



The Catholic Virginian

Serving the People of the Diocese of Richmond for 90 years

Vol. 98, No. 11

www.catholicvirginian.org

April 3, 2023

Day of Reflection focuses on Black Catholic ministry

ROSE MORRISSETTE
Special to The Catholic Virginian

Before he arrived at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen, for the Diocesan Day of Reflection on Saturday, March 18, 12-year-old Victor Kimbrough of Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Richmond, wasn't enthusiastic about attending the event with his mother and grandmother. But once the program was underway, things changed.

"I'm so glad I came now," he excitedly told Delores Oliver of St. Paul Catholic Church, Portsmouth, and Mary Mwangi, a Sister of Saint Joseph, at St. Elizabeth, Richmond, two members of his assigned group for the day.

Kimbrough was the youngest person in attendance at the Day of Reflection, but one thing he had in common with participants of all ages was his excitement in being there. Diocesan Days of Reflection have been held across the country in anticipation of the National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) XIII, July 20-23, in National Harbor, Maryland. NBCC represents African American Roman Catholics and affiliated organizations.

The purpose of this quinquennial event is to renew and develop the group's mission with a Pastoral Plan of Action for ministry to the country's Black Catholic community.

Days of Reflection are designed to provide diocesan input for that plan and to prepare attendees for the congress. This year, participants not only have a seat at the table with input for the Plan of Action, but they also have the opportunity to attend the congress themselves.

"2023 is different," Sister of Mercy Cora Marie Billings, facilitator of Richmond's Diocesan Day of Reflection, told attendees. "It was always a delegation who went before. This time anyone who wants to go, can go."

Many of them are planning to do that, representing the 89 people who gathered at St. Michael from a large swath of the diocese.

The Diocesan Day of Reflection began with Bishop Barry C. Knestout celebrating Mass, followed by participants gathering at the St. Michael Lake House in table groups for prayer, reflection, discussion, identification of action items, and formulation of written reports for the diocese to incorporate into its report to NBCC.

Sister Cora guided them through the day, connecting their activities to the theme of Congress XIII: "Write the Vision: A Prophetic Call to Thrive." She and Father Tochi Iwuji, director of the Office for Black Catholics,

See National congress, Page 13



Twelve-year-old Victor Kimbrough, parishioner at Holy Rosary, Richmond, was the youngest person in attendance at the Diocesan Day of Reflection March 18. (Photo/Rose Morrisette)

Bishop dedicates new Catholic Charities office

CCEVA services help 'remedy the brokenness in the world'

JENNIFER NEVILLE
Special to The Catholic Virginian

The Norfolk office of Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA) has a new home – a home where staff live out their mission of being servants of God by spreading love to the hundreds of people who walk through its doors each month.

On Friday, March 24, Bishop Barry C. Knestout dedicated the building at 1132 Pickett Road in Norfolk.

Thanks to Angel Ragland, granddaughter of benefactors George and Josephine Stenke, CCEVA moved its main office from St. Gregory Catholic Church, Virginia Beach, and now has

triple the space. The organization, which has been using the building for a year, is in a long-term lease but expects to eventually own it.

The new site, in what was formerly a Hampton Roads Church, is closer to the Salvation Army and the Union Mission Ministries, so it is also closer to the residences of many clients and is easily accessible by bus for other clients, said Tracy Fick, CCEVA's president and CEO.

CCEVA continues to offer services at their other offices in Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Newport News and Exmore.

The Norfolk building is larger than the previous one, allowing for

more community-based services to be housed in one site. For example, a woman may receive diapers and baby supplies as well as further parenting support and financial counseling in one visit, Fick explained.

The renovated building has about 20 offices and conference rooms, including a large one that is also available to community partners, including parishes, for meetings and events.

"Our new office space allows us to better meet the needs of vulnerable populations in our region. With the costs of groceries, gas and housing all skyrocketing, families are struggling now more than ever," Fick said. "Our

See Catholic Charities, Page 12



Bishop Barry C. Knestout blesses the outside of the new Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia office in Norfolk on March 24. (Photo/Jennifer Neville)

Inside This Edition

Seniors doing double-duty as caregivers
Page 4

USCCB on composting and dissolving bodies
Page 11

Is technology replacing parents?
Page 16

The Catholic Virginian
7800 Carousell Lane
Richmond, VA 23294

Appreciate new life Christ's death, Resurrection provide



CHRIST OUR HOPE
MOST REV. BARRY C. KNESTOUT

When the pastoral year began this past September, it was the first time since the onset of COVID that nearly everything seemed to have returned to normal. My calendar is the busiest it has been in the more than five years I have been in our diocese.

I am grateful for the activity, as it reflects positive impact, that we adapted to and made it through a difficult time. We are gathering for Mass, celebrating the sacraments as faith communities, reaching out to the poor in charity, and coming together in our various groups and organizations to carry out the mission of the Church.

I also find it challenging. Sometimes the workload is heavy and there is an increase in the amount of stress. But, free of the excuses that hindered our activity during the pandemic, I see this as an opportunity to grapple with the stress and complications that accompany a full schedule. We can confront those challenges with the energy and zeal that were present prior to COVID.

This is what the early hours of that Easter Day might have been like for Jesus' disciples. They were still traumatized by our Lord's condemnation and crucifixion; they were confused, no doubt asking the same questions we asked during the pandemic: How? Why? What do we do now?

Yet, consider what they experienced Easter Day. Following their discovery of the empty tomb, the women, on their way to tell the disciples, were met by Jesus. Later that day he walks to Emmaus with two of his disciples who do not recognize him until he ate with them, blessing and breaking the bread. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32).

That Easter night Jesus appeared to the apostles gathered in the locked Upper Room. He returned the following week when the doubting Thomas was among them. When he appeared to them again as they fished at the Sea of Tiberias, they finally recognized him.

These encounters with the Lord opened the potential of new life that was hard to grasp for the followers of Jesus. There was an excitement about it, but there was an unsettledness about it because now the work for which he had commissioned them had to take place; now they would have to carry his message to the world.

The apostles' initial Holy Week experience was not unlike what we experienced during COVID, what we might still experience as we ask, "What's next?" Our "next," in our spiritual life, is the time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost. Let's use this time to renew our appreciation of the new life that has been given to us because of Christ's death and Resurrection.

It is a time for us to pray together, to integrate ourselves more fully into the life



of Christ and holiness and draw strength from our faith communities. It is a time to accept our need for grace as we struggle with anxieties that come from expressing our faith in a world that might be hostile to Christ's message.

This is what Jesus' disciples experienced 2,000 years ago. In witnessing the Resurrection, they realized the potential for transforming the world with the Gospel. That same potential exists for us. Recognizing the dangers and the challenges of carrying out that mission, they, like us, asked, "How do we do it?"

Jesus provided the answer: "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name — he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid" (Jn 14:26-27).

Take that answer to heart, enjoy the peace and blessings of this Easter season, and share them with all you meet!

Pope updates 'Vos Estis' text for handling abuse cases

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has updated the procedures for investigating allegations of sexual abuse or the cover up of abuse, specifying that the leaders of Vatican-recognized international Catholic lay associations and movements have the same responsibilities over their members that a bishop has over the priests of his diocese.

The updated version of "Vos Estis Lux Mundi" (You are the light of the world), published March 25, also expanded the categories of victims covered by the regulations to include vulnerable adults.

The original text spoke of the crime of "sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person." The updated text read, "a crime against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue committed with a minor, or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, or with a vulnerable adult."

"Anything that expands the categories of those who should be protected is to be welcomed," Oblate Father Andrew Small, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, told Catholic News Service March 25.

Father Small also pointed to

the updated document's insistence that not only must dioceses and bishops' conferences have a "system" for reporting abuse or its cover up, they also must have "organisms or offices easily accessible to the public" to accept reports.

Making the procedures "well known and publicly accessible is part of justice," he said.

Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, secretary of the Vatican Dicastery for Legislative Texts, told CNS the updated document was based on four years of experience operating under the previous version, but the update also was needed to incorporate changes Pope Francis made in 2021 to the Code of Canon Law's "Book VI: Penal Sanctions in the Church."

The new rules go into effect April 30.

Boston Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, said in a statement that with the updated text, "the Church's ongoing work of preventing sexual abuse by ministers of the Church received a further boost."

Updating the norms, "Pope Francis has reconfirmed the serious responsibilities on bishops and others in leadership positions

to ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are effective," the cardinal said.

One thing the updated version did not do, however, was provide mandatory and explicit steps for revealing publicly when a bishop has been asked to or forced to resign because of abuse or covering up abuse allegations.

Many Catholics, including bishops, have called for such public notification after news reports revealed that a bishop who "resigned" had been sanctioned by the Vatican.

In September, the Vatican confirmed it had placed restrictions on the ministry of Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo of Dili, East Timor, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 for nonviolent resistance to Indonesia's 24-year occupation of his homeland.

And in November, the French bishops revealed that Bishop Michel Santier of Créteil, who announced in 2021 that he was retiring for health reasons, had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct and disciplined by the Vatican.

Archbishop Filippo Iannone, prefect of the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, was asked

whether Catholics in general have a right to know when a bishop or priest has been disciplined for abuse or for covering up abuse.

"A distinction must be made between those who have a legitimate interest in the case," specifically the victim, and the public, the archbishop said.

Asked the same question, Bishop Arrieta responded that "it depends on the level of scandal" and how widespread knowledge of the case is. "If the damage is limited to the victim and the victim is informed of the outcome (of the process), then you could argue that justice has been served."

In his statement, Cardinal O'Malley said that "as much as possible, those impacted by abuse should be kept informed about the status and the eventual outcome of any case pursued because of any accusation made. Communicating the process of the church's disciplinary system goes to the heart of its effectiveness. Judgments should be made available to interested parties, especially to those making accusations and the victims of sexual abuse."

Archbishop Charles Scicluna, adjunct secretary of the Dicastery

See *Investigating abuse*, Page 14

Lexington parish marks 150 years of building faith

Bishop celebrates anniversary at St. Patrick's on patron's feast day



(Left to right) Deacon Paul Gorski, Bishop Barry C. Knestout, and Father Štefan Migač at Mass for the 150th anniversary of St. Patrick, Lexington.

(Photo/Joe Staniunas)

JOE STANIUNAS

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Drawn to the green valleys and the blue hills of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the middle of the 19th century, Irish immigrants helped build canals and railroads. They brought their faith with them, going to Mass in someone's home on the rare occasions a priest visited.

By 1873, enough Catholic families had gathered to form a parish in the college town of Lexington and name it after the patron saint of their homeland.

St. Patrick was renowned for his humility and his confidence in God, said Bishop Barry C. Knestout at the Mass on the saint's feast day, March 17.

During his homily, the bishop said, "We're grateful for the legacy of 150 years of a Catholic community here in Lexington, those who founded this parish community and established it, those who lived and worked here throughout the years, carrying on and expressing the faith to those around us and helping to impress those they encounter with the beauty and glory of our Catholic faith which inspires us to new life and offers us new life in Christ."

The anniversary Mass was one of a series of special events the parish has held, starting with a picnic in September and including monthly meetings at local restaurants and other venues called "Theology on the Town" that featured talks from experts on theology, spirituality and the practice of the faith.

