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The Arlington Catholic Herald

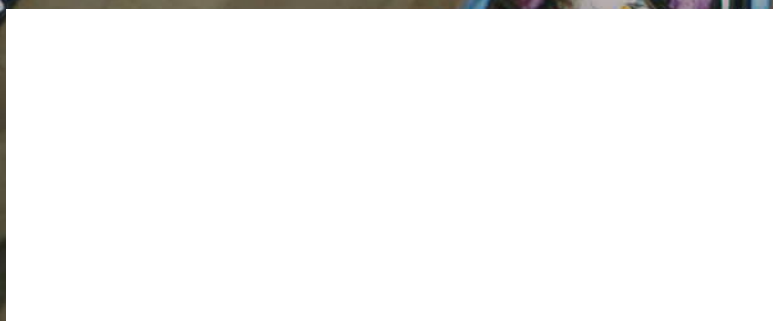
SPECIAL JUBILEE EDITION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

— FOUNDED 1974 —



Remember ♦ Rejoice ♦ Renew



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About the cover

JIM HALE | CATHOLIC HERALD

The rose window is a highlight of the renovated Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington.

The Arlington Catholic Herald

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Diocesan Golden Jubilee

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For three years, we in the Diocese of Arlington have been preparing for our diocesan 50th Golden Jubilee celebration, which this special edition of the *Catholic Herald* commemorates. This celebration has offered us the opportunity to reflect on our rich past and our dynamic present, and to look toward our joyful future — all made possible by the grace of God.

We began by “Remembering with gratitude” all that the Lord had done in establishing and building up this local Church. Most especially, we recalled his words to us at that first Eucharistic sacrifice, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

In our second year of preparation, themed “Rejoice,” we echoed the words of our Blessed Mother Mary, “My soul rejoices in the Lord.” We sought to follow her lead by imitating her profound trust and faithful obedience to God.

Finally, we considered Jesus’ words, “Behold, I make all things new,” and pledged to “Renew” our commitments to Our Lord and to living and strengthening our Catholic faith through works of evangelization and mercy. What a beautiful way to mark this, our Golden Jubilee anniversary!

In this special edition of the *Catholic Herald*, please read about those early days when His Holiness Pope Paul VI founded our diocese, and the three other bishops who, along with me, have been blessed to serve as shepherd. In these pages, you will learn how God has provided a bountiful supply of seminarians and priests through the fervent prayers of our parishioners and religious communities.

This issue explores the faithful growth of our parishes and the establishment of diocesan ministries that serve men and women considering their vocations to married, consecrated or religious life; educate our children; nurture our thriving multicultural communities, youths and young people; and strengthen our pro-life witness. It also explores how we serve the treasures of our Church — our poor and vulnerable neighbors — through the work of Catholic Charities, as well as through our diocesan, parish and partnering ministries.

Please join me in thanking Our Lord for the many blessings he has showered on the Diocese of Arlington over the last five decades. Pray with me that, with the grace of God and by the intercession of our Most Holy Mother, St. Thomas More and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, we may continue to grow in love and holiness for many years to come.

May Our Lord Jesus bless you with his peace and may Mary our Mother watch over you always.

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Mons. Michael F. Burbidge
Obispo de Arlington

Jubileo de Oro Diocesano

Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo,

Durante tres años, nosotros en la Diócesis de Arlington nos hemos estado preparando para la celebración diocesana del 50º Jubileo de Oro, que conmemora esta edición especial del *Catholic Herald*. Esta celebración nos ha ofrecido la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre nuestro rico pasado y nuestro dinámico presente, y mirar hacia nuestro alegre futuro — todo hecho posible por la gracia de Dios.

Comenzamos *Recordando con gratitud* todo lo que el Señor ha hecho al establecer y edificar esta Iglesia local. Especialmente, recordamos sus palabras en ese primer sacrificio eucarístico: “Hagan esto en conmemoración mía”.

En nuestro segundo año de preparación, con el tema *Regocijarse*, hicimos eco de las palabras de nuestra Santísima Madre María: “Mi alma se regocija en el Señor”. Buscamos seguir su ejemplo imitando su profunda confianza y fiel obediencia a Dios.

Finalmente, consideramos las palabras de Jesús: “He aquí, yo hago nuevas todas las cosas” y nos comprometimos a *Renovar* nuestros compromisos con nuestro Señor y a vivir y fortalecer nuestra fe católica a través de obras de evangelización y misericordia. ¡Qué hermosa manera de conmemorar este, nuestro aniversario del Jubileo de Oro!

En esta edición especial del *Catholic Herald*, por favor lean sobre aquellos primeros días en que Su Santidad el Papa Pablo VI fundó nuestra diócesis y los otros tres obispos que, junto conmigo, han tenido la bendición de servir como pastores. En estas páginas, aprenderán como Dios ha proporcionado una abundante provisión de seminaristas y sacerdotes a través de las fervientes oraciones de nuestros feligreses y comunidades religiosas.

Esta edición explora el crecimiento fiel de nuestras parroquias y el establecimiento de ministerios diocesanos que sirven a hombres y mujeres considerando sus vocaciones a la vida matrimonial, consagrada o religiosa; educar a nuestros niños; nutrir nuestras prósperas comunidades multiculturales, la juventud y los jóvenes; y fortalecer nuestro testimonio provida. También explora cómo servimos a los tesoros de nuestra Iglesia — nuestros prójimos pobres y vulnerables — a través del trabajo de Caridades Católicas, así como a través de nuestros ministerios diocesanos, parroquiales y asociados.

Por favor, únense a mí en agradecimiento a nuestro Señor por las muchas bendiciones que ha derramado sobre la Diócesis de Arlington en las últimas cinco décadas. Oren conmigo para que, con la gracia de Dios y por la intercesión de nuestra Santísima Madre, Santo Tomás Moro y Santa Isabel Ana Seton, podamos seguir creciendo en amor y santidad durante muchos años más.

Que Nuestro Señor Jesús los bendiga con su paz y que María nuestra Madre los cuide siempre.

Arlington's four bishops

By ANN M. AUGHERTON
Catholic Herald Managing Editor

As the Arlington diocese marks five decades, it's appropriate to take a look at

the four bishops who built, nurtured and served the Catholic community in Northern Virginia and beyond.

Pope Paul VI made the announcement June 4, 1974, that the Richmond diocese

would be split to form the new Arlington diocese.

An auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia and rector of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, Pa., became the founding

bishop. Fast forward four decades and another Philadelphia auxiliary and seminary rector would become the fourth bishop of the Arlington diocese.



Bishop Thomas J. Welsh 1974-83

Bishop Thomas J. Welsh was installed as Arlington's first bishop Aug. 13, 1974, setting in motion the reach of the Catholic Church throughout 21 counties in Northern Virginia. The new diocese consisted of 136,000 Catholics in 49 parishes and seven missions. Those numbers have changed dramatically in 50 years. There are now 433,401 registered Catholics in 70 parishes and six missions.

Bishop Welsh was an auxiliary bishop in Philadelphia and rector of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, Pa., June 4, 1974, when the diocese was formed.

Much of what the Arlington diocese is known for today is a direct result of the foundation he established. He welcomed women religious into the diocese including the Poor Clares, the Daughters of St.

Paul, the Dominican Sisters of Nashville and Our Lady's Missionaries of the Eucharist.

He saw the need to reach out to both Hispanic and Vietnamese immigrants who flocked to this area in the mid-1970s. He established the Office of Migration and Refugee Services in 1975. By the end of that year, more than 2,300 refugees had settled in the diocese. In 1979, Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Parish in Arlington was established as the first Vietnamese parish in the United States.

He established five other parishes: St. Stephen the Martyr in Middleburg, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Lake Ridge, Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison, St. Catherine of Siena in Great Falls, and St. John Neumann in Reston. He dedicated 11 new churches.

Bishop John R. Keating 1983-98

Father John R. Keating was vicar general and chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago when he was named Arlington's second bishop June 7, 1983. He served from Aug. 4, 1983, until his death during an Ad Limina trip to Rome March 22, 1998.

At the time of Bishop Keating's installation, the diocese had 188,000 Catholics in 57 parishes. Bishop Keating created six new parishes, dedicated more than 20 new churches and blessed seven new schools. The number of Catholic school students in the diocese increased from 12,818 to 16,632 during his tenure.

Bishop Keating issued six pastoral letters: "Consultation in the Par-

ish" in September 1984; "On Reverence for the Eucharist" in December 1988; "On Catholic Schools" in September 1990; "On Handing on the Faith" in October 1992; "On Morality and Conscience" in September 1994; and "Courage" in September 1996.

He ordained 84 men to the priesthood, including 13 in May 1996, still the largest ordination class in diocesan history. Many believe his legacy is his success in attracting young men to the priesthood. He appointed Father James R. Gould diocesan vocations director. Together they developed a program that was unique in the U.S.



Bishop Paul S. Loverde 1999-2016

Bishop Paul S. Loverde was appointed Arlington's third bishop Jan. 25, 1999, and installed at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More March 25. When he arrived in the diocese, there were 336,123 Catholics, 63 parishes and six missions.

He established four primary goals for the diocese: evangelization, unity, reconciliation and service. He helped the diocese focus on education, charity and addressing the multicultural needs of the area.

Bishop Loverde authored five pastoral letters: "Growing in Wisdom, Age and Grace"; "To Remember Well"; "Bought with a

Price"; "Fountain of Life, Fire of Love" and "Go Forth with Hearts on Fire."

He ordained 73 men to the priesthood and dedicated eight new churches.

As required, Bishop Loverde submitted his letter of resignation to the pope Sept. 3, 2015, on his 75th birthday. He was the longest serving bishop at the time of his retirement, having been bishop of Arlington for 17 years. Pope Francis accepted his resignation and appointed Bishop Michael F. Burbidge as the fourth bishop of Arlington Oct. 4, 2016. He was installed Dec. 16.



Bishop Michael F. Burbidge 2016-present

Following his Oct. 4, 2016, appointment as the fourth bishop of Arlington, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge was installed Dec. 6.

Prior to this, he served as administrative secretary to Philadelphia Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, rector of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and an auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia, overseeing the Office of the Vicar for Clergy and the communications office. He served as bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh, N.C., from 2006 to 2016.

When Bishop Burbidge came to the Arlington diocese, there were 69 parishes and five missions. He has established two missions and one parish.

During his time here, he has published two pastoral letters: "In Tongues All Can Hear: Communicating the Hope of Christ in Times of Trial" and "A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology."

Bishop Burbidge has served as USCCB chairman for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (2013-16), chairman of the USCCB Committee on Communications (2018-21), a member of the USCCB Administrative Committee (2018-21), a member of the USCCB Religious Liberty Committee (2018-21), and chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities (2022-present).

Timeline of the Arlington diocese

Take a glimpse into the life and progress of the church in the Arlington diocese over the last half-century.

By ANNA HARVEY
Catholic Herald Staff Writer

1974

August 13

Bishop Thomas J. Welsh is installed as the first bishop of Arlington at St. Thomas More Church in Arlington, which was named the new diocesan cathedral on the day of installation. At the time of its founding, the Arlington diocese had more than 136,000 Catholics, 60 diocesan and 33 religious priests, as well as 49 parishes and seven missions.



1975

May 10

Bishop Welsh ordains the first Arlington priest, Father Robert E. Avella.

1976

January 8

The first edition of the *Arlington Catholic Herald* is published.



The Spanish Apostolate — now the Office of Hispanic Ministry — is established to minister to the growing Hispanic population.

1983

June 7

Pope John Paul II appoints Father John R. Keating as the second bishop of Arlington, following Bishop Welsh's reassignment to Allentown, Pa. He was ordained a bishop and installed on the feast of St. John Vianney, patron of parish priests, Aug. 4.



1985

September 27

Paul VI High School's Fairfax campus is blessed by Bishop Keating.



1990

June 24

The first diocesan WorkCamp is held in Winchester. Five teens and one adult chaperone from Sacred Heart Church in Winchester attend.



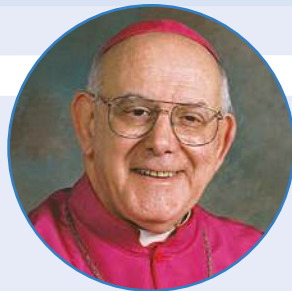
August 22

Catholic Distance University, founded by Bishop Welsh as the Catholic Home Study Institute, opens its doors.

1998

March 22

Bishop Keating dies of a heart attack in Rome during an "Ad Limina" visit with Pope John Paul II.



1999

January 25

Pope John Paul II appoints Bishop Paul S. Loverde as bishop of Arlington.

March 25

Bishop Loverde is installed as the third bishop of Arlington.

2002

May 12

The diocesan Gabriel Project is established on Mother's Day for mothers facing unexpected pregnancies.



2008

August 17

John Paul the Great Catholic High School in Potomac Shores is blessed.



2010

July 6

The St. Rose of Lima Priests' Retirement Villa opens in Annandale.

2016

October 4

Pope Francis appoints Bishop Michael F. Burbidge as bishop of Arlington.



December 6

Bishop Burbidge is installed as the fourth bishop of Arlington.



1977

July 7

Bishop Welsh installs the Poor Clare Nuns at the Poor Clare Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church in Alexandria at a Mass at St. Louis Church.

August

Dominican Sisters of Nashville arrive in Woodbridge to found St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School.

September 14

Newly founded Christendom College holds its first day of classes at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Triangle, later moving to Front Royal.



1979



August 19

Blessed Vietnamese Martyrs Church is dedicated in Arlington, becoming the country's first Vietnamese parish.



1991

July 10

Bishop Keating establishes a mission parish in Baníca, Dominican Republic.

1996



January

Bishop Antons Justs, former pastor of St. Mark Church in Vienna, is ordained a bishop of Jelgava, Latvia, by Pope John Paul II in Rome. He is the first Arlington priest ordained a bishop.

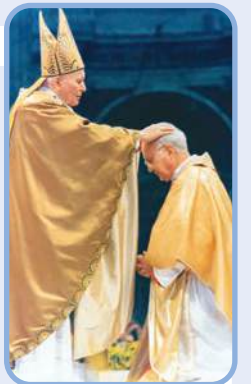


February 1

Bishop Keating establishes the diocese's first Korean parish, St. Paul Chung in Fairfax.

May 18

Bishop Keating celebrates the largest Mass of Ordination to the Priesthood in diocesan history — 13 men.



2003

March

Bishop Loverde forms an advisory review board of nine members to review allegations of abuse by clergy and to assist victims.

2005

September

Bishop Loverde and Richmond Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo establish the Virginia Catholic Conference.



October 18

The permanent diaconate program is reinstated in the Arlington diocese.

2006

December 7

Bishop Loverde releases his pastoral letter, "Bought with a Price," on combating pornography.

2020



August 27

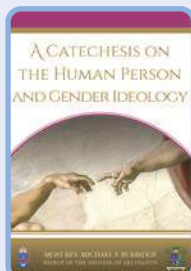
The construction of the new Paul VI High School in Chantilly is blessed and opens.



2021

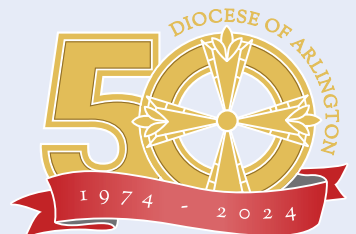
August 12

Bishop Burbidge releases a catechetical document, "A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology."



2022-24

The Arlington diocese begins a three-year celebration with the themes Remember, Rejoice and Renew, leading up to the 50th anniversary of diocese's founding in 2024.



Pieces of parish history are embedded in the new St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax, dedicated in 2020. A brick from the original 1860 church is part of the facade. A Celtic cross atop the church honors the Irish railroad workers who founded the parish. The crucifix is made from the wood of a tree that grew where the church now stands.

A booming, building diocese

Church building and rebuilding provides more space, functionality and traditional beauty.

By **ZOEY MARAIST**
For the Catholic Herald

For practically all its history, the Diocese of Arlington has been building new churches.

As the diocese has grown, new parishes have built churches and older parishes have rebuilt churches to accommodate more Massgoers. In recent years, many pastors and parishioners have opted to build in classic architectural styles and to commission or repurpose traditional, catechetical artwork.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, his predecessor Bishop Emeritus Paul S. Loverde and the team at the diocesan Office of Planning, Construction and Facilities accompanied congregations as they planned and prayed for new and improved houses of worship.

Read about a few of these churches.

Corpus Christi Church, Aldie

Fittingly, a sculpted crucifix positioned above the entrance of the limestone facade greets visitors to the steeple-topped Corpus Christi Church in Aldie.

Inside, the ceiling of the cruciform church is painted a vibrant blue. A 5-foot-tall European tabernacle from the 1800s houses the Eucharist. As in some other new parishes, including St. Patrick Church in Fredericksburg, an altar rail encircles the sanctuary.

Corpus Christi was established as a parish in 2014 and celebrated the ded-

ication of its first permanent house of worship in 2021. The parish sought the intercession of St. Joseph during the long fundraising and construction process. The church, designed by McCrery Architects and built by Forrester Construction, seats about 1,100.

The striking verticality of the church is one of the many elements designed to bring visitors a sense of the grandeur of God. "You're really leaving this world and entering into the sacred space that this church provides," said Father Michael G. Taylor, founding pastor.

Holy Trinity Church, Gainesville

Architecturally and spiritually, Holy Trinity Church in Gainesville is inspired by the triune God.

The Trinitarian symbol of three interwoven circles is etched on every pew. Trefoil arches frame the ceiling. Above Christ's dwelling place in the tabernacle are the words spoken by God the Father in the Gospel — "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him." Above those golden Latin words are triangular panes of white glass representing the cloud of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Trinity became a parish in 2001 and the community celebrated the dedication of its new church in 2008.

The church, described as Irish gothic-style, seats 1,200 people. It was built by the March-Westin Company and designed by O'Brien and Keane Architecture. "Jim O'Brien did a magnificent job (creating) many reflections of the blessed Trinity throughout the architecture," Father Francis J. Peffley, founding pastor, previously told the *Catholic Herald*. "We tried to make the church a living catechism."

St. Ambrose Church, Annandale

Decades after St. Ambrose Church in Annandale was built, the steep cost of needed repairs and a desire for a more functional worship space compelled the parish to demolish the old church and rebuild. The larger, traditional church was designed by Harrison Design Architects and built by Whitener & Jackson Inc. It was dedicated in 2023.

"The new church has really enhanced our celebrations of the sacraments," said Father Andrew J. Fisher, pastor. "There's better lighting, better acoustics, enhanced artwork, and the church design is more welcoming to those who are elderly or have special needs. That has certainly drawn more people in and allowed us to do even more celebrations in the church."

Special features include large 19th-century German-crafted stained-glass depictions of mysteries of the rosary, once housed in a now-closed church in Philadelphia. Stones from significant sites in the Holy Land are embedded in the center aisle, making each trip to the church a chance to walk on sacred ground.

St. John the Apostle, Leesburg

The 20th century saw the community of St. John the Apostle outgrow its house of worship — an 1868 building now called the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. In 1992, they began worshipping in the parish center. In 2012, they celebrated the dedication of their new church, across the street from the chapel. The 1,100-seat church was designed by Franck & Lohsen Architects and built by Whiting-Turner Contracting Company.

New churches constructed since the Arlington diocese was formed

1974: Holy Family, Dale City
1975: St. Timothy, Chantilly
1976: Our Lady of the Shenandoah (Mission), Basye
1980: Church of the Nativity, Burke
1981: St. Bernadette, Springfield; St. Catherine of Siena, Great Falls
1983: Precious Blood, Culpeper; St. Luke, McLean
1984: Good Shepherd, Alexandria; St. Francis of Assisi, Triangle; St. Mark, Vienna
1985: Our Lady of Angels, Woodbridge; Queen of Apostles, Alexandria
1986: Holy Martyrs of Vietnam, Arlington; St. Anthony (Mission), King George
1987: St. Joseph, Herndon
1988: Blessed Sacrament, Alexandria; St. Matthew, Spotsylvania
1989: Sacred Heart of Jesus, Winchester
1991: St. Clare of Assisi, Clifton
1992: Our Lady of the Blue Ridge, Madison; St. Francis de Sales, Purcellville; St. Peter, Washington
1993: St. Andrew the Apostle, Clifton
1994: Sacred Heart, Manassas; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Lake Ridge
1995: St. Paul Chung, Fairfax
1998: St. John the Baptist, Front Royal
2000: Christ the Redeemer, Sterling
2002: St. Bridget of Ireland, Berryville; St. Isidore the Farmer, Orange
2004: St. John Neumann, Reston
2005: St. Ann, Arlington; St. Veronica, Chantilly
2006: Our Lady of Hope, Potomac Falls; St. Raymond of Peñafort, Springfield
2008: Holy Trinity, Gainesville
2009: St. Theresa, Ashburn
2010: All Saints, Manassas
2012: St. John the Apostle, Leesburg
2018: St. Jude, Fredericksburg
2020: St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax
2021: Corpus Christi, Aldie; St. Patrick, Fredericksburg
2022: St. Paul (Mission), Hague
2023: St. Ambrose, Annandale
2024: St. Katharine Drexel (Mission), Haymarket

See **CHURCHES** page 7



CHURCHES

FROM PAGE 6

The focal point of the church is the altarpiece — an edifice with a niche for the tabernacle in the center of towering marble columns supporting statues of St. John the Apostle and Mary at the foot of Christ on the cross. The altarpiece was purchased from a closed parish, Sacred Heart Church in Vailsburg, N.J.

There is no comparison between worshipping in the parish center and the new church, said Kenneth Tschida, manager of facilities, grounds and cemetery. “I think the altar and the reredos are truly spectacular and the ability for us to find those furnishings was divine intervention,” he said.

“Every time I walked into the new church, I would find people in the church praying,” said Father John P. Mosimann, who was pastor at the time of the dedication. “This was, for me, a sign that we had accomplished our goal of building a warm, inviting, uplifting church that would raise the hearts and minds of all who enter to the Lord Jesus.”

St. Mary of Sorrows Church, Fairfax

In the late 1850s, Irish railroad workers built the first house of worship for St. Mary of Sorrows in Fairfax. More than 100 years later, the charming clapboard building — once used as a Civil War hospital — was too small to accommodate the growing number of parishioners. In 1979, the worship center was dedicated at a site about two miles away from the historic church.

While providing some 800 seats compared to the historic church’s 120, the facility was more an all-purpose room than church. Gradually, the parish needed more space and wanted a beautiful, dedicated place of worship.

In 2020, the community opened a 1,000-seat, brick cruciform church with a bright white interior and a splash of color above the altar — stained-glass windows depicting the Seven Sorrows of Mary. The construction was designed by McCrery Architects and built by

Coakley & Williams Construction. Corpus Christi Church in Aldie (above) was built in a traditional architectural style and dedicated in 2021. A trip to St. Ambrose Church in Annandale (above, right) approximates a visit to the Holy Land. A new chapel at Christendom College in Front Royal was dedicated in 2023.



Coakley & Williams Construction. “When we were building this new church,” said Father James S. Barkett, who was pastor at the time, “we were building upon the shoulders of those who came before us in the 1970s, all the way back to the 1860s, so that we would pass on a legacy in Virginia of Catholic believers.”

St. Paul Mission, Hague

Both the Israelites and parishioners of St. Paul Mission in Hague waited 40 years for a permanent dwelling place. The community’s original church, built in 1890 and renovated in 1924, was so damaged by termites it had to be demolished with a controlled burn in 1982. After worshipping for years in its parish hall, the mission celebrated in 2022 the dedication of “a beautiful country-style Catholic church,” as described by Father Andrew J. Heintz, the parochial vicar.

The white brick building with its bell tower and pale-yellow interior seats nearly 300. A shrine to the Infant of Prague and Blessed Karl of Austria hon-

ors the Austro-Hungarian immigrants who founded the mission, while shrines to Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Joselito Sanchez del Rio honor the present-day Mexican parishioners.

