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‘Our message is love’

Bishop leads rosary near abortion clinic



Bishop Barry C. Knestout leads a group of people, including Father Chris Hess, pastor of St. Anne, Bristol, in praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary around the corner from an abortion clinic in Bristol. (Photo/Karen Adams)

KAREN ADAMS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

On the sidewalk bordering noisy Gate City Highway in Bristol, a group of about 50 people, made up mostly of Catholics, gathered on Saturday, March 4, as Bishop Barry C. Knestout led them in praying the rosary near the abortion clinic around the corner.

“We pray for women in crisis, that they will see that the love for that child is greater than any anxieties, worries and fears they have,” said Bishop Knestout in his opening prayer.

“We pray for all of us that we might be generous in heart but also persistent in our prayer and in our advocacy for life,” the bishop said, as he invoked the grace of the Holy Spirit during the 40 days of Lent – and also for 40 Days for Life, which organized the peaceful prayer gathering with St. Anne Parish, Bristol.

The spring campaign of 40 Days for Life runs from Ash Wednesday through Palm Sunday.

Bristol has found itself in the news since Bristol Women’s Health

opened last summer after the June overturning of Roe v. Wade. To the dismay of many residents, the facility moved just across the Virginia-Tennessee state line – from Bristol, Tennessee – as abortion is illegal in Tennessee but remains legal in Virginia.

Prompted by concerns that Bristol, Virginia, is becoming known for abortion availability, an ordinance was proposed in October that would limit the clinic from expanding or relocating within the city limits and would prevent new clinics from opening there.

A decision in Bristol is still pending. Similar ordinances in Washington and Russell Counties, which ban abortion clinics from opening in either county, have passed.

Many in the Bristol community are responding with activism, fasting, outreach and fervent prayer.

‘A loving presence’

Most of those gathered on Saturday were parishioners from St. Anne, along with their pastor, Father Chris

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‘Be compassionate, yet firm’

The confusion of gender ideology

LILY NGUYEN DUNKLE
The Catholic Virginian

“There’s a lot of pain around this issue, no matter where someone stands on it ... and we need to have real love in our hearts,” said Mary Rice Hasson, a top voice in the Catholic response to the gender identity crisis. “This is really hitting home for us as Catholics.”

Gender ideology is a movement that has gained traction in secular society, permeating pop culture, public schools and government agencies – a false belief system that one’s sex is self-created regardless of biology. It denies human nature and says the human body has no meaning.

Hasson was the guest speaker at a number of training sessions throughout the diocese for parish staff and parents, to help them understand Catholic teaching on the matter, so they can support those experiencing an identity crisis.

“People are desperate for this information,” said Andrew Waring, director of the diocesan Office for Evangelization, which hosted the sessions. “It’s so hard to know how to respond; so many people have told us they want to be able to show compassion in these situations and still follow Catholic teaching.”

Training sessions were held at St. Michael, Glen Allen (March 5); Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville (March 7); and Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC), Newport News (March 8).

Who am I?

The current clash of anthropologies comes with the basic question “Who am I?” Hasson said during one session at OLMC.

As Christians, it is a fundamental belief that we are created by God, in his image and likeness, she explained. God gave each of us a gift in making us male or female. Our physical body is united with our eternal soul. The differences in our sexes and our per-

sonalities are all special and should be celebrated.

“We have an inherent dignity,” she said, “and no matter what we do, God loves us as he made us and we cannot lose our human dignity. He made us to be sons and daughters of God. That is who we are.”

However, there is no Creator for those who believe in gender ideology, Hasson further explained, because one’s identity is “self-defined, nebulous and fluid. You create yourself, you choose your sex. You are who you say you are. Who you are is how you feel.” Unity of body and soul is not assumed, nor required, she added.

Hasson said Catholics need to be kind, yet firm that gender ideology is a false set of beliefs – it is simply not true that a person can choose their sex. She said it is important to stay grounded in reality and send this message: “Respect goes both ways. I respect who you are, but don’t ask me to violate what I know is true.”

‘Failed by modern medicine’

Gender ideology has given way to something labeled “gender-affirming care,” Hasson said, which causes irreversible harm to a young person’s body and mind as they try to transition from one sex to another.

Gender-affirming care, Hasson said, takes an otherwise healthy

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Mary Rice Hasson

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The Catholic Virginian
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Through renewal, integrate your life in holiness



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

Throughout these first four weeks of Lent, we have been called to and strived for a deeper life of holiness. Holiness is another way of saying “an integrated life” — a life of integrity.

When we integrate life in holiness, we enhance and preserve what is good, and we set aside the evil and wrong that diminish us. The integration of life in holiness requires us to examine our lives, admit weaknesses and faults, and to attain a disposition directed toward God and neighbor. That is the model the Church offers us during Lent.

The Church provides us with opportunities to be more integrated in our Christian life, our relationships with people, nations, culture, and the environment in which we live. The Church does not reject what is good about our culture, i.e., respecting the freedom and integrity of people, but asks us to put aside what causes damage or brokenness in the culture.

Throughout the 10 years of his pontificate, Pope Francis, like his predecessors, has often spoken about renewal in the Church — personal and communally. This renewal, rooted in the Gospel and authentically expressed in the Second Vatican Council, helps the Church grow in life integrated in holiness.

Renewal is a frequent experience in the Church's life and history. We can see it in the

founding and growth of ecclesial movements throughout that history. Renewal was experienced with the founding of monastic orders in the early centuries of the Church, in the founding of the mendicant orders of the 13th century as well as other religious communities in the centuries that followed.

In recent history Church renewal can be seen in the work of the Schoenstatt Movement and Opus Dei, each established in the early 20th century, and in the Neocatechumenal Way and the Charismatic Movement which developed in the wake of Vatican II. Renewal, personal or organizational, is not an end in itself. It is a call to something more; it is a periodic call to renewed efforts of evangelization and an integrated life in holiness.

As evangelizers, we proclaim and demonstrate to the culture the beauty, grace and life offered by the Gospel. We meet people where they are, even going to the peripheries, as Pope Francis often reminds us. When we get there, we embrace those we meet without judgment, by not intimating that there is something wrong with them.

There may be things in their lives that need to be corrected. That is a reality for all of us. We all have weaknesses and inadequacies, areas of life that need to be purified by grace and renewed by the Holy Spirit. The starting point is to recognize people's circumstances and to share the Gospel as the source of renewal in life and culture. That is evangelization.

All the popes since Vatican II have sought to implement the work of the council by continuing to answer the question: How

does the Church express itself effectively and evangelize in the present age, in the context of the modern world, given all the global tensions and complexities, growth in technology and communications, encounters between cultures through increased migration and travel?

Throughout our history, evangelizing has been difficult for Christians. Ours is the story of countless martyrs who gave their lives in proclamation of the Gospel. It is not easier today. Godlessness, the threat of wars, self-centeredness and pride are as prevalent as ever — if not more so. Thus, evangelization can be daunting.

Yet, through spiritual renewal, individually and in our faith communities, by living a life integrated in holiness, we receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the grace needed to be evangelizers, those who will bring others closer to Christ.

As we strive to integrate our lives in holiness, to renew our faith in God and to answer our call to evangelize, let us reflect on the opening words of the council fathers in “Lumen Gentium”:

“Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission.... The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ.” (1)

‘Fraternity, tears, smiles’: Pope’s hopes for future

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In interviews focused on the 10th anniversary of his election, Pope Francis insisted it is not his task to make an accounting of what he has or has not accomplished since March 13, 2013.

“The Lord will do the appraisal when he sees fit,” the pope told the Italian newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*.

However, he said he was certain the criteria for judgment would be from Matthew 25: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and visiting prisoners.

But he did have three words for what he hopes for the future: “Fraternity, tears, smiles.”

As Pope Francis marked his anniversary celebrating Mass with cardinals in the chapel of his residence, Vatican News released a short “popecast” that included the pope's three-word response to a question about his dreams for the church, the world and humanity.

“We are all brothers and sisters,” he explained, and more efforts must be made to live like it.

“And to learn not to be afraid to

weep and to smile,” he said. “When a person knows how to cry and how to smile, he or she has their feet on the ground and their gaze on the horizon of the future.”

“If a person has forgotten how to cry, something is wrong,” Pope Francis said. “And if that person has forgotten how to smile, it's even worse.”

The 86-year-old pope also asked the Vatican News interviewer, “What's a podcast?”

In the handful of interviews Pope Francis granted in connection with his anniversary, several topics kept coming up: the war in Ukraine and wars around the world, women in the church, outreach to LGBTQ Catholics, handling criticism and even whether he thinks about death.

He does, he told the Argentinean website *Perfil*. He said he thinks about death often and “very peacefully” because “it is necessary to remember” that no one lives forever.

The Argentinean newspaper *La Nacion* asked Pope Francis about the importance of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, a process the pope launched in October 2021 and that will culminate with synodal assemblies in 2023 and 2024.



Pope Francis walks through the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica as he visits the tombs of deceased popes at the Vatican on All Souls' Day, Nov. 2, 2020. In a 2023 interview marking the 10th anniversary of his election, the 86-year-old pope said he thinks about death often, but it is a good thing to remember one will not live forever. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

In the context of explaining how he has tried to revitalize the synods, which were reinstated by St. Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council, the pope told *La Nacion* that including more voices is an ongoing process.

During the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, he said, “the question was asked: Why can't women vote? Are they second-class Christians?”

The Vatican's answer always had been that while the input of many was essential to a synod, it was the role of bishops to discern and vote. However, 10 priests — and occasionally a religious brother — traditionally were elected by the men's Union of Superiors General of religious orders as full voting members of the synod alongside bishops.

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Scout's honor: parallels of being a Scout and a Catholic



Carter Cichowicz does the first reading during the annual Scout Mass on Sunday, March 12 at St. Mary's, Richmond. Dozens of scouts from across the diocese were honored with religious medals and emblems. (Photos/Vy Barto)

leads son Owen's troop and Victoria leads daughter Caroline's troop.

"I've grown to love being a leader in Boy Scouts. It's a good chance to give back to the youth," said Jon. "When you look at the Scout Oath, it parallels the story of Christ. There is so much you can draw from that connection. I enjoy how we can apply Scout Laws in our daily life with respect to duty to God."

Caroline Mullis, who is in fifth grade, said, "Girl Scouts makes me think about how God is with me in my daily life and how it's made me treat other people better."

An Eagle Scout himself, Chris Carter now helps lead his two sons who have followed in his footsteps as scouts.

"I want to give back to the Scouting program because it helped change my life," he said. "I love watching other kids learn and having an impact on their lives."

Lisa Sprosty also has deep scouting roots. She became a Girl Scout in 1985 and now leads St. Mary Girl Scout Troop 642. Raised in a military family, she moved around a lot as a child but always felt at home when she was among other scouts.

"Scouting and Church were the two things that were a constant everywhere we went," she explained. "They both share similar values in community, respect and service to others."

Sprosty's nieces, both of whom were awarded the God is Love emblem at the Mass, and nephews continued the family tradition.

"I earned the same religious medal in 1985 that my troop earned this year," she said. "There is nothing more important to me than being able to share that tradition and faith with the next generation."

Editor's note: Look for this story at catholicvirginian.org to find more information about the religious awards, Scout Laws, and a link and email address where you can learn more about being a Catholic Scout.