The theme for the sesquicentennial celebration, "Christ Behind Us, Christ Before Us," was inspired by the Prayer of St. Patrick, also known as "Christ Be With Me." For longtime parishioners, it's been a time for reflection and appreciation.

"It's a great parish, a great community," said Father Štefan Migač, pastor since July 2021. "No one ever wants to leave St. Patrick."

Starting as a mission

The Catholic community in Lexington organized in 1843, as a mission of the Lynchburg church, according to accounts written by late parishioners Ruth Holland and Maj. Gen. James Morgan. Within 30 years, the community was large enough to have its first home on Henry Street.

A church supper and donations from people of other faiths raised \$3,000 for the building, still in use by another denomination. From 1892 to 1946, St. Patrick's was a mission served by priests in Lynchburg who would take the train on weekends to celebrate Mass.

People of St. Patrick's

Members of the Society of the Precious Blood staffed the parish from 1946 until 1979. A church was built on Nelson Street in 1953 and remains the parish's current location. St. Patrick's now has about 865 parishioners, along with 300 students from Virginia Military Institute, Washington and Lee University, and Southern Virginia University.

Retired pastor Father Jay Biber said those schools attract Catholics who "aren't afraid to say what's on their mind. That makes for some challenges. But they tend to be people who are willing to step forward, and they expect to be listened to, they expect to be heard and if you can do that, they put their energy behind everything."

VMI graduate and newly ordained priest Father Armando Herrera is on his first assignment at Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg. When he was a 3rd class member, or sophomore, he went to Mass regularly at St. Patrick's, took part in retreats, and remains grateful for the way the parish welcomed him and other college students.

"I have great love and affection for St. Pat's," he said in a phone interview. "Being able to be there,

pray at night, just be there with Jesus in the tabernacle was some of the most intimate prayer I've ever experienced. And I really fell more in love with Jesus during that time there."

Connection through campuses

Campus ministry grew to be core of parish life. Longtime parishioner William "Burr" Datz led that ministry for 13 years. As a W&L student, he attended Mass at St. Patrick's. Following graduation, he took a job teaching elementary school in New York for a couple of years before moving back to Lexington and reconnecting with the parish as campus minister. In 2001, his alma mater hired him to be director of leadership development and later, coordinator of religious life.

By 2010, he was back running campus ministry at St. Patrick's.

"God always wakes me up at 3 o'clock in the morning and says, 'Hey, I want you to do this,'" Datz said.

His approach has been "to recognize the talents and abilities in people" and invite them to use those skills building their own faith and serving the community. For example, a cadet charged with calling out the names of those who were getting class leadership roles became a lector.

"None of those names were any more difficult than some of the names you're going to get to read out of Scripture," Datz told him. "So, we'll work through that a little bit."

The parish added a Sunday evening Mass at the suggestion of another cadet. Datz organized crews to do yard work during spring breaks for low-income families living in the county. ("Nothing like chain saws is going to excite a bunch of cadets," he said.) But they also talked about how to relate to those they're helping, how to listen to them.

Reaching out to the wider community has been a hallmark of St. Patrick's, Datz believes.

"Our faith is like the tides," he said. "We're gathered to be a community, we're gathered to pray, we're gathered to be social, but if all we do is gather, we're like a football team that just huddles. We're also sent out into the world — so how do we put our faith into action?"

The pace of St. Patrick's

Tom and Darcy McCabe were looking for a different pace of life 50 years ago when they came to live in a brick house his father owned in Rockbridge County. It lacked indoor plumbing and had a wood stove for heat. But one of the first things they did was look for the local Catholic church and have been active in parish life ever since.

"We did find it a very welcom-

ing parish," Darcy said.

"You could get in and out of Mass in record time in New York," Tom said. "Down here at St. Pat's it was more leisurely, more reverent, more attention to the liturgy than what we were used to."

The McCabes have taught Natural Family Planning, organized respect life events, and celebrated the sacraments. Three of their four children were baptized at St. Patrick's. Two daughters were married there — one at a morning Mass where the congregation, unbeknownst to them, "found themselves at a wedding when they were hoping for a quick 8 o'clock Mass and then back to the car," Tom said.

"On those occasions where we are celebrating, during the Triduum for example, there's a palpable sense of unity with fellow parishioners, a solidarity. They still feel like brothers and sisters to me," he added.

His parish family plans to end the sesquicentennial celebration on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 11, with a procession and a blessing of the city and the original St. Patrick's.

St. Patrick's Parish 150th anniversary prayer

The parish said this prayer after every Mass during the anniversary celebration. It was also printed on place cards.

O God, 150 years ago St. Patrick Catholic Church was founded as a missionary parish. You have blessed us abundantly in the years since, allowing us to grow as a community of prayer and service. Grant us the grace to follow the example of our great patron, St. Patrick, to continue proclaiming your word, spreading your love, and doing your work in the decades to come. Guide us especially as we minister to the Lexington community, the students of Washington and Lee University and Southern Virginia University, the cadets of Virginia Military Institute, and our twin parish in Fond Pierre, Haiti. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

— Written by Steve Knepper, Parish Council President



Seniors doing double-time as caregivers

Asking for help, learning to lean as others lean on you

LISA M. HENDEY
OSV News

Lately I note a trend on social media, among my peers of a certain age. Amid the cute grandbaby pictures there were pleas for intercessory prayer for their aging parents.

Going home to visit can be a real wakeup call as we realize that – seemingly overnight – our strong, independent parents need our help.

This topic hits home for me. After years of caregiving during their protracted illnesses, I've recently bid farewell to both of my parents. Unexpected waves of grief and moments of regret hit me like a gut punch when I least expect them.

In a very real sense, caregiving for my parents was my life's greatest privilege, but it came with a price and trials that very nearly did me in spiritually, emotionally and physically.

I'm part of the new generation of seniors who – while only just adjusting to our own aging – are being asked to care for our parents while often serving as caretakers for our grandchildren, as well.

Their parents, our children, often need two incomes just to make ends meet, so some of us are now packing school lunches for our grandchildren while arranging medical appointments for our parents.

In some ways, we are not unique, but Mom didn't jump on Instagram to

vent about the challenges of taking in her elderly mother while still actively parenting my youngest sibling.

In those years, I unthinkingly added to her load by having her watch my then-toddler so I could enjoy a "Mom's Night Out." Looking back, I realize now that she never refused, even though her stress was undoubtedly getting the better of her.

Without words, she modeled for me the caregiver's journey.

I won't pretend to have any wisdom about how one should answer an unexpected (but vocational) call to caregiving, but now – as I walk alongside my husband as he takes on the care of his parents – I realize one great lesson I learned with Mom and Daddy that is helping me to be a better partner to him in this process: the importance of a trusted companion.

It is a gift just to have an assurance that someone can be trusted to walk this path, full of so many unknowns.

While re-reading my journals from those long days of caretaking, I came across an apt quote I'd transcribed from Rosalynn Carter.

"There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver."

Every family will have to address



distinctly challenging logistics for themselves. But if we have a loved one in need of care, we are caregivers.

My instinct is to be unwilling to be a bother to others, and I too often try to cope with stressful circumstances on my own, but when taking care of my parents I worked overtime to communicate with my siblings and my husband. It made a difference to know that I was not alone in the process.

Still, early in my caregiving journey, I recognized the very real impact my new role was having on our marriage. Now, accompanying my husband as he enters a more intense phase of parental care, I am there for him, because I see how much his support meant to me.

Along with his companionship, I relied upon the compassion of friends

and learned hard lessons about patience and trusting God's perfect will.

I often prayed over the passage of John's Gospel where Jesus entrusted John with the caregiving of his own mother (Jn 19:26-27), because the caregiver's path is one best walked in the company of others. Our Lord must have known that, when he gave his mother into the care of his beloved disciple, and him into hers.

My darkest days came when I allowed myself to succumb to the isolation that can so easily imprison caregivers. Light and hope finally returned when I learned to graciously ask for and accept help.

It is the great takeaway lesson of caregiving: Never be afraid to ask for help from heaven or to lean into the support of your companions on earth.

Archdiocese investigating possible eucharistic miracle

GINA CHRISTIAN
OSV News

(OSV News) – The Archdiocese of Hartford is investigating a possible eucharistic miracle at one of its parishes, where Communion hosts seemingly multiplied during a March 5 Sunday Mass.

Father Joseph Crowley, pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Thomaston, Connecticut, said in a YouTube livestream of his March 12 homily that an unnamed extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at the previous week's liturgy had begun to run out of Communion hosts – only to find that "all of a sudden there (were) more hosts in the ciborium."

The St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish is comprised of three church locations – St. Thomas, Immaculate Conception and St. Casimir – and the alleged multiplication of Communion hosts took place at St. Thomas.

The minister continued to distribute the hosts to some "100, 150 people in the congregation," after which "there was the same amount, if not more hosts" in the ciborium, said Father Crowley, who had celebrated the March 5 liturgy.

"What happened is Our Lord multiplied himself. ... I have no doubt. I know what I gave the person. I know what (was) returned (to the tabernacle). It was just very obvious and plain to me as to what happened," the priest said.

Father Crowley said in his March 12 homily he wanted to tell parishioners "from the horse's mouth as to exactly what happened," and "stick to the facts" to avoid confusion.

In a livestream video of his post-Communion remarks at the March 5 liturgy at St. Thomas, a visibly struck Father Crowley said the experience

was "very powerful, very awesome, very real, very shocking."

David Elliott, associate director of communications for the Archdiocese of Hartford, told OSV News that the archdiocesan judicial vicar, Father George S. Mukuka, "has been looking into the possibility of a eucharistic miracle" at the parish.

Following the investigation, the judicial vicar will prepare a report for Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, "who will make a determination from there" regarding the event's supernatural nature, said Elliott.

Several of the seemingly multiplied hosts had been distributed at daily Mass March 6 and 7, but were then kept in reserve as the archdiocesan investigation is still underway, said Father Crowley in his March 12 homily.

He said that the incident – which he described as "one of those moments where God showed up in a very powerful, powerful way" – had stunned him.

"I haven't been praying for anything like this," he said. "I've heard of this happening. I don't know of any person out of my 20-plus years of dealing with the Church ... (and) dealing with hundreds of priests ... hundreds, thousands of people, (and) many, many bishops. I know that the Lord can do anything. He does all things for nothing is impossible for God."

At the same time, "the real miracle is the fact that we're able to take simple bread and wine, and through the prayers of the Church, through the hands of the priest, Christ is made present through transubstantiation," said Father Crowley. "Our Lord then becomes the flesh and blood hid-

den under the mere presence of bread and wine."

Through the apparent multiplication of hosts, "Our Lord gave us one of the best moments of reflection this Lent about himself, about the Eucharist," said Father Crowley.

Father Crowley acknowledged that people often go through situations where "God seems so removed, so hidden ... not part of our everyday moment because we don't see him."

"It's sometimes hard to see a God that seems to be so hidden," he said. "Perhaps the Lord had done this before, where you just give Communion out and all of a sudden there's plenty of hosts and you just keep going. But to ... be made aware is part of the miracle."

A local saint in the making also may have played a role, Father Crowley said, since Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, served as pastor of St. Thomas Church from 1884 until his death in 1890.