The church was designed by Harrison Design and built by Evans Brothers Construction.

Since the church’s dedication, Mass attendance has increased, more parishioners have registered and more weddings and quinceañeras have been held, said Father Heintz. “They were starved of beauty — we were in a blockhouse for 40 years, so I think that makes them even more appreciative,” he said. “It’s an amazing transformation.”

College Campus Ministry

Catholic campus ministry at colleges in the Arlington diocese has grown over the past 50 years. To keep up with expanded ministry to the Catholic student population, new places of worship have been built.

Most recently, a new Christ the King

Chapel was built at Christendom College in Front Royal and dedicated in 2023. Featuring a 116-foot-high Gothic tower and 114 stained-glass windows, the chapel seats 540.

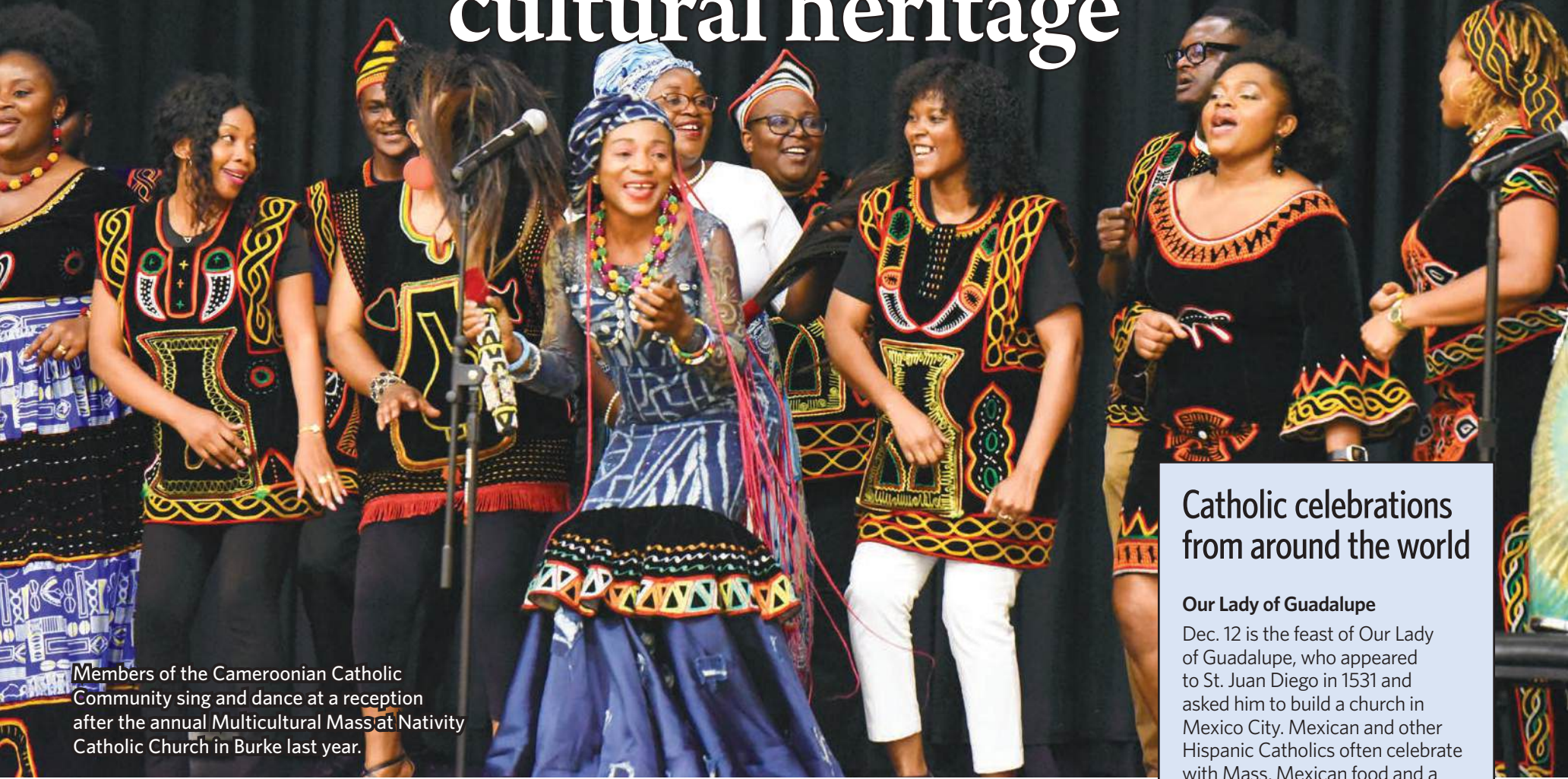
In 2021, the St. Dominic Salvo House expanded the reach of the campus ministry at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg.

St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel at George Mason University in Fairfax was dedicated in 1994 to replace an old farmhouse that had been used for worship. The gold cross atop the chapel is visible on the road from the main campus.

Father Bob Cilinski, the first full-time Catholic chaplain at GMU, once said, “Students tell me that when they see the cross, if they are having a good day, they know who to thank. When they are having a bad day, they know they are not alone.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston. Contributing to this story was Ann M. Aughterton, managing editor.

The riches of Catholic cultural heritage



Members of the Cameroonian Catholic Community sing and dance at a reception after the annual Multicultural Mass at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke last year.

Many multicultural communities have found a home in the diverse diocese.

By **ZOEY MARAIST**
For the Catholic Herald

As the Vietnamese refugees scrambled to find new homes and new jobs in their new country, they also yearned for a new place of worship. Though the Arlington diocese had many churches open to them, they longed for a spiritual home where they could speak their own language, continue their customs and worship God in the best way they knew.

They wanted a church with Vietnamese architecture, one named after their holy forefathers. So in 1979, with the encouragement of Bishop Thomas J. Welsh, the first Vietnamese parish was established in the United States — Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Church in Arlington.

Over the decades, the diocese has welcomed numerous immigrant groups and cultural communities and helped them find a home here. These include Our Lady of La Vang Mission in Chantilly for Vietnamese Catholics, St. Paul Chung Church in Fairfax for Korean Catholics and a growing number of Hispanic Catholics. The Office of Multicultural Ministries, founded in 2004 by Bishop Paul S. Loverde, supports Filipino, Cameroonian, Ghanaian, Eritrean, Albanian, Polish, Irish, Chinese, Indian and Black Catholic communities, among others. The Advisory Council on Racism,



Members of the Harangso Korean Fan Dance group perform at a reception after the annual Multicultural Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Vienna in 2022.

founded in 2020, advises Bishop Michael F. Burbidge on identifying practical ways to address racism.

“Many of the communities are looking for locations to gather, priests to administer the sacraments (particularly offering Mass in their native language), to celebrate cultural traditions, honor saints from their homelands and more,” said Bridget Wilson, director of multicultural ministries. “So we do everything from finding locations and priests to the smaller details like creating programs and giving out prayer cards.” Additionally, each year Bishop Burbidge celebrates the Mass for Multicultural Communities where representatives from the groups

come together for prayer, cultural food and performances.

Care for Hispanic Catholics in Northern Virginia predates the 1974 establishment of the Arlington diocese, said Joel de Loera, director of the Office for Hispanic Ministry. At the start, the office helped coordinate Spanish-language Masses, Bible studies and English as a Second Language classes. Since then, the Hispanic population has only grown.

“During the civil war in El Salvador in the '80s and all over Central America and South America, there was a lot of war, a lot of violence, so we started seeing this

See **MULTICULTURAL** page 9

Catholic celebrations from around the world

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Dec. 12 is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared to St. Juan Diego in 1531 and asked him to build a church in Mexico City. Mexican and other Hispanic Catholics often celebrate with Mass, Mexican food and a mariachi band.

Simbang Gabi

Simbang Gabi is the Filipino tradition of attending a novena of Masses in the nine days leading up to Christmas. Mass often is followed by a feast of Filipino foods.

Lunar New Year

The Our Lady of La Vang Mission hosts a weekendlong celebration of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year as a fundraiser for their church every year. The event has carnival games, vendors selling Asian drinks, meals and desserts, lion dance performances, and Sunday Mass.

Mass in Observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Black Catholics and others from around the diocese gather for a special Mass celebrated near Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Oftentimes members of African American ministries such as the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary dress in uniform and music is provided by a Gospel choir.

Lord of Miracles

Peruvian Catholics in the diocese hold processions in October in honor of the Lord of Miracles, a miraculous image of Christ. The celebration includes carrying an image of the Lord of Miracles, music, dance and prayer.



FILE
Members of the Ladies Auxiliary of St. Peter Claver pray at a Mass in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day Jan. 14 at St. John Neumann Church in Reston. Children (below) watch a lion dance at a Vietnamese Lunar New Year festival in January.



MULTICULTURAL

FROM PAGE 8

explosion of migration to this area,” said de Loera. “There was a bigger need to provide more services to the Hispanic community.”

Today, the diocese has many Spanish-speaking priests. Thirty-six of the 76 diocesan parishes/missions have at least one Spanish Mass on weekends. The office now focuses on bigger events, such as quinceañera and marriage preparation retreats and a Mass and festival in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Its Institute of Pastoral Formation offers theology classes to better equip some 500 catechists and other Hispanic leaders each year. Its staff translates diocesan messages into Spanish and supports lay movements such as Cursillo and the Renovación Carismática Católica.

“One of the traits that we have here in the diocese is that we are very active — there’s so much desire from many of our leaders to go out and bring more people to Christ,” said de Loera. “I would say we’re one of the most dynamic Hispanic communities in the U.S.”

Ministering to Catholics through their culture is impactful, said Wilson. “Our faith and our cultural identity are tethered so close to each other, and usually through one you can find richness in the other,” she said. “For example, the Vietnamese Catholics hold a huge TET Festival for the Lunar New Year. So many non-Catholic Vietnamese attend the event because they want to celebrate. Now they are being exposed to the work of Catholics, to the Mass, in ways they may not have before, all because of culture.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

How does your diocesan Catholic cultural community help you stay close to God?

Sandra Sediles

A Nicaraguan member of the Hispanic community at St. John Bosco Church in Woodstock

“The existence of a pastor who speaks Spanish helped me to integrate when I arrived and to seek an active life in the sacraments. The Hispanic Apostolate and the Institute of Pastoral Formation (are) an important way the diocese offers us the opportunity to know, learn, grow, and then serve our community — nourishing our faith, our communion with the church and our brothers and sisters.”

Marlene Orellana

A Salvadoran member of Our Lady of Angels Church in Woodbridge

“Our Catholic Hispanic community is very joyful and full of life. Participating in processions honoring a patron saint, Stations of the Cross and community meetings, apart from getting to know each other better, helps me to understand that I do not have a solitary life but on the contrary, a life of fraternity, a group of people where I receive the abundant grace of God poured out in his son Jesus Christ.”

Gilbert Berinyuy

A member of St. William of York Church in Stafford and of the Cameroon Catholic Community based at St. Mark Church in Vienna

“My Catholic cultural community celebrates Mass in our cultural way and organizes prayer sessions to (allow us to) regularly spend time in prayer and meditation. (It’s) a powerful way to connect with God and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. During these sessions, we consistently study and apply God’s word, which inspires me to be closer to him. Lastly, my community does little things with great love, which motivates me to stay closer to God.”

Merita McCormack

A member of St. John the Apostle Church in Leesburg and of the Albanian community:

“Growing up, family and community were integral parts of our lives. The expression ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ was so true. We grew up in the same place, never moved too far away and supported each other through thick and thin during the most difficult time (of) communism. “That experience of love, here in the Arlington diocese, is replicated with our compatriots joining the community and being

warmly welcomed in the diocese. The friendships formed within the community, the desire of our members and non-Christian friends to contribute to Masses, events, and causes and to help others, the joy we see on happy occasions, the strength people get and manifest on sad occasions, are all testimony to being closer to God. Happy 50th birthday, Diocese of Arlington. Thank you for making room for us Albanians.”

Christian Bentley

A member of the Black Catholic cultural community at St. Joseph Church in Alexandria

“The Black Catholic cultural community in the Arlington diocese helps me stay close to God by enriching my spirituality and deepening my prayer life through its vibrant expressions of faith. The dynamic music and powerful preaching bring joy and energy to worship, making each Mass a profound celebration of God’s presence. This community also provides a safe and supportive space to discuss the challenges of discrimination, offering comfort, and understanding while keeping me grounded in Catholic hope and forgiveness.”

Teresa Reyes

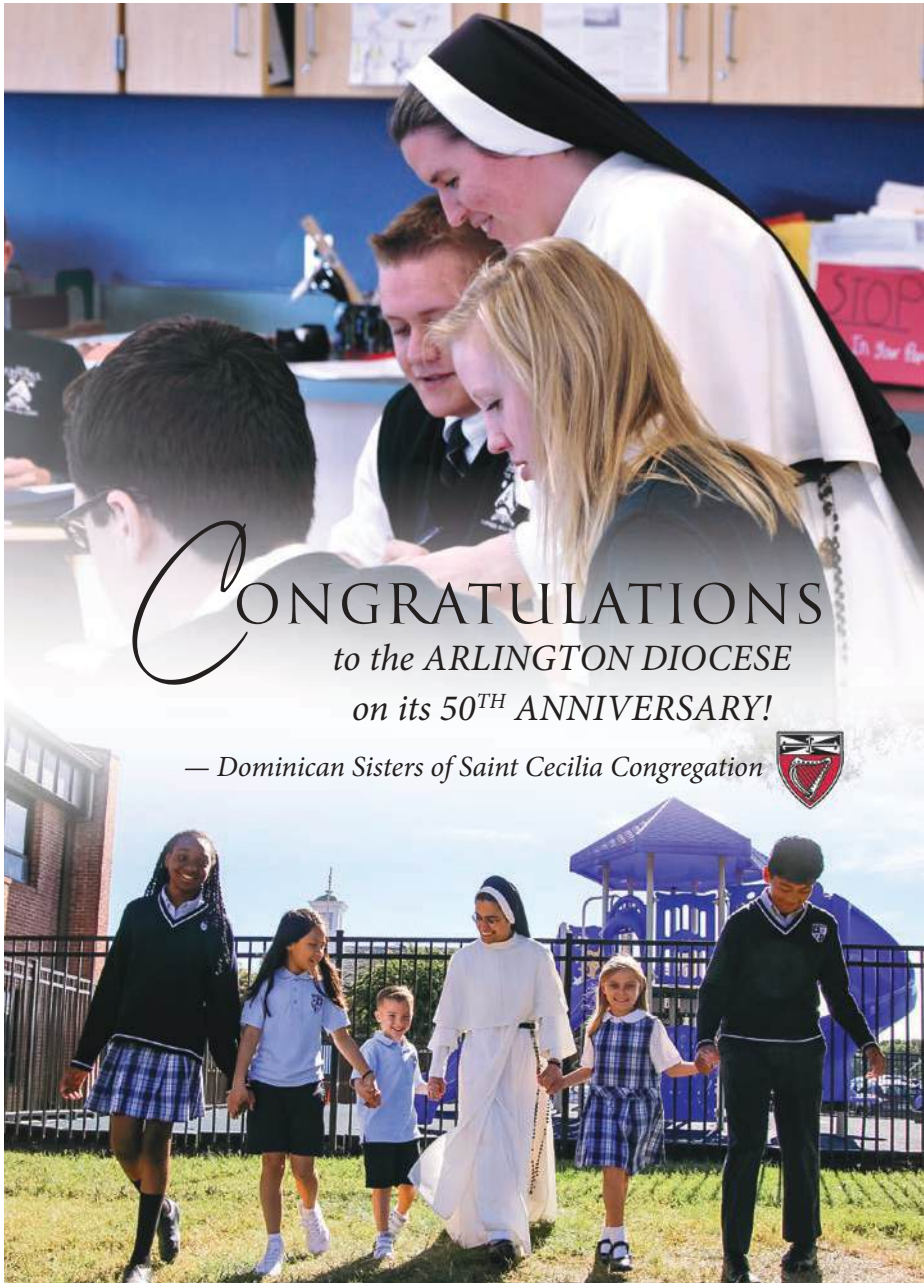
A Bolivian member of the Hispanic community at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Arlington

“I have been out of my country for 47 years, and having a community where I can communicate in the same language and have the same cultural background significantly helped me to continue growing in the love of God without losing my own culture. I enjoy so much being around people who express the love (of) God almost the same way that it was in my country.”

Yoonhee Kim

A member of St. Paul Chung Church in Fairfax

“Since 1986, St. Paul Chung’s Korean Catholic Community in Northern Virginia has been divided into 13 districts, consisting of 22 groups, who meet regularly once a month as small family to contemplate the Gospel and share fellowship. In addition, St. Paul Chung continues to nurture spiritual groups such as the Legion of Mary, Cursillo and Holy Spirit Prayer Group. Other spiritual groups are cooperating with Korean Catholic organizations in the east-central region of the United States to promote spiritual faith through religious meetings, education and prayer worshipping.”



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to the ARLINGTON DIOCESE
on its 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

— Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation



Congratulations
to the
DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
On their 50 Years of
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Most Reverend Keith J. Chylinski, Rector
and the entire
Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary community
wish to congratulate the
Diocese of Arlington
on celebrating its Golden Jubilee!

Decades of fostering vocations

The Arlington diocese continues to be fertile ground for priests.

By ZOEY MARAIST
For the Catholic Herald

When Father Jonathan R. Fioramonti reflects on the road that led him to the priesthood, he thinks about his parents.

Not only did they share the love of Christ with him, but they intentionally surrounded him with teachers, coaches and classmates who fostered his relationship with God. “Families encourage each other and it becomes this whirlpool of creating great communities that foster vocations, not just to priesthood and religious life but to holy marriages,” said Father Fioramonti, chaplain of St. Paul VI Catholic High School in Chantilly.

“For 50 years, Arlington has been a fertile ground for priestly vocations thanks to a number of factors, including strong, faithful families,” said Father Michael C. Isenberg, director of the Office of Vocations. Other influences include the example of good priests, the vitality of Northern Virginia, strong Catholic schools, vocation ministries and, above all, the work of the Holy Spirit.

Diocesan efforts

Though the number of diocesan and religious priests is decreasing nationwide, the Arlington diocese is bucking the downward trend. According to the Catholic organization Vocation Ministry, dioceses of Arlington’s size — 300,000-750,000 Catholics — often have a difficult time maintaining their priestly ranks. But of the 41 U.S. dioceses of this size in 2022, Arlington is one of eight dioceses ordaining priests at or above replacement level.

Vocation Ministry posits that maintaining high vocations numbers matters because priests beget more priests — something Father Isenberg has witnessed as well. He noted that in a yearly survey conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, soon-to-be ordained priests overwhelmingly cite the importance of their parish priest inviting them to consider the priesthood. “I think the priestly influence has been big here,” he said. “If you’re inviting someone to something that doesn’t look appealing, they’re not going to want to do it. We have joyful priests.”

From the beginning of the diocese, the priests and staffers at the Office of Vocations have worked to recruit and nurture

future priests. Father Richard J. Ley, the first vocations director, recalled that Bishop Thomas J. Welsh limited the number of seminaries Arlington seminarians could attend in an effort to bolster fraternity. “Part of the seminary experience is the friendships you establish in the seminary (that) continue through the rest of the priesthood,” he said. “If you don’t have anybody that you establish these relationships with early on, you tend to not have any close relationship with other priests after you’re ordained.”

Father Ley, who is now retired, also believes the diocese’s reputation helped attract strong candidates for the priesthood. “I’m very happy that we are doing so well with vocations,” he said. “I think it’s because we took a hard line at the beginning and stated clearly where we stand on issues in the church. It has paid off to attract good, solid vocations. If you’re clear about who you are, people are happy to join you.”

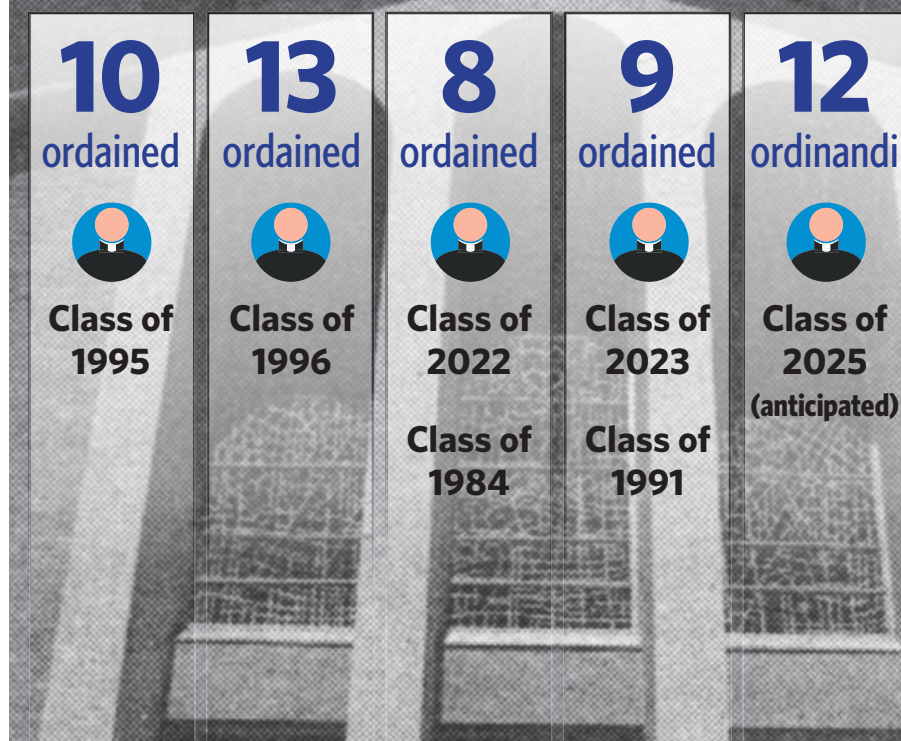
Over the years, the diocese started a number of discernment events, including retreats, seminary visits, an annual Mass for Vocations and two weeklong camps for high schoolers — Quo Vadis for boys and Fiat for girls. Members of the St. Therese Vocation Society and the Serra Club support vocations by praying for the diocese’s men and women in formation. Many local Catholic schools display photos of alumni priests and religious, helping bring visibility to vocations.

During Father J.D. Jaffe’s time in the Office of Vocations (2012-18), he worked to foster vocations within the diocese’s many cultural groups such as the Vietnamese and Hispanic communities. Father Jaffe, now pastor of Christ the Redeemer Church in Sterling, also continued the work of fostering vocations to the religious life. “One of the things I truly believe is that as women discern the religious life it becomes an inspiration for men to discern the priesthood, so it is really good when we help a whole family — brothers and sisters — be open to the possibility of religious life,” he said.

He hopes in the next 50 years that the diocese will not only maintain but exceed the current number of priests. “We’re doing really great with vocations but there’s a lot more that could still be done,” he said.

BIGGEST ORDINATION CLASSES

OVER THE YEARS



FILE

Bishop John R. Keating (center) and other officials pose for a photo outside the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington with the 13 men ordained priests in 1996.

Hearing the call

Father Joseph D. Bergida and his family moved to the Arlington diocese because of his father’s job, but he believes the Catholic community is the reason they stayed. “My dad is from the West Coast originally, my mom is from the Midwest, but I think they really found in Virginia a home because of the church,” said Father Bergida, parochial vicar of St. Raymond of Peñafort in Springfield.

Getting to know the priests of the diocese as he grew up played a big role in him hearing the call to the priesthood. “Seeing the priests’ human side and their real love for God in the way they celebrated Mass and the way they interacted with the youth — I remember a snowball fight there at St. Timothy (Church in Chantilly) where the priest was ping-pong with snowballs, and it was great,” he said.

During many family vacations and gatherings, Father John Paul Heisler, parochial vicar of St. James Church in Falls Church, had the priestly example of his uncle, Father John F. Heisler, parochial vicar of St. Michael Church in Annandale.