KRISTEN L. BYRD
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Be reverent. This is one of the 12 Points of the Scout Law that guide every member of Scouts BSA (formerly known as Boy Scouts), Girl Scouts, American Heritage Girls, and Trail Life all follow similar laws. On Sunday, March 12, Bishop Barry C. Knestout presided over a Scout Mass held at St. Mary's, Richmond. Dozens of scouts from throughout the diocese were honored with religious medals and emblems.

Andrew Waring, director of the diocese's Office for Evangelization, which coordinated the event, explained why having a separate annual Scout Mass is important.

"When it is at its best, Scouts helps boys and girls to grow as a complete person. The Scouting groups that are part of Scout Mass use religious emblems to help Catholic scouts to grow in their faith as they grow in Scouts," he said. "The Scout Mass allows for the diocese to acknowledge them on a public level and to affirm them in their growth in faith."

Award recipients spanned ages and ranks. Five-year-olds, adults, and many more in between were recognized for their service to their community and to their faith. Various awards highlight a strong bond between the scout and God.

The Light of Christ emblem is awarded to Cub Scouts who develop a personal relationship with Jesus and see him as their friend, while the God is Love award is given to young Girl Scouts who learn of God's love for each of them and recognize God's presence in their daily lives.

Select older Girl Scouts received the Marian Medal, which focuses on the Virgin Mary serving



Deacon Andy Ferguson and Bishop Barry C. Knestout receive the gifts from Chase O'Shea (left) and William D'Antonio.

as a model of spirituality for young women. Several teenage scouts earned the Ad Altare Dei emblem, which is based on the scout knowing, understanding and observing the Catholic sacraments. Additionally, any scout who reaches the rank of Eagle Scout is able to receive a letter from Pope Francis.

Rules of three

During his homily, Bishop Knestout focused on various "rules of three" that are present in one's life. He spoke of the rule of three pertaining to physical wellbeing, what one needs to survive. The basic necessities of this are food, water and shelter. One can only survive but a few days without water, a few weeks without food, and not much longer without shelter. Scouting equips scouts with the tools and knowledge to survive in various natural environments, he said.

Bishop Knestout next spoke of the Church's Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

"Prayer is focusing our mind and attention towards God and

the gifts he gives to us ... Fasting is to temper our own passions for those things that are selfish so we might be more selfless ...," he said. "Almsgiving is directed toward charity and those in need; it's the awareness that we are connected to one another."

Bishop Knestout then spoke about the virtues of faith, hope and love. He said faith is trusting that God will always be with everyone, hope is having confidence that the promises of the Lord will be fulfilled, and love is the desire to be reunited with God, and also for the good of those around us.

"Scouting helps you do all those things," he said. "It encourages reverence for God and reverence and care for those around you."

Scouting as a family

The Mullis family has been involved in Scout life for generations. Jon and Victoria Mullis grew up as scouts and now serve as Scout masters for their children's troops; Jon



Members of Scouts BSA and Girl Scouts were recognized during the annual Scout Mass on Sunday, March 12 at St. Mary's, Richmond.

Restored churches highlight Black Catholic tradition

ROBERT ALAN GLOVER
OSV News

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in New Orleans, there hangs behind the sanctuary's altar of worship a mural known as the "Dance of Holy Innocence."

But this work, measuring 45 feet high by 25 feet wide, and the church it resides in, are symbols of the enduring faith of Black Catholics within the wider church, and the importance of the Virgin Mary in their worship.

"We are in a huge building that has survived more than a few storms – including both Hurricane Katrina in 2005 – and Hurricane Ida, which struck on August 26, 2021, during the restoration project," Father Emanuel Tanu of the Society of the Divine Word, who is the pastor, told OSV News.

"Our parish is an old one – its original building was built in 1911 – and today we have around 300 families in what is a very organized, very Catholic, African American community," Father Tanu said.

Getting to this point, however, was anything but a "given." The parish school, for example, closed down many years ago, and in the wake of Katrina, many Catholic churches were either closed or merged by the New Orleans Archdiocese.

"We are a unique parish whose members are proud to be here, and we are hoping to be here for many years to come," Father Tanu said.

Reflecting community spirit

Our Lady Star of the Sea is one of a number of Black Catholic churches that have undergone restoration efforts. These efforts testify to the enduring importance of parishes formed by Black Catholic traditions and the richness they bring to the church's mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church is located about a mile from downtown New Orleans, in the St. Roch area, which became a majority Black neighborhood over the years as African Americans moved into it.

Father Tanu described the mural, originally erected in 2001, "as a work of sheer beauty; one that reflects the spirit – and the ethnicity – of this community and who the real people in it are."

Baton Rouge native Elise Grenier, an expert in the field of restoration technology, specializes in restoring large-scale artworks in churches and museums. When it came to restoring the mural, Grenier with the support of its original artist, replaced the all-white angels with a "now more diverse group of angels" around Mary.

The restored mural now features an image of the historical Lake Pontchartrain lighthouse, and Grenier told OSV News "reflects the people who live here and the fishing industry."

"I took care, however, to ensure



Mass celebrating the dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk, Sept. 26, 2021, after a \$6.7 million renovation. (Photo/Eric Labat)

that we would have a mural that was as close as possible to the original with a few (other) enhancements that were previously determined by the committee, whom, of course, I answered to," Grenier said.

"The face of Mary is now the focal point of it; she is the first image that we see, and Our Lady seems to be watching you from every angle," Anthony Carter, a parishioner for 16 years, told OSV News.

He said the congregation generously donated to the mural restoration, and "as a restored image, it has

lit a fire under this congregation."

Expression of heritage

Darren Davis, professor at the University of Notre Dame professor and co-author of "Perseverance in the Parish: Religious Attitudes from a Black Catholic Perspective," estimates that anywhere from 200 to 400 parishes in the U.S. reflect the African American heritage in Catholic life.

"The vast majority of Black Catholic parishes express some

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Black Catholic Congress to feature 'voices of faithful'

Listening, discernment key to national gathering in July

MARK ZIMMERMANN
OSV News

WASHINGTON – Catholics are being invited to register to attend this summer's National Black Catholic Congress, which over the years has made history of its own.

The National Black Catholic Congress XIII will be held July 20-23 at the Gaylord National Resort in National Harbor, Maryland, just outside the District of Columbia. It marks the third time the Washington area has hosted the gathering, and each of those times, key participants included noted figures in U.S. Catholic history.

St. Augustine Church in Washington – the mother church for Black Catholics in the nation's capital, founded by free men and women of color in 1858 – hosted the inaugural congress gathering, which opened on New Year's Day 1889 and included a Mass celebrated by Father Augustus Tolton, the first U.S. Catholic priest publicly known to be Black and whose cause for sainthood is now being considered. He was declared "Venerable" by Pope Francis in 2019.

Five of those congresses were held before the turn of that century, and then that movement was revived with National Black Catholic Congress VI held in 1987 on the campus of The Catholic University of America in Washington, where the speakers included Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and dynamic evangelist who died of cancer in 1990. Her sainthood cause also is underway. She has the title



Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., marking the 25th anniversary of Our Mother of Africa Chapel. (OSV News photo/Patrick Ryan, courtesy National Black Catholic Congress)

"Servant of God."

At the National Black Catholic Congress this summer, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory – the archbishop of Washington who was elevated to the College of Cardinals by Pope Francis in 2020, becoming the first African American cardinal in history – will give the opening keynote speech and celebrate the opening Mass.

The congress is the largest national gathering in support of Black Catholic ministry that brings together lay people, clergy and religious for prayer, dialogue and discernment.

Wendi Williams, the executive director of the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach of the Archdiocese of Washington, noted that the National Black Catholic Congress "coming to the Archdiocese of Washington is a coming home at an important time for Black Catholics, coming out of COVID, really sensing the needs and interests as they exist today, and how we plan to move the priorities forward."

She explained that "the congress movement is a mechanism to involve the lay faithful with the Black Catholic ministry. By attending, the lay faithful are involved with decisions and priorities that will become the pastoral plan (of the National Black Catholic Congress) for the next five years."

That national pastoral plan is integral to diocesan plans and parish outreach for Black Catholics, Williams said, noting that it exemplifies the synodality that Pope Francis has encouraged in preparation for the world Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in October.

"The congress is an important lay movement that helps ensure that the voices of the lay faithful are heard and acted upon," Williams told the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese. "It's about listening, dialogue, discernment and journeying together."

In preparation for the National Black Catholic Congress XIII, parish representatives from throughout the Archdiocese of Washington in

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Dating struggles fuel decline in Catholic marriages

RACHEL HOOVER
OSV News

Among Catholics, the sacrament of matrimony is in freefall. Over 50 years between 1969 and 2019, Catholic marriages declined 69% even as the Catholic population increased by nearly 20 million, according to Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

In 2021, as U.S. Catholics largely emerged from the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, weddings were still down more than 30,000 from 2019's pre-pandemic number of nearly 132,000 marriages celebrated.

However, fueling the decline is a broader cultural crisis of dating that is also leaving single Catholics struggling to meet each other in person, or even online.

A 2021 survey by the Institute for Family Studies asked people under 55 who desired marriage why they were not married: 58% said, "It is hard to find the right person to marry."

When Roxane, 23, logged onto CatholicMatch, she found very few matches near her home in Maryland. To broaden her scope, Roxane tried the dating app Hinge, and found two men who claimed to be Catholic, "but sitting in church for one hour a week was too much for them," she told OSV News.

Some in her situation form long-distance relationships; the CatholicMatch Instagram account regularly posts success stories, many about long-distance couples. But that doesn't appeal to Roxane.

"I feel a connection more when I'm with the person physically

so that I can see the expression, the body language, and how he treats other people," she said.

Matt, 23, also struggles to meet fellow single Catholics in-person. He said the dating scene was pretty good at his Catholic university, but following graduation, it's hard to find like-minded Catholic women.

"Most of the people I meet in Chicago aren't interested in having a family anytime soon, let alone having a relationship or life centered around faith," Matt told OSV News.

He also suspects that many women don't feel the need for a man, at least until they're older and financially established. In his experience so far, Matt said, "I'd say a lot of women wouldn't ever put something like that above their career in this age range: early to mid 20s."

Elizabeth, 31, established her career in her 20s, but also actively searched for a spouse.

"I didn't think it would be that difficult since I knew a lot of women who met their husbands very young," she told OSV News.

She tried online dating, joined a local Catholic young adult group, and told friends and family she was open to meeting anyone they knew. She even employed a matchmaker. While Elizabeth succeeded in meeting people – Catholic and non-Catholic – nothing panned out.

"Most of the Catholic men were initially attracted to me, but lost interest when they learned that I planned to have a career," she said.



She also found that most of the Catholic men she encountered were "rather uninteresting."

"They didn't seem to have much to talk about. There was no joking or flirting," she said. "They tended to have few hobbies and interests, when compared to other men I tried to date."

Other young Catholics told OSV News the Catholic young adult scene is also posing a challenge to form real connections – including problematic dynamics they do not typically find in non-Catholic peer groups.

"When you walk into an event with evangelicals, someone will say 'hello' to you right away, and draw you into their group conversation if they are in one," Sara Perla, 40, told OSV News.

"I have been invited to things with Catholics in which I walk into the room, not knowing anyone but the host, and no one even looks up ... and when you try to start a conversation, you hit a brick wall," said Perla.