"I think in a very profound way that ... because of Blessed McGivney's life here ... it shows that this is a very special place. And it's important to God," said Father Crowley. "And I think good things are coming. I think great things are coming."

As a parishioner pointed out to him, "we're so easy to accept an act of evil, an act of harm," but "it's hard for us to accept an act of goodness or a God moment or a moment with Christ," said Father Crowley.

"As we move forward, we really need to see our world through the lens of faith, through the eyes of faith," he said. "And the more we get closer to our Lord, the more we're going to see him in our everyday lives."

Parish supporting people from around the world

Saint Mary's 'welcomes all' through ESL, citizenship classes

KRISTEN L. BYRD

Special to The Catholic Virginian

Seated around a long rectangular table at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Richmond, are a woman from Ukraine, another from Afghanistan, a man from France, a woman from Peru, and a handful of others, each from a different country, but all sharing a common goal: to learn English.

From all corners of the globe, they have come to the United States in search of a better life. Many have fled war, famine, genocide and persecution and somehow all ended up sitting at the same table, looking at the same unfamiliar words written on the same whiteboard.

Saint Mary's has offered ESL (English as a Second Language) classes since 2014, but has been involved in refugee resettlement for decades. First helping refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia during the 1970s, Saint Mary's continues to offer support to those seeking refuge in the United States.

There are multiple weekly ESL classes offered for students, ranging from Low-Beginner to Advanced. Some students attend classes for a few months, and others return year after year. While most students have some grasp of the language, none are turned away for lack of knowledge. Saint Mary's has a dedicated team of instructors that strives to find a place for anyone looking to learn, regardless of their faith.

Supporting, not imposing

Jon Kraimer has been with the program since its beginning and has helped dozens of students over the years. He continues to find joy in each class.

"Seeing a face that suddenly understands something never gets old," he said.

Kraimer explained that Saint Mary's utilizes a workbook series with a multi-level progression that can meet the needs of a range of skill levels.

Though there is a set curriculum, there is still a certain amount of freedom in the class to allow for open conversation related to daily life, cultural observations, and individual questions. This can be anything from popular films to departments of the federal government to understanding how to read parking meters.

In-class discussions are a vital component of the class. Students can also attend virtual classes or get one-on-one help completing employment, housing, and education applications.

Kraimer sees the program as a way to put his faith into action

without imposing his faith on anyone.

"Treating all as brothers and sisters and children of the one God is at the heart of Christian faith," he said, adding, "I hope that the example of caring and helping will lead people to do the same, and the fact that it's being done by Christians without prerequisites will give them an introduction to our faith."

Wendy Arroniz, another long-time ESL instructor, recognizes that each student's needs are unique.

"The important part in connecting with another person is to try to understand where that person is coming from," she said. "Introductions, questions about their lives, encouraging them to try to speak, and sharing stories about myself as well are important in building rapport. It's about meeting people where they are."

Once basic conversational skills are covered, students are then introduced to more advanced concepts and vocabulary, including different types of weather, past tense verbs, and contractions.

Students practice having conversations with the instructor and each other to ensure everyone understands the material before moving on.

"We hope to help immigrants and non-native speakers improve their lives with a better ability to communicate, thereby helping them to participate more in community life, and find better opportunities for themselves with work and all aspects of life," said Arroniz.

Moving toward citizenship

Once their ESL lessons are completed, some students continue their education by taking U.S. citizenship classes, which are also offered at Saint Mary's.

Larry Spurzem worked as a high school English teacher for many years and now teaches the citizenship class at Saint Mary's. He said he enjoyed it because he loves seeing the camaraderie students build throughout the sessions, overcoming any cultural barriers that may have existed at the beginning.

Speaking of his recent class, he said, "There were nine students from seven countries. What's interesting is how those in the class interact with each other. It takes a couple classes, but after a time they talk among themselves, and by the end, they're a family."

The classes are free of charge and consists of 12 two-hour



Above: Students of different backgrounds study during citizenship class at Saint Mary's in Richmond. Parish instructors offer citizenship and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Students normally enroll in the citizenship classes after completing the ESL classes. The classes are free of charge at Saint Mary's.

Right: Jafar Alkhudur and his wife, Jinan Alnesar, show off their certificates after becoming U.S. citizens. They passed classes at Saint Mary's which helped prepare them for the test required to become citizens. Students of all backgrounds and faiths are welcome at the parish classes. (Photos/Larry Spurzem)



sessions held twice a week for six weeks.

There are 100 civics questions Spurzem goes over in class. Beyond merely providing the answers, Spurzem tries to educate his students on the nuances of U.S. history and government, at the federal and state level. He also works with them to improve their English reading and writing skills, which are essential for the citizenship test.

The U.S. citizenship test takes place at a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services facility. The applicant is asked a maximum of 10 random questions from the 100 discussed in class and must answer six correctly. It costs \$765 to apply for citizenship, which allows for two attempts to pass the test.

Spurzem said that it's often a moving moment once someone passes the test, and even more meaningful once they finally pledge their oath to their new country. This is true not just for the newest American citizen, but for their teacher as well.

"I get to know these people, and sometimes their family members," said Spurzem. "Knowing the

time they've invested in this class and how I've gotten to know them, it's an emotional experience seeing them reach their goal."

Rebecca Oxenreider, the parish's Minister of Human Concerns, Social Justice, and Community Life, explained, "One of the reasons I became Catholic was that when Bishop Sullivan met with families who were going to sponsor refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam, what he said was: 'This is not about making Buddhist people into Catholic people. This is about standing in solidarity with sisters and brothers throughout the world who are hurting. Our task is to try to live our lives the way Jesus asks us to - in doing that, people will ask, and then, it becomes their journey.' So, we welcome all people."

Editor's note: If you are interested in volunteering as a teacher or learning more about these programs, check out this story at catholicvirginian.org for contact information.

Enter fully into powerful events of the Triduum

GUEST COMMENTARY

BISHOP DONALD J. HYING
DIOCESE OF MADISON, WIS.
OSV NEWS

During the Sacred Triduum – the days of Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday – the strangest thing will occur. Millions of Christians throughout the world will gather to honor the humiliation, torture and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

In a global culture that usually celebrates power, strength and beauty, this public veneration of something so horrible is always a little shocking. Could it be that what people find so absolutely compelling about the Passion narrative is the vulnerability of God?

In the Christ event, God leaves the safety and glory of heaven, in a certain sense, and embraces the limitations of our human condition, coming to know in the flesh both the glory and tragedy of our nature without ever having sinned. In the last week of his life, Jesus completely hands himself over to us.

In the foot washing and the Eucharist, in the scourging and the crucifixion, the Son of God loves us completely without restrictions, conditions or limits. Whether we accept, reject or ignore this Divine Love, Jesus never changes his fundamental stance toward us.

In Roman and Greek mythology, the gods are always conspiring to manipulate humanity to serve their often-selfish ends and egotistical schemes. In Christ, we encounter the surprising subversion of this oppressive game. God serves us!

In absolute humility, availability, vulnerability and mercy, God has come to love, pardon and save us.

The weakness of the cross, the simplicity of the Eucharist, the tenderness of the foot washing, the love that seeks to embrace a traitor, a thief and a coward is so beyond the grasp of power politics, the swirl of social hubris and the world of earthly grasping that it takes our breath away. No wonder that kings would stand speechless in the presence of the Suffering Servant, as Isaiah proclaims.

If God could become that poor, humble and vulnerable to love me, how can I ever stand on my own self-importance?

This week, we celebrate the strangest things: weakness becomes strength, love conquers fear, miserable despair transforms into resurrected hope and perpetual death gives way to eternal life, and it's all because a naked criminal was thrown down on a cross 2,000 years ago, and he embraced it as if it were his marriage bed.

We should let the Lord love us during Holy Week. The palm we held on Palm Sunday should be a symbol of our praise, reverence and love for the humble Master who has saved and set us free.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening is an opportunity to taste the surprising grace of the Eucharist and surrender to the consolation of the foot washing.

Listening to the Passion and venerating the cross on Good Friday gives us the opportunity to embrace the cross in our own lives, no matter what form it may take.

Know that the mystery of suffering in our lives

is the sacred ladder by which we will ascend to the beauty of the Kingdom of heaven.

Holy Saturday is a sacred time of rest and silence, as the Lord sleeps in the tomb and all of creation awaits a salvation it does not yet understand. A beautiful ancient text from the early Church pictures Jesus roaming the abode of the dead on this day, unchaining Adam and Eve and all of the other souls who had been waiting for redemption since the foundation of the world.

Ask the Lord to set you free from the fear, sin and self-seeking that keeps you bound.

Gathering around the Easter fire at the Vigil, we call to mind how we began the Lenten journey marked with the ashes of sin, failure and defeat, but now you have become filled with fire – the mighty force of the risen Christ and the courageous strength of the Holy Spirit.

As we proclaim the resurrection of Christ as the beautiful truth and transformative meaning of human history, know that the Lord walks with you, loves you and is leading you to the fullness of joy and peace.

The shocking, strange and powerful events of Holy Week should lead us to tears and laughter, gratitude and praise, humble awareness of our weakness and joyful acclamation of God's victory.

The Triduum is a time for God to break open our hearts, so that the gracious torrent of Divine Mercy that flows from the side of the crucified Christ will wash us clean, forgive our sins and fashion us ever more deeply in the new creation of the Lord's saving death and resurrection.

Williams' portrayal of Black Catholic history is untrue

In the Feb. 6 issue, author and associate professor Shannen Dee Williams is quoted as saying during a Bishop Keane Institute lecture, "Black history is and always has been Catholic history. Catholic history is and always has been Black history."

While the two histories may have aligned at certain points, the two were never synonymous.

During her talk, Williams reportedly debunked myths about the Catholic Church regarding racism.

One of them: "The Church was a reluctant and benevolent participant in modern slavery."

To back up her claims, she notes papal bulls by Nicholas V, Alexander VI and Gregory XVI. Nicholas V's 1452 Bull to Alfonso V of Portugal regarding Saracens (Muslims) was a defensive reaction to the Muslims terrorizing Christians. It was not a race war with the goal of slavery.

Williams also claims the Catholic Church was the "largest practitioner of segregation."

During the first half of the 20th century, many churches of all faiths were self "segregated" by nationality, i.e., Italians, Poles, Irish, not just race. People tend to worship close to home. So, if there were no Black people living near the predominately French church, you weren't going to see many of them on Sunday but neither would you have seen many Germans or Danes.

The ratio of Black Catholics to white also requires consideration. Ac-

ording to the 2019-2020 Pew Research Survey, 6% of Black adults are Catholic and they make up 4% of Catholics.

Williams said she was leaving her audience with a "blueprint for confronting the enduring sense of white supremacy and exclusion in our Church." If she has the blueprint, where is it?

She is creating more divisiveness. It is also demoralizing to good priests and parishioners. It is especially hurtful to multi-racial families.

– **Christy Metacarpa Williamsburg**

Common sense gun laws needed

In face of the February gun death of the Catholic bishop in Los Angeles following on the heels of mass gun deaths at Michigan State University, University of Virginia, Walmart(s) in Virginia and elsewhere, elementary schools in Sandy Hook, Conn. and Uvalde, Texas, and gun deaths in Richmond, and on and on, going back to the mass shootings in the late '60s at the tower at the University of Texas, the Feb. 20 letter to the editor incorrectly claiming a Gospel and religious basis to gun rights was shocking and sad.