But others helped him discern his vocation, too. “Father Chris Pollard (pastor of St. John the Beloved Church in McLean) had a really big impact on me,” he said. “I think I was at a really impressionable age when my family went through a crisis — my sister got hit by a car. He was constantly present, always over at our home.”

During high school, Father Heisler attended Quo Vadis, which was formative for his prayer life. After years of homeschooling, he attended Christendom College in Front Royal, where he and several peers, including Father Fioramonti, further discerned a call to the priesthood.

Though he’s grateful for institutions and programs that provide discerning-friendly environments, he’s found that it’s ultimately in prayer that each man and woman finds their vocation. “The space of listening, of being in silence, of going to prayer — those places (are) where vocations come from,” he said.

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

Diocese responds to serve Hispanic Catholics

More Spanish-speaking priests and Masses in Spanish are part of the response to explosive Hispanic growth.

By **JIMHALE**
Catholic Herald Staff Writer

When Irish, Italian, German, and Polish immigrants came to America in the 19th and early 20th centuries, they brought their priests with them. They settled in established Catholic communities with strong ethnic identities.

It's a different story for Hispanic immigrants. "The Latinos come to the U.S. with no priests," said Father Juan Puigbó, pastor of St. Leo the Great Church in Fairfax. "So I go to a church and the pastor doesn't understand me. Not only my language, but me as a person. What Latinos are facing is a huge challenge. They're often sheep without a shepherd."

Hispanic growth is hard to quantify, as many immigrants are reluctant to register in their parishes. But the diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry estimates that Hispanics comprise at least half of the Catholic population in the diocese and a solid majority of those under the age of 18.

"The spark of hope is that most of those who are being ordained now know Spanish," said Father Puigbó, who led an Easter retreat for the 12 newly ordained deacons in the diocese. "The percentage of seminarians who can communicate in Spanish is 80 percent."

Spanish language training is a requirement for seminarians. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge expects every man who's ordained a priest will have studied two years of Spanish, according to Father Michael C. Isenberg, diocesan vocations director. Seminarians also participate in an eight-week Spanish immersion program in Antigua, Guatemala, meeting one-on-one with a Spanish tutor for five hours a day.

While it takes time for non-Hispanic seminarians to become conversational in Spanish, they quickly come to appreciate Hispanic culture, Father Isenberg said. "What they're sensing is that amongst Hispanics, there is a greater sense of community," he said. "That's attractive to seminarians."

But the need for more Hispanic priests is urgent. "It's an issue that bishops all around the country are addressing," said Joel de Loera, diocesan director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry. "Young adults in the Hispanic community are hard to reach," he said, adding that one of the main challenges comes from within Hispanic culture.

"Hispanic parents love their priests, but often see the priesthood as distant and something unattainable for their children," said de Loera. "Many immigrant



COURTESY

St. Anthony of Padua Church in Falls Church hosts a "Via Crucis en Vivo" (living Stations of the Cross) before Easter this year.

parents came to the U.S. so that their children could find better professional opportunities. They wish for them to become lawyers, doctors and businessmen. In many Latin American countries, it is much easier to become a priest than attend college or have a successful career. It is also common for many of these parents to have strong desires to have grandchildren, which can make them less receptive to the idea of their children entering the priesthood or religious life."

Despite the challenges, Hispanic evangelism is thriving in many diocesan parishes. At this year's Rite of Election ceremony for already baptized adults entering into full communion with the church, St. Anthony of Padua Church in Falls Church had 18, the highest number in the diocese. Sixteen of them were Hispanic.

"We've been building a culture of welcoming and meeting people where they are. Visitors at the door are personally greeted. Phone calls are promptly returned," said Father Matthew H. Zuberbueler, pastor of St. Anthony. "Newcomers soon feel a connection to a group or parishioner who invited them. Our catechetical teams are joyful evangelists and we never turn anyone away or make them wait for too long."

At St. Leo, Father Puigbó pastors a congregation of more than 9,000. Eighteen percent are Hispanic. The only Latin American country he can think of that's not represented is Paraguay.

"(Hispanics) don't have the theological formation that the Anglo community has," he said. "But their spiritual understanding is better and they understand the need to have a commitment to a church. They say, 'Father, how can I help you? I don't have money, but I can fix all those kneelers.' There's a readiness to

help. It's a beautiful lesson we can receive from this community."

All three priests at Winchester's Sacred Heart of Jesus Church offer Mass in Spanish. Hispanic spiritual formation is offered through Sacred Heart's San Andres School of Evangelization.

"This ministry is made up of a large community eager for acceptance, information, love and who need to receive the love of God," said Ana Fitzpatrick, Hispanic ministry coordinator at Sacred Heart. "Hispanics are immensely generous with the church. Just invite them and they will fill you with love."

The model of ministry at St. Anthony, which has two Sunday Masses in Spanish, is intentional and personal, with a focus on prayer groups. "These groups offer the gift of a more personal support in living the faith by means of the smaller community of believers striving together, accompanying each other," said Father Zuberbueler. "We always stress the necessity of connecting what they learn in catechesis with what they live day to day."

Thirty-six of the 76 diocesan parishes/

missions have at least one Spanish Mass on weekends. "One can say, 'Why don't they learn English?' It is not our task to teach them English," said Father Puigbó. "These people are working two or three jobs, so many won't learn English. That's a fact. We're here to evangelize regardless of where they come from."

Parish picnics at St. Leo's bring people of all races and many languages together. "What I see here is the work of the Spirit," said Father Puigbó. "The ability of all these people coming together to make a community is impressive. It isn't just a table of Latinos. They are right next to people from Cameroon, Uganda or Kenya. It's so beautiful."

Demographics of the diocese have undergone drastic change in 50 years, and more change is certain. "One thing I see is that from the diocesan offices, to parishes, there is a huge commitment and desire to serve the church as it is," said Father Puigbó.

Hale can be reached at Jim.Hale@catholicaherald.com.

Diocesan jubilee documentary

A special documentary on the 50-year history of the Arlington diocese will be released Sept. 6. It includes interviews with Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, priests, religious and lay faithful.

Watch the video

Go to bit.ly/3Xbp3Ep.





FILE
Cloistered Dominican nuns pray at St. Dominic's Monastery in Linden.

FILE
Friends of Poor Clare Sr. Mary Damian take a selfie with her, the abbess and vocations director in the monastery in 2016.

Women religious remind a 'forgetful' world of God

By **KIMBERLEY HEATHERINGTON**
For the Catholic Herald

Tucked away within the Diocese of Arlington are two “powerhouses of prayer” — monasteries of cloistered nuns praying day and night, 365 days a year, for the diocese and the world.

They are the Poor Clare Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church in Alexandria and the Dominican nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery in Linden.

In an era when constant connectivity, incessant busyness and relentless social media activity are routine, the contemplative work of these nuns may seem an increasingly radical vocation.

But it's a vocation that has both temporal and eternal consequences.

“In a world that's so forgetful of God, a monastery of cloistered nuns is a living reminder of the fact that God exists,” said Dominican Sister Mary Grace of St. Dominic's Monastery. “The hidden life of cloistered nuns silently but resonantly proclaims the truth that in God alone is true happiness to be found.”

It's a truth, the nuns feel, that can be overlooked.

“It's so easy for our world — and even members of our church — to forget this,” Sister Mary Grace reflected. “Far from being outdated, the life of these women — devoted exclusively to God

— is more relevant than ever.”

Contemplative life retains its attraction; the community of 12 has a sister soon to make solemn profession and young women who could possibly enter soon.

Their bucolic Linden location — to which they moved from nearby Washington in 2008, with help from friends in the Arlington diocese — is ideally suited to the nuns' needs, and to eventual expansion, including a permanent chapel.

“In the over 100 years of this community's existence, we've been waiting for this completion of our dreams,” Dominican Sister Mary Joseph said. “Our community has been in various locations throughout the country looking for a place where we could live the contemplative life to its full. So when we see this chapel built, it's going to be a major landmark for our community.”

Visitors are invited to pray with them and can view the community's schedule on the nuns' website.

Reflecting on the diocese's first 50 years, Sister Mary Grace said the support of its faithful is “a very tangible presence. Our bishop, the priests and the faithful here do support and love us; we're very aware of that. We are truly blessed and deeply grateful to be in this diocese.”

And their next 50 years?

“We're building to hopefully last for several centuries,” said Sister Mary Grace.

The Poor Clares at the Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church date their own founding almost to the creation of the Arlington diocese itself.

Poor Clare Mother Miriam, abbess of the community of 15 women, explained that when the diocese was erected in 1974, its first prelate — Bishop Thomas J. Welsh — wanted contemplative sisters resident in the diocese to pray for a variety of intentions.

In 1976, a community of Poor Clares in Roswell, N.M., were inclined to make a new foundation. Learning of it, Bishop Welsh wrote them — then visited to formally ask their discernment and offer Mass.

“In his homily he said, ‘Let us pray that the Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church will become a reality,’” Mother Miriam recalled. “Well, that was the name Mother had already decided on for our monastery.”

Whether holy coincidence or the keen spiritual attunement of their abbess, the community agreed. Six sisters were selected, as was their foundation day — July 7, 1977.

Since then, “We are very much a community that has at its heart the welfare of the diocese,” Mother Miriam said. Visitors can attend daily Mass at the monastery.

She also shared the kinship felt with their non-cloistered counterparts who serve throughout the diocese.

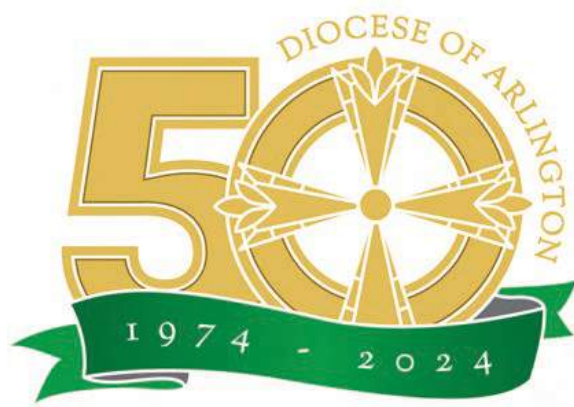
For half a century, these orders — including the Adorers of the Holy Cross; Benedictine Sisters of Virginia; Daughters of St. Paul; Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia; Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist; Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; Handmaids of Reparation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; Poor Sisters of St. Joseph (Buenos Aires); Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary; Sisters Adorers of the Holy Cross; Sisters of Our Lady of La Salette; Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and Sisters of St. Joseph (Chestnut Hill, Pa.) — have taught school and cared for children, served the poor and marginalized, ministered to the hospitalized, staffed parishes and shared the Gospel.

“The other sisters have always been very supportive of us,” Mother Miriam noted.

Perhaps unlike those sisters “in the world,” she senses that the Poor Clares' cloistered life might appear a mystery from outside the monastery walls.

“Sometimes people cannot understand why a person would make this a total life focus,” said Mother Miriam. “But there's this beautiful quotation that we love: ‘Fixing her gaze upon Christ, she wholly clings to the Lord.’ And that's the reason. He is the reason.”

Heatherington is a freelancer in Alexandria.



FOUR DIOCESAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS ONE MISSION

We are grateful to the Diocese of Arlington for 50 years of faith, leadership and joy. Congratulations on the Golden Jubilee!

REMEMBER

REJOICE

RENEW



Bishop O'Connell
1957



Bishop Ireton
1964



Paul VI
1983



John Paul the Great
2008

Mind, body and soul

For decades, diocesan Catholic schools have educated students in the faith.

By ZOEY MARAIST
For the Catholic Herald

When Laura Matheny thinks back to her parochial school days, what comes to mind is the experience of sitting in church and feeling the presence of God. “Going to Catholic school, you’re so surrounded by and so immersed in the faith,” she recalled.

Catholic schools have the unique ability to not only educate, but to share the love of God. Catholic schools in the Arlington diocese have taught the whole person — mind, body and soul — for more than 50 years. From principals and teachers to coaches and cafeteria staffers, the efforts of many have made a huge impact on the lives of young people.

“The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Arlington have been foundational elements of the growth and success of the diocese,” said Joseph Vorbach, diocesan school superintendent. “They have enriched parish life around the diocese, produced hundreds of priestly and religious life vocations, inspired hundreds of future teachers and given thousands of young people a priceless opportunity to grow in faith and wisdom, moving toward productive lives as Catholic citizens in Northern Virginia and around the world.”

Laura, who attended St. James School in Falls Church, went on to marry Patrick Matheny, the son of her third-grade teacher and a fellow St. James graduate. The Mathenys wanted a similar Catholic school experience for their own children, Daniel and Natalie, so they sent them to St. Leo the Great Catholic School in Fairfax and then St. Paul VI Catholic High School, now located in Chantilly. Patrick is grateful for the close-knit community he and his children found at Catholic schools. “I just cherish the times at St. James,” he said.

Growing schools

Today, the diocese educates more than 17,000 students at its four diocesan high schools and 37 parochial and regional schools. Other children attend the numerous preschools and diocesan-affiliated Catholic schools.

More than 70 percent of the schools have been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Some diocesan schools have specialties, such as Siena Academy in Great Falls, which offers a Montessori education, or St. Ambrose School in Annandale, which has a dual-language Spanish immersion program. About 18 percent of students enrolled in diocesan schools

are Hispanic. For the 2023-24 school year, more than \$7.5 million in diocesan financial aid was awarded.

The oldest running Catholic school in the diocese is the Basilica School of St. Mary in Alexandria. It was founded in 1869 as a free parish school run by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. According to the school history, the building was warmed by a pot-bellied stove, plumbing was outdoors and recess shut down the nearby street so that students could play.

The newest diocesan school is St. John Paul the Great Catholic High School in Potomac Shores, which was founded in 2008. The school is staffed by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia and is known for its four-year bioethics curriculum as well as its house system, which fosters community and school spirit.

Nineteen diocesan schools, including all four high schools, have enrolled children with intellectual disabilities. Efforts to serve them originally kicked off when dedicated Paul VI families helped launch the Options program in 1998. In addition to receiving specialized instruction, Options students attend general classes accompanied by volunteer students known as peer mentors. Several graduates of Options and similar programs now work in Arlington Catholic schools and in the chancery.

Touching lives

Alumni of Catholic schools often share their appreciation not only for the education they received, but the relationships they made along the way. Laura Matheny, for example, was thrilled last year to find herself reunited with a beloved teacher when St. James celebrated the 100th anniversary of the presence of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

“I can’t tell you the joy that I felt to see (my teacher) again. She just really embodied everything that is good,” said Laura. “Seventh and eighth grade is such a vulnerable and difficult time, and to have a teacher like that was just invaluable.”

Father Peter J. St. George first attended St. Theresa School in Ashburn before going to Bishop O’Connell High School in Arlington. There, he ran track, played soccer, joined the pro-life club and helped plan Superdance, the all-night fundraiser for a cure to cystic fibrosis. He loved the ability to integrate his faith into his daily life, including his schoolwork.

“I wrote on ‘Les Misérables’ and Jean Valjean’s redemption through suffering, Flannery O’Connor and her depiction of



FILE

Students at St. Ann’s School in Arlington start their day with prayer.

the disruptiveness of grace, and Beowulf as a Christological hero,” he said. “To be able to do an English research paper, which had strong theological overtones, was really delightful for me.”

But Father St. George, now parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria, feels the greatest fruit of his time at O’Connell was his friendship with Father Robert C. Renner. “We were really close friends all through high school, then independently discerned a vocation to the priesthood and were ordained together in 2022,” he said. “So, that friendship, which began for us on the soccer pitch the summer before ninth grade, has continued. We’re not just high school buddies — we’re brother priests.”

No matter where they moved, Peggy Jensen’s parents always made sure their new home was within walking distance of a Catholic school. It’s how the military family ended up less than a mile from St. Rita School in Alexandria.

Her future husband, Rick Jensen, also attended St. Rita before moving on to Bishop Ireton High School in Alexandria. Peggy attended Ireton’s then sister school, St. Mary’s Academy, before the academy closed and Ireton became coed.

Peggy treasures the good, moral example of her teachers at St. Mary. Rick values the spirit of service modeled at Ireton. Both of them made lifelong friends at school, and it was through friends that the couple first met. They sent their own children, Kate and Christopher, to the Basilica School of St. Mary then to Ireton. Now their oldest grandson, Will, is in kindergarten at St. Mary. “We are so excited,” said Peggy.

Brandon and Sarah Perroots first played together while waiting for their older siblings to be released from St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School in Woodbridge. Then they started kindergarten at Aquinas, where now both of their mothers work. In high school at John Paul the Great, they went to every homecoming dance and prom together. Though they attended different universities, they continued dating and were married two years after college graduation.

“I think going to Catholic school, one of

the biggest things is being around people who have similar beliefs, and it becomes a whole community,” said Sarah. “We got a really well-rounded education and obviously it brought us together so we’re thankful for that as well.”

Theirs wasn’t the only relationship that blossomed at Aquinas. “My best friend who was actually the maid of honor in my wedding, we became friends in kindergarten, we were each other’s first sleepover,” said Sarah. “In eighth grade, she decided to get baptized and confirmed. So, at one of the school Masses she did that and my mom was her sponsor. So, we say we’re godsisters.”

Passing it on

In some ways, Dave Conroy has never left Catholic school. He was part of the first graduating class at Paul VI, taught at St. Rita after graduating college and now is in his 28th year as principal of All Saints Catholic School in Manassas. “I like an academic setting and I love working in an environment of faith,” he said.

Over the years, Conroy has seen the opportunity for students to attend diocesan Catholic schools grow with the opening of new schools and the launch of initiatives such as the Diocesan Scholarship Foundation. He’s seen the Office of Catholic Schools help schools strengthen Catholic identity, take new approaches to curriculum and make inclusion of students with disabilities a priority.

“Catholic schools are a beacon of hope for young people,” he said. “This is such a challenging time in society and young people are bombarded by all sorts of messages, in many cases, which are counter to what we teach and what we believe. But Catholic schools provide a safe environment for students, one that is committed to their faith formation, one that supports them emotionally and provides academic rigor.

“It’s the hope for our future that these children, despite all the challenges that are out there, are hearing the truth of Jesus Christ.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

Fifty years for a multifaceted ministry

Catholic Charities continues to find new ways to serve the poor and vulnerable in the diocese.

By ZOEY MARAIST
For the Catholic Herald

When Crystal Woodson made the difficult decision to place her daughter for adoption, she turned to diocesan Catholic Charities.

They helped her find an adoptive family that goes to church each Sunday, eats meals together, is financially stable and, above all, deeply loves her child. “They’re like angels,” Woodson said. “Every picture they send me she’s smiling, she’s happy. I think I made the best decision.”

Though it’s been months since the adoption, Catholic Charities is still walking alongside Woodson as she works to better her life for herself and her other child. She received a car through the Catholic Charities Car Ministry. They helped pay her rent and her nursing entrance exam fee. “I meet with the counselor weekly, and I can meet with them as long as I need to,” she said. “I feel like they go over and beyond for me.”

Diocesan Catholic Charities staff and volunteers strive not only to serve those in need, but to do so in a way that shows Christ’s compassion and honors the client’s God-given dignity, said Stephen Carattini, president and CEO.

“We don’t want to be just another service provider,” he said. “We are already looking at them as our brothers and sisters in Christ when they come to us. We’re going to love them.”

For more than 50 years, Catholic Charities has served those in need throughout the diocese. Though the ministry started small, as the needs grew, so did Catholic Charities. Today, more than \$8.2 million in support was provided to some 27,000 men, women and children in fiscal year 2022-23 alone.

“Bishop (Paul S.) Loverde would always say that Catholic Charities is the heart of the diocese,” said Father Robert C. Cilinski, episcopal vicar for charitable works and pastor of Nativity Catholic Church in Burke. “Catholic Charities has helped us live out the corporal works of mercy. It’s made our diocese a place of great love.”

Likewise, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge considers it an extension of his ministry and he visited Catholic Charities on the day he was introduced as the bishop of the diocese.

Before the Arlington diocese was founded in 1974, the Arlington branch of

the Richmond diocese’s Catholic Charities primarily was focused on adoption and foster care services. That ministry has continued and grown — in the 2022-23 fiscal year, 359 individuals were served through the pregnancy and adoption support ministries.

After looking into different agencies, Caitlin and Jason chose to adopt through Catholic Charities because of its dedication to the child, the birth family and the adoptive family. “I think as believers, we are called to love those who are most vulnerable,” said Caitlin, who preferred that only her first name be used to protect her child’s privacy. “I would certainly consider babies in the womb who can’t speak for themselves to be most vulnerable and I think birth moms are as well. So, what a gift it is to have organizations that are willing to speak out, provide resources and care for those most in need.”

Their son, Nathan, is now an active toddler with two doting older sisters. “We could not imagine life without Nathan,” she said. “I’m so grateful for Nathan’s birth mom and the very hard decision she made.”

By 1980, Catholic Charities had added several more ministries, including the emergency assistance program, immigration and refugee services, prison ministry, and the St. Martin de Porres Senior Center and Christ House, both in Alexandria. What’s now known as Migration and Refugee Services has resettled thousands of newcomers over the years, from the Vietnamese refugees after the fall of Saigon in 1975 to the recent influx of Afghans after the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

In addition to serving dinner every night to nearly 50 people, Christ House serves as a clothing closet and men’s shelter. Francis O., who prefers using only his last initial due to the sensitive nature of the topic, moved in after living on the streets and in rentals. “I had family stuff going on, I was angry at the world and cut everybody off and didn’t pay my bills,” he said. “I think it was mental health stuff. I just kind of felt alone.”

Being homeless was a horrifying experience, said Francis. After seeking help, he ended up at Christ House. “After talking to (the resident case manager) for a while, I



COURTESY

Caitlin and Jason, standing with their children Haley, 8, Clara, 7, and Nathan, 2, chose to adopt through Catholic Charities after seeing the agency’s commitment to the child, the birth family and the adoptive family.

kind of broke down because I didn’t think I would go through homelessness and losing pretty much everything,” he said.

These days, Francis drives for Uber while earning his cybersecurity certification. He’s paid off \$20,000 in debt. “I feel like I’m in a way better place,” he said. “I’ve made friends here, I’ve been able to get back in touch with my family and (I) understand no matter how strong you are, you need to pray. You need God in your life.”

The St. Martin de Porres Senior Center provides social and recreational activities for seniors, something participants Gloria Velasco and Lois Costedio believe is vital for men and women their age. “That’s my second home,” said Velasco, who is 87 and has been going for 15 years. “I love the people. I love the activities. I love everything.”

Costedio, 76, enjoys the word search puzzles the center provides, Monday bingo and the chance to be with others. “I’m all by myself and it just helps me get out of the apartment,” she said. “I’d be lost without it.”

The Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic in Manassas, which opened in 2017, holds a special place in Father Cilinski’s heart. For years, the building was an abortion clinic. Father Cilinski, who previously served as pastor of All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas, watched as his parishioners faithfully prayed outside the facility. Eventually, they convinced the owner to sell the property to them.

Staffed by volunteer doctors, nurses and other medical personnel, the clinic serves adults who are uninsured or underinsured — including approximately 80 pregnant women a month, said Father Cilinski. “They didn’t just want to stop a wrong, but to replace it with something

really good, that’s life-giving,” he said. A second Mother of Mercy clinic now operates in Woodbridge.

Another more recent Catholic Charities ministry is the St. Lucy Food Project, which started as a food pantry in the basement of Christ House and became a food distribution network that supplies nearly 100 pantries from its Manassas warehouse. The St. Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing in Woodbridge, founded in 2009, provides shelter for single mothers and their children. Hogar Immigrant Services offers low-cost legal immigration consultations. The Mobile Response Center van brings hygiene products and other necessities directly to those in need. Catholic Charities offers counseling, workforce training, free clothing and more.

Thanks to the generosity of the diocese, in the past 10 years the Catholic Charities budget has grown from \$13 million to \$22 million a year, said Father Cilinski. More than 2,000 volunteers support the work of the staff. Carattini believes that in the next 50 years Catholic Charities will continue evolving to serve the needs of the poor and vulnerable. With ongoing global unrest and an affordable housing shortage, he anticipates serving more seniors and immigrants.

