds \$25 million. There are many families in need of scholarship aid and many projects to fund. Our hope is to invite generosity from all individuals and families that have been blessed by a Catholic school education and believe in their vital role in our communities.

We recognize the sacrifices families make to provide a Catholic education for their child. The investment made today makes a lifetime of difference. Our students are well prepared for college, career opportunities, and the future guided by their faith, strength of character, and lifelong friendships.

Every parent wants the best for their children. Visit one of our schools and experience the difference that is Catholic education! We invite you to explore our new website, [DiscoverCatholicSchools.org](http://DiscoverCatholicSchools.org), and let us help you find the right school for your child and begin their journey today!

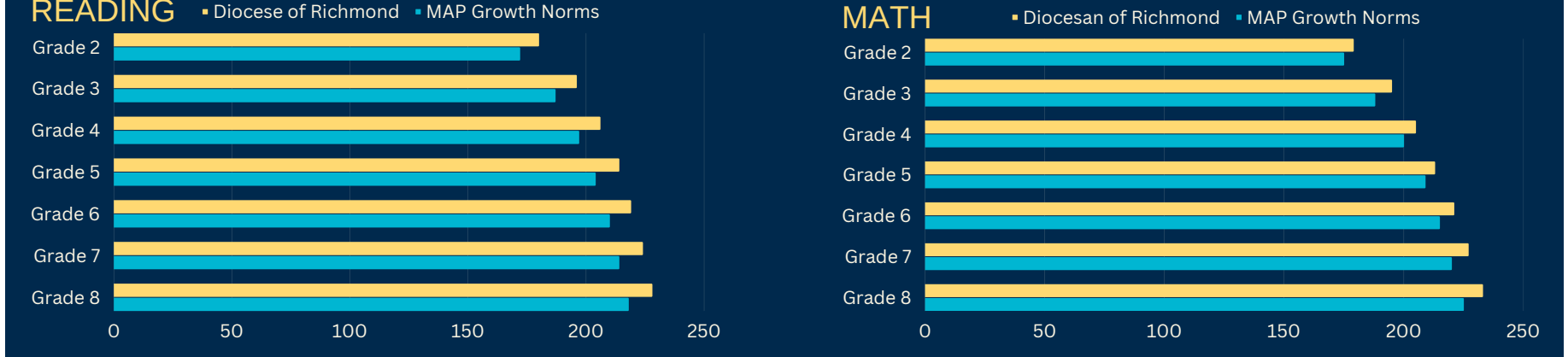
In Christ,  
Kelly Lazzara, Superintendent



# CELEBRATING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

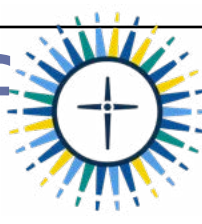
Standardized tests are a tool used in the educational process to evaluate student performance. Students in the Diocese of Richmond take MAP Growth (Measurement of Academic Progress) for reading and mathematics. MAP Growth is given to all students in grades 2-8 three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) and used for instructional purposes. Families receive a report that provides a summary of how their child is performing in the academic areas tested. This is just one of the many tools teachers use to tailor instruction to meet the needs of all students throughout the school year.

**This fall, students in EVERY grade level scored higher than the MAP Growth National norms!**





# Preparing students for life



As a teacher, I love working in a Catholic school. Catholic schools help bring God's love, light, and teachings to many hearts. Each day, All Saints Catholic School works to bring about the flourishing of our students, families, and staff, as we grow together in faith, knowledge, and responsibility. ASCS provides a strong education for young minds while taking each moment and each walk of life into consideration.

— ELEXES WADDELL,  
1ST GRADE TEACHER,  
ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**Catholic Schools offer...**  
*a transformational opportunity for your child to broaden their knowledge, discover their passions, build friendships, and grow a close relationship with God all in one place.*

## BENEDICTINE



## BLESSED SACRAMENT HUGUENOT



## CARDINAL NEWMAN



To say Catholic High School has prepared me is an understatement. Whether it is the great teachers who are fundamental to my success, or the faith-based community that enables me to strive spiritually, or the long-lasting relationships built over my four years, Catholic High School has brought me the successes of today and will bring me the successes of tomorrow.

— THOMAS MARFEO, CLASS OF 2023  
STUDENT, CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

## CHRIST THE KING

Having our son/ grandson at Christ the King for his first two years of school has been a wonderful experience for him and our family...The curriculum is excellent, and the extracurricular activities work together to create a well-rounded student. The sense of community encountered at CTK has certainly served our student, and our family, well.

— THE COWAN FAMILY, CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC SCHOOL



CHARLOTTESVILLE CATHOLIC



**Faith is the heart of Catholic education**  
 Catholic schools educate the whole child – academically, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. As children grow, they are searching for answers to their emerging questions about the world, their identity, and powers greater than themselves. Our schools are safe, caring communities where your child can explore the realities of life while remaining firmly grounded in their relationship with Jesus Christ.



CRISTO REY



It is difficult to put into words how grateful we are to watch our children grow in a place that wants them to develop and thrive; in a community that teaches and displays the discipleship qualities and traits; and in surroundings that feel like home.