Further, throwing our hands up and saying, "We live in an imperfect world" and doing nothing about guns and gun violence is indefensible.

We, more than ever, need common sense gun legislation at the federal and state levels to restrict the sales of AK-15's, other military-style weapons and to the endless number of guns an individual is allowed to own.

The U.S. has more guns than

people, more mass gun deaths and individual gun deaths than any country in the world.

Our leaders, elected, judicial and non-elected, need to act now, including the Catholic Church, its members and leaders in support of commonsense gun laws to protect us all.

– **Jim Thorsen Richmond**

Revising prayer of absolution was pointless

In light of all the substantive problems plaguing the Catholic Church these days, one wonders how it could possibly be the case that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) would undertake the task of revising the wording of the prayer of absolution used in the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation (Catholic Virginian, Feb. 20). It is mind-numbing to learn that this is exactly what the USCCB has done.

The result of this project was a change in the use of two verbs and the elimination of two words.

I would say that these are differences without distinctions. The CV reports that there might be penitents who, in light of these changes, could become anxious about the possibility that a priest might "revert" accidentally to the earlier sacramental language and thus invalidate any meaningful sacramental experience but that no such anxiety need be felt. The sacrament would still be valid.

Good to know.

It is, in part, due to our Church leadership's engagement in such pointless activities that many Catholics find themselves lost in the weeds these days as opposed to enjoying an anxiety-free participation in the life of Christ fully and mercifully present in the Church.

– **Philip Garmey Lynchburg**

Mail: The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Ln., Richmond, VA 23294
Phone: (804) 359-5654 • www.catholicvirginian.org
Circulation changes to: akrebs@catholicvirginian.org

Publisher: Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout

Editor: Lily Nguyen Dunkle (804) 622-5225 lnynguen@catholicvirginian.org

Creative Director: Stephen Previtera (804) 622-5229 sprevitera@catholicvirginian.org

Circulation: Ashly Krebs (804) 622-5226 akrebs@catholicvirginian.org

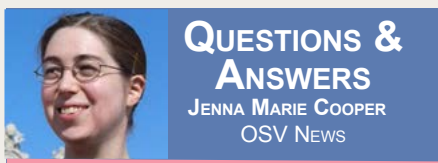
Eastern Correspondents: Wendy Klesch and Jennifer Neville

Western Correspondents: Karen Adams and Joe Staniunas

Central Correspondents: Kristen L. Byrd and Rose Morrisette

Postmaster: Send address change to The Catholic Virginian, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. The Catholic Virginian ISSN 0008-8404 – Published every other week on Monday by The Catholic Virginian Press, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA. Periodical postage paid at Richmond, VA and at additional mailing office. Sixty cents per copy, \$15 per year.

Do we need to be quiet before Mass, and when can we leave?



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
JENNA MARIE COOPER
OSV NEWS

Q. The priest who helped with my conversion said that when we arrive before Mass we should be respectful to the people around us – to pray and sit quietly until Mass begins. Has the process changed or are we still asked to be quiet? In my church people speak very loud before Mass and the priest is the biggest offender.

A. Courtesy and common sense strongly suggest keeping a reverent, silent atmosphere in church.

Our church buildings are meant to be sacred spaces where people can come to be in the presence of God in an especially focused way. Before Mass the faithful are encouraged to recollect themselves in preparation for Mass. After the dismissal people often stay, to extend their time of thanksgiving after receiving the Eucharist.

If we find ourselves occasionally bothered or distracted by other people's talking in church, sometimes the best thing to do is to recall the "little way" of St. Therese of Lisieux and use the noise as an opportunity to grow in patience and charity. For instance, we might try to assume that the "offending"

priest was aiming to cheer up a lonely parishioner who is going through a challenging time.

Q. Can I leave Mass after the blessing, or must I wait for the recessional hymn to be sung? (Syosset, New York)

A. The final blessing is the official conclusion of the Mass, so – in that sense – once the final blessing is said, Mass is over and you may leave without technically missing any of the Mass.

However, as the "General Instruction of the Roman Missal" says: "The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord's coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles (cf. Col 3:16)" (GIRM 39). And, as the popular expression (sometimes attributed to St. Augustine) goes, "he who sings prays twice." So, if you're not on a tight schedule, you might consider staying for the recessional hymn – not out of a sense of obligation, but simply for your own spiritual joy and communal nourishment.

Q. What happened to Limbo? (Sacramento, California)

A. Traditionally, limbo was

thought of as a "place" in the afterlife that was neither heaven nor purgatory, but which also didn't involve the full sufferings of hell proper. Limbo was meant for the non-baptized who were innocent of any serious personal sin. Generally, limbo was seen as the destiny of young children who died before baptism, and in some cases also as the eternal home of virtuous non-Christians.

The idea of limbo was a sort of compromise between the Church's teachings on the necessity of baptism for salvation, the reality of original sin, and our belief in God's justice and mercy. It was posited that while God would never condemn the innocent to suffer eternal torment, the unbaptized could never enter heaven itself.

However, limbo was never official Church doctrine; it was always only a well-established but still speculative theological theory. Limbo is not included in our Creeds and is never mentioned in our current Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Our liturgical tradition also at times contradicts the concept of limbo for unbaptized infants. For instance, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Innocents every year on December 28, recognizing that these unbaptized babies who died for the sake of Christ can intercede for us from their home in heaven. The Church also has special rites for the funeral Mass of infants who

die before baptism.

In more recent times, the International Theological Commission – a body of professional theologians who convene regularly to study various issues and advise the Pope – addressed the question of limbo in a document published in 2007. They note that while baptism is a necessary component to our faith, "The necessity of sacramental Baptism is a necessity of the second order compared to the absolute necessity of God's saving act through Jesus Christ for the final salvation of every human being." And that "Sacramental Baptism is necessary because it is the 'ordinary' [my emphasis] means through which a person shares the beneficial effects of Jesus' death and resurrection."

That is, while baptism is the usual and ordinary means through which a person is able to attain eternal life in heaven, the Church still recognizes that God is free to extend his saving grace in an extraordinary way, beyond his promises. The overall conclusion of this document from the Commission is that, with respect to the eternal fate of unbaptized infants, we can have confidence in God's tender mercy.

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.

28-29TH APRIL

Don't Miss This Unforgettable Event!

- Experience Mass with Bishop Zarama & Confession with numerous diocesan priests
- Say a Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet with over 1000 fellow Catholics
- Learn more about your incredible Catholic Faith
- Listen and talk to our fantastic speakers
- Be moved in Adoration or with saint's relics
- See your friends & grow your children's faith
- Leave with a blessed Miraculous Medal touched to the True Cross



IGNITED BY TRUTH

2023 CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

20th Anniversary



DR. JENNIFER ROBACK MORSE
FAMILY LIFE



FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC
DIVINE MERCY



MATTHEW LEONARD
LIVING CATHOLIC



JACKIE FRANCOIS ANGEL
LOVE & MARRIAGE



KRIS FRANK
ACTIVE APOSTLESHIP



DCN. RALPH POYO
NEW EVANGELIZATION



REYNOLDS COLISEUM
MAIN STAGE • NC STATE • RALEIGH

Adults 2-Day Ticket \$25 • SAT Lunch
Options: Pizza, Turkey Sub, or BYO



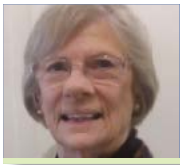
REGISTER ONLINE AT
IGNITEDBYTRUTH.ORG

FRI 6:30-9:30PM
SAT 8AM-5:30PM

Students Age 10+ FREE + Pizza
Free Food FRI Evening



Keep your eyes on the finish line during Holy Week



IN LIGHT OF FAITH
BARBARA HUGHES

When I reflect on the events in Scripture surrounding the commemoration of Holy Week and Easter, I'm struck by the fickle nature of our humanity. Although the events commemorated during the liturgical season took place in first century Palestine, the human tendency to waiver in our resolve remains, in many respects, unchanged.

Like the Jews in Jesus' time, we enter Lent resolving to hear the Good News and turn away from sin as we journey toward Easter. However, before we can sing "alleluia," we must travel by way of Jesus' Passion and death.

We begin Palm Sunday by way of a celebratory procession, singing, "Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," only to reverse course minutes later as the Passion and death of our Lord is solemnly proclaimed, when we cry, "Crucify him!"

It's this radical shift from triumph to tribulation that causes me to wonder if we've grown so accustomed to the Palm Sunday liturgy that we no longer recognize how this shift mirrors the ease with which the human heart can be swayed.

For many Catholics, the days between Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday are typically business as usual, but when we consider that Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are also part of the week we call holy, they should not be dismissed as unimportant. The liturgical

readings of those three days, particularly the Gospels, offer much food for thought, setting the stage for the drama of the Sacred Triduum.

Monday's Gospel (Jn 12:1-11) takes us to Bethany where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with precious ointment while Judas, wanting the money for himself, berates her for wasting money on precious nard. Not only did Judas' greed blind him from recognizing the prophetic action of Mary, he compounded it by lying about his motives.

However, this Gospel is not just about Judas; it's about us and the blindness, ignorance and greed that keep us from reverencing God and loving our neighbor. And so, we do well to ask: Has greed caused me to hoard the gifts I've been given and then compound my selfishness by lying to myself to justify my actions?

On Tuesday, the Gospel (Jn 13:21-33, 36-38) invites us to reflect on Jesus' prediction of his betrayal by one of his own, to which Peter boasts, "Master, I will lay down my life for you." Although Peter loved Jesus, his love had yet to be tested and when the hour of proving his love came, Peter not only fled, but denied Jesus, just as the Master had predicted.

And so, we pause to reflect: When have I, like Peter, promised to do good and then failed to follow through because it seemed too difficult, unappealing or inconvenient? Then becoming fearful, I took the easy way out, and like Judas chose darkness.

Wednesday's Gospel (Mt 26:14-25) once again takes us to the Upper Room where Jesus reveals his betrayer. Dipping a morsel of bread into the dish, he hands it to Judas, who shamelessly asks, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?"

As we reflect on these words, we might ask:

Have I denied, excused or defended myself by pretending that I have done no wrong?

Every sin is an act of betrayal toward God, so when I approach the altar to receive the Eucharist, do I do so with humility, acknowledging my unworthiness, mindful that I am receiving the actual Body and Blood of Jesus? And do I thank him for the tremendous gift that is ours?

Like every pilgrimage, our journey toward Easter has its inevitable ups and downs. Therefore, as we approach the final days, let's not be like the runner who breathes a sigh of relief and slows his pace when he sees the finish line. Rather, let's quicken our pace and deepen our resolve.

Recall that when Cain became jealous of his brother because Abel's offering was found acceptable, God said, "Why are you so resentful and crestfallen? If you do well, you can hold up your head, but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door and his urge is toward you, yet you can be his master" (Gen 4:6-7).