“Pope Benedict (said) for love to be of service to the community it must be organized, so our task is to organize that love,” he said. “(We’re) a witness to everyone within our diocese, whether they’re Catholic or not, that the church is carrying out her mission in very real and tangible ways.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

‘A tool for connection with Christ’

In 35 years, WorkCamp has transformed numerous homes and countless hearts.

By ZOEY MARAIST
For the Catholic Herald

Over the past 35 years, more than 14,600 teens have come to WorkCamp to repair and improve some 2,000 homes. But the homes’ physical changes are nothing compared to the spiritual changes that occur within the campers, adult crew leaders, contractors and other WorkCamp volunteers.

Just ask Kevin Bohli, executive director of the diocesan Office of Youth, Campus and Young Adult Ministries.

“I’m doing what I’m doing today because of my experience at WorkCamp,” he said. “I got roped into being a contractor (for) WorkCamp in the summer of ’96 in Madison. I loved that it gave me the ability to tie my love of youth ministry with my ability to do home repairs. That started a discernment process in my life where I left my engineering job to go into youth ministry.”

WorkCamp is one of a number of regular events Bohli’s office hosts to minister to young people, including the middle school BASH gathering, the Life is VERY Good rally before the national March for Life and CALLED, a conference for young adults.

Since he began working for the youth ministry office in 2001, Bohli has seen God powerfully working in the hearts of both young participants and adult volunteers. “Every year, we have contractors at the end of the week (who) come up to me (and say), ‘Gosh, I haven’t been to Mass in years and now I’ve been to Mass every day this week and I’ll be at Mass again this Sunday,’” said Bohli.

These days, WorkCamp is a week-long diocesan youth program with two full-time staffers, dedicated donors and around 800 campers a year. But it began as a parish program of St. Michael Church in Annandale with 18 teens and the stylish moniker of Hammertime.

Bob Mueller, previously executive director of the Office of Development and a former youth minister, wanted to bring the teens on a service trip and knew they didn’t need to leave the diocese to find people in need. The Hammertime team stayed in a Winchester retreat center and partnered with a nonprofit housing agency to find homeowners to serve. But the goal was more than home improvement. “The vision was always trying to help kids in high school grow in their faith,” he said.

Father J.D. Jaffe, pastor of Christ the Redeemer Church in Sterling and one of the first participants, distinctly remembers the project he worked on — removing a chimney to make space for an addition

to the home. “It was an incredible project and it made a huge impact on this person’s life to do that,” he said.

Tackling big home projects is one of the enduring hallmarks of WorkCamp, said Bohli. “We haven’t dumbed it down, we haven’t made it easier to make WorkCamp happen, but that’s allowed the camp to have an impact on the communities that we serve and the young people that participate,” he said.

For many years, Father Jaffe has returned to WorkCamp as a priest to hear confessions on Tuesday night, an evening of adoration often cited as the most spiritually poignant part of the week. One Tuesday night, he had a view of the whole gymnasium as the emcee announced confessions were open. “Half the gymnasium just immediately stood up and started walking toward confession,” he said. “There was this authentic joy.”

Sarah Richardson has been to 27 WorkCamps. “(It’s) my favorite week of the year,” said Richardson, who works as the administrative assistant for the George Mason University Catholic Campus Ministry in Fairfax. When she first came as a camper in the early ’90s, the teens were asked to go outside one evening and spend some time in prayer. “I remember sitting on the edge of the soccer field and feeling a closeness to God that I hadn’t experienced before,” she said. “There was a peace and a joy and a clearness of conscience in knowing that I had served him well that day.”

Now as a volunteer, she witnesses how WorkCamp touches teens the same way it touched her. “It’s moving to see the change of heart or the change of attitude or something come alive in a young person,” she said. “(It’s) a tool for conversion and for connection with Christ.”

Paul Dwyer’s daughter first introduced him to WorkCamp. Though she willingly volunteered to go, as the week drew closer, she began to get nervous, said Dwyer, now the coordinator of youth ministry at St. Theresa Church in Ashburn. He and his wife volunteered as WorkCamp security so they could check up on her.

“We really didn’t know what to expect,” said Dwyer. “She ran up and gave us this huge hug and she said, ‘I will never miss this again as a high schooler and I will volunteer as long as I can after.’ Sure enough, she fulfilled that. And she ended up meeting some of her best friends.”

Longtime contractor Lewis Thorp also was introduced to WorkCamp by his daughter. “She could not stop talking about it and really made me ask the question,

Teens (at right) pray during Eucharistic adoration at WorkCamp last year. Teens (below) work on a repair project during WorkCamp.



FILE



COURTESY

‘What did they feed her?’” joked Thorp, a parishioner of Christ the Redeemer. “From that point forward, I volunteered.”

For many years, he’s been tasked with finding supplies the crews unexpectedly need. “One crew was working on getting a sink replaced and needed a special clip. I couldn’t find it at any of the hardware stores,” he recalled. “But then I go visit a different site and what do I find in the back of the yard but a sink with the clip I needed. It’s little things like that that just tell me that Christ is present. Little things like that have happened almost every time I’ve gone to WorkCamp.”

Deacon Ricky Malebranche remembers how it felt to be at WorkCamp for the first time. “It was probably one of the few places I felt most comfortable being me,” he said. “At the time, I was going to public school and I did not hide my faith, but there’s a difference between saying you go to Mass and really singing the songs and listening to the talks and diving into the faith.”

“WorkCamp showcases the best of what it means to be Catholic,” he said.

After two years as a camper, Deacon

Malebranche began to volunteer. Then one night during adoration, he felt called to become a priest. “I couldn’t quite tell you what I was praying about but I assure you it was not the priesthood,” he said. “And all of a sudden in the same voice you have in your mind when you’re mentally praying, the Lord kind of took over and on repeat (I heard) ‘Become a priest.’ I knew this (was) the Lord using the work of WorkCamp and his presence in front of me to call me.” The next year, Deacon Malebranche shared his story with WorkCampers as a seminarian.

Bohli believes WorkCamp makes such an impact simply because it’s an intentional Christian community. “We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the early church broke bread together, shared everything in common and served one another and that’s what we’re trying to do at WorkCamp,” he said. “That’s why I think WorkCamp grows and that’s why I think it’s been around for so long. We’re simply doing what Jesus asked us to do.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

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‘God loves’ those with disabilities

The diocese has led the way in expanding religious services to the disabled.

By **NANCY EMANUEL**
For the Catholic Herald

From its inception in 1974 to the present time, the Arlington diocese has been at the forefront of welcoming people with disabilities into parish faith communities by educating them in the Catholic faith, encouraging reception of the sacraments and providing a multitude of services including residential homes.

This movement was initially inspired by parents of children with disabilities. The first such program began in 1967 at St. Louis Parish in Alexandria. Following their lead, St. John Parish in McLean developed a “model parish community ministry to the handicapped” in 1971 in cooperation with surrounding Catholic and Protestant faith communities.

The growing effort to expand religious services to people with disabilities in Northern Virginia was spearheaded by Frances Campbell when her son with disabilities was unable to participate in typical religious education classes in the early 1970s.

Her efforts as well as her devotion and dedication led to her appointment in 1977 as volunteer coordinator of special religious education in the diocese. Campbell served as a consultant to not only the diocese but to the Advisory Committee on Ministry to the Handicapped Individuals for the U.S. bishops.

In 1978, she was invited by President Jimmy Carter to attend a meeting of the president’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The Arlington diocese quickly became the nationally respected leader in the movement to include people with disabilities in religious education and parish life. Several diocesan priests and women religious as well as Bishop Thomas J. Welsh joined in the movement to include people with disabilities in religious education and in the life of the expanding diocese.

“God loves the physically and mentally handicapped as he loves all the other members of his human family,” said Campbell in 1977.

Her groundbreaking work and visibility led to the continued growth of programs, opportunities and services for people with disabilities in the diocese.

Special Religious Development, known as SPRED, was developed in the 1960s by the Archdiocese of Chicago for people with significant disabilities unable to participate in traditional religious education programs. Finding this to be a match for the needs of parishioners and families, the SPRED program was embraced and adopted by the Arlington diocese in 1981.

This led to the formation of the St.



COURTESY

Twins Anthony and Andy Jovel, pictured with their parents, receive their First Holy Communion.

John Center for SPRED at St. John Parish in McLean, which served as a regional program for developmentally disabled persons from four parishes — St. John, St. Luke, St. James and St. Catherine of Siena.

Over the past 50 years, awareness about the value and importance of including people with disabilities in parish life and religious education has grown exponentially.

Under the direction of Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, 14 parishes throughout the Arlington diocese now provide SPRED instruction for people with disabilities, from 6 years of age until adulthood. Currently, guided and inclusive religious education programs including SPRED can be found in the 70 parishes of the diocese. The diocese firmly believes that Catholics with disabilities should participate in the sacraments as full members of parish communities.

A full-time professional staff member serves as the coordinator for special needs ministries and provides guidance and training for the SPRED program in addition to educating directors of religious education, volunteers and families. More than 100 people with significant disabilities now participate in the SPRED program and countless people receive guidance and support through this ministry.

Bishop Burbidge, selected as episcopal moderator of the National Catholic

Partnership on Disability for his devotion to people with disabilities, prioritizes including children and adults with special needs in all diocesan programs.

Financial support is provided through the generosity of the Bishop’s Lenten Appeal and fraternal organizations.

The Knights of Columbus have long supported people with disabilities through their fundraising. The Knights sponsor and support six group homes in the diocese for adults with disabilities and also provide family support.

Diocesan Catholic Charities funds two group homes for families in need and offers counseling services, food and financial support.

Porto Charities, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting persons with disabilities, was started in March 2009 by members of the International Order of Alhambra, a fraternal organization of Catholic men and women. Their mission has been to raise funds to provide grants to schools and organizations in Northern Virginia serving children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In its first decade, Porto Charities awarded \$1 million in grants. In September 2020, Porto Charities recrafted its mission to include advocacy programs and other initiatives to increase educational and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and develop-

mental disabilities in the diocese.

People with disabilities are now employed at diocesan schools, parishes and offices at the chancery. Training programs throughout the diocese have made it possible for people with disabilities to become altar servers, lectors, greeters, assistant ushers and other highly visible parish community participants.

Four Catholic high schools in the diocese provide the Options program for students diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program began more than 25 years ago with the goal of providing individualized and inclusive, student-centered Catholic education in small classes.

Classes help students work on individual goals and develop skills needed to transition into adulthood and the workplace. Peer mentors help students with their coursework, serve as advocates and facilitate inclusion in academic and non-academic settings. Many diocesan elementary schools also welcome children with intellectual and developmental disabilities into their programs. The Arlington diocese supports, encourages, and rejoices in the belief that all people are made in the image and likeness of God and are equal in the sight of God.

Emanuel is diocesan coordinator for Special Needs Ministries.

50 years of supporting mothers and babies

The Arlington diocese has come far in its pro-life ministry and activism.

By ANNA HARVEY
Catholic Herald Staff Writer

The Arlington diocese was born into the fight for life. Just one year prior in 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the Roe v. Wade case.

The diocese delved into pro-life efforts, with parishioners attending the annual March for Life at the Supreme Court. Diocesan Catholic Charities, established in Northern Virginia in 1947, opened its doors to provide services, counseling and housing for pregnant women. Pregnancy centers and shelters such as Birthright and House of HOPE opened throughout the area.

Bishop Thomas J. Welsh spurred on diocesan pro-life efforts with the formation of the Diocesan Committee for Pro-Life Activities in 1976. He hired newlyweds Robert and Cathy Marshall to serve as executive secretary and administrative assistant of the committee.

“We were there to implement the bishop’s directive to get parishes more aware of the pro-life issue and educate parishioners,” Cathy said.

The committee was based out of St. Philip Church in Falls Church with Father Franklyn M. McAfee as director. The Marshalls remembered that in the diocese’s infancy, the committee was devoted to developing pro-life ministries in parishes.

Robert recalled that with the help of Father McAfee and Bishop Welsh, the office sent out dozens of letters to parishes, requesting that each select a parish pro-life coordinator. From there, pro-life ministry “really grew with the coordinators at the parish level,” Robert said.

The committee used postcard campaigns to notify parishes about local pro-life legislation and activist efforts. “This was before email, so we had to use a lot of postage from the diocese to keep everyone informed,” Robert said.

As pro-life activity in the diocese increased over the next two decades, there was more than enough work to go around. When Robert “Bob” Laird arrived as assistant director of the diocesan Family Life Office in 1992, “Bishop (John R.) Keating had a really active pro-life program. It was basically run by a whole bunch of volunteers, and we didn’t have a lot of staff,” he said. While Laird helped lead the Family Life Office, his wife, Gerri, ran the diocesan Natural Family Planning program.

Many pregnancy centers operated in the diocese, but the introduction of a pro-life OB-GYN in October 1994 augmented the medical support that centers could provide mothers. “When (Dr.) John Bruchalski showed up with Tepeyac Family Center, we were able to do a lot more to help pregnant women, because we had a place

where we could send them,” Bob said. He added that the Family Life Office would always foot the bill for mothers in need.

From the mid ’80s to the ’90s, the post-abortion ministry Project Rachel spread across the country. The Lairds realized that Arlington needed its own ministry, so Gerri launched the diocesan Project Rachel in August 1995. Today, Project Rachel continues to provide counseling and community to help women and men heal after abortion.

The Lairds said that in the ’90s and early 2000s, the conversation and approach of the pro-life movement began shifting to focus on the health and well-being of the mother. “Pro-life enthusiasts were focused on the baby — which is understandable; the baby is defenseless — but in doing so, we were forgetting to give personhood to the mother. And in order to save the baby, we learned that you have to save the mother first,” Gerri said.

Thérèse Bempohl, executive director of the diocesan Marriage, Family and Respect Life Office, added that in the early 2000s, pro-life language shifted to address how abortion harms women. “That’s when they started to realize, ‘You know, we have to address the mother and the child.’ Of course we want to save the baby, but we also know that there’s a mother and a father who need to be ministered to,” she said.

Complementing Catholic Charities’ ongoing pregnancy support, the diocesan Gabriel Project launched May 12, 2002, Mother’s Day. The Gabriel Project provides resources and recommends local pregnancy centers to women facing unexpected pregnancies. Today, 19 parishes host Gabriel Project pregnancy assistance ministries.

Activism grew as well in the early 2000s, and the arrival of Bishop Paul S. Loverde ushered in a newfound wave of support for prayer outside abortion facilities. According to Bob, a week after his installation March 25, 1999, Bishop Loverde prayed at three abortion facilities in Falls Church, Alexandria and Manassas on Holy Saturday. “I think we had 1,200-1,500 people there,” Bob remembered. Bishop Loverde continued to pray monthly outside Northern Virginia abortion facilities during his time as bishop of Arlington.

The Family Life Office created a pregnancy support network in 2011 to facilitate meetings between pro-life organizations, ministries and leaders. Each meeting hosts between 25-35 pregnancy support network leaders from throughout the Northern Virginia area including various



A man holds a pro-life sign during the Virginia March for Life in Richmond in 2021.

pregnancy centers, pregnancy homes, Gabriel Project parish-based assistance ministry, Divine Mercy OB-GYN practice, Catholic Charities Mother of Mercy clinic and Catholic Charities pregnancy and adoption offices, Bempohl said.

Amy McNerny, diocesan director of respect life, said pro-life efforts have expanded to include end-of-life issues. The diocese produced the Catholic Advance Medical Directives in 2011 to help sick and aging Catholics navigate their own end-of-life decisions in accord with church teaching. McNerny is currently working to create a ministry for suffering parishioners in alignment with the Diocesan Strategic Plan, which identifies needs in the diocese and creates solutions.

“We are working, as part of the strategic (plan), to create parish teams to accompany folks with end-of-life or life-limiting illness situations. So, we have the Palliative Care Initiative,” McNerny said.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge has continued the efforts started by Bishop Welsh and his other predecessors, Father McAfee, and the Marshalls, and is chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. “Bishop Burbidge has asked every parish to have a Respect Life coordinator,” McNerny said. Today, the net-

work of parish coordinators shares information and resources and mobilizes parish communities to help local mothers in need. “There’s not a parish anywhere in the Diocese of Arlington that wouldn’t help a woman in need,” Bempohl said.

June 24, 2022, ushered in a new age in the pro-life movement with the overturning of Roe v. Wade in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. While pregnancy support in the diocese has remained constant over the years, more women than ever need resources post-Dobbs, McNerny said. As state legislatures attempt to codify Roe v. Wade into state law, she added, support for pregnant mothers and advocacy are all the more essential.

“We’re in a very hard economic season in American history, so there is a lot of need right now. So, the church opens her doors to welcome those who need help,” McNerny said. “But that is a constant. We have always accompanied expectant mothers in need and expectant families in need. After Dobbs, it’s another teachable moment for us to remind the faithful that this is who we are.”

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Life before Arlington

What was the NoVa church community like before 1974?

By ZOEY MARAIST
For the Catholic Herald

In the years following World War II, the character of Northern Virginia began to change. As the growth of the federal government attracted workers, the area soon became a suburban community of newcomers, including Catholics from around the country.

Natives and longtime residents shared their memories of what became the Arlington diocese in the years leading up to its 1974 creation.

Deacon Steve Dixon grew up at St. Rita Church in Alexandria and serves there now. When he was a boy, the parish still worshipped at the old church in Mount Ida. “The Catholic population within the parish boundaries was tremendous,” he said. “On Sundays and holy days — Christmas and Easter in particular — many times it was standing room only, you couldn’t even get in. It was a nice little church, but it was way too small for the growing population.”

He was one of the first students at the new parish school in 1952. As with many of the Northern Virginia Catholic schools, including St. Mary in Alexandria, St. James in Falls Church and St. Michael in Annandale, the school was staffed by religious sisters and at its peak had more than 1,000 students. “(It was) 60 kids in one classroom and one nun,” recalled Deacon Dixon. “And that faith and that learning and camaraderie that we had as students has lasted all these years.”

When Father Thomas G. Miller was growing up in Winchester, there were two routes leading to Washington — Route 7 and Route 50. “You could drive down those roads — Tysons Corners was a stoplight, that was it,” he said. His family worshipped at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Winchester in a church built in 1868. According to parish history, the previous church was used as a stable by Union troops and was later destroyed.

“Our closest neighbors as parishes actually were not in Virginia,” said Father Miller, a priest of the Richmond diocese. “It was that section of West Virginia that was part of the diocese at the time — Berkeley Springs, Martinsburg, Charleston.”

Though most of his peers were Protestant, Winchester was something of a Catholic enclave, he said. “The Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity bought an old resort hotel on the outskirts of Winchester for their major seminary. Frequently, the priests who were the professors there would be among the priests who would say Mass in our parish. One of the professed brothers of the community was the scoutmaster for the church’s Scout troop.”

As the population of Northern Virginia grew, the church grew with it. Priests such as Msgr. Thomas P. Scannell ensured the creation of churches to serve the masses. As his *Washington Post* obituary states, “He persuaded the diocese to acquire vast amounts of land in Northern Virginia when it was less expensive, before 1974. Some of the churches built on that land are Holy Spirit in Annandale, St. Ambrose in Annandale, St. Leo the Great in Fairfax, (the new) St. Mary of Sorrows in Fairfax Station and St. Clare of Assisi in Clifton. ‘We are absolutely indebted to him for his wise counsel and foresight,’ said Father Robert J. Rippey.”

Father Richard Ley, a retired Arlington priest, spent his diaconate year at St. Ambrose before his ordination in



COURTESY

Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, I.H.M. (above, front row, second from right) shares a photo of her confirmation in 1958 with Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton and her classmates at the now-closed Marymount Junior School in Arlington.

Bishop John R. Keating (at right) poses for a photo with students from Marymount Junior School March 16, 1984, with Headmistress Patricia Earl before she professed her final vows as an IHM.



1971 and remembers the parish’s vitality. “That’s where newly married couples could afford to buy a home. The whole year I was there, we never had one funeral, we never had one wedding, but we had lots of baptisms every week,” he said. “As a matter of fact, the first baptism I performed there, there were 15 babies to be baptized.”

The military first brought Deacon David E. Conroy, a parishioner of St. Patrick Church in Fredericksburg, to Northern Virginia. After living in Alexandria, he and his family bought a brand-new home in Chantilly and joined St. Timothy Church in 1969. St. Timothy, too, was building. The community first worshipped in a firehouse before they bought a Protestant chapel on Route 28.

“At that time, Route 28 had one lane going each way,” he said. “(We worshipped in) a tiny, tiny chapel. I mean, really small. And then we also rented the cafeteria at Greenbriar East (Elementary School), which was right there in Chantilly, until we got the church built.”

Longtime Arlingtonian Sister Patricia Helene Earl is a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and until her recent retirement was the director of the Catholic School Leadership Program at Marymount University in Arlington.

As a child, she attended the now-closed Marymount Junior School in Arlington, and after college she taught at St. Thomas More School. After entering the IHMs, she

later returned (1982-85) and was headmistress of the Junior School.

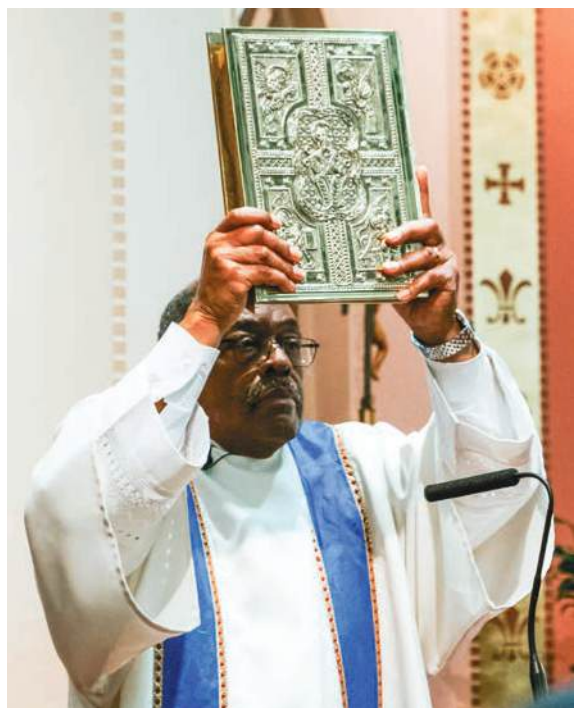
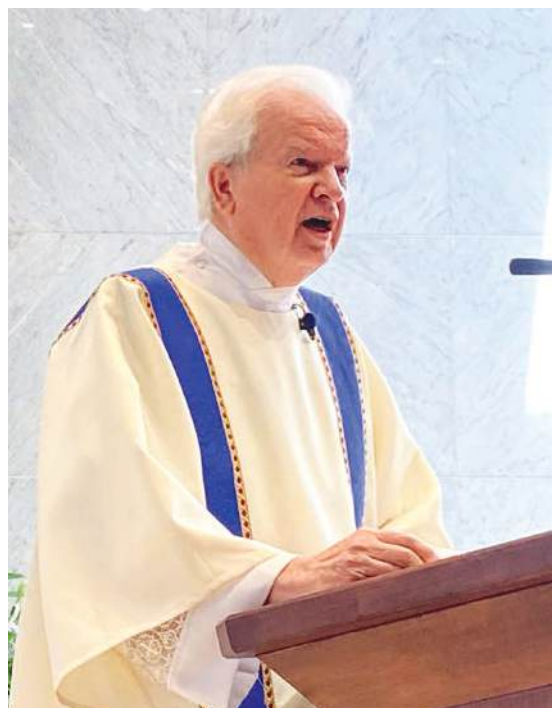
She remembers when the first big shopping center arrived at Seven Corners with the department stores Garfinckel’s and Woodward & Lothrop. She remembers when the liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council brought English-language hymns to Mass.