Jacob, a software engineer in his mid-20s, says he's found a

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Non-Catholics also struggle with dating

Catholics aren't the only ones struggling to find spouses. Americans overall are ambivalent to bearish on dating. A 2020 Pew study found that 47% of Americans thought dating had become harder in the prior 10 years, while only 19% thought it had become easier. Technology was cited as a major reason for both those who felt dating was getting harder and those who felt it was getting easier.

A 2023 Pew study also found that 30% of U.S. adults – and 53% of those under 30 – had ever used a dating site or app (with Tinder being the most popular choice) with about 10% of partnered Americans meeting their current partners online.

Brad Wilcox of the National Marriage Project summed up the trends. "I think it's getting harder for Americans to find spouses," he said. "Marriage rates are down markedly since 1970, and we see declining rates of dating as well."

He attributes this to a confluence of factors, including online dating. "[It] tends to reward people who have more resources – looks, money, education... [Others] can be sort of locked out of the dating market."

Other factors that contribute to the dating decline are a growing gender gap in college attendance, and a secular culture that discourages young marriages. "People are not intentional about using [their twenties] as a decade to do all they can to meet someone," said Wilcox.

While many Catholics are looking to marry young, this cultural trend makes it harder to find a fellow twenty-something spouse.

Saint Spotlight: Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Solemnity of Saint Joseph is observed on March 20 this year because his feast day, March 19, falls on a Lenten Sunday.

LILY NGUYEN DUNKLE
The Catholic Virginian

Saint Joseph does not utter a single word throughout the four Gospels, but it is his actions that speak volumes to show he is the model of a strong man, husband and father – a Catholic gentleman. God would not have chosen an unworthy man to be the husband of Mary, who is the epitome of being a lady.

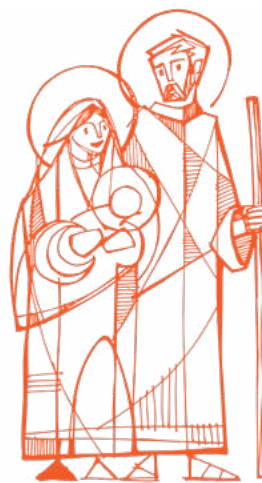
Saint Joseph was the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster father of Jesus, meaning he had a great responsibility to protect his wife and son. He was always devoted to them, despite the difficulties they faced as the Holy Family. Joseph was Mary's protector from the moment they were betrothed; he was protecting her from being stoned to death when he considered quietly divorcing her after she became pregnant. After an angel appeared to him, however, he dedicated the rest of his life to being the head of the Holy Family.

Saint Joseph was a man of action; as Saint Matthew writes the story of Jesus' birth, he recounts four dreams. In each dream, an angel

instructs Saint Joseph to do something, or take his family somewhere to safety. Saint Joseph doesn't hesitate; he gets up, even in the middle of the night, and leaves with Mary and baby Jesus. Travel was difficult and dangerous at that time, but Joseph shows he is brave, strong and faithful.

There is no official Church teaching on Saint Joseph's age, though he is often depicted in artwork as a docile, weak, old man – even sleeping. However, Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen writes "Joseph was probably a young man, strong, virile, athletic, handsome, chaste and disciplined. Instead of being a man incapable of loving, he must have been on fire with love" ("The World's First Love: Mary, Mother of God" 1996).

Saint Joseph's purity would not have been as great a gift to the Blessed Virgin Mary if he had been an old man. He would not have had the energy to protect his family and walk to Egypt if he had been an elderly man. He would not be



called the Terror of Demons if he were a weak, old man.

Saint Francis de Sales also writes "think you that the Eternal God would not, in his almighty power and wisdom, choose from out of his creation the most perfect man living [Saint Joseph] to be the guardian of his divine and most glorious Son?" ("Joseph the Just Man," Rosalie Marie Levy). Being a guardian requires a person to be strong and fearless.

Saint Joseph balances those strong characteristics by being a model of humility and obedience to God's will.

He followed God's instructions which were delivered to him by angels, taking Mary into his home as his wife when she was pregnant. He took his wife and son to safety in Egypt and provided for them as a carpenter in Nazareth.

Raising the king of kings was not like raising royalty – Saint Joseph lived a humble life and he was a working man. The Holy Family was likely not poor, since Saint Joseph was a tradesman; they were also likely not part of the upper class.

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Religion is dangerous, but not for reasons FBI claimed

GUEST COMMENTARY
DOMINICAN FATHER PATRICK BRISCOE
OSV NEWS

A recent internal memo issued, and subsequently retracted, by the FBI labeled “radical traditionalist Catholics” as “potential terrorists.”

Since the memo’s release, 20 state attorneys general have objected to the memo’s premise that Catholics are an extremist threat. “Anti-Catholic bigotry appears to be festering in the FBI, and the bureau is treating Catholics as potential terrorists because of their beliefs,” the AGs wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Bishop Barry C. Knestout denounced the memo. In a statement released Feb. 13, he said, “The leaked document should be troubling and offensive to all communities of faith, as well as all Americans.”

Condemning the memo as “a threat to religious liberty,” Bishop Knestout argued that “Racism, religious bigotry, violence, and discrimination have no place in our Church.”

At stake is the integrity of Catholic teaching, our right to live out our faith in peace and our reputation among our fellow citizens.

Bishop Knestout was “grateful” for the letter

of the 20 state attorneys general “who have called upon the government to publicly release all materials related to the production of this memo.” The bishop continued, “A preference for traditional forms of worship and holding closely to the Church’s teachings on marriage, family, human sexuality and the dignity of the human person does not equate with extremism.”

And here we are, facing a real difficulty. Our religious faith does not now, nor has it ever, conformed to secular cultural values and norms. We will continue to be at odds with a world that does not recognize Our Lord.

Today, that confrontation between what we believe and our society is principally concerned with the value and fundamental dignity of every human life and human sexuality. In ages past, Christians gladly embraced death rather than offer sacrifice to pagan idols.

But the greatest contest for believers is not between the world at large and the Christian faith. The greatest conflict is fought in our own tortuous hearts.

There’s a scene in “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” (the first novel in C.S. Lewis’ “Chronicles of Narnia”) that I often think of concerning this battle for our hearts. Lucy and her sister, Susan, English schoolgirls who have been transported to Narnia, have heard that

Narnia’s king is a lion.

“Is he – quite safe?” asks Susan. “I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion,” she says. Lucy echoes her sister’s question.

“Safe? ... Who said anything about safe? Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King I tell you,” replies Mr. Beaver.

To the wicked, to those who harm his children and oppose his reign, Aslan is a force to be reckoned with. His power is terrible and great because he is good. He is forgiving and compassionate but not “safe” or “tame.”

Christianity is not dangerous because it harms people – quite the opposite, actually. In Christ, all are changed and freed. That work of liberation can be a messy affair, which is why, no doubt, some balk at it. The process of conversion is constant, even violent. But in Christ we become more fully who we were made to be.

We have to take seriously unjust aggressions like the recent FBI memo. We should fight to overturn them. But they shouldn’t surprise us. This memo is just one more line in the history of a world that neither now nor then knows the God who loves it. The one thing we do know is that we must cling to the Lord. He alone is good.

Father Patrick Briscoe, OP, is editor of Our Sunday Visitor. Follow him on Twitter @PatrickMaryOP.

Did Jesus say ‘kill your enemies’?

I found it interesting that the only letter published in the Feb. 20 edition of the CV was from a misguided gun fanatic writing about his “right” to own and use weapons without limits on “type, capacity, or form.” How can a newspaper that otherwise promotes “the right to life” justify promoting the writer’s advocacy for the use of deadly weapons “for self-defense” by citing “Luke 22:36” and the “Catechism of the Catholic Church 2265”? Did Jesus say, “Love your enemies”? – or was it “Kill your enemies”?

Obviously, Luke was writing about swords, and perhaps their future use in the Garden of Gethsemane, and not about modern weapons. But the more relevant misinterpretation made by the writer was in his reference to the catechism, which addresses “legitimate defense.”

The USCCB has consistently supported sensible regulations on the sale and use of firearms, and recently sent a letter to all members of Congress urging lawmakers to “unite in their humanity to stop the massacres of human lives” and to advance life-saving legislation to address gun violence.

When gun advocates ignore the “well-regulated militia” part of the Second Amendment, they jeopardize “the right of the people to peaceably assemble” part of the First Amendment. The only reason this country has hundreds of mass killings by gun each year and thousands of suicides by gun each year is that we have more guns than

any other country – more guns than people.

When I go out to “peaceably assemble” in marketplaces, churches, theaters and schools, I am more worried about gun zealots like the writer than I am about my own “self-defense.” – Donald Jakob Moneta

Criminals do not care about gun laws

Using my experience and training as a now-retired professional law enforcement officer (LEO), I can promise you that most of those alleged “common sense gun laws” do not address any causes of any violence. They smack of the “Jim Crow” laws that once forbade people of color from possessing firearms. Our National Rifle Association, as a civil rights organization, helped quash some of those bad laws to allow Black people an opportunity to defend themselves against attacks by domestic troublemakers.

Any experienced LEO can tell you violent criminals are not affected by “gun laws.” They steal, buy and sell firearms at will because laws are of no concern to them.

Stopping violence will require a change of mindsets. Some politicians and some “prosecutors” oppose arresting, trying and convicting violent criminals, and want them roaming the streets killing decent people. This has got to stop.

Our decent citizens must get angry at criminals and rogue politicians and demand better arrests and prosecutions and sentencing to put violent criminals behind bars where they belong. Former Gov. George Allen proposed this, got the legislation

passed, and reduced violent crime in the Commonwealth.

– C.S. Kessler Henrico

Why the FBI memo should alarm all Catholics

I wish to applaud Bishop Knestout for his strong defense of Catholics in response to the leaked FBI memo targeting traditional Catholics. There is no place for racism or bigotry in our Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explicitly condemns this (CCC 1935). We are all one body in Christ as Paul teaches to the Galatians.

Since 2020 I have been attending St. Joseph Parish which is administered by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP). I have visited several other of their apostolates. I do not know anyone who rejects Vatican II, espouses anti-Semitism, or supports violence in any way. I see a community bound by reverence for the Real Presence in the Eucharist and committed to living

a fully Christian life in continuity with Catholic tradition.

Our Church has been the target of hate groups throughout U.S. history. But search the news and you will see unrest caused by Catholics is men and women praying outside abortion clinics, not committing real violence.

This memo must alarm all Catholics! The subtext in the memo is that family values, traditional views of sexuality, and opposition to abortion are real threats that need to be investigated. These are normal Catholic views, upheld by the magisterium. What starts with an investigation of fringe groups can only engulf regular parishes as well. Will there be FBI moles in the cathedral as well?

Thank you again to Bishop Knestout for standing up for religious liberty and supporting the truth of our faith.

– Benjamin Chopski Richmond

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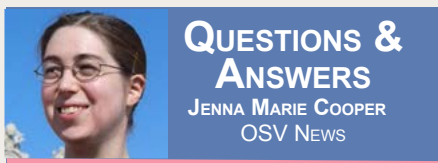
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Continuing penance on Fridays outside of Lent aids in holiness



Q. While answering a question about vegetarians and vegans during Lent, you mentioned the requirement for continuing a penance on Fridays, even if not abstaining from meat. Can you explain why? My understanding is that our penance helps us remember Good Friday every week, to draw us closer to our Lord.