We are masters of our will, so regardless of our successes or failures, let's keep our eyes on the finish line so that when we gaze upon the risen Lord, at Easter and at the end of our life, we will be able to say with St. Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

15th ANNUAL EASTERN VICARIATE HAITI TWINNING GATHERING

Saturday, April 29th, 2023 - 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, in Person & by Zoom
Saint Gregory the Great | 5345 VA Beach Blvd, Va Beach, VA 3462

CONTINUING ON THE PATH TO SELF-SUSTAINABILITY
LEARNING ABOUT ENDOWMENTS

Guest Speaker | Maggie Keenan, Ed.D, Director of Planned Giving, Catholic Community Foundation



Live Drummer | Robert McDonald | \$10.00 charge at the door for refreshments | Silent Auction

In Person, RSVP by April 21st | Mary Ann Collins maryann_collins@verizon.net or (757) 615-5140
By Zoom, RSVP by April 21st | Brian Alexander brian@holyfamilyvb.org

Our words, actions are proof of the Resurrection



We have made it through Lent. Holy Week has arrived and next comes the celebration of Easter, the celebration of Jesus conquering death and rising from the grave. However, this most important event for Christians has no eyewitness to it as it was actually happening. No one was there, that we know of, when Jesus rose from the dead and came out of the tomb.

When Mary gets to the tomb, it is already empty. She runs back to the apostles, and Peter and another apostle run to the tomb and find it

empty. John's account tells all they found in the tomb were the burial clothes, the one from his head separate and rolled up neatly.

So, is the empty tomb evidence of the Resurrection? At the end of the Gospel reading, we are told they did not yet understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. If the empty tomb is evidence of the Resurrection, the two apostles and Mary would have believed and understood.

As it is written, they went away

not understanding. Since the empty tomb is not evidence for Mary and the apostles, where do we find that evidence?

A few verses later in verse 16, we hear that Mary recognizes Jesus when he calls her by name. The definitive evidence of the Resurrection for the apostles was Jesus' appearances to them.

What is the proof or evidence of the Resurrection for us? It is the Scripture writings in the New Testament, the eyewitness accounts of those who saw Jesus after the Resurrection, and the way they lived their lives in the early Church.

What does our belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, Easter, mean for us? Easter is a call to action.

Once he has called Mary by name and she recognizes him, Jesus

sends her to the others with news of the Resurrection. Before his ascension into heaven, he sends those early believers out to the whole world. In the early Church, after Jesus has returned to the Father, evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus comes from the actions of those early Christians, their preaching and living the Gospel.

Just as Jesus called Mary by name, he calls us by name at our baptism and confirmation. Just as Jesus sent Mary to the apostles and



the apostles to the world, he sends us to be his witnesses in our world.

St. Teresa of Avila, a doctor of the Church, said: "What the Beloved wants from us is action," (Quoted by Mirabai Starr, March 14, 2023 reflection from "Center for Action and Contemplation").

The Resurrection of Jesus is a call to action. Our actions bear witness to Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead. However, St. Paul writes in the Letter to the Colossians to seek what is above. Our experience of God impacts our actions.

It is in prayer and contemplation that we find what is above and our lives become buried in

Christ. This union with Christ gives direction to our work on earth and our work gives further proof of the risen Lord.

Proof today that Jesus died and rose from the dead will continue to come through the written word of God and the example of the early Christians.

Our words and actions will also be proof of the Resurrection. It is in prayer and contemplation we find God. It is in our words and actions that others experience God alive in us.

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

Easter Sunday 2023
Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Col 3:1-4
or
1 Cor 5:6b-8; Jn 20:1-9

SAINT MARY
STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL



The ROARING TWENTIES

AUCTION & CASINO NIGHT
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023
6 TO 9:30 P. M., SCHOOL GYM



Live & Silent Auction - Casino Games- Photo Booth - Complimentary Wine & Beer - Heavy Hors d'Oeuvres

\$60/person \$100/couple

Purchase event and 50/50 raffle tickets, sponsorships, & register to bid at:
<https://charityauction.bid/RoaringTwenties>

Raffle Tickets: Purchase a 50/50 raffle ticket for \$100 and get one complimentary admission to the event, plus the chance to win the \$5,000 top prize or one of five \$1,000 prizes.



Thank you to our Jubilee Sponsor




Contact Maritza Davila 757-723-6358
14 N. Willard Ave.,
Hampton, VA 23663

development@saintmarystarofthesea.com


www.saintmarystarofthesea.com

Discover a Career with the Knights of Columbus




SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY ♦ STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH ♦ CHANGE THE WORLD

Opportunities in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake!
Learn more at abbatekofc.com/career-opportunities



Knights of Columbus
The Abbate Agency



Visit our website for more information: www.abbatekofc.com
Call or email us at: 1-866-868-1492 / abbateagency@mail9@kofc.org
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Abbatekofc

© Knights of Columbus, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510 INS08152022B

Why Jesus had to undergo the agonies of his Passion

GUEST COMMENTARY
FATHER THOMAS COLLINS

One of the harshest yet central teachings of Christianity is that, to save us, Jesus had to undergo all the torments of his Passion and Death (Lk 24:26).

Over the centuries, many have pointed out that, since Jesus is God, he could have redeemed us merely by shedding one drop of His Precious Blood.

According to this perspective, it could be asserted that we were actually saved the day of his circumcision, when the first drops of his blood were shed. But this is not what the Gospel proclaims, but rather Christ crucified.

A similar misunderstanding is that Jesus had to endure his Passion and Death to appease the just wrath of his Father, who was infinitely offended by human sinfulness. This requires viewing him as an angry father, who severely abuses his children when they disobey his commands.

But this is not in harmony with the fact that God the Father so loved the world that he sent his only Son to live among us and to lay down his life for our salvation. Thus all who believe in him and are born of water and the Spirit are able to share in eternal life with him (Jn 3:16).

Jesus did not lay down his life for us to appease the Father, but rather to please him (cf., Matt 3:17, 17:5; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22).

But why was such a cruel and agonizing death required for the world's salvation? To answer that question, it is necessary for us to note that Jesus' suffering and ascent to Calvary mirrored his descent into the depths of the human soul.

Such a descent was required to allow God's redeeming graciousness not merely to deliver a soul from the tragic consequences of its sins and resentments, but also to draw the soul out of the bleak and desecrating darkness of sin into the marvelous light of his redemptive and regenerative mercy.

This truth was indicated to us repeatedly in the Gospel. Jesus frequently lamented the lack of faith on the part of so many, while exclaiming his joy when he discovered faith being revealed in the lives of others.

One of the great deceptions of Satan is the idea that our sins so badly desecrate ourselves that we cannot be loved, much less appreciated. This deception leads to the belief that, while we can manipulate others into liking us, at the very core of our being, we remain intrinsically unlovable.

The truth, however, is quite the opposite. While we can be and often are unfaithful and even rebellious and perverse, God is always faithful to his original sacred, loving and gracious commitment to continually beget us in his image and likeness.

In a way, this love was reflected in the ministry of St. Teresa of Calcutta. A child was going through a terrible fit. When St. Teresa picked him up, the child viciously bit her and clawed at her. But, through this ordeal, she just gently, firmly and lovingly held him, until he gradually calmed down and fell asleep in her arms. No matter what he did to her, she would not stop reverently affirming his intrinsic sacredness and her love for him.

This is a beautiful image. But we need to remember that, ultimately, authentic love can only bear fruit when it is both freely given and freely received. If one were to impose love or affection on another without that person's consent, it would violate an important dimension of such a sacred relationship – if not of the person himself/herself.

One of the consequences of our sins is that, as they desecrate us and our perspective of ourselves and others, they draw us into a profound but real sense of self-loathing, if not a pernicious and pervasive sense of self-hatred.

This, in turn, leads to other sins. Just as our first parents, after they ate the forbidden fruit, sought to justify themselves and find salvation through excuses and resentments, we tend to do the same thing.

Furthermore, seduced by Satan, we go even further by believing that, if we degrade and desecrate others enough, we can forget how profoundly we have desecrated ourselves, and thus, like Adam and Eve, we seek to find "salvation" through excuses and resentments.

In direct opposition to this vicious circle of abuse, excuses and resentments, Jesus was sent by the Father that we may have life and have it to the full. But he could only fully reveal the transformative depths of God's love, mercy, reverence and gratitude to us by having us fully and tangibly reveal to him the evils that festered in and polluted the depths of our souls.

Sadly, since our ability to believe that we could ever be revered, loved and appreciated so deeply is severely crippled by our sins, we will not believe unless we can actually witness such love transcending and triumphing over all the festering evils in the depths of our souls.

The price that sinful humans demand to be redeemed from their sins is that the Divine Lover persevere in asserting that love, even as

See Christ crucified, Page 16

Come join an incredible Catholic community of educators, students and parents at

Roanoke Catholic School Est. 1889



Now Hiring for the 2023-2024 academic year: Elementary, Middle and High School Faculty, School Leadership Positions - Assistant Head of School and Dean of Faculty, and Teaching Assistants in all levels. Please contact Mr. Patrick Patterson, Principal & Head of School at ppatterson@roanokecatholic.com or 540.982.3532 www.roanokecatholic.com Learn more about joining us in this short video below.



Human composting, alkaline hydrolysis not acceptable for burial, say US bishops

GINA CHRISTIAN
OSV News

(OSV News) – Two new alternatives to burial and cremation fail to comply with the Catholic Church’s teaching on respect for the bodies of the dead, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine said.

In a March 23 statement, the committee said it had evaluated human composting and alkaline hydrolysis, and concluded that both “fail to satisfy the Church’s requirements for proper respect for the bodies of the dead.”

The methods, which rapidly accelerate decomposition, have gained support in recent years as “eco-friendly” forms of treating human remains.

In human composting, the body of the departed is placed in a metal bin with plant material to enable microbes and bacteria, along with heat and oxygen, to break down bones and tissues. The resulting mixture is then offered for lawn or garden use.

Alkaline hydrolysis dissolves the body in some 100 gallons of water and alkali under high temperature and pressure. Within hours, the body is dissolved, except for some bone material which is then dried and pulverized.

Unlike flame-based crema-

tion, which uses intense heat to reduce human remains to ashes, human composting and alkaline hydrolysis do not “show adequate respect for the human body, nor express hope in the resurrection,” said the bishops in the seven-page document that accompanied their statement.

Burial is “the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body,” wrote the bishops, quoting the 2016 instruction “Ad resurgendum cum Christo: regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation” by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The congregation is now the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

According to the 2016 instruction, flame-based cremation is permissible, so long as the ashes are gathered and laid to rest in a sacred place, rather than being stored at home, distributed among loved ones, encased in jewelry or scattered broadly.

In contrast, both human composting and alkaline hydrolysis leave nothing that could be properly interred, said the U.S. bishops.

Following alkaline hydrolysis, “there are about 100 gallons of liquid into which the greater part of the body has been dissolved,



and this liquid has been treated as wastewater,” they wrote. “At the end of the human composting process (there is) ... nothing distinguishably left of the body to be laid to rest in a sacred place.”

Currently, six U.S. states – California, Colorado, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington – permit human composting. The Maryland Senate is currently considering similar legislation.

Katrina Spade, founder and CEO

of Seattle-based Recompose, the self-described “first human composting company in the world,” said in a 2021 video interview that “you’re not human anymore at the end of this process.”