“I suddenly found myself, 21 years of age, leading the congregation of St. Thomas More in hymns. Ten minutes before Mass, you would teach a new hymn every week and teach the people to sing with you. It was a lot of fun,” she said. “Between teaching in a Catholic school and leading the congregation in praise and worship, I was very attuned to Christ in my own life. Going to daily Mass, at one point I suddenly realized what I had been told for years — that the Lord was calling me to religious life.”

Though much has changed over the years, Sister Patricia believes it’s not only the thriving region that has kept the diocese’s Catholic churches, schools and charities strong. “We are rooted in faith,” she said. “It’s the heart of a diocese that has been committed to developing the faith and helping people grow in their love of Christ. I think that’s why we’ve continued to flourish.”

Maraist is a freelancer from Reston.

Deacon Stephen J. Dixon baptizes a baby at St. Rita Church in Alexandria; Deacon Malcolm L. D'Souza holds the crucifix for veneration during Good Friday liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington; Deacon Albert A. Anderson Jr. displays the Book of Gospels at St. Joseph Church in Alexandria; and Deacon Richard F. Kelly proclaims the Gospel at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke.



Permanent deacons assist in variety of ways

'Servants' of God are ordained to serve the diocese and the bishop.

By **Fr. PAUL D. SCALIA**
Special to the Catholic Herald

In 1967, two years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI reinstated the permanent diaconate. Then in October 1974, shortly after the Diocese of Arlington was established, the first permanent deacon was ordained at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington. Since then, hundreds of permanent deacons have served in many different ministries and apostolates throughout the diocese.

This state of life is typically termed the "permanent diaconate" because the men ordained to it exercise their ministry on a stable basis in the life of the church. Unlike diocesan seminarians who are ordained "transitional" deacons, permanent deacons do not go on to be ordained priests. Another distinction is that married men can be ordained to the permanent diaconate. If an unmarried man is ordained a deacon, he makes a promise of celibacy.

We hear of the first deacons in Acts of the Apostles, when seven men are chosen to assist the Apostles in caring for the growing church (Acts 6:1-7). The word "deacon" comes from the Greek word for servant. A man is ordained a deacon for a threefold service in the church. First, service of the word of God, by teaching and at times preaching at Mass. Second, service at the altar, assisting

a priest or bishop as he offers the sacrifice of the Mass and nourishes God's people with the Eucharist. Third, service of the poor by charitable works.

Throughout the church's history, this threefold service has been lived out in various ways. St. Stephen, one of the first seven deacons, proclaimed the Word of God powerfully and witnessed to it by martyrdom (see Acts 6:8-7:60). St. Lawrence had the duty of caring for the poor in Rome and was arrested while assisting Pope St. Sixtus at the altar. When the emperor ordered him to bring him the wealth of the church, Lawrence presented the poor themselves as the church's true riches.

A deacon is ordained to serve the diocese and in assignments given him by the bishop. So, throughout Arlington's history, deacons have served in various capacities. Most have been assigned to parishes, where they assist at Mass, do baptisms, teach, do marriage preparation, preside at exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, help with administration, and so on. Others have served in the diocesan administrative offices, high schools and the retreat center. Further, since deacons typically have secular jobs, they also are called to bear witness to the Gospel beyond their official assignments. No matter what the role, they are to strive to live the meaning of the word "deacon."

The formation of candidates for the permanent diaconate in the Arlington diocese takes place over a period of six years. After acceptance into the program, a man enters into a period of aspirancy for two years, to further his understanding of the diaconate and discernment of a call. During that time the aspirant is assigned a spiritual director and a deacon mentor. At the end of aspirancy, he may petition for admission to candidacy. If accepted,

he is received formally as a candidate by the bishop and begins his formation.

The program consists of spiritual, theological and pastoral formation. The spiritual formation helps the candidate grow in his knowledge of the church's traditions of prayer, liturgies and devotions so that he can deepen his own spiritual life. This dimension also helps him integrate his prayer, study, work and family. The theological formation provides the intellectual training necessary for an effective minister of the Gospel. Required courses include philosophy, sacred scripture, dogmatic theology, moral theology, liturgical and sacramental theology, canon law, and church history.

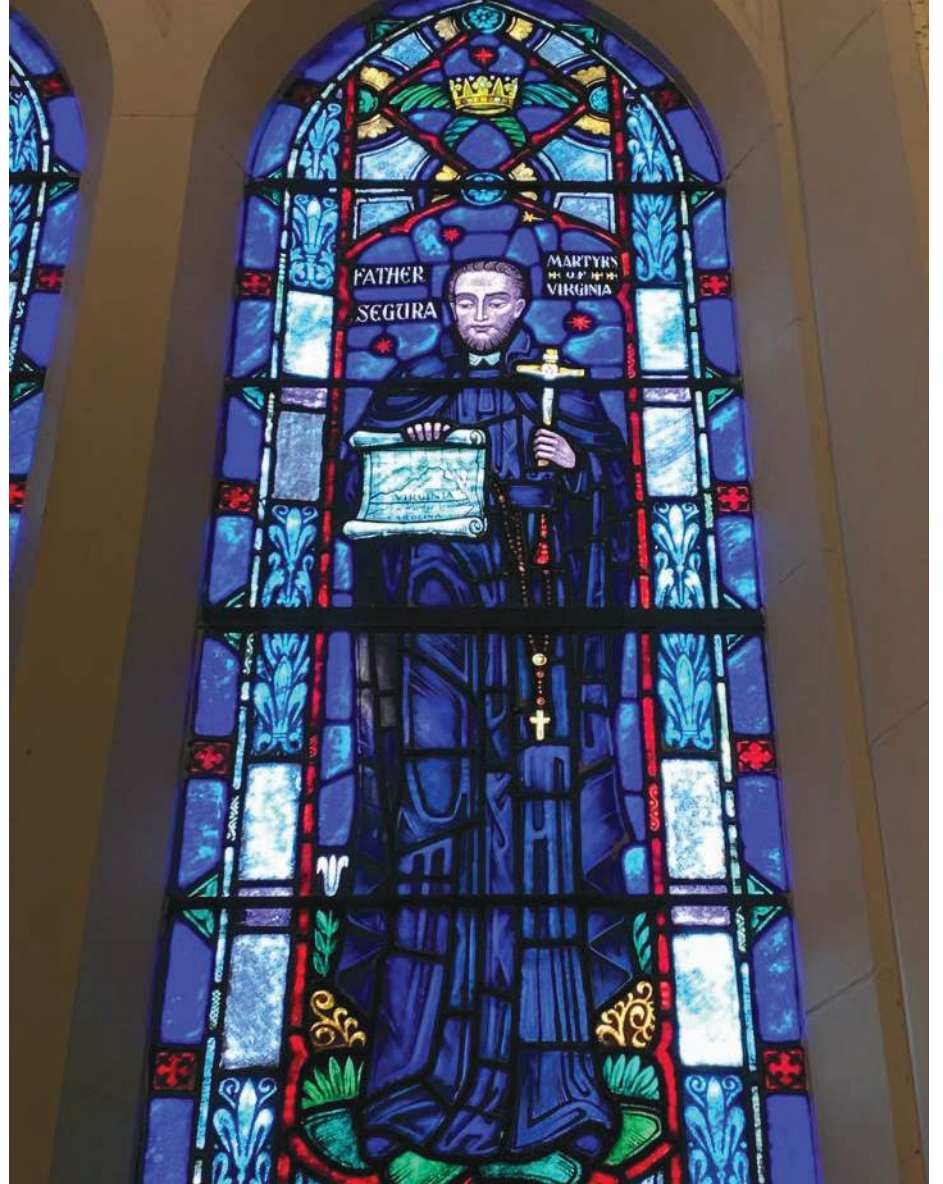
Finally, the pastoral formation occurs primarily through the candidate's involvement at his home parish and under his pastor's supervision. This helps the candidate gain the experience and develop the necessary skills for future ministry in the church. By providing field experience and supervision, the program helps him appreciate the pastoral importance of theology and integrate his studies with service.

Today, there are 90 deacons who work in various assignments and roles throughout the diocese. Seventeen men are in formation, including seven in the newly established Spanish program for Hispanic men. In the end, the deacon is called to be the icon of Christ the Servant, to imitate him who came "not to be served, but to be the least and the servant of all."

Fr. Scalia is diocesan episcopal vicar for clergy and director of the diaconate formation program as well as pastor of St. James Church in Falls Church.



A marker (above, left) stands at the Brent Family Cemetery in Stafford describing the Jesuit martyrs' efforts to establish a Catholic settlement in Virginia. A sign on Colonial Parkway near Jamestown (above, right) honors the Jesuit martyrs who died in 1571. A stained-glass window at St. Paul Church in Richmond (at right) depicts Fr. Juan Bautista de Segura, who came to Virginia to evangelize the native people.



COURTESY

Martyred Jesuits brought Catholicism to Virginia 450 years ago

By Fr. ANDREW J. FISHER
Special to the Catholic Herald

As the Arlington diocese marks its 50th anniversary and calls to mind the people and events that have shaped its rich history, many people may not be aware of the extraordinary beginning of Catholicism in the commonwealth of Virginia.

In September 1570, a small band of nine Spanish missionaries arrived in Virginia's Tidewater region to begin the evangelization of the indigenous people. The team consisted of two Jesuit priests, three Jesuit brothers, three lay catechists and one teenage altar boy. They would build the first Christian chapel, make the first efforts to preach the Gospel and celebrate the first recorded Mass and baptism. This was the first European settlement in Virginia, 37 years before the English founded Jamestown colony in 1607.

As early as 1520, Spain had identified the strategic importance of the Chesapeake Bay, which on their maps was named "Bahia de la Madre de Dios" (Bay of the Mother of God). Due to favorable winds and currents, the Atlantic coastline became the primary route for Spain's treasure fleet. However, French and English ships often launched attacks to steal their treasure, and even attempted to open colonies along the coastline within Spanish territory.

During a July 1561 reconnaissance of the coastline, a storm forced a Spanish ship into the Chesapeake Bay, where they had a peaceful encounter with natives in the Tidewater region. When the ship sailed for Spain, it brought two natives, one of whom was identified as the teenage son of an important chief.

Over the next nine years that teenag-

er would be baptized, become fluent in Spanish and befriend King Philip II. He would travel throughout Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Florida. At his baptism, Luis de Velasco, the viceroy of New Spain (Mexico), served as godfather, giving the teen his own Christian name. From 1562 on, this young indigenous noble was known as "Don Luis."

In 1565, Pedro Menendez de Aviles, governor of Florida and founder of St. Augustine, began recruiting the newly formed Jesuits to lead efforts to evangelize the tribes of Florida. However, their labors were stymied by the cruelty of the Spanish soldiers.

By 1568, the vice provincial of the Jesuits in Florida, Father Juan Bautista de Segura, began writing to his superior in Rome, St. Francis Borgia, expressing the need for a new mission format, which was purely evangelical. He believed that free from maltreatment by armed soldiers, the intelligent and spiritual natives would embrace the Gospel. In 1570, Father de Segura met Don Luis, who promised to lead a Jesuit mission team back to his people at the Chesapeake Bay, serving as their guide, translator and protector.

On Sept. 9 or 10 of 1570, the Jesuits arrived in Virginia, near Newport News, and celebrated their first Mass. Later that day or the next, they sailed up the James River to College Creek. Here the Jesuits met with Don Luis' brother, a local chief, and learned the area had suffered from famine for several years.

Despite the perilous conditions, Father de Segura insisted on staying to serve the natives, even sending a letter back to Spanish authorities in Havana begging for an immediate shipment of seed and farming equipment so that the Jesuits

could help plant new crops. When the Spanish ship sailed, the Jesuits carried their equipment overland to the village of Don Luis, most likely Kiskiak village located on the York River, where they built a cabin and chapel.

After only a few days Don Luis abandoned the Jesuits, moving to an uncle's village, where he returned to his tribal position and took several wives in marriage. The Jesuits' situation quickly deteriorated, being shunned by the local tribe and having to survive on edible roots and berries foraged in the woods. The harsh winter brought illness and fear as they were cut off from both the native and Spanish worlds. But Father de Segura sustained the team by prayer, sacraments and spiritual conferences. With death seeming imminent, it is believed three lay catechists were received into the Jesuit order and became novices.

Twice Father de Segura sent members of the mission team to Don Luis, calling for him to return to his baptismal promises, but to no avail. Unsure of when the delayed rescue ship would return, Father de Segura made one more overture, sending the other priest and two Jesuit brothers to beg for assistance from Don Luis.

On Feb. 4, as the three Jesuits returned to the mission site, they were attacked by Don Luis and his warriors. All three were stuck with arrows, two dying instantly, while one hid during the night, but was killed in the morning.

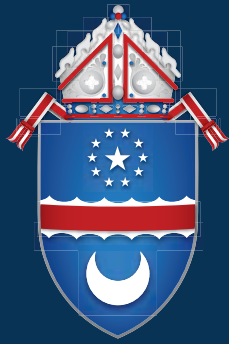
Early Feb. 9, Don Luis and his men came to the mission site. Using the missionaries' own hand axes, they killed the remaining Jesuits, but spared the young altar boy. The lone survivor and Don Luis buried the five Jesuits at their chapel, and warriors plundered the Jesuits' possessions. The young boy was sent to an-

other tribe some distance away but was rescued in August 1572 by the governor of Florida and a military expedition. The lone survivor, Alonso de Olmos, is understood to have given interviews with several civil and ecclesiastical authorities after his rescue, and his testimony is the basis for our knowledge of these events.

In 2002, the Diocese of Richmond opened a cause for the canonization of the eight Jesuit martyrs of Virginia. In 2018, their cause was transferred to the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, to be enrolled in a larger cause, known collectively as the Martyrs of La Florida. This group of 57 martyrs is made up primarily of indigenous men, women and children who converted to Catholicism and died for the faith, but does include some Spanish missionaries, like the Virginia Jesuits, who died while evangelizing the native people. On Oct. 12, 2023, the Catholic bishops of Florida formally sent all historical documentation to Rome as the cause moves forward.

Today the commonwealth of Virginia acknowledges these Jesuit missionaries with a sign along the Colonial Parkway near Jamestown, as well as displays at the Jamestown Settlement Museum. The Catholic Church in Virginia commemorates them with a stained-glass window in St. Paul Church, Richmond, a mural at St. Bede Church, Williamsburg, and a marker at the Brent Family Cemetery, Stafford. These eight Jesuit martyrs brought the Catholic faith to Virginia, and their mission of evangelization has been passed down to the dioceses of Richmond and Arlington today.

Fr. Fisher is pastor of St. Ambrose Church in Annandale.



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



BACKGROUND:

In 2020, Bishop Burbidge initiated the diocese's first strategic planning effort. Over 26 focus groups were held that included approximately 200 participants. With this input, a diverse working group that represented all of the diocese produced a strategic plan that would unite all parishioners. This plan includes a mission statement, six strategic areas and 23 specific initiatives.

MISSION:

In communion with the universal Church, we strive to be disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Kingdom of God in both Word and Sacrament throughout our diocese, and by working together in the service of charity and mercy so that all may know the joy of the Gospel.

1. Promote best practices among the priests for evangelization and discipleship

To leverage effective approaches among priests in a deliberate way to strengthen evangelization and discipleship in all parishes.



2. Sponsor the expansion of successful evangelical programs in every parish

To promote and support specific evangelical programs that have proven effective in attracting persons to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.



3. Strengthen greeters and welcoming programs at every parish

To promote welcoming programs at every parish and to share best practices so that every person's experience at a parish is joyful and encouraging.



4. Encourage parishes to promote sacraments, virtues and saints routinely

To promote and share in every parish the treasure of devotions that are available in our Church to deepen one's love of Christ.



5. Initiate a feasibility study at San Damiano to expand its facilities and increase retreat opportunities for all

To make San Damiano Spiritual Life Center better known and more accessible to parishioners so that their spiritual lives may be deepened.



6. Develop a multimedia teaching series on discipleship, created and delivered by our diocesan priests

To explain and encourage discipleship through the voice and support of our diocesan priests.



7. Hold an annual diocesan service day to unify the faithful in service to others

To promote the importance of Christian service through a unifying event that focuses on the needy and the vulnerable in our diocese.



8. Initiate a feasibility study to create a diocesan vocational/technical school

To broaden access to Catholic education by including career and technical programs in our school system.



9. Reshape parish youth groups around various interests, smaller gatherings and more mentorship

To reshape youth programs to be more diverse in their activities and teaching approaches, and to provide smaller gatherings that enable greater discipleship.



10. Increase access for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities to diocesan youth groups and religious education

To adapt our religious education and youth programs to make them more accessible for our brothers and sisters in Christ with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



11. Encourage and equip pastors to develop staffs spiritually and in evangelization approaches

To help parish and school staffs deepen their prayer life and understanding of evangelization so they are effective in their service to the Church.



12. Substantially increase diocesan tuition assistance

To grow our diocesan tuition assistance program in order to make Catholic education in our diocese more affordable and accessible to all the faithful.



13. Deploy special education trainers in our Catholic schools to build effective options programs in every school

To provide training in approaches and techniques that make it possible for teachers to include students with intellectual and learning disabilities in their classrooms.



14. Identify promising approaches for attracting and retaining teachers in our schools

To engage priests, faculty, teachers and parents from across the Diocese to develop approaches that attract and retain qualified and faith-filled teachers.



15. Identify, promote and support effective small-group discipleship programs in every parish

To promote small groups as a critical component of helping parishioners grow in love of Christ and others.



16. Provide resources and support regarding gender dysphoria to parishioners

To provide educational materials, counseling and support groups that respond to today's concerns about gender dysphoria.



17. Promote diocesan-wide engagements to identify opportunities to connect parish and school communities

To strengthen the engagement between the families in parishes and schools that results in greater mutual support.



18. Establish an advisory group for those with intellectual and learning disabilities to provide perspectives on life in our Church

To create a regular forum for family members of children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to share their ideas and concerns with diocesan leaders.



19. Execute a unified and coordinated diocesan campaign to promote sacramental marriage

To unify the priests and the faithful of the diocese in a campaign of prayer, communication and commitment to Christian marriage as a beautiful witness in today's culture.



20. Identify and increase resources for Catholic-based mental health counseling

To support and promote resources in the diocese, in our parishes and within Catholic Charities that assist those dealing with mental health challenges.



21. Research and evaluate Catholic-based care for seniors in the diocese

To identify and support solutions for seniors in our diocese who need daily care and graduated living arrangements such as independent-living, assisted-living and nursing care.



22. Develop partnerships for Catholic-based palliative and hospice care in the diocese

To identify partners that are faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church and to connect them with our parishes as a resource.



23. Implement sustainability projects at the diocesan-level, at parishes, and at schools for care of creation

To advance conservation and sustainability in our diocese, parishes and schools to demonstrate stewardship of God's creation.



REVITALIZE
EVANGELIZATION
AND FAITH FORMATION



CULTIVATE AUTHENTIC
DISCIPLESHIP
IN CHRIST



INVIGORATE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION
FOR ALL



STRENGTHEN
PARISH
AND FAMILY LIFE



FOSTER ONE
COMMUNION
OF MANY CULTURES



DEEPEN OUR
COMMITMENT TO
CHARITABLE WORKS

To find out more, visit our website: www.arlingtondiocese.org/strategic-plan

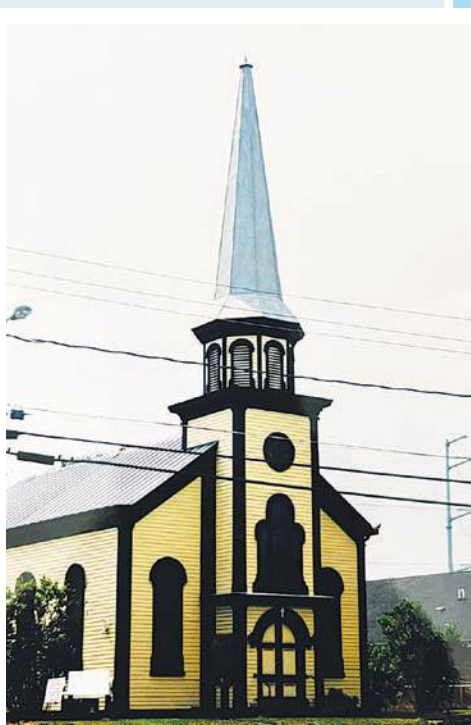
ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH

“Here we are assembled on the very fields, which not many years ago, was the scene of the most bloody battles of the war.” With these words, Bishop William H. Elder dedicated the first All Saints Church on a hot August day in 1879. The small mission church sat fewer than 100 parishioners and served hundreds of square miles with its jurisdiction extending north to the Potomac River, east to Woodbridge and Triangle, and west to the Bull Run Mountains.

In December 1974, All Saints Parish completed construction of a new church. Presided by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh, this was the first church dedicated in the newly formed Diocese of Arlington. Over the years, All Saints split into a number of parishes: St. Francis of Assisi (1947), Our Lady of Angels (1959), St. Timothy (1969), Holy Family (1970), Sacred Heart (1984) and Holy Trinity (2001). The parish built its current church, dedicated in August 2010, to serve the growing Manassas area. All Saints Parish includes the community of St. Gabriel Mission, established in 2017. Together the parish and mission celebrate five Masses in English and five Masses in Spanish each Sunday.

All Saints Catholic Church is a vibrant, multicultural faith community of 8,300 families. The parish is known for its welcoming atmosphere, active ministries and focus on serving others. Generations of families call All Saints their home; some have been parishioners for more than 50 years worshipping alongside individuals and families who continue to join the parish community.

WEBSITE: allsaintsva.org



When All Saints Catholic Church was first established as a mission church in 1879, it was the largest religious structure in Manassas. The bell tower (at right) was dedicated in 2010.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

BASILICA OF ST. MARY

The “eldest daughter” of the church in Virginia, the Basilica of St. Mary in Old Town Alexandria, is the first Catholic parish in the Commonwealth of Virginia and West Virginia, which were one state territory until 1863. It was founded in 1795 by Jesuit Father Francis Ignatius Neale at the initiative of Col. John Fitzgerald, an aide-de-camp and friend of George Washington, who made a substantial financial contribution for the church’s construction.

The original chapel was built in 1795 on Church and South Washington Streets. In 1810, the parish moved to its present location on Royal Street. By 1826, Father Joseph W. Fairclough erected the sanctuary and a major portion of the present-day church, formally dedicated in 1827.

The original parish established six different mission churches in Maryland and Virginia, now all independent parishes. Its parish school, the Basilica School of St. Mary, has operated continuously since 1869.

The basilica cemetery, the oldest Catholic cemetery in Virginia, is the final resting place of numerous Revolutionary War patriots. Last year, the parish dedicated a new columbarium in the cemetery.

St. Mary was named a minor basilica Dec. 6, 2017.

Today, the basilica is known for its reverent liturgies and focus on the Eucharist. It has a flourishing music program, including a professional “schola” and a children’s choir. The parish is also home to more than 50 active apostolates.

WEBSITE: stmaryoldtown.org



COURTESY

Above, the sanctuary of the Basilica of St. Mary in Alexandria today. The sanctuary of the Basilica (at right) as it appeared in 1915.



PARISH PROFILE

BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH

The post-World War II population boom in the Washington suburbs led Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton to assign a young Irish priest, Father Martin T. Quinn, to a new parish in the West end of the city of Alexandria to be named to honor the Blessed Sacrament.

On Sept. 15, 1946, ground was broken for the original church on West Braddock Road. The school opened in 1949 and was staffed by Sisters of the Holy Cross.

The parish grew and remained on the same site until the existing church and school were dedicated Sept. 10, 1988, by Bishop John R. Keating.

Blessed Sacrament is strongly rooted in the community and is always in service to our less fortunate neighbors. Our parishioners were instrumental in the formation of ALIVE! and the Carpenter's Shelter in Alexandria and are actively involved in many ministries of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, among dozens of other service organizations.

Our small, lively and faithful Hispanic community continues to grow.