A. Our obligation to do some form of penance on Friday is identified in Canon 1250 in the Code of Canon Law, which tells us that “The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.”

The preceding Canon 1249 gives us a definition of “penitential days” as days “on which the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence.” As Canon 1249 puts it, the faithful have special days of penance “in order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance.”

You are correct that Fridays have a penitential character because of Good Friday. Because Friday is the day on which Jesus offered his life for us on the cross, every Friday is an especially suitable time to draw closer to the mystery of his passion and death.

By practicing self-denial in spiritually healthy and appropriate ways — whether that be giving a favorite food, or sharing our resources with the needy, or taking time out of our daily lives for prayer — we recall and imitate Jesus’ own self-denial in how he “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,” and “humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:7-8).

Traditionally, a penitential

self-denial, often referred to as “mortification” in many classic older works of spirituality, was also understood as an aid to personal growth in holiness. We all know that muscles grow stronger through exercise. In a similar way, a habit of making small sacrifices when the stakes are relatively low can prepare us to choose the right thing in more serious situations.

In other words, those who are spiritually “in shape” through the spiritual training of regular penances and the practice of self-denial are spiritually stronger and thus better able to resist temptations as they arise.

In terms of specifics, canon law further tells us that: “Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday” (1251), and that local bishops’ conferences also have the power to “determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast.”

Here in the United States, in 1966 our own bishops’ conference issued a “Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence,” which reiterated the requirement for Catholics in the United States to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent. But this same document — noting that “changing circumstances, including economic, dietary and social elements, have made some of our people feel that the renunciation of the eating of meat is not always and for everyone the most effective means of practicing penance” — formally permitted Catholics to “substitute other penitential observances” on non-Lenten Fridays.

It is worth noting, though, that the document did urge Catholics to freely choose to continue the tradition of year-round Friday abstinence from meat, even though less strictly required.

Q. A two-point question:

It is common to hear, “It’s a miracle,” for a sports comeback victory. Does the Church have a definition of a miracle? When it comes to canonization, miracles are required, aren’t they? Does a miracle happen in other domains except health and medicine? (Cape Girardeau, Missouri)

A. A miracle is an extraordinary phenomenon that cannot be explained by any natural cause. In its glossary, the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines a miracle as “a sign or wonder such as a healing, or control of nature, which can only be attributed to divine power.”

Calling something like an unlikely sports comeback a “miracle” is using quite a bit of poetic license, since there is a readily discernible natural explanation for the victory, namely, the skill of the athletes, which the athletes acquired through their own human efforts.

There also are situations where God truly may have intervened in answer to a prayer — for instance, a disease goes into an unexpected remission after a course of medical treatment, or a wayward loved one has a surprising conversion of heart — but which cannot be called miracles in a strict technical sense, as there can be a strong natural component to such blessings.

In instances such as these, we might understand God as working within the natural order he established, albeit perhaps in an especially active way; this is as opposed to “breaking the rules” of nature, which is what happens in a true miracle.

Medical miracles seem to be the kind of miracle we hear about most often today, but not all miracles are health-related. While Jesus seemed especially fond of performing miraculous healings, the Gospels give us many wonderful examples of other kinds of miracles — consider Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana; the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and Jesus calming a storm.

In more recent times, there was the “miracle of the sun” at Fatima on Oct. 13, 1917, when numerous witnesses saw the sun move and

seemingly dance in a way that should have been impossible.

Q. We supposedly agree that the human ceremony of canonization does not create a saint. That is God’s doing. So, why are miracles so central to canonization? (Cape Girardeau, Missouri).

A. Theologically, a saint is anyone who is actually in heaven with God, but canonized saints are those whom the Church has officially recognized as presently enjoying the beatific vision. This recognition is for the benefit of those of us still here on earth, as canonized saints are heavenly intercessors to whom we can confidently turn, and they serve as role models of Christian holiness in various states and circumstances of life.

As this is a determination the Church really wants to get right, the process of canonization is necessarily a lengthy and involved one. For a non-martyr, the process begins with a very detailed investigation of the potential saint’s life.

If this investigation shows that they truly lived a life of heroic virtue, that person is declared “Venerable.” If there can be a proven miracle attributed to the Venerable’s intercession, that person is beatified and given the title “Blessed”; after a second miracle, the person can be canonized and is declared a saint.

Supposed miracles can be and are evaluated by either medical doctors or other impartial experts in their respective fields to rule out any merely natural explanation thereby proving a supernatural one. As such, miracles are central to the canonization process because, to put it in very practical terms, they are the best we have in terms of finding objective signs from God that a person is in heaven.

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@osu.com.

Pope anniversary

Continued from Page 2

In February 2021, Pope Francis named Xavière Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart one of the undersecretaries of the synod general secretariat, a post that would make her an automatic voting member of the assembly.

So, La Nacion asked the pope if only one woman would have a vote at the next synod assembly.

“Everyone who participates in the synod will vote. Those who are guests or observers will not vote,” he said, but whoever participates

in a synod as a member “has the right to vote. Whether male or female. Everyone, everyone. That word everyone for me is key.”

On the question of LGBTQ Catholics, Pope Francis insisted to the Perfil interviewer that “everyone is a child of God and each one seeks and finds God by whatever path he or she can.”

While the pope insisted matrimony can only be between one man and one woman, he also repeated his support for the legal rights guaranteed by civil unions for gay couples and others who share a life. And he said, as he told the Associated Press in January, homosexuality should not be criminalized.

As for Catholic teaching that homosexual acts are sinful, like any sexual activity outside of marriage, Pope Francis said he did not think those sins would send a person to hell.

“God only sets aside the proud, the rest of us sinners are all in line,” he said, and God always is reaching out to save sinners who seek his help.

In each of the interviews, he spoke of the horror of war and his concern for the continued fighting in Ukraine.

Asked by Vatican News what he would want as a gift for his 10th anniversary, Pope Francis responded: “Peace. We need peace.”

Don't miss invitation for deeper relationship with God



**BELIEVE AS
YOU PRAY**
MSGR. TIMOTHY KEENEY

Lent is always an invitation to expand in faith, to grow deeper in relationship with Christ, to make a more intense commitment with our lives to Jesus. That is the plan, but in execution it is often quite different.

Many years we can experience Lent as a time of increased occasions of prayer, but not as transformative of our lives. Some years we might get to the end of Lent and realize that it has passed without any effect on our lives.

To paraphrase St. Paul, during Lent we know the good we ought to do yet find ourselves doing the opposite.

The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday of Lent is the account of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus in St. John's Gospel. John gives us seven signs in his Gospel each of which is an invitation to a deeper act of faith in and for Jesus. The seven signs include:

1. **Turning water into wine (Jn 2:1-12)**
2. **Healing the nobleman's son (Jn 4:46-54)**
3. **Healing the lame man at the pool (Jn 5:1-11)**

4. **Feeding of the 5,000 (Jn 6:1-15)**
5. **Walking on water (Jn 6:16-21)**
6. **Healing a man born blind (Jn 9:1-12)**
7. **Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11)**

These signs have a direction and goal. They are meant to move us to an act of faith in the Resurrection of Jesus – a sign and reality that changes everything.

Lent has the same direction and goal and that is why we have the sixth and seventh signs as our Gospels for the Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent.

God knows that our faith grows, that we go through stages of growth in our physical and our spiritual

lives. The signs invite us to grow in our faith in Jesus from faith in him being Lord of nature and of our life in this world, to where we can make an action of faith in him as the Lord of Eternal Life.

That invitation calls us to radically alter how we live in this world now, to give adequate testimony to that deeper act of faith.

We cannot be naïve. There are powerful forces — interior and exterior — that stand in the way of making such an act of faith.

One practical example, which study after study and practical observation confirms, is



that our connection to our phones and other internet capable devices is having a profoundly negative effect on our ability to relate to one another. This has been the source of dysfunctional behavior in our culture and moral lives.

Yet, fasting from our phones and devices, or even establishing a different relationship with them, is among the most difficult tasks we can undertake.

We might agree in the abstract that this is necessary to allow us to have a deeper relationship with Christ, but, like the image from the Book of Proverbs, we are like dogs that return to their vomit.

We are now coming to the close of Lent and in the following week we will begin Holy Week. It is not too late.

The power of Christ came into people's lives in each of these signs in a way that transformed them. Reflecting on the sign of the resurrection of Lazarus, and all the signs that God gives us in our daily lives, don't miss the invitation for a deeper relationship and act of faith that he is giving to each one of us.

Msgr. Timothy Keeney is pastor of Incarnation, Charlottesville.



a special evening for a special cause

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2023

Reserve your seat for the Annual Benefit Dinner at the Commonwealth Club, featuring cocktails, a seated dinner, and a live auction. It's an enchanting evening benefitting our faith-based community dedicated to serving older adults of limited financial means. Black tie optional; valet parking.

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Photos by Michael Mickle



Lent is a time to fight for what is good

TOM KLOCEK
Special to The Catholic Virginian

“The evil which exists in the world is the result and the effect of an attack on society by a dark and hostile agent, the devil,” said St. Pope Paul VI (November 15, 1972).

Satan, in his pride, wanted to equate himself with God, rejected God’s love, and is intent on separating us from God. One of the ways he does this is by enticing us with worldly things: money and pleasure.

Lent — a period for reflection, prayer, fasting and repentance — is a time for us to enter into the battle and build up our defenses against Satan. It is part of our journey to understanding Christ, who is God made man, the Incarnate Word — from his incarnation to his redeeming Passion and the cross.

Living a meaningful Lent has become more difficult. Christians are assaulted at every turn. The secular world has become evil. It wants everyone to worship at its altar of self and its sacraments of abortion, transgenderism, gay pride and gay marriage, all contrary to God’s will and his love for us.

In the Old Testament, God cautions us against following the ways of the world around us. Jesus calls us out of this world. St. Paul says, “Do not be conformed to this world

but be transformed ... [to] what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

People convince themselves that they aren’t bad because they haven’t killed anyone, they contribute to charities, they greet their neighbors, etc. — but what have they left undone?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetuate it” (“Stride Toward Freedom,” 1958).

Wrongly, we go along because we don’t want to make waves, be singled out or be cancelled.

Abortion, transgenderism, euthanasia, gay marriage, etc., all go against the laws of nature and God, and tear at the fabric of humanity, the family and society, and must be opposed. These assaults on life are a greater existential threat than anything the climate activists claim.

All of these things undermine the good things that God wishes for us. Some claim that they are expressions of love, but they use the good things that God has given us in ways contrary to their purpose.

Loving one’s neighbor does not mean condoning their sins. We think those sins don’t hurt us, but they undermine our sense of right and wrong, dulling our consciences, so that eventually we stop standing up for what is right.

We get lulled into thinking that



LENT

PRAYER • FASTING • ALMSGIVING

impose upon himself ... the voice of conscience ... speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; ... according to it he will be judged” (“Gaudium et Spes,” 16).

Organizations like Pew Research repeatedly report that those who believe in God, pray regularly, and try to follow God’s laws are happier, more stable, and have less despair. Yet people resist turning to God. We think we can do everything ourselves.

We can do nothing without God. This is what it means to surrender to God, to acknowledge that without him we are dust.

Ash Wednesday reminded us of our mortality. Lent is a time for us to think about ourselves and our smallness before God.