Alkaline hydrolysis is legal in several states as well, with the Cremation Association of North America having expanded its definition of cremation in 2010 to include the method, which also is known as “water” or “chemical cremation.”

Notre Dame Cathedral reopening date announced

AGNÈS POIRER
OSV News

VAL DE BRIEY, France (OSV News) – Four years after a devastating fire, the date of the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris has been set for Dec. 8, 2024, at 11:15 a.m., according to Philippe Villeneuve, the architect leading the reconstruction.

Villeneuve made the announcement March 16 during a trip to Val de Briey in eastern France, a small agricultural town near the Luxembourg border. It was there that the base of the famous Notre Dame spire was being assembled before its installation on the four pillars at the crossing of the cathedral’s transept, at a height of nearly 100 feet. The spire was destroyed when a fire ravaged the cathedral April 15, 2019.

Making the announcement with Villeneuve was Jean-Louis Georgelin, the five-star general appointed by French President Emmanuel Macron to oversee the operations of what French media have named “the building site of the century.”

“Let’s say 11.30 a.m. We may be slightly late,” the general joked in front of journalists.


Even if Paris’ famous medieval cathedral won’t reopen in time for the Paris Olympic Games scheduled for July 26-Aug. 11, 2024, the reopening date is a significant one for Catholics, as Dec. 8 marks the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, one of the biggest feast days of Mary, to whom French King Louis XIII consecrated himself, his dynasty and his kingdom in 1638.

In what Louis XIII called his vow, he had proclaimed: “We hereby declare that by taking the very saintly and very glorious Virgin as special protector of our Kingdom, we particularly dedicate to Her our person, our state, our crown and our subjects.”

At that time, the king stated that he desired a new altar for the cathedral – one with a depiction of the Pieta – Mary holding her son after he was taken down from the cross. The sculpture, created by brothers Nicolas and Guillaume Coustou, was commissioned by King Louis XIII’s son, Louis XIV, and it emerged

See Notre Dame, Page 13


In Observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month



Together, may we always protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults in our homes, churches, schools and communities.

To learn more about our child protection efforts in the Diocese of Richmond, visit:

<https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>



Nashville bishop: Praying for shooting victims

KATIE PETERSON
Tennessee Register

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (OSV News) – Nashville Bishop J. Mark Spalding celebrated the 5:30 p.m. Mass March 27 at the Cathedral of the Incarnation to pray for the victims of the school shooting that morning at The Covenant School in the city's Green Hills neighborhood.

"On this day of such tragedy, we come here to gather as a people who live in hope, in faith and in love," Bishop Spalding said at the beginning of Mass. "So, as we gather today, mindful of what our faith teaches us, that darkness, sin, death does not have the final word, but light, love, and the victory of Jesus Christ does."

The shooter, 28-year-old Audrey Hale, killed six individuals, including three children. Metro Nashville Police have identified the three child victims as 9-year-olds Evelyn Dieckhaus, William Kinney and Hallie Scruggs, daughter of the senior pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church Chad Scruggs. The three adult victims include school head Katherine Koonce, substitute teacher Cynthia Peak and school custodian Mike Hill.

Hale, who was armed with two assault-type rifles, was fatally shot dead in interactions with officers who responded to the scene.

"We come here to be with and for each other, not only for us gathered here in this church today, but with and for all the people of Nashville and Middle Tennessee that have gone through this day struggling, emotional, tearful," Bishop Spalding said in his homily.

"We come together to be with everyone, and we're together in our prayer, we're together in our condolences and our sympathies, we're together in our love, love for another," he added.

"And we understand our words in these kinds of moments are somewhat insufficient, but for you and for our family and friends that we go to in the next hours and days ahead, please make sure you listen with love," he continued. "Listen and our most profound response can be this. 'I love you. I care for you. I'm here for you.' Those words are sufficient."

"We are mindful that our faith, our hope and our love overcomes, endures, even through the darkness and the sufferings and pains of life, and today is one of those significant days of tragedy and pain," Bishop Spalding said.

He said that he hoped "our prayer here as a family of faith today is like an embrace for our community."

Bishop Spalding noted that the word 'lament' had been a frequent one on his mind throughout the day.

"Lament is a prayer or a poem or a song in which we cry out to God in our suffering and in our pain," he said, "and we tell him, 'Here is my hurt, here is my anger, here is my frustration, here is my woundedness and my weakness. Help me God. Help me in this moment.'"

Nearly 150 people were present for the special Mass.

"They are our colleagues. We know people there and we're saddened that they're not only experiencing this but that their lives are changed forever because of this senseless act," said Rebecca Hammel, superintendent of schools for the diocese.

Bishop Barry C. Knestout gets a chance to tour the new home of Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia in Norfolk. The bishop celebrated Mass for former clients, donors and staff members' relatives who had passed away, then dedicated the new building. CCEVA serves more than 10,000 families each year through its programs. (Photo provided by CCEVA)



Catholic Charities

Continued from Page 1

services are designed to provide critical material support as well as education to empower families to move out of poverty."

"We are so grateful to have this large office space to better provide so many crucial services and hold large classes and community forums. We are truly blessed to have our staff working together so closely," she added.

Serving the vulnerable

Bishop Knestout dedicated the office after celebrating a Mass in which 39 former clients, donors and staff members' relatives who all died over the past year were honored. Each of their names was read aloud during the Prayer of the Faithful.

The memorial service reflects the organization's "core value of dignity and sanctity of life," Fick said.

Most of the clients honored received guardianship services.

"Really, these are people who are our family," Fick said. "They often have no family to care for them. We take care of them until they die and plan their funerals" which are often "very simple" so the March service "feels like this is almost their funeral Mass."

"While they might have had a small service or funeral, this is our chance to really honor them and memorialize their lives," she said. "It's just a very important way to bring us back to serving the most vulnerable, making sure that they are treated with as much dignity and respect as any dignitary would be."

Remedy the brokenness

In his homily, Bishop Knestout expressed gratitude to Catholic Charities as he spoke about the importance of being Christ to others as one responds to "the brokenness" of the world in "love, charity, and hope."

"I'm grateful for all that Catholic Charities does in that area, and all that you do with your own resources, time, talent and treasures, all that you do to assist in remedying that brokenness in the world around us," he told the congregation which was primarily staff, board members and CCEVA supporters.

He said it can be overwhelming and make one feel "worn thin" in responding to everyone's needs, but the sacraments can give us strength through grace.

He stressed that everyone must walk with Christ who "endured the punishment and the suffering and the anxiety and the difficulties of the

whole world that he experienced on his shoulders in bearing the cross."

CCEVA serves more than 10,000 families annually through its adoption and post-adoption services, financial and housing counseling programs, guardianship and representative payee services, mental health counseling, health and community services and family engagement services.

Setting, attaining goals

For many, the organization has made a significant difference in their lives.

For example, CCEVA began providing diapers and baby supplies to Rosalind Braxton for her 2-year-old granddaughter for whom she has cared since the child was born. CCEVA is also helping Braxton set financial goals. Before seeking help from CCEVA, life was "very hard, challenging, stressful and a struggle," she said.

"I honestly don't know where I would be (without CCEVA's help)," she said.

Similarly, Sharon Justice has been receiving the agency's assistance and support for about a year, ever since she gained custody of her granddaughter Zena, now three.

She is part of the Grandparents as Parents support group and has received diapers and clothing for Zena and plans to seek mental health counseling for herself and her granddaughter.

CCEVA has helped her set and attain personal goals and has provided referrals for other community assistance such as a food pantry and electrical bill assistance, she said.

"With my newfound situation, I sort of lost track of where I was headed in life, so it's just allowing me to know that even though I am in this situation that I can still set goals and achieve those goals," Justice said.

One goal was returning to work which she was unable to do when she first assumed custody because she couldn't find daycare for Zena immediately. She is now self-employed as a housekeeper and care provider for the elderly, and she plans to have CCEVA help her create a résumé, she said.

She added that before receiving services she felt alone but now has support from the organization and from other grandparents in the support group.

"I know for me it's been a very positive thing and as I'm becoming more part of the group, I realize that there's things I can do also as far as helping the group and the other grandparents involved," she said.

"Zena just loves it too. She loves the program (which has special events for grandchildren)," Justice added. "She loves being there, and so it's been a positive thing for her too."



The Diocesan Day of Reflection March 18 at St. Michael the Archangel, Glen Allen, was one of many similar events across the country in preparation for the National Black Catholic Congress XIII, July 20-23, in National Harbor, Maryland. (Photos/Father Tochi Iwuji)



National congress

Continued from Page 1

entreated participants to trust in the process that would lead to their recommendations.

Attendee Elizabeth Thornille of St. Paul, Portsmouth, arrived that day with a spirit of trust.

“If I’ve already asked God to guide me, I have to trust him and not be concerned about asking for specific things,” she said.

In his homily, Bishop Knestout called upon attendees to “be open to God’s grace and the Spirit acting on us as we reflect on the needs of Black Catholics and Black Catholic ministry” and to “make sure our expectations are in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and the expectations God has for us.”

While many issues and needs surfaced throughout the day, attendees appeared most concerned about addressing those associated with Black Catholic youth, particularly their desire and need for a Catholic education.

Father Tochi wants to address this need expeditiously. “We have to do something,” he said. “We must make it right.”

Deacon Christopher Barrett, who serves at St. Elizabeth, Richmond, concurred.

“I came away from the day feeling more strongly than ever that penance, reparations and justice require that Catholic dioceses, parishes and schools establish and grow funds to provide for scholarships for African American children and youth to attend Catholic schools,” he said.

“This is a way of providing them with quality education and a way of serving the Church through the nurturing of Black vocations to religious life, priesthood, diaconate and lay ministry,” he added.

Challenges and strategies associated with youth engagement were also identified.

Another salient issue for attendees was the need for transparency and communication, especially with regard to a diocesan process/structure in place to address the concerns of Black Catholics.

Daniel Villar, director of the diocesan Office of Ethnic Ministries, discussed procedures for bringing Black Catholic concerns to the diocese with the group.

Attendees recognized that there is much

work to be done in the area of social justice and expressed the need for the diocese to look at racism and engage those affected by it. They also expressed a desire for the diocese to recognize Black Catholics as the gift they are and acknowledge this tangibly with funding.

Ameen’abd’illah “Ameenah” Zakia, a 19-year-old J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College student and member of Holy Rosary, Richmond, who plans to attend the congress, liked how engaging the Day of Reflection was.

“Some very valid issues were brought up,” she said. “We all need to work together ... and with the congress, you can get ideas from other people as well. Now that everyone has their idea of what’s going on, you can get support from other parishes so that we can all improve.”

After attending the Diocesan Day of Reflection, retired Navy master chief and current civilian employee Jimmy Lemelle of Immaculate Conception, Hampton, is strongly considering going to the congress.

“The Day of Reflection was an awesome event,” he said. “I enjoyed seeing the different parishes come together and be able to fellowship with one another ... and hearing their thoughts and visions, especially when it comes to youth. For the Church to thrive, we need to reach out to youth and speak to the issues that affect them.”

Lemelle believes there were a lot of good points made at the Day of Reflection. He was particularly impressed by the call for reconciliation. He said the diocese needs to reach out to the Black Catholic community and make Catholic education for Black youth a priority.