Our 5,800 parishioners strive to live up to the spirit of the name of our parish – the “body of Christ” – through dedicated faith formation and fellowship from children to seniors.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of our diocese, we look forward with hope and enthusiasm to continue the wonderful work that has been done by our predecessors to be the presence of Christ here in the West end of Alexandria. May God bless all our efforts in his holy name.

WEBSITE: blessedsacramentcc.org



COURTESY

Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria is modeled after medieval cloisters and Mediterranean villages built around an open plaza.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

CATHEDRAL OF ST. THOMAS MORE

When St. Thomas More was established in 1938, led by Father Edwin J. Lee, parishioners worshipped in buildings that would eventually become the nucleus of a school. The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary administered the school from 1944 through 1998.

Construction began in 1949 on a separate edifice that served as the main church until 1961; the cruciform shape we know today was built atop this. Travelers along Arlington Boulevard would now see our iconic frontage.

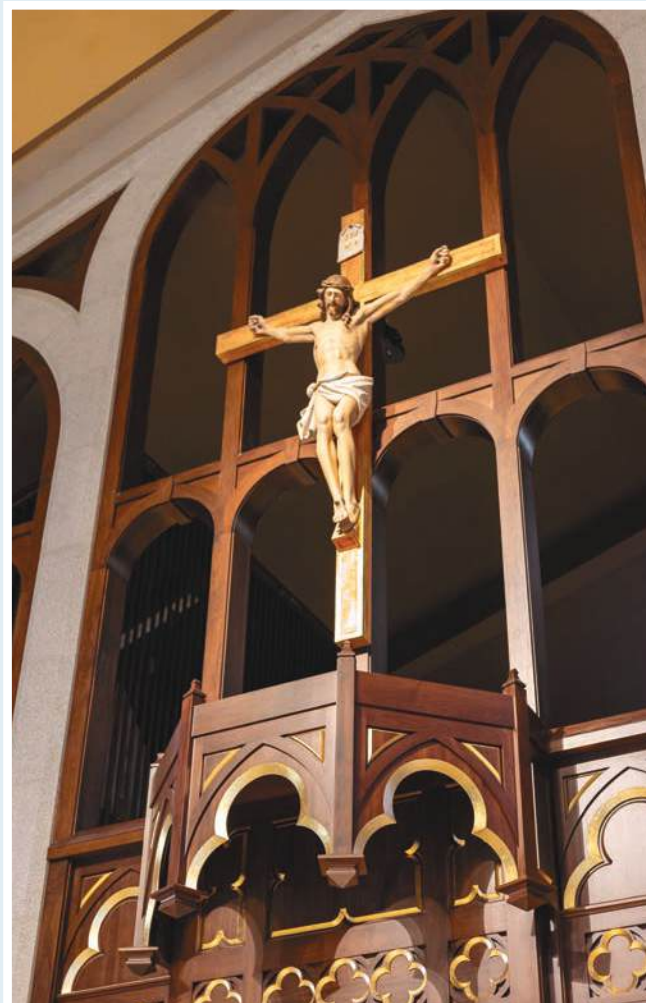
The 1960s witnessed a burgeoning Catholic population, and as such the parish boundaries were partitioned creating Our Lady Queen of Peace in Arlington and St. Anthony of Padua in Falls Church. Msgr. Richard J. Burke became pastor in 1969 and oversaw an increase in events. The former “first-floor” church was then transformed into a parish activities hall. The hall was eventually named in Msgr. Burke’s honor.

In 1974, Pope Paul VI created the Diocese of Arlington from the Diocese of Richmond, designating St. Thomas More as the cathedral, the “mother church” of this new entity. Thomas J. Welsh was installed as the first bishop Aug. 13, 1974.

With its designation as cathedral, St. Thomas More became more than a local parish. It became the focal point of major diocesan events, both sacramental and social. It is here where men of faith become “God’s servant(s) first” at their diaconal, both permanent and transitional, and priestly ordinations.

WEBSITE: cathedralstm.org

The Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington is the focal point for major diocesan events, both sacramental and social. Jubilee-year renovations to the cathedral include installation of a traditional crucifix and gilded paneling (at right), and stained-glass windows honoring saints including St. Teresa of Kolkata (below).



JIM HALE | CATHOLIC HERALD



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

CHRIST THE REDEEMER CHURCH

In the early 1970s, a small group of families had an interest in a Catholic parish in Sterling. They recruited the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement and got permission to celebrate the first Mass March 5, 1972, in the cafeteria of Sterling Middle School. With 500 people attending that first Mass, the parish was soon after officially established June 1, 1972.

The first church was dedicated in June 1980, and the parish saw remarkable growth. Christ the Redeemer partnered with local churches to create LINK, a program to combat hunger, and established a food pantry to serve the area.

By the year 2000, the parish had grown to more than 2,300 households. A new church that could seat 1,200 people was dedicated Feb. 27, 2000. Two years earlier, after 46 years of generous service and ministry, the Atonement friars returned to New York; by then the parish had doubled in size to 4,500 households and was more than 50 percent Hispanic.

Currently, there are 4,700 households and the parish is beautifully multicultural with more than 60 percent being Hispanic, as well as sizable Vietnamese and Filipino communities. There are multiple weekend Masses and daily Masses offered in both English and Spanish.

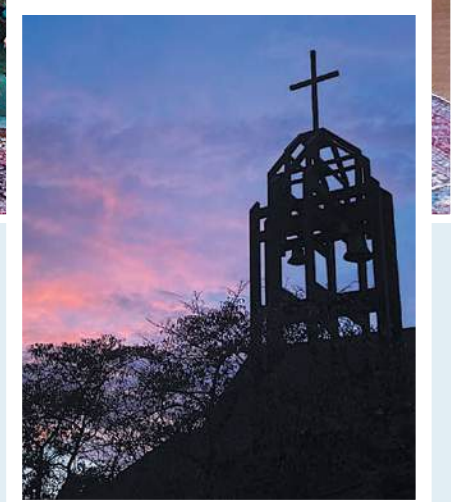
Confession is offered in both languages every day, and the rosary is prayed daily in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino and French. This community that started with a dozen or so dedicated families in 1972 has been blessed and has multiplied.

WEBSITE: ctrcc.org



COURTESY

The sanctuary at Christ the Redeemer Church in Sterling is bedecked with flowers in 2022. The bell tower (at right) stands in sharp contrast to the sky at sunset.



PARISH PROFILE

CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH

Corpus Christi in Aldie was established as a mission church in 2005, branching off from St. Stephen the Martyr in Middleburg. Bishop Paul S. Loverde named Corpus Christi a parish in 2014, with Father Michael G. Taylor as its founding and current pastor.

For 16 years, parishioners celebrated weekend Masses in several local public schools, as well as St. Paul VI Catholic High School. May 2, 2021, Corpus Christi celebrated the dedication of its newly constructed church with traditional architecture and a grand but homey sacred space.

Noteworthy aspects of the church include a first-class relic of St. Peter and a rare and exceptional antique altar rail from the decommissioned Gothic-style St. Peter Catholic Church in Hartford, Conn.

A younger parish of more than 5,700 parishioners with many young families, Corpus Christi still embodies the longevity and legacy of faith being passed to the new generations. Parish ministries have strong missions of outreach, with some of the most prolific groups involved with our local food pantries, pro-life mission and Gabriel Project.

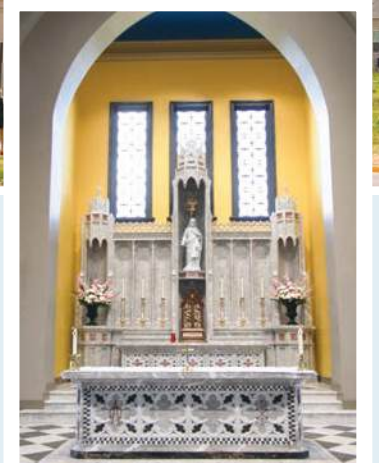
Corpus Christi has a long history of large religious education classes and a dynamic Bible study program for adults and a strong religious education program for youths. With its beautiful property and location in Virginia's wine country, Corpus Christi has become a popular option for wedding couples from inside and outside the Arlington diocese.

WEBSITE: corpuschristisr.org



FILE

Parishioners gather outside Corpus Christi Church in Aldie prior to the church dedication in 2021. Inside the church is a first-class relic of St. Peter and a rare altar rail from a decommissioned church in Connecticut.



PARISH PROFILE

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

Good Shepherd Church was established in May 1965 by Richmond Bishop John J. Russell in response to the growth of Fairfax County during the early 1960s. Father Joseph F. Schwartz, Good Shepherd's first pastor, founded a parish with an initial membership of more than 900 families.

Beginning first with a multipurpose structure, the church was completed and dedicated by Bishop John R. Keating Oct. 21, 1984, and expanded again in 1991 to include classrooms and offices. Good Shepherd is now the spiritual home to more than 3,800 families who come from many cultures, backgrounds and nationalities. Blessed by a spirit of welcome and compassion, Good Shepherd has a strong commitment of service to others and is a warm and welcoming faith community to parishioners and visitors alike.

To better serve our parishioners, Good Shepherd recently completed a 150-seat chapel and additional meeting spaces and renovations to the church.

Good Shepherd is blessed with strong faith formation programs, a growing number of family events, many fellowship groups, community outreach opportunities and an annual International Festival.

Devotion to Jesus present in the Eucharist is fostered through daily adoration and Mass in both English and Spanish.

As Good Shepherd nears its 60th anniversary, the parish looks back at the past with great thanksgiving and looks forward to the future with hope and joy.

WEBSITE: gs-cc.org



COURTESY

Good Shepherd Church in Alexandria is nearing its 60th anniversary. A new, 150-seat chapel (at right) provides a more intimate space for daily Mass.



PARISH PROFILE

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH

During the late 1960s, the population of Prince William County was growing exponentially, and another Catholic church was needed. Holy Family became that church. The parish was founded in 1970 by Msgr. R. Roy Cosby, who converted his garage to a weekday chapel for daily Mass. Sunday Masses were celebrated in the local elementary school.

Holy Family was put in charge of the cemetery at the old Sacred Heart Church on Hoadly Road. Soon after that, Msgr. Cosby also began to celebrate a Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart. The church remained a mission until 1984, when Bishop John R. Keating elevated it to a parish and assigned it its own pastor.

In 1974, the current Holy Family building was completed with additional Masses and programs. The religious education program grew very quickly. In 1997, Holy Family Catholic School opened with 160 children from kindergarten through fourth grade. In 1996, Father Joseph P. Biniek saw the need to offer Mass and services in Spanish. Bishop Keating assigned Father Armando Oviedo to celebrate Masses and hear confessions in Spanish. Shortly after that, the religious education program in Spanish commenced.

In 2020, the nave received a sorely needed upgrade with new pews, confessionals and a cry room.

Today, the parish continues to minister to people in both English and Spanish. There are parishioners from Central and South America, as well as many from Asia and Africa.

WEBSITE: holyfamilycatholicchurchdalecity.org



FILE

Holy Family Church in Dale City was established in 1970 in response to the growing Catholic population in Prince William County.



PARISH PROFILE

HOLY MARTYRS OF VIETNAM CHURCH

Blessed Vietnamese Martyrs Parish, the first Vietnamese Catholic parish in the United States, was established Aug. 19, 1979, by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh. The first pastor was Father Nhat Duy Tran. Jan. 24, 1989, about six months after Pope John Paul II canonized 117 martyrs from Vietnam, Bishop John R. Keating approved the change of the parish's name to Holy Martyrs of Vietnam, as petitioned by Father Tron Binh Tran, a former pastor.

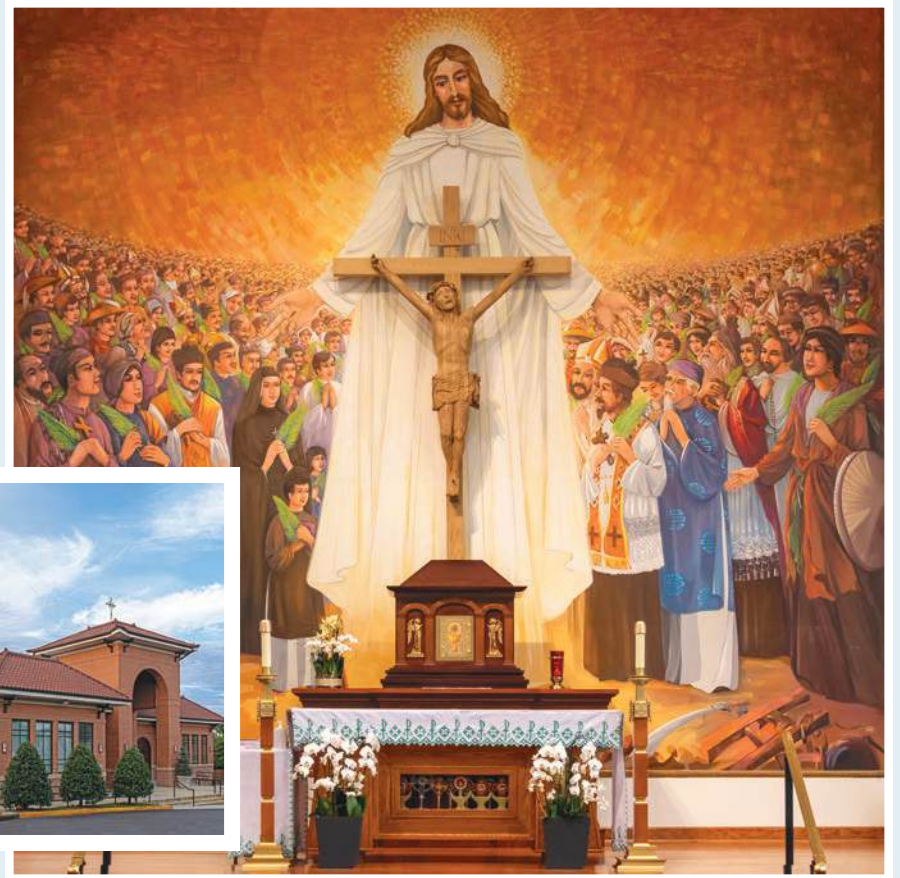
Since August 2000, the Arlington diocese has assigned the Vietnamese Dominicans from Calgary, Alberta, to minister at the parish.

Inside the church, there is a beautiful wall mural of the Holy Martyrs of Vietnam behind the altar and the tabernacle. Vietnamese Catholics have special devotions to Our Lady of La Vang and the Vietnamese martyrs.

In 2006, Vietnamese Catholic families from Ashburn, Sterling, Herndon, Chantilly, Centreville, Manassas, South Riding and other areas were attending Masses in Vietnamese at St. Thomas à Becket Church in Reston. The congregation, named Our Lady of La Vang, moved to St. Veronica Church in Chantilly in 2011. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge established the mission church of Our Lady of La Vang within Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Parish Sept. 3, 2017.

The parish and mission are flourishing with many choirs and apostolates for all ages, including the League of the Sacred Heart, Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus, Eucharistic Youth Movement, Our Lady of Fatima Apostolate and prayer groups. The parish and mission also have large religious education programs and offer Vietnamese language classes.

WEBSITE: cttdva.org and ourladyoflavangva.org



COURTESY

A mural behind the altar of the Arlington church depicts the Holy Martyrs of Vietnam. The church (inset) began life in 1979 as Blessed Vietnamese Martyrs before the Vietnamese martyrs were canonized.



PARISH PROFILE

HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH

Richmond Bishop John J. Russell established Holy Spirit Parish May 23, 1964, on 15.3 acres. Missionhurst Father Paul R. Cauwe was appointed the first pastor.

The church was formally dedicated in 1967. Holy Spirit School opened in 1966 with a single kindergarten and first grade class. The Missionhursts provided the clergy for the parish until 1981, when the Arlington diocese assumed responsibility for providing diocesan clergy to the parish.

When first established, the parish had 500 families and 1,300 parishioners. Today more than 2,500 families and 7,200 parishioners are registered, participating in more than 50 liturgical and social ministries.

Holy Spirit School has grown to have two classes each for prekindergarten through eighth grade with robust academic and social programs. Homeschoolers number over 40 and more than 240 young people participate in CYO sports.

Over the years, a second wing, a larger cafeteria and other facilities were added to the school. In 2009, additional capital improvements were made at the school and the church.

In 2012, Father John M. O'Donohue was assigned to the parish and became pastor in 2014. He led the construction of the new narthex, event space, and sanctuary, adding new life to the original dark and dimly lit brick-walled interior. New flooring, carpet and pews are scheduled for completion this fall.

WEBSITE: holyspiritchurch.us

ANNANDALE



The sanctuary of Holy Spirit Church in Annandale (at left) has been renovated to brighten a previously dark interior. New flooring, carpet and pews are in the works.

The number of registered families at Holy Spirit has increased fivefold from 500 to 2,500 since its founding in 1964.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

On June 27, 2001, Bishop Paul S. Loverde created Holy Trinity Parish, the 67th parish in the Arlington diocese. Father Francis J. Peffley celebrated the first Mass July 21, 2001, at the Benedictine Monastery in Bristow.

Since that first Mass of approximately 200 people, the parish has grown to more than 4,000 families and is still growing.

The dedication and consecration of Holy Trinity Church took place Feb. 2, 2008. Holy Trinity has seen many of our diocesan priests through its doors and Father James S. Barkett took over as pastor June 27.

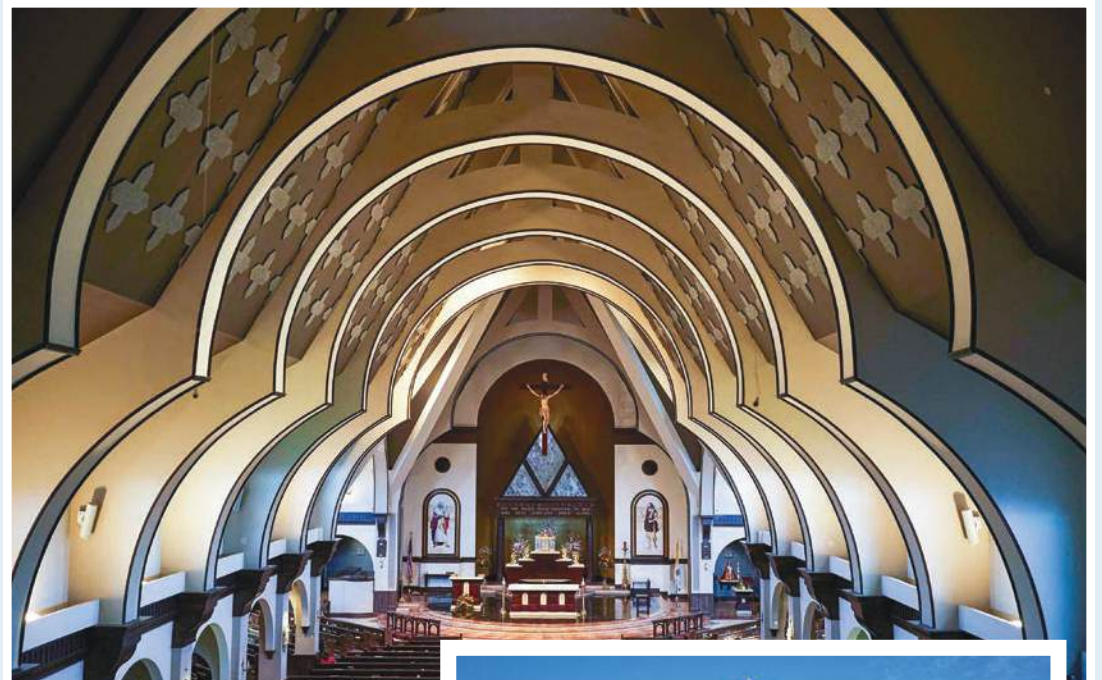
Holy Trinity is blessed with many opportunities to receive sacraments as well as Eucharistic adoration.

As Holy Trinity has continued to grow, highlights of the parish include a thriving and growing homeschool ministry with 200 registered families, our Lady's Fall Festival honoring our Lady of the Rosary, a large youth and young adult ministry, and many more ministries that serve our parish and local communities.

In 2023, Holy Trinity began offering Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults classes to the homebound at a local nursing facility through the Legion of Mary.

The parish also has introduced family faith formation for its sacramental preparation. The mission of family faith formation at Holy Trinity Church is to model our families after the Holy Family, thus creating a Christ-centered home.

WEBSITE: holytrinityparish.net



COURTESY

Holy Trinity Church in Gainesville has 20 large stained-glass windows depicting the mysteries of the rosary and many stained-glass windows of the saints. A statue of the Holy Family stands outside.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

At the center of the Nativity scene is the child Jesus with his hands outstretched. As a parish, Nativity Catholic Church aims to model this in our everyday lives.

Nativity "has a very welcoming atmosphere and they have a lot of events supporting our community, surrounding communities and beyond," according to a Facebook comment from a non-Catholic friend of the community.

Established June 11, 1973, near the intersection of Old Keene Mill Road and Lee Chapel Road in Burke, Nativity celebrated its first 50 years as a parish last summer. The hallmarks of the parish are warmth, welcome and service to our neighbors "across the street and around the world," to quote Father Richard B. Martin, pastor from 1996 to 2014.

Every week, the Nativity family gathers to feed our souls at Mass and to feed those experiencing homelessness in our local area. Every month, our family ministry, youth ministries and adult formation groups gather to deepen their knowledge of Jesus and how to live the Gospel authentically.

Every year, we partner with Food for the Poor to uplift the dignity of our brothers and sisters in Haiti by supporting the construction of villages, clinics and much more.

To see additional photos of our community and events, follow us on social media @nativityparishburke.

WEBSITE: nativityburke.org



COURTESY

Parishioners at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke attend Easter Sunday Mass in 2023. Fr. Robert C. Cilinski, pastor, and Fr. Edward J. Bresnahan (right), parochial vicar, greet a family.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

GAINESVILLE

BURKE

OUR LADY OF ANGELS CHURCH

Our Lady of Angels Parish in Woodbridge was founded in 1956 as a mission of All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas. The first chapel, built on land purchased by Bishop Peter L. Ireton, was dedicated in 1958, and incorporated as a parish in 1959. The parish St. Vincent de Paul Society soon began ministering to the needy. Due to rapid growth, a parish hall was built and dedicated by Bishop John J. Russell in the 1960s.

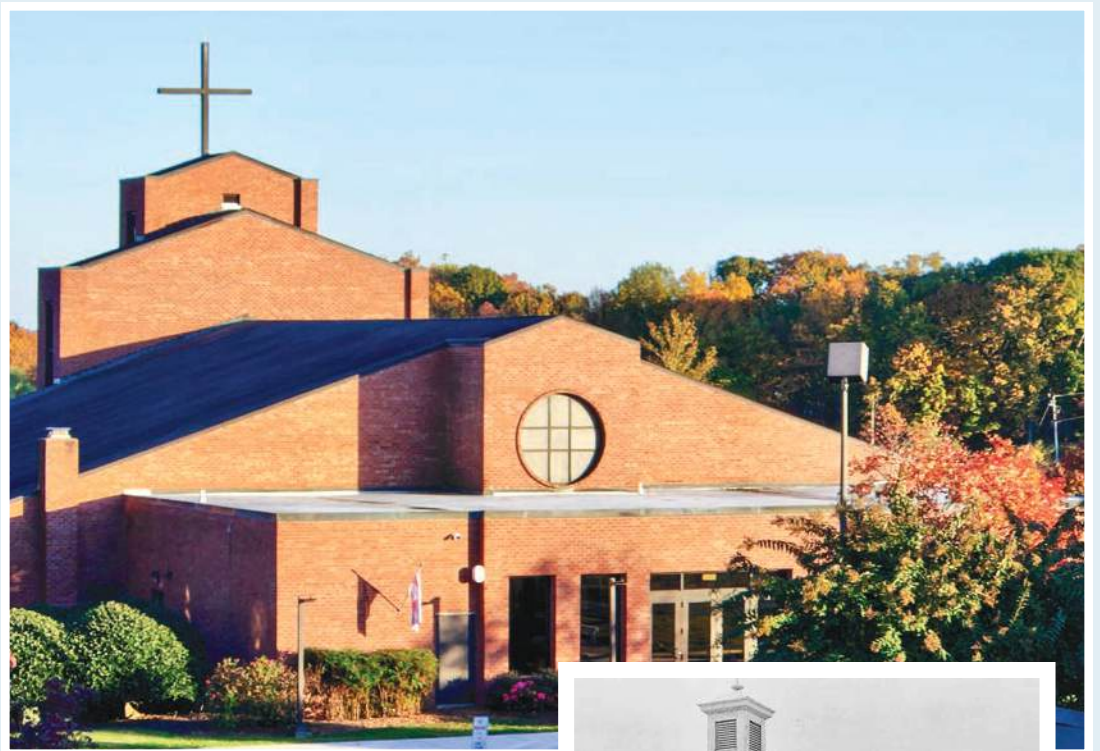
In 1977, Bishop Thomas J. Welsh opened the diocesan St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School and entrusted its operation to the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia of Nashville, Tenn. A new rectory and church were built and dedicated by Bishop John R. Keating in the 1980s.