Turn away from the ways of this evil world. Fight for what is good. Loving your neighbor includes encouraging him to do what is right and good. Admonishing the sinner is an act of mercy.

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:14-15).

Tom Klocek is a parishioner at St. Stephen, Martyr, in Chesapeake, Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, retired naval officer and retired systems engineer.

if something is legal or everyone is doing it then it must be OK. We allow it to pervade society.

“Wrong is wrong, even if everybody is wrong. Right is right, even if nobody is right.” (Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen)

Many deny God, good and evil, and even our consciences. Psychiatrists know that people need and look for a sense of purpose.

“In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not



Harm happened in isolation.

Healing can happen together.

As a community, we strive to support survivors of child sexual abuse on their journey toward healing and wholeness.

For those who have suffered abuse by clergy residing in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, we invite you to join virtually on April 12th at 7:00pm. Spouses and affected community members are also welcome. These gatherings, led by an independent facilitator, will offer a safe environment for participants to connect, share experiences, support, and heal.

If you would like more information, or the virtual meeting link, please call the Victim Assistance Coordinator at (877) 887-9603 or email dana@atreeplanted.org



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Meet the compassionate priest who served the scorned



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

Whenever a quote, story or inspiration from a book stays with me, I regard the hours reading the book time well spent. That was definitely the case after reading "Fr. Ed: The Story of Bill W.'s Spiritual Sponsor." I admit it's a book I might have passed over if not for an invitation from the author, Dawn Eden Goldstein, to read and review it.

Although I was familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), I had no knowledge of Jesuit Father Edward Dowling. But reading his biography left me inspired and with a memorable quote: "The shortest cut to humility is humiliation." The quote also appears in AA's Big Book.

The biography includes the priest's spiritual struggle during his novitiate, which was providential as it prepared him for the work that God would set before him.

Not only did the aspiring priest struggle with his call to the priesthood during his formative years, but he endured a crisis of faith that prompted his desire to walk with and champion the poor, the down-trodden and the marginalized.

Father Ed lived his vocation in

the society that bears the name of Jesus as a compassionate presence toward the very people that are too often scorned.

As an editor and columnist with the "Queen's Work," a journal published by the Jesuits of the Missouri Province, Father Ed's outreach was as deep as it was broad, but it didn't stop with the printed word. Early in his priesthood, he was involved with voter's rights, democratic principles of engagement and racial justice.

Convinced that the Ignatian Exercises were something that could help everyone, he quickly noted parallels between the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the 12 Step Program espoused by AA. In an effort to reconcile the two, he went out of his way to meet Bill W. (Wilson), co-founder of AA.

The meeting led to a lasting friendship, prompting the priest to establish a chapter in St. Louis. Although he was not an alcoholic, Father Ed bonded with those who struggled with the addiction and found in them a type of communion that he believed was not limited to alcoholics. In one of his articles about AA in the "Queen's Work" he wrote:

"If you can't stop biting your fingernails, growling at your mother-in-law, or are obsessed with

any other deteriorating habit, just substitute your vice for alcohol in the following 12 steps and see if you have the courage even to start the program. It is very practical for people who are drinking too much, loneliness, anxiety, or discouragement these days."

The priest realized that a wider application of the 12 steps was a way to reach people who might not be inclined toward Ignatian spirituality.

As a follow-through, he developed numerous support groups, which included "Recovery" for those with mental illness and their families, Cana Conferences for married and engaged couples, a support group for women who suffered a miscarriage and a group for women with seven or more children that he named 7-Up. His outreach also included teaching Catholic Action classes during the summer months.

Another remarkable aspect of Father Ed's ministry was its inclusivity regarding race and religion that took place a decade prior to the civil rights movement. A man before his time, his prophetic call to the laity to live a life of holiness preceded Vatican II and the publication of "Lumen Gentium."

Sustained by the grace of God, Father Ed made no secret of his love

for God and his dependence upon divine grace, which deepened through the years. Diagnosed in his 40s with a debilitating disease that caused his vertebrae to fuse and made mobility difficult, he inspired those who knew him.

As the disease made walking and activities of daily living an ongoing challenge, his secretary told him that she was praying for him to be healed, to which the priest responded, "Oh, kid, don't do that. This is my ticket to heaven."

Father Ed died in his sleep, April 6, 1960, after visiting with friends from several of the support groups he helped establish. His life was truly an embodiment of a belief that C.S. Lewis professed which was that after the Blessed Sacrament, the most sacred object on Earth is our neighbor.

As we continue our Lenten journey deep into the heart of God, may the words and lives of the saints continue to inspire us and help us to believe that we too can become holy as our heavenly Father is holy.

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

WHAT WE'VE HEARD



Women's Giving Circle kicks off new season: Approximately 30 women from the Richmond area gathered at the Pastoral Center, Richmond, March 1st for Mass and lunch with Bishop Barry C. Knestout. Later this month, the philanthropic group will hear pitches from organizations hoping to receive a grant for their program/project. Grants will be awarded in late April.

Eagle Scouts at work in the community: Beau Griffey and Lucas Ramos-Orama, scouts from the same troop, earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Beau designed and led a renovation project for the children's nursery at Blessed Sacrament, Norfolk, for his Eagle Scout project. Lucas chose to design and construct a prayer garden at Church of the Holy Family, Virginia Beach.



Beau Griffey and Lucas Ramos-Orama

Planned Giving Officer

The Diocesan Office of Development has an opening for a full-time Planned Giving Officer. This position is responsible for securing planned gifts to support ministries of the Diocese of Charlotte, cultivate relationships with current and new Catholic Heritage Society members, and increase endowment gifts to the Foundation Diocese of Charlotte that support the Diocese of Charlotte.

Must be willing to travel within the Diocese of Charlotte.

Knowledge and Experience:

- BA/BS degree required
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- Excellent relationship building skills: ability to work effectively with parishioners, prospects, and parish leaders
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Please submit letter of interest and resume to:

Gina Rhodes, Office of Development

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Gender ideology

Continued from Page 1

body and damages it, destroying the function of a person's reproductive organs. It provides an unnecessary medical treatment for someone who is actually experiencing mental health problems, such as depression.

Hasson said anyone who has a loved one undergoing this type of crisis needs to make it clear: "I love you, but I love you too much to let you go down this path of harming yourself."

She explained the steps in the process: it usually starts with psychological and social changes, such as changing one's hair, clothes, name and pronouns. For young children, the next step can be puberty blockers, which disrupt naturally puberty, but also bone, brain and emotional development.

Cross-sex hormones follow, Hasson said, which, if combined with puberty blockers, will sterilize a teenager and permanently take away their chances of having their own children. Lastly, doctors can perform surgeries including double mastectomies and castration.

Gender ideology denies a fundamental fact that humans cannot choose, or change, their sex, Hasson emphasized. At conception, God is the one who chooses to make us male or female and that is part of our DNA.

The National Institutes of Health notes that our sex marks every cell in our body, she said. Surgery can change outward appearance, but it cannot change one's cells. A woman who has taken cross-sex hormones is still a woman, even if she looks like a man.

Hasson shared the story of Chloe Cole, a teenage girl who medically transitioned between the ages of 13 and 16, receiving puberty blockers, testosterone and a double mastectomy.

According to Cole, she realized nearly a year later that she had made a terrible mistake, learning she would never be able to breastfeed her future children, if she were able to have any.

Cole now testifies before lawmakers and shares her story in the hopes of saving others, saying "I was failed by modern medicine."

She says she did not understand the ramifications of the medical decisions she was making; she did not know the long-term health effects; she was not told how traumatic the recovery would be from the surgery; and that she could face complications for the rest of her life.

As an attorney, Hasson said she is seeing a rise in lawsuits from transgender people suing the doctors who failed to treat their mental health issues and instead performed high-risk surgeries.

Rise of social media influence

Hasson said the normalization of transgenderism in secular culture is linked to the rise in social media

influence, and is particularly toxic for girls.

Social media is curating a false reality for teens, she said, encouraging users to post false images of themselves through the use of filters that distort reality.

Hasson described a TikTok filter that takes away all imperfections from a person's picture: "when the filter comes off, the girl feels depressed at what she really looks like." Depression is linked to social media use, Hasson noted.

An even bigger problem is the fact that social media influencers glamorize transgender surgery for kids, said Hasson. Influencers and even surgeons post pictures of teens who have undergone double mastectomies with messages saying the kids are "hotter" and "cooler" after they have mutilated their once-healthy bodies.

Hasson warns parents about social media influencers who will try to reach vulnerable teens and then convince the teens to cut off contact with their families; this way, teens will be further disconnected from reality and the people who truly love them.

Being proactive parents

"As a pastor, this is a tough topic, so I can only imagine how difficult it is for parents," said Father Dan Beeman, pastor of OLMC, during one session.

Hasson said people who promote gender ideology strive to drive a wedge between parents and children. She added that public schools that have adopted a transgender-affirming culture force children to lie by making them accept and participate in affirming someone's chosen gender identity as their sex.

Schools can permit students to socially transition without notifying the parents. Hasson also said some pediatricians will ask parents to leave the room while they conduct "gender screening" on a child. Pediatricians are not required to share the results of the screening with parents.

Hasson urged parents to be proactive. That means having a good prayer life, teaching their children about their faith, and helping them be healthy. Good sleep habits, exercise and a healthy diet will help strengthen their body and mind. Limiting and monitoring social media use is also key.

Hasson said it is important for parents to teach their children to do physically and mentally hard things; this sense of accomplishment will help build children's confidence and give them an appreciation for the body that God gave them.

She also stressed the importance of letting kids grow and develop naturally, and not to sexualize them or their relationships at a young age. She mentioned that kids need to know it is natural to feel confused, awkward and unhappy with one's body around the time of puberty

– but to reassure them that it is a temporary phase.

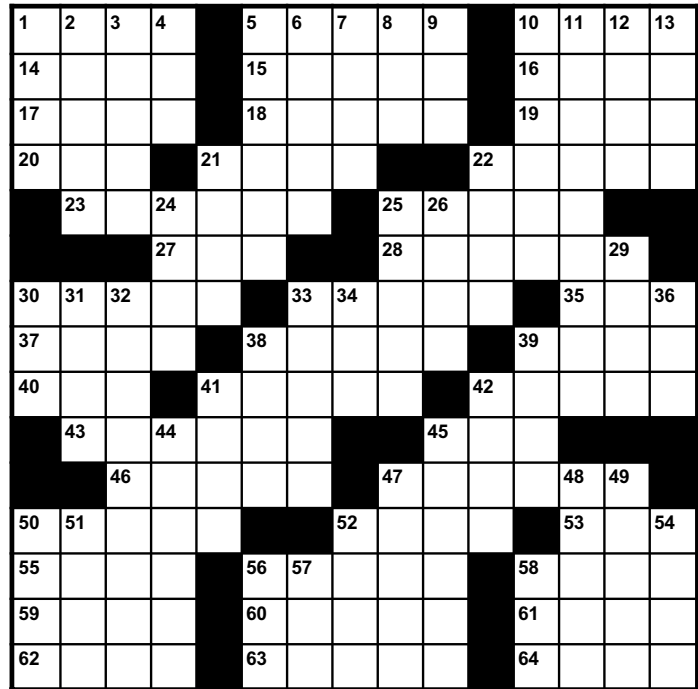
Hasson said just as kids need to be kids, parents also need to be parents – that means guiding their children, helping them understand how to deal with their emotions, and helping them make sense of the world – not affirm their confusion.