“We’re only as strong as our weakest link,” he said. “We need to share our talents, open up as a diocese, communicate with one another, and strengthen our communities.”

Editor’s note: Read this story at catholicvirginian.org for links related to National Black Catholic Congress XIII and the diocesan Office for Black Catholics.

Notre Dame

Continued from Page 11

completely intact from the 2019 fire. In fact, the spire and the vaults underneath it collapsed at its feet.

The fire, which started in the afternoon, quickly spread to the roof of the cathedral. The original 13th-century oak beams burned down. While firemen protected the stained-glass windows and the famous twin towers from catching fire, crowds gathered in shock around the cathedral and witnessed the collapse of the spire. Groups of the faithful were praying along the streets of Paris that their beloved cathedral would be saved.

Many treasures were, in fact, saved from the inside of Notre Dame, including the Crown of Thorns that is believed to be worn by Jesus during his Passion. The crown temporarily is on display at the Louvre Museum.

However, it is already known that it won’t be a carpenter giving the final touch to the spire on completion day. It will be Villeneuve, the architect-in-chief.

When the spire crashed down just before 8 p.m. on April 15, 2019, the copper rooster perched at its tip was feared lost. However, on April 16 at dawn, Villeneuve found the battered rooster lying in the gutter of Rue du Cloître-Notre-Dame, a street right next to the cathedral square. The relics of Paris’s patron, St. Genevieve, were found intact inside.

WHAT WE’VE HEARD



Bringing “Laudato si” to life. Saturday, March 4, the Care for Creation Ministry at Sacred Heart Church, Norfolk, spent time picking up trash along their adopted street, Princess Anne Road. The team of 13, led by Frank Murphy,

included some members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity of Saint Francis, Virginia Beach. The team collected 75 pounds of trash.

Feeding children in need.

Father Michael Duffy, pastor of St. Jude, Mineral, and Immaculate Conception, Bumpass, and Rebecca



Chidester, social ministry committee chair, present a \$3,000 CRS Rice Bowl Grant award to the Louisa County Resource Council. The money will help fund the Children’s Emergency Feeding Program.

Leading as a public servant. The new mayor of Newport News, Phillip Jones, visited Our Lady of Mount Carmel School Feb. 28 to



see how OLMC serves the community. Mayor Jones answered questions from the eighth grade civics classes and spoke about leading as a public servant. “Christ went to the people,” he said, “so I didn’t just go to the nice neighborhoods.”

OPPORTUNITIES

Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, is seeking a part-time (25 hour a week) Minister of Social Justice. A large part of this position is serving the local community with our outreach programs including client assistance and leadership within various ministries. Normal workdays will be Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Flexibility in work hours is required for meetings and seasonal projects which may require some evening and weekend hours. For more information please visit www.ascension-vb.org/employment or contact Lisa Liedl at liedll@ascensionvb.org or 757-495-1886 ext 422.

Peninsula Catholic High School has the following open positions for teachers with an enthusiasm for youth, skills for effective integration of technology in the classroom, and a desire to be part of a community known for excellence in Catholic education for over 120 years.

Theology teacher. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred. Must be in good standing with the Catholic Church.

Math teacher (algebra and above). Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred. Experience with online platforms such as WebAssign/Kuta preferred. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teaching license with endorsements in the assigned subject areas.

School Counselor. Will support the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents of Peninsula Catholic High School in the areas of academic and personal counseling for students in grades 8-12. Responsibilities include but are not limited to assisting the principal in development of academic programs, implementing all testing (PSAT and AP), coordinating and monitoring all academic records for students, providing personal counseling for all students, coordinating academic support services with the resource teacher, school counseling budget preparation, college admissions advising. In addition to specific responsibilities listed, a person in this position handles other tasks as they emerge and performs other duties as assigned. The School Counselor must demonstrate an understanding of child development and the educational needs of high school students. Other qualifications include professional oral and written communication skills, ability to maintain confidentiality, computer skills, strong organizational skills, positive attitude, efficiency, and promptness. The School Counselor must be certified or working toward certification/licensure through the Virginia State Department of Education. This certification requires a minimum of a master's degree in guidance and counseling (K-12). This is an 11-month position beginning Aug. 1 of each academic year and ending June 30.

Health/PE/Driver's Ed teacher. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred. The successful candidate must have a current Virginia teaching license with endorsements in the as-

signed subject areas.

Send cover letter, résumé, diocesan application (which can be found at www.richmonddioocese.org) and references to: Peninsula Catholic High School, Attn: Principal, 600 Harpersville Road, Newport News, VA 23601 or email principal@peninsulacatholic.org. Application deadline is Sunday, April 30, or until the position is filled.

St. Benedict Catholic Church, Richmond is seeking a full-time Assistant Director of Evangelization who will collaborate with the Director of Evangelization to continue developing a diverse and multi-faceted ministry for the whole parish through community outreach and faith formation. The Assistant Director will also oversee the children's and youth ministries. Children's ministry responsibilities include overseeing monthly faith formation program, sacramental preparation for first reconciliation/Communion, recruiting and training new catechists. Youth ministry responsibilities include overseeing faith formation for middle school and high school youth through developing/maintaining a program that includes catechesis, social events and service opportunities, recruiting and training adult volunteers, and overseeing preparation for the sacrament of confirmation. Candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing to serve in this position. A degree in theology/religious studies and at least one year of experience working in a parish preferred.

To apply please email a completed diocesan application <https://bit.ly/36ndEsX>, cover letter and résumé to Father John David Ramsey at frjdr Ramsey@saintbenedictparish.org.

Church of the Redeemer, Mechanicsville, is seeking a passionate disciple of Christ to fill our full-time position of Minister of Evangelization and Communication. This person will be responsible for ensuring that we are living out our mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. The minister is tasked with using traditional and modern means to invite others to discover the Catholic faith. This work includes collaboration with clergy and staff members. The minister would form and equip our parishioners to be evangelists in their homes and communities. The minister would also handle developing and implementing a plan for communicating faith and sharing information with the community. Must be willing to learn new technologies or already have competency in social media platforms, Flocknote and Adobe Suite. A bachelor's degree in theology, Catholic studies, religious education or a related field or equivalent experience required. Three to five years' experience in Catholic parish ministry is preferred. Must supply three (3) references. Qualified candidates should send a cover letter, résumé and diocesan application to the attention of Father Jim Cowles at jcowles@churchredeemer.org. Applications are being reviewed immediately.

SHORTTAKES

Virginia Beach Knights of Columbus Council #13467 of St. John the Apostle Catholic Church is holding its first Golf Scramble, Thursday, April 13, at the Virginia Beach National Golf Club. Registration is \$125 and includes green fees, cart, range balls, two beverages from the beverage cart, lunch, and four hours of fun on the course! Proceeds go toward council-sponsored scholarships for St. John the Apostle School. Registration, donations and more information are available online at <https://birdease.com/SJA2023>.

Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated at 3 p.m., April 16, at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Virginia Beach. The image of Divine Mercy will be displayed for veneration, and we will sing the Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by Benediction. Refreshments will follow in the Tobias room, and everyone is welcome. Contact Bridget Lukeman at 757-497-2841 with questions.

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

St. Gabriel Knights of Columbus Council #13170 is hosting its Annual Foursome Scramble Golf Tournament Monday, April 24. Shotgun start at 9 a.m, rain or shine! Lake Chesdin Golf Club, 21801 Lake Chesdin Parkway, Chesterfield. Entry fee is \$110 person, \$440 per foursome. Includes breakfast and lunch. Join the fun through the purchase of a Supercard for \$20 to receive two "mulligans," two beverage tickets, putting contest, men's longest drive, women's longest drive, and closest to

the pin. \$1,000 shootout, \$15,000 hole-in-one contest. Sponsorships available; email Steve Freeby at sfreebyjr@yahoo.com. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/43fpke3m> or send check with golfer's name to KofC Council #13170, c/o Jerry Garofalo, 14201 Long Gate Road, Midlothian, VA 23112.

St. Joan of Arc Parish, Yorktown, invites all parishes to the Divine Mercy Prayer Service, Sunday, April 16, 3-4 p.m. at 315 Harris Grove Lane. Service will begin with eucharistic adoration, reflection on Divine Mercy and the real presence of his mercy through the Blessed Sacrament, presented by Father Michael Joly. Following will be the praying of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, as well as readings from Scripture and St. Faustina's Diary. The service will close with Benediction. For more information contact Donna Prantl at 757-621-8353 or Cathy Fowler at 757-329-4059.

Join Deacon Christopher Malone from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond, on a spiritual pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, Spain and Portugal to visit Our Blessed Virgin Mary's many gorgeous shrines, where miracles occur daily! An 11-day tour, Sept. 27 to Oct. 7 for \$4,399, including airfare, 4-star hotels, daily prayers, arrangements for Mass, local tours, breakfast, dinner, and more! Highlights: Lourdes, where Our Lady appeared 18 times to St. Bernadette. In Spain, we will visit the Basilica La Sagrada Familia, the Benedictine Monastery of Montserrat, the Basilica of Our Lady of The Pillar in Zaragoza, the medieval town of Salamanca, and the birthplace of St. Teresa of Avila. Our pilgrimage will continue to Portugal, where we will see the 20th-century Marian shrine at Fatima and then to the capital of Lisbon, the birthplace of St. Antony of Padua. For further information, contact Alba Kim at 804-298-4035 or tours@albastours.com. Website:<https://www.albastours.com/>. Reservations are available now. Spaces are limited.

Investigating abuse

Continued from Page 2

for the Doctrine of the Faith, told Vatican News "one of the strongest changes" the pope made was to add laypeople leading Vatican-recognized organizations or movements and priests leading clerical associations to the list of those covered by "Vos Estis." Like bishops, they must act when allegations of sexual abuse or the abuse of power are made, or they can face a "Vos Estis" process.

Cases of abuse in several Catholic movements have made headlines in the past several years. Perhaps the best known was the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, founded in Peru in 1971. An internal investigation in 2017 found that Luis Fernando Figari, who began the movement and headed it until 2010, and three other high-ranking former

members abused 19 minors and 10 adults.

In 2017 the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life banned Figari from living in a Sodalitium community, participating in Sodalitium activities or contacting any Sodalitium member.

Father Small said Pope Francis' update – declaring "Vos Estis" to be "definitive" and no longer "experimental" – shows that the church still has work to do in implementing its laws to punish abusers and those who cover up abuse. Expanding its coverage to include leaders of lay movements, he said, is an important part of the Church's global safeguarding efforts.

The definitive text of "Vos Estis," Father Small said, "is a clear sign that a culture of impunity is over in the Church."

Viviendo la Semana Santa en vivo

POR: DANIEL VILLAR, M.A.