The original chapel is now used for perpetual adoration. The campus currently is shared by the parish and Aquinas School, whose students are drawn primarily from Our Lady of Angels, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Lake Ridge and Sacred Heart in Manassas parishes.

In 1994, the Stigmatines transferred the pastoral care of the parish to the priests of the Arlington diocese. In 2020, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge entrusted the parish to the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a Spanish religious order present in the diocese since 2004. They focus on the new evangelization as priests for the family.

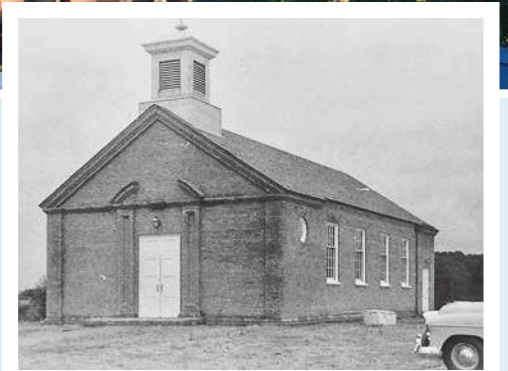
The parish has grown from 66 people in 1956 to nearly 5,000 families in 2024, representing a wide variety of nationalities and ethnicities.

WEBSITE: ourladyofangelscatholicchurch.com



COURTESY

Since its founding in 1956, Our Lady of Angels Church in Woodbridge has grown from 66 people to nearly 5,000 families. The original chapel (at right), dedicated in 1958, is now used for perpetual adoration.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CHURCH

Our Lady of Good Counsel has ministered to the people of Vienna for nearly 70 years. Since 1956, the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales have staffed the parish, which is currently led by Oblate Father Matthew Hillyard.

A new church and a separate three-bell tower were built and dedicated March 10, 1973. The largest bell weighing 1,480 pounds is inscribed "Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Vienna, Virginia, November 1972, 'Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.' "

In the Catholic, Salesian tradition, Our Lady of Good Counsel strives to "Live Jesus" in our sacramental life, our loving service, our parish communal life, and our teaching and formation, especially to our children.

St. Francis de Sales reminds us daily that "There is nothing small in the service of God" and "the measure of our love is to love without measure."

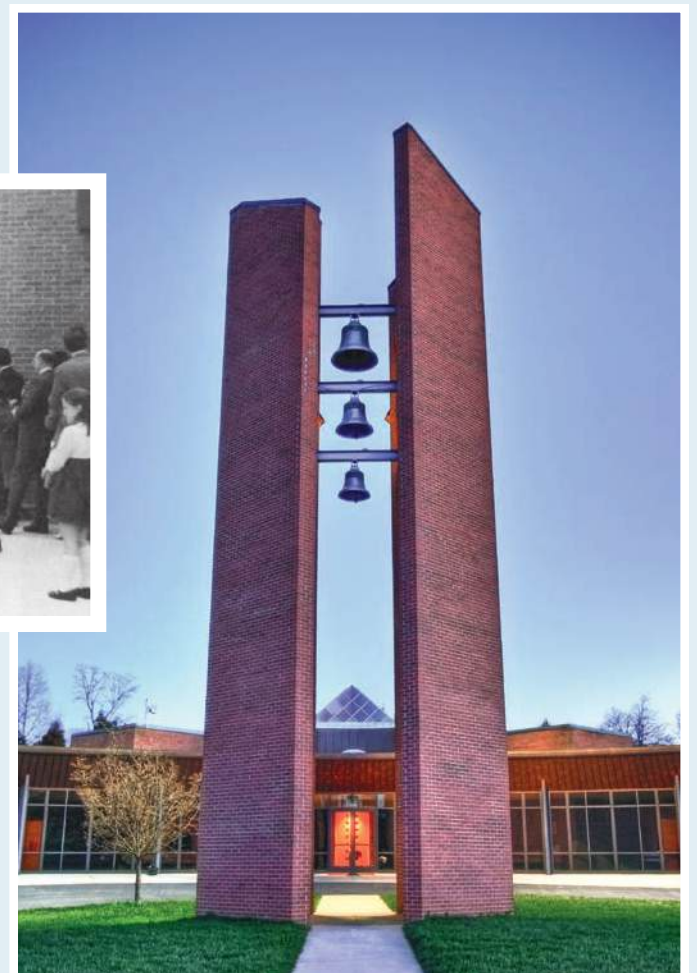
Our five ministries – liturgy, faith formation, Our Lady of Good Counsel School, outreach and community – help us to fulfill our mission and "to be who we are and be that thoroughly well to the greater honor of the Master Craftsman whose handiwork we are."

WEBSITE: olgcva.org



Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Vienna was built and dedicated in 1973 under the leadership of Oblate Fr. Edward J. Corcoran.

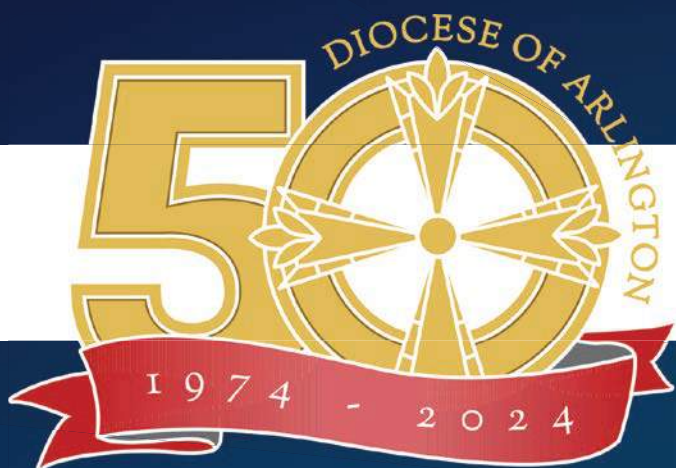
A three-bell tower (at right) stands in front of the church.



COURTESY



P A R I S H P R O F I L E



HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

with very best wishes from

WILTON CARDINAL GREGORY
Archbishop of Washington

together with the Auxiliary Bishops

THE MOST REVEREND ROY E. CAMPBELL, JR.
THE MOST REVEREND JUAN ESPOSITO
THE MOST REVEREND EVELIO MENJIVAR

DONALD CARDINAL WUERL
the Archbishop Emeritus of Washington

and the

CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAY FAITHFUL of
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON



The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of
Washington



Prayerful best wishes and
congratulations to the
Diocese of Arlington
and their Bishop

The Most Reverend
Michael F. Burbidge

on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee
of the Diocese of Arlington



from the

BASILICA of the NATIONAL SHRINE
of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
America's Catholic Church

Reverend Monsignor Walter R. Rossi
Rector

Clergy, Religious, and Staff

OUR LADY OF HOPE CHURCH

Named for Our Lady of Hope, who appeared in Pontmain, France, in 1871 during the Franco-Prussian War, Our Lady of Hope Parish was established in 2000 by Bishop Paul S. Loverde. Located in Loudoun County, the parish and school would break ground in a county that, at the time, had only five Catholic parishes and one Catholic elementary school.

Organized under the leadership of Father William P. Saunders, founding pastor, the new parish purchased a house that served as both living quarters and parish offices. The new parish gathered to offer its first Mass Aug. 6, 2000, in the Potomac Falls High School auditorium.

Over the next five years, Masses, parish events and religious education classes were held at the high school, at Community Lutheran Church and at the local senior citizen center.

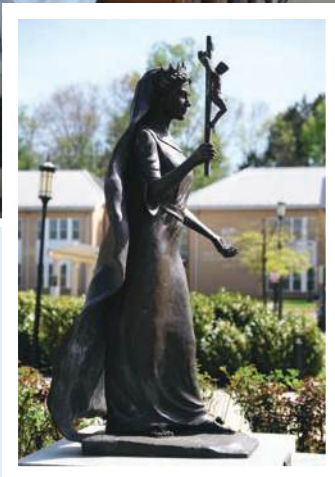
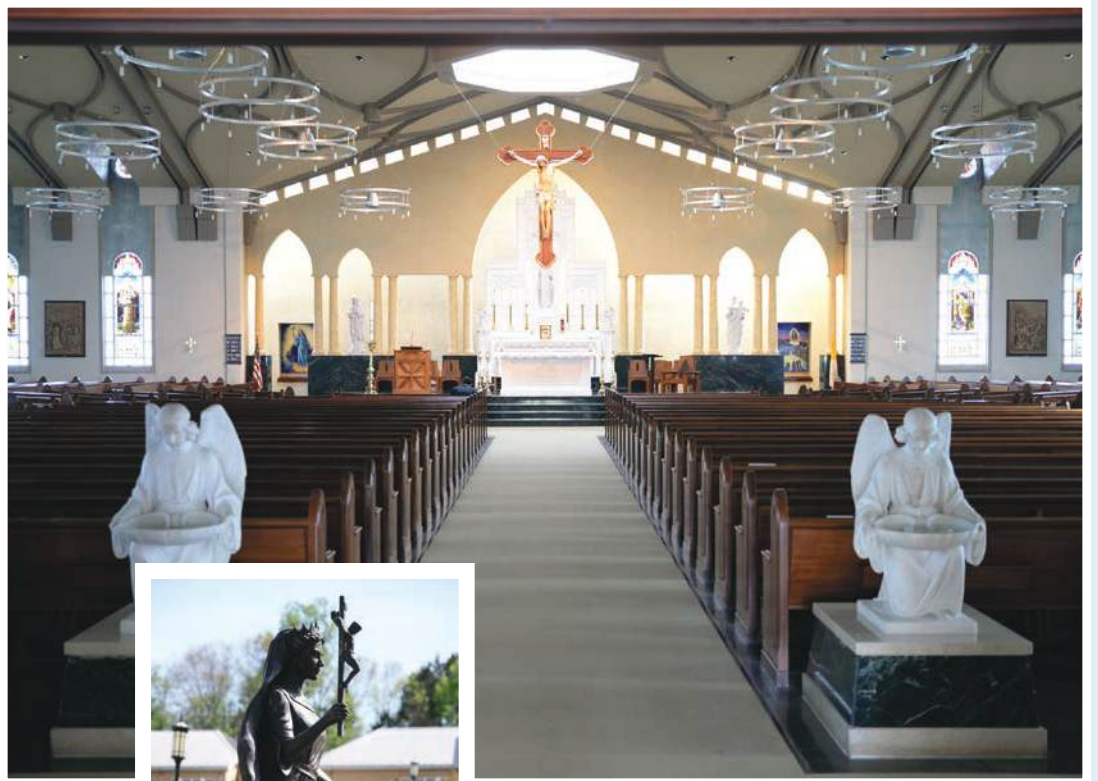
Our Lady of Hope Catholic School was opened Sept. 6, 2005. The church was dedicated to the glory of God and in honor of our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Hope, Jan. 17, 2006.

Today, Our Lady of Hope is an active parish community and home to more than 3,000 parishioners. The parish and its pastor, Father Anthony J. Killian, continue to support those in need through charitable partnerships and serve the community as a beacon of hope, reflecting the message of the Gospel and striving to transfigure this troubled world with the light of Christ.

WEBSITE: ourladyofhope.net



POTOMAC FALLS



COURTESY
The interior of Our Lady of Hope Church in Potomac Falls is serene. The statue of Our Lady of Hope of America (at left) that stands outside the church was sculpted by local artist Francois LePelch.

PARISH PROFILE

OUR LADY OF THE BLUE RIDGE CHURCH

Nestled amid the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains of Madison County, Our Lady of the Blue Ridge Church is a soulful country sanctuary.

This close-knit parish, established in 1977, boasts a rich history. They celebrated Masses in unexpected places – from the current rectory to the Presbyterian church and even the Madison County firehouse.

Finally, in 1992, their dream was realized with the dedication of the current church building by Bishop John R. Keating.

Symbolism abounds. The three-level sanctuary steps represent the Holy Trinity, Christ's resurrection after three days and the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Those aren't just ordinary steps; beneath them lie prayers and sacrifices offered by the congregation during construction, literally embedded in the church's foundation.

Step inside, and you'll be greeted by a warm, Gothic arch – a nod to European cathedrals – leading your eyes to a stunning stained-glass Virgin Mary gracing the altar.

This spirit of welcoming extends beyond aesthetics. Our Lady of the Blue Ridge fosters a family-focused atmosphere, attracting new members all the time.

The church has flourished with a vibrant community of 179 families and 487 members.

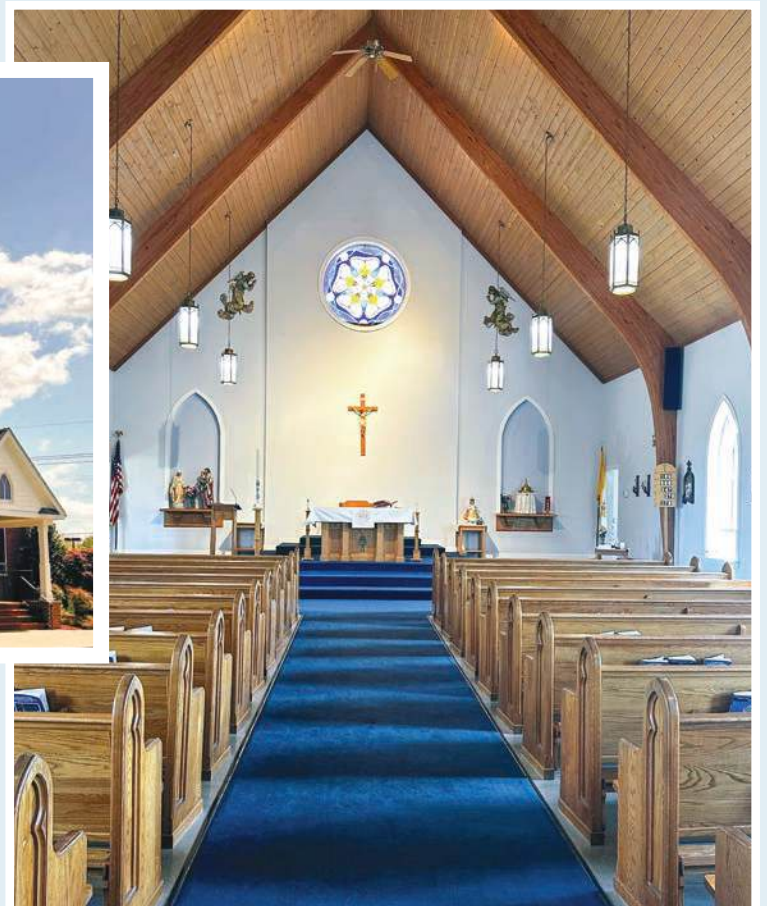
WEBSITE: facebook.com/OLBRCC



MADISON



Members of Our Lady of the Blue Ridge Church in Madison celebrated Mass in a Presbyterian church and a firehouse before dedicating their own church (above) in 1992.



COURTESY
The three steps leading to the sanctuary represent the Holy Trinity, Christ's resurrection after three days and the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

PARISH PROFILE

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH

Our Lady of Lourdes is nestled in south Arlington among the neighborhoods of National Landing, Aurora Highlands, Aurora Hills and Arlington Ridge. Originally a mission of St. Rita Church in Alexandria, Our Lady of Lourdes was established when many Catholics moved to Northern Virginia after World War II.

Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton established Our Lady of Lourdes June 9, 1946, appointing Father Robert F. Beattie of St. Mary Church in Alexandria as first pastor.

The current church is a mid-century modern rendition of the cave in Lourdes, France, where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858, revealing herself as the “Immaculate Conception.”

The parish’s second pastor, Father Charles Comaskey, built the current church and celebrated its first Mass on Christmas Eve of 1963. Bishop John J. Russell dedicated the church March 7, 1964.

Today, Our Lady of Lourdes has 1,100 households, an active Hispanic community and two very active ministries for the needy. Increasingly young, diverse and global parishioners come together for social events such as monthly brunch by the Knights of Columbus, Catholic feast day celebrations and the parish picnic.

Reagan National Airport, local hotels and the famous “restaurant row” on 23rd Street bring travelers and school groups to parish Masses. People pray and find solace in the church’s quiet Mary Grotto. The Tuesday, Thursday and Friday confessions after the noon Mass are popular.

WEBSITE: ololcc.net



COURTESY

The current church at Our Lady of Lourdes in Arlington is a mid-century modern rendition of the cave in Lourdes, France, where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858. The Mary Grotto (inset) offers a quiet place for prayer.



PARISH PROFILE

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CHURCH

Nestled in the Shenandoah Valley, Our Lady of the Valley Church serves Page County, one of the poorest counties in the state. Established in 1951 as a mission of Holy Infant in Elkton, Our Lady of the Valley was first served by the Redemptorist Fathers.

In 1954, land was acquired for the church, and Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton dedicated the church Oct. 31, 1954. A little more than a decade later in 1968, priests of the Richmond diocese replaced the Redemptorists and staffed the missions at Elkton and Luray until 1974 when the Diocese of Arlington was established.

Our Lady of the Valley became an independent parish in 1976 with Father Charles A. Ryan appointed as pastor. Over the years, many diocesan priests served the parish until 1992, when the friars of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis ministered and served the parish for the next 24 years. In 2016, diocesan priests replaced the Franciscan friars in the pastoral care of the parish.

Father Edwin E. Perez is pastor. There are about 400 parishioners, many of whom relocated from the Washington and Baltimore areas, as well as new Catholics. During the summer months, many tourists and visitors to the valley attend Mass at the parish.

WEBSITE: ourladyofthevalleyluray.org



COURTESY

Our Lady of the Valley Church in Luray is home to 400 parishioners but during the summer many tourists attend Mass there.



PARISH PROFILE

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE CHURCH

In 1945, Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton granted the request of 16 Black Catholics to establish a Black Catholic parish in Arlington County where they could worship in dignity. He called upon the Spiritans to provide the pastoral leadership and work with the families in the establishment of this new parish.

Today we give life to that dream with the joy of a diverse and welcoming parish community sharing and handing on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. During the 79-year history of Our Lady Queen of Peace, a commitment to social justice and racial equality has been its hallmark. The dedication of parishioners is embedded in Matthew 25:35, "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me."

Established during a period when racial segregation prevailed both in the wider society and in the Catholic Church, Our Lady Queen of Peace became a spiritual and social community for its Black parishioners and Arlington community at large. In the 1960s, they established the Catholic Interracial Council of Northern Virginia to work on issues of poverty, employment and fair housing.

For decades the Matthew 25 Bazaar, a clothing and thrift store, has provided free services to the needy on a weekly basis. Today we serve 700 families each week in our parish food pantry.

We are a thriving parish with more than 50 ministries and many outreach programs to the marginalized, following the call of the Gospel.

WEBSITE: ourladyqueenofpeace.org



COURTESY

Our Lady Queen of Peace Church was founded in 1945 at the request of 16 Black Catholics in Arlington County. A display before the altar (at right) features information about the six U.S. Black Catholic candidates for sainthood.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

PRECIOUS BLOOD CHURCH

Precious Blood Parish was established with 39 families in 1946, covering Culpeper, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock counties. Missionhurst Father Maurice du Castillon was appointed the first pastor.

In 1979, he retired after 25 years of service, and Missionhurst Father Leo Zonneveld was appointed pastor.

In 1981, the parish expanded with a new church and parish hall. The church was dedicated in 1983 by Bishop John R. Keating. A Spanish Mass was added on Sundays in 2000. Father Zonneveld retired in 2012 after 33 years of service. In 2013, the diocese purchased property that became the current site for Epiphany Catholic School, which sits on 22 acres. The Missionhurst congregation returned the parish to diocesan administration in 2016, and Father Kevin B. Walsh was appointed pastor. In 2019, the parking lot was expanded and brought up to code. Other upgrades include a new sound system, standardized LED lighting, new signage with an electronic sign on Main Street and updated audiovisual technology to accommodate increased Mass attendance.

The parish also purchased four buses that provide transportation for Epiphany Catholic School as well as parish activities. Responding to repeated requests from parishioners, a new crucifix was added to the sanctuary in 2021. Precious Blood Parish continues to thrive. Since 2016, attendance at the Mass in Spanish has increased by 350 percent, leading to plans to add an additional Spanish Mass this year.

WEBSITE: pbconline.com



COURTESY

A new crucifix was added to the sanctuary of Precious Blood Church in Culpeper in 2021 at the request of parishioners.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ALEXANDRIA

QUEEN OF APOSTLES CHURCH

Father John P. Hannan was appointed the first pastor of Queen of Apostles Church in Alexandria May 25, 1963. The church was to serve the Catholic community in the West end of Alexandria and the Eastern end of Fairfax County.

Father Hannan commissioned the building of the church with beautiful stained-glass windows from Ireland, mosaic altars and an unusual design. The baseball-diamond shape of the church featured a concrete roof with a hyperbolic paraboloid shape.

Queen of Apostles was dedicated May 27, 1965, by Richmond Bishop John J. Russell. Three months after the opening of the church, the school was established.

The parish has been blessed with the assistance of two orders of nuns. The Sisters of St. Dominic were the first teachers in the school and stayed in the parish until 1974. The Poor Sisters of St. Joseph came to the area in 1970 and continue to provide child care to parishioners and non-parishioners.

Many changes have occurred in the parish. In 1992, Father Keith R. Ramey supervised major renovations to the church, completed later by Father William P. Saunders.

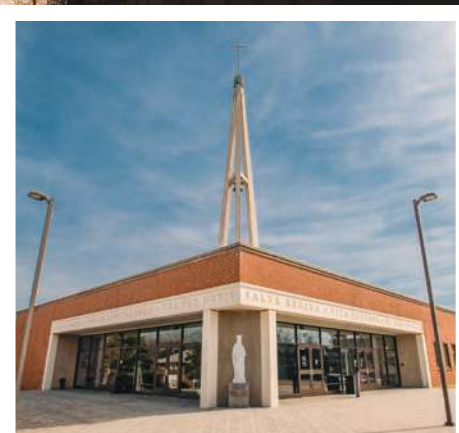
Our parish of more than 1,600 families provides faith formation equally in English and Spanish, with opportunities to learn directly from the clergy, and according to one's place in life, whether through the various parish ministries, our men's and women's groups, our young adults group, religious education, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults or our parish school.

WEBSITE: queenofapostles.org



COURTESY

The Twelve Apostles surrounding Mary are depicted behind the altar at Queen of Apostles Church in Alexandria. The church (at right), dedicated in 1965, features a baseball-diamond shape and a concrete roof.



PARISH PROFILE

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH

Sacred Heart began with the dreams of a group of immigrants from Austria and Czechoslovakia. Dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it started off as a small chapel in 1916 on Spriggs Road and then moved the chapel to an acre of land in Manassas, where it still resides.

Sacred Heart at the time was made up of Roman-rite and Byzantine-rite Catholics. Parishioners who wanted the Byzantine rite moved over to St. Mary's Church in 1929.