"They need to know that we care about them – not just in dealing with gender ideology, but also their salvation," said Waring.

He said the Office for Evangeli-

zation plans to bring Hasson back for more training sessions to cover other areas of the diocese.

Editor's note: Mary Rice Hasson is an attorney and policy expert at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. She co-founded the Person and Identity Project and serves as a consultant to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family, Life and Youth. Find links with more information in this story at catholicvirginian.org.



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

ACROSS

- 1 "Blessed are you who are ____" (Lk 6:20)
- 5 Weaned pig
- 10 Reflected sound
- 14 Fix and laugh ender
- 15 Vows
- 16 Bovine sounds
- 17 Covers
- 18 "If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your ____ as well" (Mt 5:40)
- 19 Ponder
- 20 Shelter
- 21 Entr' ____
- 22 Tic-tac-toe alternatives
- 23 Legend says Patrick drove these out of Ireland
- 25 Third century pope
- 27 Sea, to Sartre
- 28 "...on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has ____" (Mt 4:16)
- 30 Greek goddesses of the seasons
- 33 Commandment place
- 35 Pull laboriously
- 37 Rosary beads
- 38 His name was changed to Israel
- 39 Texas state star
- 40 Sweet potato
- 41 "____ Tag!"
- 42 Sham
- 43 ____ of the Sacred Heart
- 45 Evil
- 46 Cavalry sword
- 47 Hydra and sea anemone
- 50 Stingers
- 52 Apostle to the Gentiles
- 53 A finish for Canaan
- 55 Canal or lake
- 56 Jeremiah's description of himself
- 58 Small blemish
- 59 A queen of Jordan
- 60 Isaiah spoke of a new one
- 61 Confined
- 62 Spanish titles
- 63 Squeeze
- 64 Way to travel

DOWN

- 1 Chalice covering
- 2 Tony's "cousins"
- 3 Ancient
- 4 Matter of law
- 5 Sport of Sneijder, Dutch athlete who converted to Catholicism during the World Cup games
- 6 Stops
- 7 Native American
- 8 "I've got it now!"
- 9 Tongue-clucking sound
- 10 Village to which Jesus traveled
- 11 Title for the Holy Spirit
- 12 Aircraft cargo compartment
- 13 Capital of Norway
- 21 Tropical tree
- 22 Number for the last Leo
- 24 Latin 101 word
- 25 The ____ of saints
- 26 Middle easterner
- 29 "____ Dimittis"
- 30 Mattress for the Baby Jesus?
- 31 Shaped like a racetrack
- 32 ____ of sin
- 33 Hybrid creature of myth
- 34 Glass filler
- 36 Command to a horse
- 38 St. Peter's feast day is the 29th of this month
- 39 Our ____ of Fatima
- 41 Yaks
- 42 "...all have sinned and ____ short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23)
- 44 Thin candles
- 45 Tree limbs
- 47 Trousers
- 48 Biblical instruments
- 49 Jesus referred to Himself as this, rejected by the builders
- 50 Travel
- 51 Buck ender
- 52 Free from contamination
- 54 Miss Kett
- 56 Affirmative
- 57 Crew tool
- 58 Mineral spring

Bristol rosary

Continued from Page 1

Hess, as well as Catholics from other area parishes.

“The fact that Bishop Knestout is willing to do this shows that he recognizes how important this is, what’s going on in Bristol, and how it affects all of us,” Father Hess said.

He added that his parishioners who gather to pray always distance themselves from those who may be aggressive and loud, even if they share the same view.

“We are different; we are a loving presence,” the priest said. “There is nothing malicious in anything we do; we don’t even like being called ‘protesters’ because we are simply praying.”

At the frequent gatherings, it’s not unusual for Protestants to stand on the sidewalk beside Catholics, and sometimes to pray the rosary with them.

Dr. Jacquelyn Early, co-leader of the Respect Life ministry at St. Anne Parish, handed out rosaries, along with brochures on how to pray the rosary. She commented on the ecumenical aspect of this ministry.

“This is one of the good things about this movement: it unites all the Christian churches,” she noted afterward.

Angie Bush, leader of 40 Days for Life in Bristol and co-leader of the Respect Life ministry at St. Anne, noted that although the regular prayer vigils near the clinic are smaller than the one gathered with the bishop, they often include Catholics from Christ the King, Abingdon, and also from Kingsport, Johnson City, and Mountain City, Tennessee. Sometimes Pastor Paul Becker from Concordia Lutheran Church in Kingsport, Tennessee, joins them, as well as other area Protestants.

“What is encouraging now is the unity we’re seeing, with St. Anne’s parishioners and others,” Bush said. “It’s our common call to be the Body of Christ.”

Bush invited Bishop Knestout when she learned he would be at St. Anne for the confirmation Mass that morning.

“I think having the bishop here will give courage to some of our parishioners,” she said. “He is our shepherd.”

Bush made sure participants stayed on the public sidewalk and did not step onto the blacktop edge of the parking area of a neighboring business. It’s important to be careful and respectful, she noted, while offering heartfelt and passionate prayer.

The group prays for the women who are in crisis pregnancies, for the people waiting for them in the clinic parking lot, for conversion of the hearts of those who work at the clinic, for women who have had abortions, and for the men in their lives, she explained.

“We carry all those prayers and place them at the foot of the cross,” Bush said.

The ministry in Bristol continues to draw supporters and gain momentum. Bush noted that Father Hess’ compassionate leadership has helped others find their voices on the subject of abortion.

“His courage has sustained and strengthened this movement,” she said.

No matter who they are praying for, on either side of the issue, Father Hess said, “Our message is love.”

‘Everyone does need compassion’

Bishop Knestout led the group in praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary. Afterward, he walked with about half of the group around the corner to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet on the public sidewalk directly across the street from the clinic.

“We are always peaceful,” said St. Anne parishioner Kelly Frisbee, who also facilitates the interdenominational Sidewalk Advocates for Life program. The group had moved closer that day partly “to be there as a witness for anyone who might even be thinking of an abortion,” she said, explaining that sometimes people simply drive by to find a facility in case they may seek their services.



After praying the Sorrowful Mysteries, some members of the group walked to the abortion clinic and said the Divine Mercy Chaplet. (Photo/Karen Adams)

Several clinic staff members stood in the parking lot, upset at those praying, and told them to leave. One woman called out that the clinic offered condoms, pregnancy tests and feminine supplies.

“We are not intimidating during our prayer vigils,” said Frisbee. “When the Catholic groups are out there, we don’t yell, scream, or harass any of the people who are coming or going. We do not believe in that; it doesn’t help anyone.”

They do offer literature to direct people to Pathways Pregnancy Resource Center if they’re interested.

Located nearby in Bristol, Tennessee, Pathways helps women with unplanned pregnancies, offering free services including counseling, pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, and maternity and baby goods. It refers pregnant women who are in need of other help, such as medical care, safe housing, or financial assistance, to other support programs. It also offers post-abortion counseling.

The year-round sidewalk ministry differs from the vigils in that members are less prayer-focused, taking a “woman-centered approach” and offering to talk with anyone who is thinking about abortion.

“We act like the friend next door, to be a loving presence, share literature, and offer support in a Christ-centered way,” she said.

Prayer is offered only if the woman wants it, Frisbee said.

“Some people are uncomfortable with prayer. Not everyone is Christian, and they may have no beliefs. But everyone does have a soul. Everyone does need compassion,” she said, adding, “And even if they do have an abortion, perhaps they’ll look at our information and reach out down the road if they need healing.”

A former NICU nurse, Frisbee has seen babies at 22 weeks old who survive, thrive and eventually go home, she said.

“I also have seen babies whose mothers began the abortion process and they delivered big, healthy babies,” she recalled. “And when the mothers saw their babies, they usually changed their minds about keeping them. They think, ‘This is my child and I want it.’”

Learning more about what drives women to seek abortions has touched her heart, deepened her faith, and given her a better understanding of people, Frisbee explained.

“When you think about some of the hard situations that the moms are in, it helps you to see the humanity of people and realize that deep down everyone’s the same,” she said.

Black Congress

Continued from Page 4

November 2022 participated in a day of reflection at St. Joseph Parish in Largo, Maryland, to shape local recommendations for the national gathering.

Washington Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr., who also is St. Joseph’s pastor and president of the National Black Catholic Congress, welcomed those participants, saying, “We look at what we can do as a prophetic people for our communities, families and church.”

The National Black Catholic Congress, which meets every five years, was held in Orlando, Florida, in 2017; in Indianapolis in 2012; in Buffalo, New York, in 2007; in Chicago in 2002; in Baltimore in 1997; in New Orleans in 1992; and in Washington, in 1987. At each gathering, the congress renews its mission with a new pastoral plan.

Several key recommendations in the Pastoral Plan of Action from the most recent National Black Congress gathering in Orlando included: enabling Black Catholics to enhance their Africentric spirituality; increasing awareness of Black saints; creating opportunities for lay leadership in the church; identifying and eradicating racism; increasing prison ministry and outreach; providing support for those experiencing domestic violence; and increasing awareness of and working to eliminate human trafficking.

Other recommendations were: developing Africentric religious education programs; providing outreach to unchurched members of the community; creating more sustainable Catholic schools; promoting and supporting Black Catholic vocation; and having parishes and dioceses “address the urgent issue of disengaged Black Catholic youth.”

Bishop Campbell said the pastoral plan devised in the upcoming congress will help Black Catholic parishes and parishes with Black Catholic members “address the vision of what we’re called to do.”

The early congresses and now the modern gatherings have had a goal of showing that “Black Catholics have an equal place in the church with any other Catholics,” he said. The gathering, he said, can help Black Catholics persevere in their faith and show the gifts from God that they have to share.

Discussing the impact that the National Black Catholic Congress can have on individuals, parishes and dioceses, Bishop Campbell said, “We start with a change of our hearts and move to change the hearts of others, so we’re all walking together. That’s what we do in our parishes. Just like a family is the building block of society, the parishes are the building blocks of the church.”

A promotional flier for the upcoming National Black Catholic Congress XIII invited people to “join with other Black Catholics and those who minister to Black Catholics in the United States for a celebration of our faith and culture.”

Editor’s note: Registration for National Black Catholic Congress XIII ends July 15. Read this story at catholicvirginian.org to find related links.

Black churches

Continued from Page 4

aspect of their cultural heritage in their styles of worship,” he said. “From music, cultural symbols, vestments, community, and the interpretation of Scripture, Black Catholics have always expressed their identity.”

Davis also noted that “these parishes tend to be more engaged spiritually and emotionally” than the average Catholic parish. However, he explained that despite high levels of faith engagement, Black Catholic churches have declined in number, being closed or consolidated “due to financial reasons.”

This removes a vital Catholic presence in communities that need them and the Black expression of Catholic faith that forms them. Davis said the church should be concerned.

Recognizing spiritual importance

Recently, two Black Catholic parishes – St. Rita Catholic Church in Indianapolis and the Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Norfolk, Virginia – were among 35 Black Christian churches across the U.S. that received a much-needed financial infusion aimed at preserving their houses of worship in recognition of their spiritual importance to Black Americans.

The grant money, which totaled \$4 million, was announced Jan. 16 by the National Trust For Historic Preservation’s African-American Cultural Heritage Action fund.