—THE SAVAGE/FUNK FAMILY, OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

# We Believe...

- Families provide the foundation for the faith development of their children and value partnering with parents in forming their children in the Catholic faith.
- Catholic schools are integral to the mission of the Church and are the responsibility of the entire church.
- Catholic schools are positioned as the heart of the church's life, and as such, share in the responsibility of representing the church in the world.
- Catholic schools are formative communities where prayer and worship, justice and peace, reconciliation and evangelization become lived experiences.



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a one-of-a-kind school. As a military family who moves a lot (this is our 4th Elementary school in 8 years) we see so many different schools and programs. The love and kindness we received from the very beginning and continue to receive to this day is outstanding. It felt like our family was put first from the time we inquired to walking in the first day.

—WHITNEY MESSER, PARENT, OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL



PENINSULA CATHOLIC



PORTSMOUTH CATHOLIC





ROANOKE CATHOLIC



SAINT ANNE



SACRED HEART

**Catholic school students are more likely to pray daily, attend church more often, and retain a Catholic identity as an adult. Catholic school graduates are more civically engaged, more likely to vote, more tolerant of diverse views, and more committed to service as adults/get involved in social advocacy. Catholic education makes a significant impact in our lives.**



SAINT BENEDICT



SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT



SAINT BRIDGET



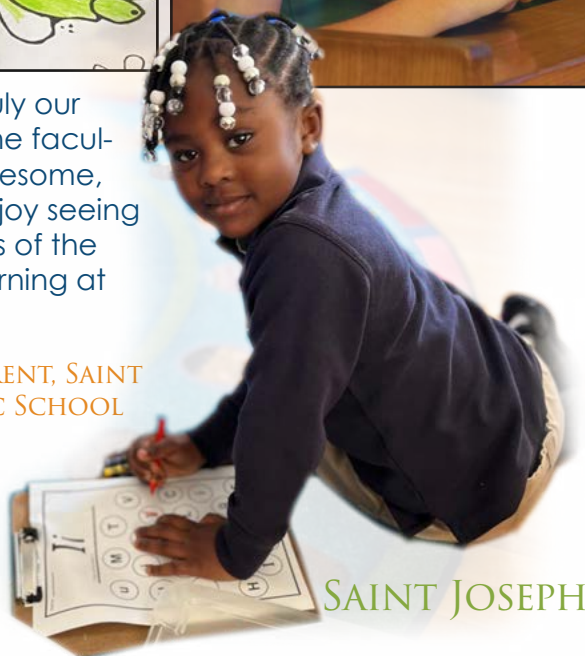
SAINT GERTRUDE

The SGGS community is very welcoming and tight knit, one that we are honored to be a part of. The teachers are amazing. They have left long lasting impressions on my boys. My boys have had best friends since Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten. Friendships that I'm sure will last a lifetime. Although it can be a sacrifice to send my children to a private, Catholic school, it is one that is very well worth it!

— PAMELA QUARTARARO DAVIS, PARENT AND ALUMNI, SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Saint Benedict is truly our "second home". The faculty and staff are awesome, and I especially enjoy seeing all the smiling faces of the teachers every morning at the car line.

— SYLVIA ARYEH, PARENT, SAINT BENEDICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL



SAINT JOSEPH



SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA



ST. JOHN NEUMANN ACADEMY

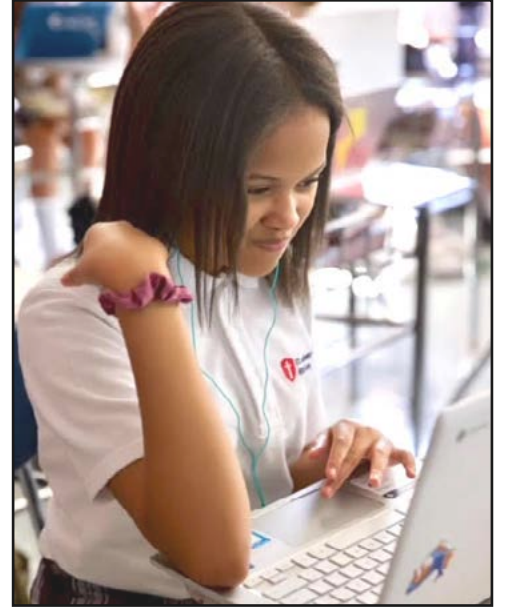


The staff and teachers at St. John Neumann Academy serve wholeheartedly. They care as much about helping students develop strong values, faithfulness, and character as they do about education. Care and intention are felt in all they do and we continue to be impressed by the safe and loving environment at SJNA.

— LAUREN NALDO, PARENT, ST. JOHN NEUMANN ACADEMY



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL VIRTUAL ACADEMY



ST. EDWARD-EPIPHANY

### Affording a Catholic Education

*The Catholic Diocese of Richmond and our schools are committed to ensuring a Catholic education is within reach for all families. Our schools provide an excellent education while maintaining affordable tuition thanks to the support of our parishes, donors, and communities.*

**Catholic education is a sacred responsibility, and we need your support to serve our students and families.**



SAINT MARY'S

The Future isn't written but it can be shaped.



ST. MATTHEW'S



SAINT PATRICK



ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE



SAINT PIUS X



STAR OF THE SEA















WALSINGHAM ACADEMY









EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

Our schools across the Diocese of Richmond positively impact the lives of over 9,000 students as well as their families, our employees, and the communities they serve. We invite you to learn more about our schools and how they can meet the needs of your child and your family. We offer flexible tuition payment options and financial assistance to help your family afford a Catholic education.














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