La Semana Santa es un tiempo único en el año litúrgico. Es el momento en que nosotros conmemoramos los acontecimientos en la vida de Jesús en sus últimos días. Comenzando con el Domingo de Ramos, después de cuarenta días de ayuno y contrición, los misterios de esta semana se abren y se hacen presentes en nuestro caminar con Cristo. La voluntad de Dios se hace patente en Jesús de una forma muy extraordinaria esta semana y ¿Por cuál razón? “La Semana Santa, en particular la Pasión y Muerte de Cristo, nos recuerda el Amor de Dios por la humanidad. En su párrafo 604, el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica nos dice:

Al entregar a su Hijo por nuestros pecados, Dios manifiesta que su designio sobre nosotros es un designio de amor benevolente que precede a todo mérito por nuestra parte: ‘En esto consiste el amor: no en que nosotros hayamos amado a Dios, sino en que él nos amó y nos envió a su Hijo como propiciación por nuestros pecados’. ‘La prueba de que Dios nos ama es que Cristo, siendo nosotros todavía pecadores, murió por nosotros’. (EWTN.com)

Como seguidores del maestro, somos llamados a imitarlo en todo sentido de la palabra y Palabra. P minúscula en todo lo que ha dicho y ha hecho y P mayúscula en todo lo que Dios nos revela en la Sagrada Escritura y la Tradición de nuestra Iglesia. Entonces, ¿De cuáles maneras podemos participar en esta semana con más dedicación y devoción a este amor y sacrificio que Dios nos ha dado?

“Durante la Semana Santa, los fieles pueden ir a misa y participar de las celebraciones que ofrecen sus parroquias como el rezo del Vía Crucis.

Además, cada uno puede conmemorar la Semana Santa en su casa. Se pueden leer las Escrituras, en particular los pasajes que relatan los sucesos del Domingo de Ramos hasta el Viernes Santo. También pueden rezarse los Misterios dolorosos del Rosario.

También es una buena semana para rezar la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia –toda la Cuaresma es buen momento para esto– y el Viernes Santo puede comenzarse la Novena de la Divina Misericordia para prepararse para el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia. El Señor pidió a Santa Faustina que se rezaran estas devociones para que las gracias de la Redención se derramaran más abundantemente en las almas.” (EWTN.com)

Al llegar a esta semana culminante, por razones culturales, muchos de nosotros conocemos muy bien los sucesos del Domingo de Ramos y los del Jueves Santo y Viernes Santo en la vida de Jesús. Las palabras y las acciones de Jesucristo resuenan con el servicio (Jueves Santo) y el sufrimiento (Viernes Santo) que forman parte de nuestras experiencias diarias con Hispanos/Latinos y en nuestras culturas según como se manifiestan en nuestros países. Pero ¿Cómo podemos meditar sobre los eventos que nos empiezan a encaminar hacia la Pasión? Reflexione sobre las siguientes ocho frases para empezar bien la Semana Santa:



(Foto: Daniel Villar)

1. Ante todo quiero decirle a cada uno la primera verdad: “Dios te ama”. Si ya lo escuchaste no importa, te lo quiero recordar: Dios te ama. Nunca lo dudes, más allá de lo que te suceda en la vida. En cualquier circunstancia, eres infinitamente amado.

2. Quizás la experiencia de paternidad que has tenido no sea la mejor, tu padre de la tierra quizás fue lejano y ausente o, por el contrario, dominante y absorbente. O sencillamente no fue el padre que necesitabas. No lo sé. Pero lo que puedo decirte con seguridad es que puedes arrojarte seguro en los brazos de tu Padre divino, de ese Dios que te dio la vida y que te la da a cada momento. Él te sostendrá con firmeza, y al mismo tiempo sentirás que Él respeta hasta el fondo tu libertad.

3. Para Él realmente eres valioso, no eres insignificante, le importas, porque eres obra de sus manos. Por eso te presta atención y te recuerda con cariño. No quiere llevar la cuenta de tus errores y, en todo caso, te ayudará a aprender algo también de tus caídas. Porque te ama. Intenta quedarte un momento en silencio dejándote amar por Él. Intenta acallar todas las voces y gritos interiores y quédate un instante en sus brazos de amor.

4. Ese Cristo que nos salvó en la Cruz de nuestros pecados, con ese mismo poder de su entrega total sigue salvándonos y rescatándonos hoy. Mira su Cruz, aférrate a Él, déjate salvar, porque «quienes se dejan salvar por Él son liberados del pecado, de la tristeza, del vacío interior, del aislamiento»

5. Y si pecas y te alejas, Él vuelve a levantarte con el poder de su Cruz. Nunca olvides que «Él perdona setenta veces siete. Nos vuelve a cargar sobre sus hombros una y otra vez. Nadie podrá quitarnos la dignidad que nos otorga este amor infinito e inquebrantable. Él nos permite levantar la cabeza y volver a empezar, con una ternura que nunca nos desilusiona y que siempre puede devolvernos la alegría».

6. El amor del Señor es más grande que todas nuestras contradicciones, que todas nuestras fragilidades y que todas nuestras pequeñeces. Pero es precisamente a través de nuestras contradicciones, fragilidades y pequeñeces como Él quiere escribir esta historia de amor. Porque la verdadera caída –atención a esto– la verdadera caída, la que es capaz de arruinarnos la vida es la de permanecer en el piso y no dejarse ayudar»

7. ¡Él vive! Hay que volver a recordarlo con frecuencia, porque corremos el riesgo de tomar a Jesucristo sólo como un buen ejemplo del pasado, como un recuerdo, como alguien que nos salvó hace dos mil años. Eso no nos serviría de nada, nos dejaría iguales, eso no nos liberaría. El que nos llena con su gracia, el que nos libera, el que nos transforma, el que nos sana y nos consuela es alguien que vive.

8. Si alcanzas a valorar con el corazón la belleza de este anuncio y te dejas encontrar por el Señor; si te dejas amar y salvar por Él; si entras en amistad con Él y empiezas a conversar con Cristo vivo sobre las cosas concretas de tu vida, esa será la gran experiencia, esa será la experiencia fundamental que sostendrá tu vida cristiana. (Opusdei.org)



Daniel Villar

Mensaje del director de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano

¡Hermanos y hermanas! Recordemos siempre que Dios sacrificó a su único Hijo por nuestros pecados. No hay nada más grande en la historia del mundo. Fue nuestro Padre Celestial quien tomó la decisión de clavar su mismo corazón a un madero por nuestra salvación. No hay otra

medida que nos ayuda a entrar con mucha profundidad y poder tocar la grandeza de nuestro Creador. Somos llamados a seguir los pasos de Cristo y elegidos a vivir la Semana Santa en vivo, es decir, teniendo por presente todo lo que Dios ha hecho y sigue haciendo por nosotros.

Is technology discreetly rendering parents expendable?

ELIZABETH SCALIA
OSV News

About 10 years ago, my younger son stopped me in my tracks with a thoughtful observation.

I wasn't surprised that he could be thoughtful – he often is – but this time his thought seemed momentous to me: "Parents don't get to teach their children anymore. When I was little," he explained, "if I wanted to know almost anything, my first instinct was to go to you or Dad about it:

'What's a bowline knot?

'Why does everything get dusty?

'What is a shillelagh?'

"We would always talk it through. Now, if I'm curious about something I just go to Google. Younger kids don't even develop the habit of going to their parents for answers. They've been googling since they could reach a keyboard.

"Parents have become expendable," he concluded. "They aren't even in the equation."

He went about his business unbothered. I, on the other hand, spent the rest of the day in a horrified sort of daze. Pondering just how numerous and fruitful were the meandering conversations that fill our lives, I realized my son had identified a real threat to ordinary family dynamics.

Our children's questions often became openings not just for discussion but for mutual learning and creative engagement. If my husband or I could not answer something off the top of our heads,

we'd join in the research – searching a dictionary or an encyclopedia with them, or heading to the library if that's what was required. We learned together, and more than once a child's question turned into a personal or family project.

Did you ever notice that in a jar of mixed nuts the cashews and Brazil nuts are always on top while pistachios and broken pieces are on the bottom? One son noticed and asked about it.

Soon we were putting rocks of varied sizes into a can and shaking it, finding that – what do you know – smaller things sink to the bottom as space availability relegates bigger stuff to the top. This wasn't an earth-shaking realization (although one son eventually used it for a grade-school science project to good effect), but the question sparked discussion and then activity.

In varying degrees, the whole family participated in the discovery and together we managed to be curious, entertained, informed and – perhaps most important – impressed with each other.

It's a slight thing, yes, but – as our little experiment demonstrated – small things are what the big things ultimately rest upon.

Family structure, sibling reliance, mutual respect, parental humanity and vulnerability – all of that big stuff rests upon the little questions and answers, the ever-widening discussions, the trivial but sweetly recalled moments of

shared exploration and curiosities satisfied.

Going to a search engine for an answer might be expedient but it delivers none of that vibrant interaction. A question quickly resolved brings no encouragement to throw a curve into one's thinking, or to puzzle out new ideas while laughing or maybe even crying, if that's where the human part of it leads.

These memories came rushing back to me thanks to news stories about artificial intelligence and an AI tool called ChatGPT – GPT stands for "Generative Pre-trained Transformer" – which can write lively, human-sounding speeches, poems and school papers.

In January, Rep. Jake Auchincloss, D-Mass., took to the House floor and delivered a 100-word speech written by ChatGPT; anyone listening would never have suspected it wasn't written by a human.

In an "explainer" article, the

Associated Press actually asked the tool how to discern its writing from human work and was given a perfectly reasonable response. The article then noted, "Open AI said in a human-written statement this week that it plans to work with educators as it learns from how people are (using) ChatGPT"

Increasingly, we will see distinctions between human and machine-generated material become required, if we're to keep the world honest. For a while, anyway.

Our children learn from their parents and the world around them – how humans speak, act, explain, think, hold and uphold.

Artificial intelligence learns, too, from what it is purposely or unwittingly fed by the human element. But it has no limits and no boundaries; it is an empty vastness, offering no human consolations, upholding nothing.

How terrifyingly bleak and unholy that sounds.

Christ crucified

Continued from Page 10

we demonstrate how deeply we are enmeshed in – and even committed to – sin's desecrating demonic dynamic.

This being the case, Jesus had to pay the price we were demanding. Throughout his Passion, and even beyond it, he continued to plead with each of us – "Please believe how deeply I love you, how precious you are to Me, and how grateful I am to have you as my child."

A wise spiritual director once noted that, if you really want to know yourself, it is grossly inadequate to look into a mirror. A mirror can only reveal to you one dimension of the marvelous mysterious and sacred gift you truly are.

Instead, authentic self-knowledge requires that you have the faith and courage to abide in the transformative gaze of the One who loves you, reverences you and appreciates you most purely and perfectly. As awkward as abiding in that gaze may seem to be at first, ultimately, it is the only way you will be able to discover your true dignity and grow in the joy of becoming, in the mystery of His reverent and gracious gratitude, the uniquely sanctifying gift God has called you to be.

Father Thomas Collins retired in 2018 and remains a priest in residence at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Hot Springs. Read his full commentary at catholicvirginian.org.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for April 9, 2023

Matthew 28:1-10

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Easter Vigil: The women arrive at the tomb. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

FIRST	TO SEE	EARTHQUAKE
AN ANGEL	ROLLED BACK	THE STONE
LIGHTNING	CLOTHING	WHITE
AS SNOW	GUARD	AFRAID
JESUS	CRUCIFIED	NOT HERE
RAISED	HE LAY	TELL
GALILEE	FEET	SEE ME

AN ANGEL COMES

```

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