Father Jean Bosco Ntawugashira, St. Rita’s administrator, told OSV News that his parish, founded in 1919, was the first Black Catholic parish established for African Americans in Indianapolis by Archbishop Joseph Chartrand.

“A school was added on the church’s main campus shortly afterward, to also serve and educate Black Catholic children,” Father Ntawugashira said.

He explained St. Rita’s \$100,000 in grant money will primarily restore its bell tower and prevent it from becoming a public safety hazard.

“Once our bell tower work is done we will turn our attention to other building matters,



Mural “Dance of the Holy Innocence” at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, New Orleans. (OSV News photo/Elise Grenier, courtesy Grenier Conservation)

such as the gym and getting a new boiler,” Father Ntawugashira said.

St. Rita parishioner Caleb Legg, an alumnus of the old school, chairs the parish’s capital campaign. He told OSV News they acquired an additional \$150,000 grant from the Fund for the Preservation of Sacred Places, and plan to raise money for several other restoration projects across the church campus, which has been nominated for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Places.

‘Strong Catholic witness’

The Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, located in Norfolk, Virginia, is the only Black Catholic basilica in the U.S. The basilica underwent a \$6.7 million restoration, completed in 2020, and its \$150,000 grant will help sustain the upkeep of the church.

The basilica’s pastor, Father Jim Curran, told OSV News that the “largest donors” for the basilica’s massive restoration were not even Catholic – showing how “very well known we are around here” thanks to the basilica community’s strong Catholic witness through community outreach. Besides providing help with basic needs, such as utility payments and rent, the basilica also operates a food pantry and soup kitchen four days a week.

“We usually serve between 150 to 200 people – although some days it varies – and since we are partnered with restaurants, a grocery store and Panera bakery, I believe that our outreach program is a good one,” Father Curran said.

The basilica no longer operates a school – that closed in 2001 – however, it continues to be seen as, quoting its website, “the cornerstone of Catholicism in the Tidewater area.”

Father Curran emphasized that the church’s evangelizing mission suffers when Black Catholic parishes are closed.

“When they (dioceses or archdioceses) close parishes – or try to merge them – it is the Black music and Black worship traditions that we lose the hardest,” Father Curran said.

This removes a Catholic tradition that feeds spiritually not only many African Americans, but also people of other ethnic heritages who find a home in Black Catholic spirituality and ways of being church.

The priest noted, “Everybody who comes here to worship with us always says, ‘it should be like this everywhere.’”

Editor’s note: Look for links in this story at catholicvirginian.org to find our past stories on the Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Communications Specialist, Office of Communications

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond, VA is seeking a Communications Specialist to support the mission of the diocesan Office of Communications. The Communications Specialist reports directly to the Communications Director and works closely with the director to develop materials for online, social media content, and offers media and public relations support. The position proactively monitors, oversees, and provides written content for diocesan digital communication platforms, supports diocesan programs in order to serve the overall mission of the Roman Catholic Church and is reflective of the voice and priorities of the bishop of Richmond.

The Communications Specialist is a self-motivated, team player, with the ability to generate ideas, exercise good judgement and write compelling content and edit for a wide range of digital and print communications, including but not limited to the diocesan website, diocesan social media content, and media and public relations efforts. In addition, the successful candidate will publish press releases, statements, reports and letters for the Office of Communications.

The successful candidate must also have a bachelor's degree in Public Relations, Marketing, English or related field.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is seeking a Campus Minister

to serve the Catholic Campus Ministry at James Madison University in Harrisonburg. JMU is a public, liberal arts university with an undergraduate population of approximately 20,000 students. The Campus Minister, alongside the other members of the Campus Ministry Team, is responsible for coordinating pastoral, programmatic and catechetical activity of the Catholic Campus Ministry with student leaders. The Campus Minister is also responsible for developing student leaders, pastorally responding to student needs and accompanying students during their college experience. An ideal candidate will be a practicing Catholic who has a commitment to prayer, a desire to know God and an excitement to share the Gospel with college students.

Qualifications: Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. A minimum of a bachelor's degree is required with a master's degree preferred in a relevant field. 2-3 years of experience in pastoral work, preferably campus ministry. This is a full-time, exempt position on a salary basis. The salary is commensurate with experience and diocesan pay scale. To apply for this position visit <http://bit.ly/3kSBkx6>. For more information, or questions, please contact Kelly Shumate, HR Generalist/Recruiter at jobs@richmonddioocese.org.

Peninsula Catholic High School seeks an innovative, collaborative and experienced science teacher (earth, chemistry and physics) for the 2023-2024 school year who has an enthusiasm for youth, skills for effective inte-

gration of technology in the classroom, and a desire to be part of a community with a 120-year history of excellence in Catholic education. A bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred, hands-on inquiry and STEM focus is a must. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teaching license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas. Please send cover letter, résumé, diocesan application, (which can be found at richmonddioocese.org), and references to: Peninsula Catholic High School, Attn: Principal, 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 or hwhitchurch@peninsulacatholic.org. Application deadline is Sunday, April 30, 2023 or until the position is filled.

At least 2-3 years working in communications or related field is necessary. A practicing Catholic with working knowledge of the structure and teachings of the Catholic Church is needed, but not required. Must have extensive knowledge and experience working with social media, strategy, and its various platforms. Analytics of this platform is a plus. Required skills include proficiency with PC software, including Microsoft Office and Wordpress. A familiarity with Adobe Creative Suite and Google Analytics, AP Stylebook and Canva is a plus.

Excellent written and oral communications skills with a strong attention to detail. Self-motivated with strong organizational and planning skills. Ability to work independently and collaboratively with a proven track record of completing multiple projects under deadlines. Ability to maintain confidentiality and work well under pressure.

This full-time position will require approximately 35 hours per week with the expectation of some nights and weekends. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, résumé and completed diocesan application at <http://bit.ly/3ZhcGT>. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Shumate, HR Generalist, to jobs@richmonddioocese.org.

St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church, 2700 Dolfield Drive, Richmond, seeks a Director of Music. This is a full-time position in a vibrant, demographically diverse, 3,500-household parish in the greater Richmond area. Responsibilities include planning and implementation of liturgical music for parish liturgies — four weekend Masses, holy days, sacraments, weddings, funerals, other communal celebrations, etc. Openness to contemporary music required. Proficiency in voice, choral music, choir development, keyboard (organ) skills, orchestration and conducting. Maintain a graded choir/instrumental music program. Good rapport with adults, teens and children. A master's degree in music or comparable preferred. Experience in parish setting. Salary and benefits commensurate with education and experience. Position description and application available at the parish or by email to jan.webb@stedwardch.org.

SHORTTAKES

Enjoy the 1927 silent film "The King of Kings" accompanied and brought to life by acclaimed theater organist, Tom Hoehn. This 112-minute silent film leads the viewer in the events that lead to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection superbly told by one of Hollywood's greatest directors, Cecil B. DeMille. Hoehn will use all of the varying sounds of our 54-rank pipe organ to make present this biblical story. Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience this free silent film with live organ accompaniment, Friday, March 31, 7 p.m., St. Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road, Williamsburg. For more information, call 757-229-3631 or visit www.bede.org/concerts.

Annual Easter Sunrise Mass will be celebrated Sunday, April 9, 6:30 a.m., in front of the garden mausoleum of St. Mary Cemetery, 3000 Church St., Norfolk. Celebrant for the Mass will be Father Brian Rafferty, Portsmouth Naval Hospital chaplain. For further information or to volunteer, contact Jim Fitzpatrick at 757-572-1420 or fitzpatrick1100@aol.com.

The Monks of Mary Mother of the Church Abbey invite all to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16, 3 p.m., 12829 River Road, Goochland. Schedule: 1 p.m. limited confession, 2 p.m. rosary, 2:45 p.m. Divine Mercy Chapel, 3 p.m. Mass. For more information contact Brother Jeffery Williams at 804-708-9673 or Carol Stefanec at 804-708-9651.

Armor of God Retreat, St. Clare of Assisi Retreat Center, 620 Buckroe Ave., Hampton, April 14-16. Do you think life is sometimes a battle ground? Do you ever feel defeated or dragged down by the world? Do you feel like you need a defense plan to overcome the enemy? Then come and learn how putting on the Armor of God can help in discerning the power and will of God through the struggles of life. Suggested donation is \$90 which includes four meals and two nights' accommodation. Contact Lisa at lhran75@aol.com and sign up at: <https://form.jotform.com/230435773044150>.

Couples married seven years or less are invited to Wintergreen Mountain Resort for a weekend to strengthen your marriage and connect with your spouse. Catholic speakers and authors, Ennie and Cana Hickman, lead the weekend with retreat chaplain, Father Brian Capuano. April 28 and 29. Visit evangelizerichmond.org/couples to register before Sunday, March 26.

Charity Golf Tournament, Friday, May 5, Virginia Beach: All are invited to the second annual Knights of Columbus Virginia Open. All proceeds to benefit charities, as well as the Diocese of Richmond. Register to golf as an individual or a team and learn about sponsorships at <https://abbatekofc.com/golf>.

Knights of Columbus annual Fish Fry, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 4309 Thomas Jefferson Parkway, Palmyra. March 24 and 31, 5-7 p.m. Eat in or take out. Price \$13 per plate.

Join Father Gregory Kandt of the Church of St. Therese, Gloucester, for a rich and inspiring journey to Greece. Our itinerary includes stops at some of the more significant Pauline sites from the earliest days of Christianity, including Thessaloniki, Philippi, Corinth, Athens, and Ephesus. We will have the chance to explore impressive monuments at these sites and ponder the world of the first generation of Christians. Our program includes a four-night cruise through the Aegean, stopping in iconic places like Mykonos, Santorini, Rhodes, and Crete. We will enjoy land excursions at Kusadasi (Ephesus), Patmos (sites associated with St. John), Rhodes (the crusader-era palace), and Crete (the Palace of Knossos and evidence of the historic Minoan civilization). Throughout, we will have access to local expert guides, a tour manager, breakfast/dinner daily (plus lunch during the cruise). Fr. Gregory will celebrate liturgy with us at select historic venues each day. This is a memorable and customized journey that you are sure to enjoy! Come join us. Priority registration is open now. Additional registrations will be taken after March 25th on a space-available basis. For detailed information about the program, price, and itinerary, visit: www.travelillum.com/trc/kna.

Saint Joseph

Continued from Page 5

During the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Saint Luke writes that Joseph and Mary did not offer a lamb in sacrifice, but instead chose the option for those with lesser means: two turtledoves or pigeons.

Since Saint Joseph was a working man, he has a second feast day in May, Saint Joseph the Worker. This feast in March, however, emphasizes that he is the husband of Mary. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade writes that God would only pick the worthiest of men to be the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

"If God had charged you with the honorable task of choosing from among the kings a husband for the Blessed Virgin, would you not have given her the greatest mind in the world? ... Do you think that the Holy Spirit, who is the author of this divine marriage, is less concerned than you are to provide her with a husband suited to her merits?" ("Marian Writings", Vol. 1, 1980)

Saint Joseph's feast, which was celebrated locally as early as the ninth century, became a universal feast in the 16th century. Pope Pius IX named Joseph patron of the universal Church in 1870; he is also the patron saint of carpenters, the dying and workers.

Francisco: ¿Buscamos a nuestro alrededor la luz del amor de Dios?

En este segundo domingo de Cuaresma, el Papa reflexionó sobre el relato evangélico de la Transfiguración, que nos enseña la importancia de estar con Jesús. “Estando con Él, de hecho, aprendemos a reconocer, en su rostro, la belleza luminosa del amor que se entrega, incluso cuando lleva las marcas de la cruz”, afirmó.

SEBASTIÁN SANSÓN FERRARI – CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

¿En qué consiste la belleza como Hijo de Dios con la que Jesús se revela en el monte, junto a Pedro, Santiago y Juan? ¿Qué ven los discípulos? Son preguntas que el Papa Francisco planteó a los miles de fieles y peregrinos reunidos en una soleada y fresca Plaza de San Pedro este segundo domingo de Cuaresma para la oración mariana del Ángelus. El Pontífice los invitó a detenerse un momento en la escena del Evangelio del día (Mt 17, 1-9) que narra la Transfiguración de Cristo.

¿Acaso los discípulos ven un efecto espectacular? “No, no es eso”, dijo el Pontífice, aclarando que “ven la luz de la santidad de Dios brillando en el rostro y en los vestidos de Jesús, imagen perfecta del Padre. Se revela la majestad de Dios, la belleza de Dios”.

“Pero Dios es Amor, continuó, y así los discípulos han visto con sus propios ojos la belleza y el esplendor del Amor divino encarnado en Cristo. Un anticipo del paraíso”. “¿Qué sorpresa para los discípulos!”, aseveró Bergoglio, acotando: “Hacia tanto tiempo que tenían ante sus ojos el rostro del Amor, ¡y nunca se habían dado cuenta de su belleza! Solo ahora se dan cuenta, con inmensa alegría”.

Cristo, luz que ilumina el camino

El Santo Padre observó que, “en realidad, Jesús les está formando con esta experiencia, los está preparando para un paso aún más importante”. “En efecto -añadió el Papa-, de pronto tendrán que saber reconocer en Él la misma belleza cuando suba a la cruz y su rostro quede desfigurado”.

“Pedro se esfuerza por comprender: le gustaría detener el tiempo, poner la escena en “pausa”, quedarse allí y prolongar esta maravillosa experiencia; pero Jesús no se lo permite”, prosiguió. “Su luz, en efecto, no puede reducirse a un ‘momento mágico’. Se convertiría, entonces, en algo falso, artificial, que se disolvería en la niebla de los sentimientos pasajeros. Al contrario, Cristo es la luz que guía el camino, como la columna de fuego para el pueblo en el desierto (cf. Ex 13,21). La belleza de Jesús no aleja a los discípulos de la realidad de la vida, sino que les da fuerza para seguirle hasta Jerusalén, hasta la cruz”. “La belleza de Cristo no es alienante, te lleva siempre adelante, no te hace esconderte: ¡ve adelante!”, puntualizó el Pontífice, apartándose del texto escrito.

Llevemos a los demás la luz que hemos recibido

Para el Santo Padre, “este Evangelio también nos traza un camino: nos enseña lo importante que es estar con Jesús, incluso cuando no es fácil comprender todo lo que dice y hace por nosotros”. “Estando con Él, en efecto, aprendemos a reconocer, en su rostro, la belleza luminosa del amor que se entrega, incluso cuando lleva las marcas de la cruz”.

“Y es en su escuela donde aprendemos a captar la misma belleza en los rostros de las

personas que caminan a nuestro lado cada día: familiares, amigos, compañeros, aquellos que de las formas más diversas nos cuidan”.

“¿Cuántos rostros luminosos, cuántas sonrisas, cuántas arrugas, cuántas lágrimas y cicatrices hablan de amor a nuestro alrededor!”, exclamó el Papa, invitando a aprender a reconocerlos y llenarnos nuestro corazón de ellos. También nos anima a ponernos en camino para llevar a los demás la luz que hemos recibido, con las obras concretas del amor (cf. 1 Jn 3, 18), sumergiéndonos más generosamente en nuestras ocupaciones cotidianas, amando, sirviendo y perdonando con más entusiasmo y disponibilidad. “La contemplación de las maravillas de Dios, la contemplación del rostro de Dios, de la cara del Señor, nos debe empujar al servicio a los demás”, comentó Bergoglio.

Entre la luz del Señor y la luz falsa

De ahí la invitación del Pontífice a interrogarnos: “¿Reconocemos la luz del amor de Dios en nuestra vida? ¿Lo reconocemos con alegría y gratitud en los rostros de las personas

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El Papa Francisco saludó a una mujer de 99 años en el desfile efectuado el 20 de Enero en Trujillo, Perú. (Foto de CNS/Paul Haring)

que nos aman? ¿Buscamos a nuestro alrededor signos de esta luz, que llena nuestros corazones y los abre al amor y al servicio? ¿O preferimos los fuegos de paja de los ídolos, que nos alejan y nos encierran en nosotros mismos? ¿La gran luz del Señor y la luz falsa, artificial de los ídolos? ¿Qué prefiero yo?”.

Y, como es costumbre al final de sus alocuciones previas al Ángelus, el Santo Padre invocó a la Virgen María, para que Ella, “que conservó la luz de su Hijo en su corazón, incluso en la oscuridad del Calvario, nos acompañe siempre en el camino del amor”.

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Portsmouth alum inducted into 'Circle of Saints'

JENNIFER NEVILLE

Special to The Catholic Virginian

When Brice Anderson gave his former colleague, Gregory Gilligan, an informal tour of Portsmouth last year, his first two stops were his former Catholic high school's site and Portsmouth Catholic Regional School (PCRS).

"It was very important to him," said Gilligan, parishioner at St. Bridget, Richmond.

He added that Anderson was "tugging at my heart" as he showed him Portsmouth Catholic High School, which closed in 1991, and PCRS. Now the only standing building at the high school site is a Catholic school built in the 1890s (now Cambridge Hall, a privately-owned special events venue), which once housed part of the high school.

Anderson's dedication to PCRS is why the Portsmouth Catholic Alumni Relations Committee inducted him into its Circle of Saints, an annual honor bestowed upon an alumnus or alumna of PCRS or former Portsmouth Catholic schools "who lives a life of faith, knowledge and service in a spirit of excellence," explained PCRS principal Donna Henry.

"Brice embodies all of the virtues and goodness that we would want our students to emulate. Brice is indeed a saint among us, a superb scholar and devoted servant leader. Everyone needs a hero. Brice is certainly ours," Henry said.

When PCRS was tasked to raise \$217,000 in 2020 to cover a budget shortfall or face closure, Anderson "came on board 100%," said Marie Reynolds Penney, school advisory board chair.

After joining an ad hoc committee of alumni, parents and teachers to save the school, Anderson, former managing editor of the Richmond Times Dispatch, diligently searched through old yearbooks, telephone directories and the internet – as well as talking to alumni he had located in order to build the scant PCRS database of people who attended Portsmouth Catholic schools through the years.



After being inducted into the Portsmouth Catholic Alumni Relations Committee's eighth annual Circle of Saints, Brice Anderson gave a presentation during which he talked about the five generations of his family who have attended Portsmouth Catholic schools. (Photo/Jennifer Neville)

Solicitation letters, fundraisers – including a golf tournament – diocesan support and EISTC (Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits Program) donors reaped the required amount, ultimately surpassing the requirement by approximately \$50,000.

Anderson's service to PCRS continues. He, along with Henry, has continued to search for alumni and past families to augment the list that now tops 2,000. Currently his service includes being on the school advisory board, the golf tournament committee and, as fellow volunteers say, doing any task asked of him.

Despite his service, he is humble about the honor.

"I've told people I'm kind of sheepish about this whole thing. I told Donna at the time, 'certainly there are other people who've had a more long-term involvement who deserve this award,'" he said. "There's a lot of people who keep that school going and

have over the years. My involvement just feels more momentary because I didn't get involved until the crisis of the fall of 2020, but I haven't stopped since."

Staff and friends maintained Anderson is worthy of the honor.

"He was the shaker and mover that we needed" when the school was under threat of closure, said Cindy Pauler, school advisory board member. "He really went to bat," and he and Henry were the "moving force" behind the effort to keep the school open.

"You know you can count on him. That's the nice thing. You know he is going to come through. He's just an all-around good guy. He really is. We're lucky to have him," Pauler said.

Dick Campbell, Anderson's former high school theology teacher and soccer coach, described Anderson as "the town crier for the school" and said Anderson is "still very positive about the benefits of the school" and persists in finding "ways to make the school financially viable."

"He's just really taking advantage of being retired to do something for other people. It's one of those things as a religion teacher you want your students to do. You want your students to grow up and care about other people, and he really does that," said Campbell.

Anderson credits his Catholic education and his mother's influence as a tireless volunteer for motivating him to serve. He went to Portsmouth Catholic schools from first through 12th grades, attending PCRS when he was in seventh grade.

He said the "lasting value" of his Catholic education was an "awareness of 'it's not just me.' There's a whole world out there and maybe there's something we can do to help, to make things better for other people."

People praised Anderson's congeniality.

"Brice is probably everybody's best friend," said Jack Lyons, Anderson's schoolmate at PCRS, high school and William and Mary. "That's just the way his DNA is – he's available to help, he's thoughtful, he's always generous of his time."

Dating struggles

Continued from Page 5

friend group and a few dates through a young adult program run by his archdiocese in the Midwest. But he also notices a lack of conversation skills among his peers at these events.

"Some of the men tend to steer towards intense intellectual, deep, theological discussions, which makes it harder for people who aren't interested in that to participate. ... There are a lot of people who are very political, and everyone's got vastly different opinions," said Jacob.

Many single Catholics say they struggle to find anyone "in the middle": someone with genuine faith and a commitment to chastity, but without a super-strict approach to Catholicism that goes beyond Church teaching.

There's confusion, too, about how to show interest in a potential partner, and even how dating works.

"Sometimes girls drop hints or act interested but guys completely have no idea about this, because they're overthinking: 'Is she dropping a hint or just being friendly?' At the same time, guys don't tell girls how they feel and tend to beat around the bush because they're afraid of rejection," said Jacob.

If single Catholics do manage to start dat-

ing, other problems arise along the way. One is what Daniel, 39, calls a "shopping mindset."

He sees most Catholics coming into dating with checklists of criteria for their future spouse and a reluctance to share their true selves. "Dating seems like job interviews until you reach a certain threshold where you are finally real with each other," said Daniel.

Daniel said he had never experienced this "incredibly awkward and stilted social climate" with non-Catholics: "You certainly had anxieties and people using each other, but not this high fear of sharing oneself preventing connection and relationship."

Even when a relationship is finally established, addiction, psychological wounds, and abuse can still ruin it.

Elizabeth did get married at age 30 – later than she had hoped – to a non-Catholic man. He professed to be religious and supportive of her goals, but turned out to be deceptive and abusive. He divorced her six months later.

When asked if the church could have helped prevent this situation, Elizabeth told OSV News, "Yes, absolutely." She describes the premarital counseling offered through the church as "woefully inadequate."

"There was no discussion of warning signs of domestic abuse, of which there were many. There was no discussion of what would make

a marriage valid or invalid. ... Now that I'm trying to prepare for an annulment, I have a much clearer understanding of the Catholic definition of marriage than I ever did as part of my wedding prep," said Elizabeth.

If her marriage is declared null, Elizabeth can attempt a valid Catholic marriage again. But given today's dating landscape for Catholics, that might be a long road.