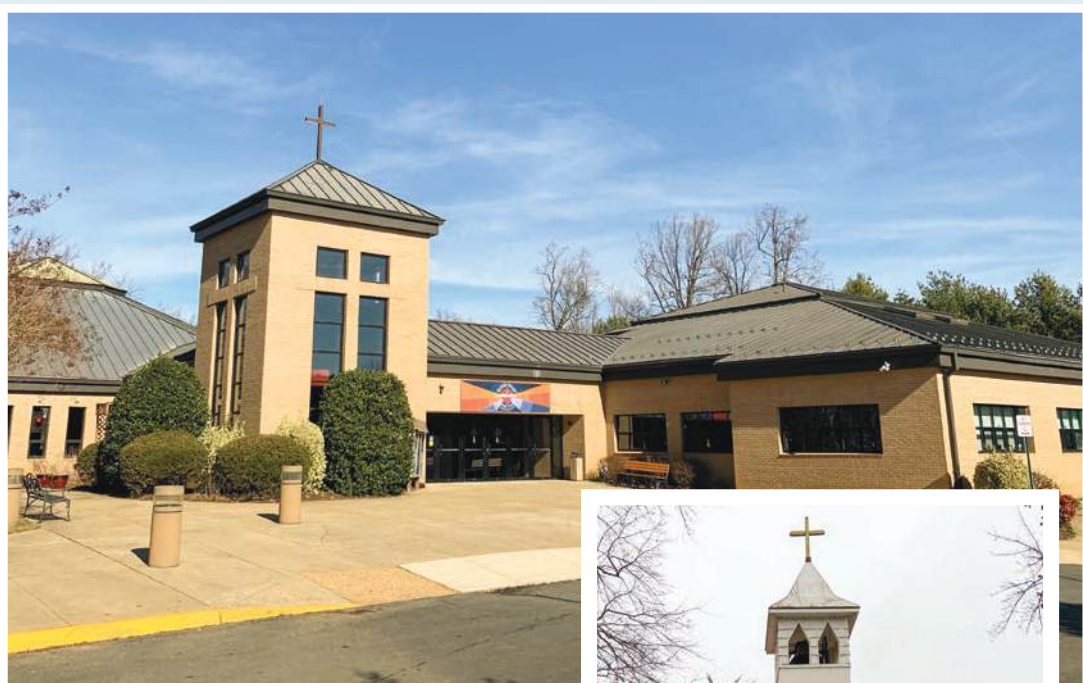
From 1929 to 1959, Sacred Heart was a mission church of All Saints Church in Manassas. It was closed from 1959 to 1970 in hopes that the new Our Lady of Angels Church in Woodbridge would serve the needs of local Catholics.

After a mission statement was signed in 1983 as a covenant by the people of Sacred Heart, Bishop John R. Keating raised Sacred Heart to the full status of a parish in 1984. Seeing the congregation and the area of Manassas growing, it was decided a new church would be built, with Father Frank J. Ready as pastor.

Ground was broken for Sacred Heart Nov. 22, 1992, and the dedication took place Jan. 17, 1994. The current pastor, Father Stephen Holmes, and parochial vicar, Father Marianus Isaac Arockiaraj, keep the Catholic tradition alive and well with our 1,580 families.

We are committed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We are humble and patient, and our priests and deacons will do everything necessary for all the souls who enter our doors to feel welcome.

WEBSITE: sacredheartmanassas.org



COURTESY

Founded by a group of immigrants from Austria and Czechoslovakia, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Manassas welcomes more than 1,500 families today. The previous church building (at right) now serves as a chapel.



PARISH PROFILE

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH

Discover the rich tapestry of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish nestled in Winchester. Established in 1870, our deep roots have taken us from a mission parish to the fourth-oldest parish in the diocese.

With more than 10,500 registered parishioners and 3,300 families, we offer over 25 active groups and ministries for prayer, service, and fellowship. From the St. Andrew School of Evangelization to the dynamic Knights of Columbus council and soup kitchen, we embrace all ages and backgrounds in our shared journey. Catholic Biblical School offers a four-year curriculum to 365 students with Nicholas Lebish. Education is paramount here. Our academy, founded in 1957, nurtures 240 students, while religious education shapes more than 650 young hearts with Director Julia Carty and a team of dedicated volunteers. Summer at Sacred Heart, now entering its sixth year, invites children into fun and enriching day camps. Last year, the program hosted more than 475 registered campers for the summer, averaging over 160 per week.

At the heart of our parish beats perpetual Eucharistic adoration. During COVID we creatively continued and enter our 29th year this August. Each spring, the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival draws more than 250,000 to our area.

Father Bjorn C. Lundberg, with his passion for history and evangelization, leads our flock as pastor alongside parochial vicars Father Stephen M. Vaccaro and Father S. Luke Poczatek. Father Jerome W. Fasano, officially retired, is busier than ever.

WEBSITE: sacredheartwinchester.org



COURTESY

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Winchester has grown from a mission to the fourth-oldest parish in the Arlington diocese.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. AGNES CHURCH

Located in the Cherrydale area of Arlington, St. Agnes was established as a mission of St. Charles Borromeo Church in 1919. Mass was celebrated first in a grocery store, then in a movie theater called Pioneer Hall and finally a public school until Richmond Bishop Denis J. O'Connell dedicated the first church in 1920.

Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton erected St. Agnes as a parish in 1936, appointing Father Edward W. Johnston as the first pastor. The school opened in 1946, staffed by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, until 2009. A larger church, which later became the school gymnasium, was built in 1952.

The present church was dedicated in 1966. In 2022, a new entrance and interior renovations were made to the church, and the former convent transformed into a library, technology center and resource room for the school.

Today, St. Agnes has 1,500 registered families. More than 460 children are enrolled in the school, and 100 in religious education. Parishioners include some who were born, baptized, educated and married in the parish; some who sent their children to the school and now have children or grandchildren attending; and many young people and families.

People are very generous in supporting charities including the food pantry in Madison County, Hope, Christ House, Catholic Charities and other organizations. Adult religious education programs also flourish.

WEBSITE: saintagnes.org



COURTESY

A new entrance and interior renovations were made to St. Agnes Church in Arlington recently.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. AMBROSE CHURCH

St. Ambrose Parish's original church building was dedicated in 1968 under its first pastor, Father Vincent S. Sikora. A second church, dedicated on the feast of St. Ambrose in 1977, was in continuous use until 2021.

In 2001, Father Richard J. Ley, the sixth pastor of the parish, built the Parish Activities Building. This large facility included more offices for a growing parish staff, a parish library, small meeting rooms, a choir rehearsal area and a large reception hall.

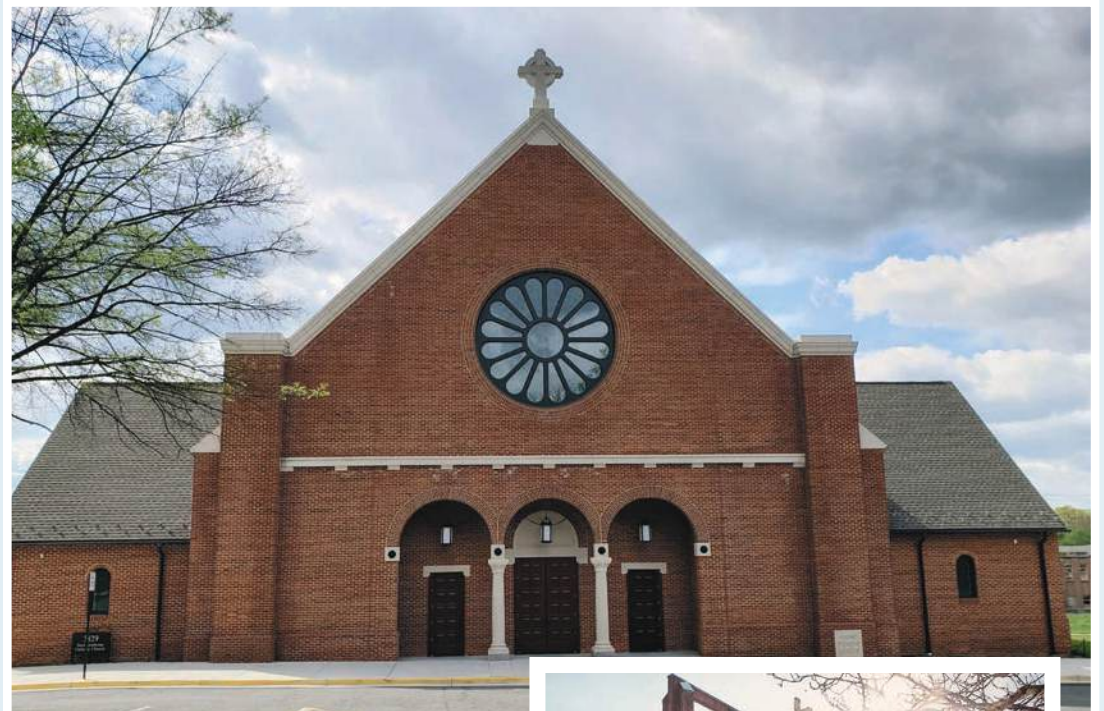
After 14 years of planning, fundraising and construction, the new church building at St. Ambrose was dedicated by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge July 15, 2023. The new church features antique stained-glass windows crafted in Munich, Germany, in 1890, and a vaulted ceiling painted in Marian blue with gold leaf bordering.

Stones from Holy Land sites are embedded in the center aisle and a stone from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is embedded in the altar. Every visit to St. Ambrose is a spiritual pilgrimage in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Ambrose School is the first school in the diocese with a dual-language program for classroom instruction in both Spanish and English.

St. Ambrose is blessed with more than 900 families, many with connections to the military. The parish is strong in service and faith with many organizations, including the Knights of Columbus, Women of St. Ambrose, Bible studies, choir, groups for high school students and young professionals, and an extensive summer camp program. St. Ambrose is also home to the Arlington chapter of the Order of Malta.

WEBSITE: stambroseva.org



COURTESY

St. Ambrose Church in Annandale, dedicated in 2023, features antique stained-glass windows from Germany and stones from Holy Land sites. The former church is shown at right.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE CHURCH

Bishop John R. Keating established St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in 1989 and assigned Msgr. John P. Hannan as the founding pastor. While the campus was under construction, parishioners gathered for worship at Clifton Fire Station, the Centreville firehouse and Centreville High School.

The new church was dedicated April 3, 1993. The next day, the first Sunday in the church, was Palm Sunday. The parish school opened its doors that August and remains a single-track school for students from preschool to eighth grade.

Subsequent enhancements to beautify the sanctuary included installation of stained-glass windows depicting mysteries of the rosary and the placement of statues of American and international saints above the altar. A majestic pipe organ was dedicated in September 2020 and is a showcase for beautiful sacred music for liturgies and concerts.

Today, the parish is comprised of approximately 1,500 registered households and just over 200 students are enrolled in the parish school.

A robust liturgical schedule includes Mass at least twice a day, Eucharistic adoration every weekday and confessions at least four times a week. Along with vibrant parish ministries, the parish is strengthened in faith to follow the example of Christ to live a life of service and love.

WEBSITE: st-andrew.org



Statues of 12 American and international saints overlook the altar at St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Clifton. The church and school (below) opened in 1993.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. ANN CHURCH

St. Ann Parish was established in 1947, combining portions of St. James in Falls Church and St. Charles, St. Agnes and St. Thomas More parishes in Arlington. Currently served by Missionhurst priests and two deacons, the parish is warm and welcoming and offers liturgies in both English and Spanish.

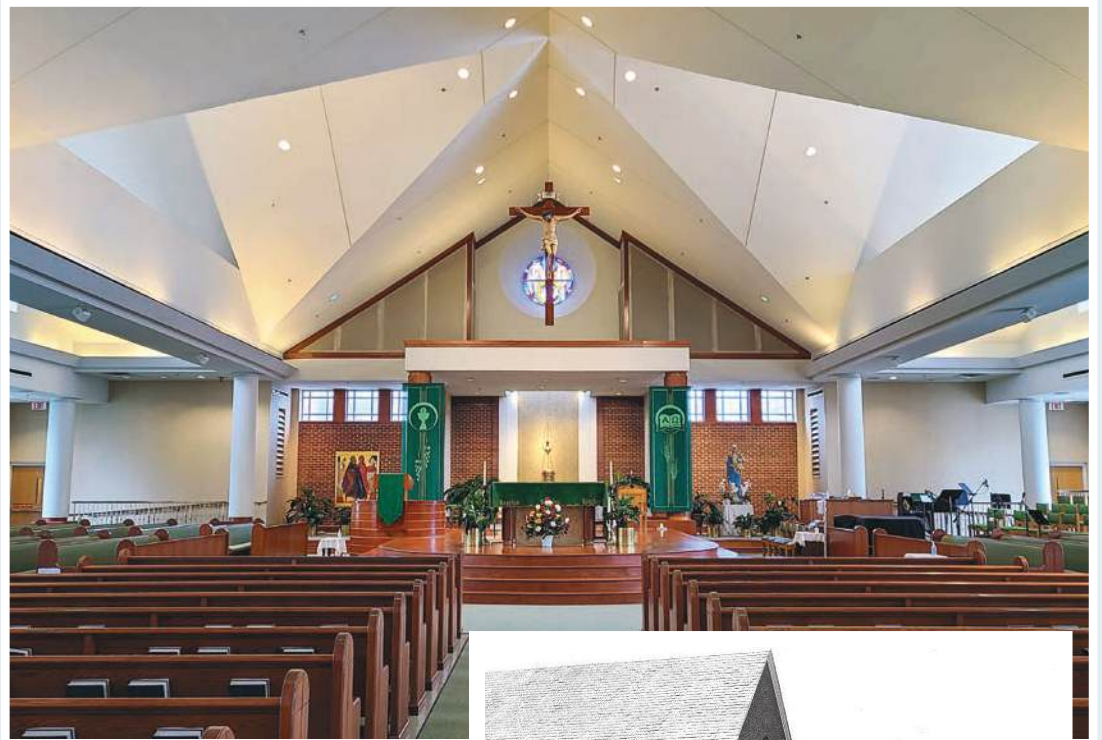
The school opened in 1951, first staffed by the Sisters of Loretto, then by the Sisters of Notre Dame and today by lay faculty and staff.

Our “little school with big results” educates more than 260 students (pre-K to eighth grade), providing a quality Catholic education while instilling a desire to “believe, achieve and inspire.”

The faith formation program offers catechesis and sacramental preparation to more than 600 students in kindergarten through eighth grade annually. Offerings for youths include Scouting, CYO sports, and Invictus, the parish youth group for middle and high school students. Faith formation strives to bring all people of any age into a relationship with Christ through reception of sacraments and bringing adults into full communion with the church.

St. Ann Parish depends on our seniors, most attending for decades and constituting the backbone of our parish volunteers. Whether serving liturgical needs at Mass, being catechists, assisting with the 24-hour pastoral care of Virginia Hospital Center, helping feed local homeless people or hosting collections to help the needy worldwide, our volunteers strive to evangelize through example.

WEBSITE: stannchurch.org



COURTESY

St. Ann Church in Arlington offers liturgies in both English and Spanish. This file photo (at right) from the late 1940s shows the old St. Ann Church in Arlington.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH

St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Falls Church began in 1921 as a mission of St. Mary Church in Alexandria. At that time, the priests of St. Mary’s served the mission. In the 1930s, priests from St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax Station served here until pastoral responsibility was transferred to Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria after World War II.

The aftermath of the war saw a great influx of families coming to the eastern section of Fairfax County and building, out of woods and farmland, many neighborhoods and developments such as the Barcroft areas, Ravenwood, Sleepy Hollow, Willston, Munson Hill and Culmore.

With the growth in the area came a great number of Catholic families and the need for the mission to become a parish. The Diocese of Richmond purchased land at the current location of the parish in 1950.

Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton established St. Anthony as a parish in 1952. For many years, priests and religious sisters of the Society of the Precious Blood served the parish and school, which continued to grow rapidly. From 1989 to the present, priests of the Arlington diocese have served St. Anthony Church.

The parish has provided pastoral care to generations of immigrants who have found a spiritual home and a welcome for the gifts they bring. The presence of Christ in the sacraments, and in each person who seeks refuge in him, continues to be our wealth.

WEBSITE: stanthonyparish.org

FALLS CHURCH



COURTESY

The Diocese of Richmond purchased land in 1950 for the future St. Anthony of Padua Church in Falls Church. Parishioners (inset) process outside the church on Palm Sunday 2024.



PARISH PROFILE

SPRINGFIELD

ST. BERNADETTE CHURCH

St. Bernadette, one of several parishes founded during the growth of the Washington suburbs after World War II, was established in west Springfield in 1959 from St. Michael's Parish in Annandale.

Father Francis L. Bradican, the first pastor, celebrated Mass for several months at a local public school.

In fall 1959, St. Bernadette School opened at St. Leo Church in Fairfax. The next fall, the Daughters of Wisdom arrived to teach, and in early 1961 the new school building and convent were completed.

The School of Religion started in February 1961. That April, Richmond Bishop John J. Russell dedicated the new parish worship space in the school. The rectory/parish office was completed in 1966.

Father Edward P. Brown, then pastor, led the building of a permanent church, dedicated by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh in 1981, complete with the altar used by Pope John Paul II for the Mass on the National Mall in 1979.

In 2007, under Father Kevin J. Larsen, then pastor, the convent was renovated to provide new offices for the parish staff. Under the current pastor, Father Donald J. Rooney, plans for building a new parish life center are underway.

Today, St. Bernadette is known for its participatory liturgy and liturgical music. It is a community of great cultural diversity, with many young families, a thriving school and religious education program, many active parish groups, and a deep care for the underprivileged.

WEBSITE: stbernapar.org



The present St. Bernadette Church building in Springfield (above) was dedicated by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh in 1981. St. Bernadette School (at right) serves children from pre-K through eighth grade.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. BRIDGET OF IRELAND CHURCH

Designated a parish in 2017, St. Bridget of Ireland in Berryville has the distinction of being the youngest parish in the diocese, although it has a much longer history.

Prior to 2017, it was a mission of Sacred Heart Parish in Winchester. Masses were celebrated as far back as the 1960s in Holy Cross Abbey at Cool Spring Farm, the Berryville Opera House and later at Grace Episcopal Church.

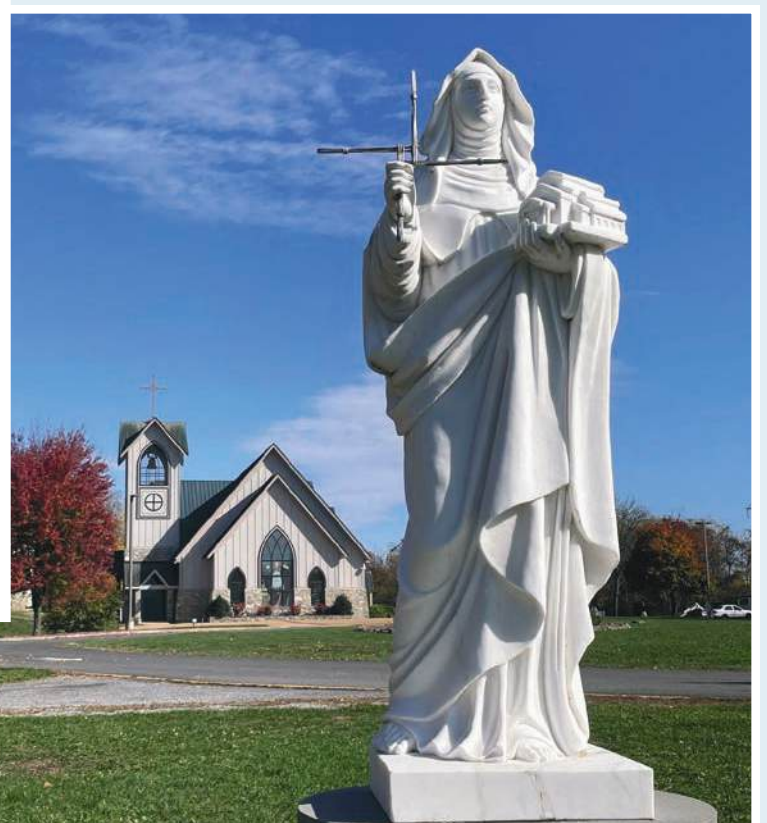
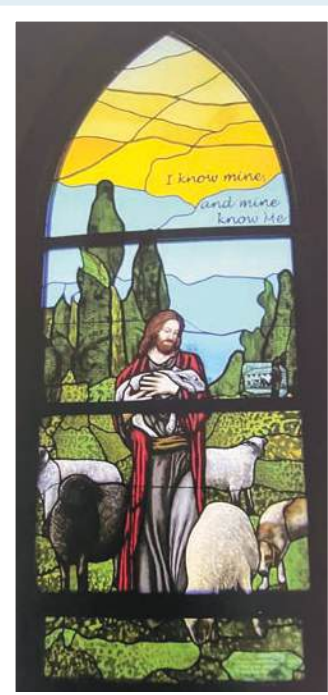
A parish church was finally built and dedicated in 2002. In 2013, the Chet Hobert church hall was added, named for the man who was one of the primary proponents for a Catholic church in Berryville. In 2017, a rectory was added.

The church, tucked away amid the scenic splendor of the Shenandoah Valley, serves all of Clarke County. Stained-glass windows in the church depict scenes from the Gospels, but also contain images of landmarks from the surrounding area.

A window of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque features an image of the historic Sacred Heart Church located in downtown Winchester. Another window depicts Ashby's Gap, used during the Civil War by Stonewall Jackson to move troops to the first Battle of Manassas.

Another window depicting Christ as the Good Shepherd features an image of Holy Cross Monastery, home to a cloistered order of Trappist monks.

WEBSITE: stbridgetberryville.org



COURTESY

A statue of St. Bridget of Ireland stands outside the Berryville church named after her. One of the stained-glass windows (inset) features Jesus as the Good Shepherd with the image of nearby Holy Cross Monastery.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA CHURCH

Established as a mission of St. Luke Church in McLean in 1968 and as a parish in 1979, St. Catherine of Siena Church prioritizes traditional Catholic worship and Christian apostolic witness. The church offers weekly exposition of the Eucharist. A large church crucifix, paintings, icons and elaborate stained-glass windows invite veneration.

The parish school, Siena Academy, uses the Montessori approach emphasizing self-directed activities as a method of learning rather than traditional teaching styles. The school also values religious education and has adjusted its schedule to allow children to attend daily Mass.

The religious education activities similarly promote the love of Jesus and Christian formation. An annual apologetics series prepares high school students to defend their Catholic faith by participating in an academically challenging course and having fun at the same time.

Parishioners contribute generously to various charity drives throughout the year. Many financial campaigns support A Woman's Choice, a pregnancy resource center in Herndon. The Knights of Columbus coordinates charitable programs such as Sweats for Vets for hospitalized military veterans.

Father Jerry J. Pokorsky, pastor, continues the work of his predecessors. The parish founder was Father Antons Justs, who left to become the bishop of Jelgava, Latvia. Father Jerome W. Fasano, Father Franklyn M. McAfee and Father Alexander R. Drummond were his successors.

WEBSITE: saintcatherineschurch.org



COURTESY

The sanctuary of St. Catherine of Siena Church in Great Falls features beautiful icons.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO CHURCH

St. Charles Borromeo Parish was founded in 1909 by Richmond Bishop Augustine van de Vyver. It became a parish of the Arlington diocese when the diocese was erected in 1974.

The first church building was dedicated in 1911 and a four-classroom parish school, staffed by the Benedictine Sisters of Bristow, was founded in 1922. A new school and convent were built in 1955, a new church in 1960, a new rectory in 1965, and a new parish center in 2006. The church was renovated in 1990.

The Benedictine sisters served the school until 2008. In 2014, the school transitioned to a preschool.

The most urban parish in the diocese, encompassing the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, St. Charles serves more than 3,500 parishioners in more than 2,000 registered households.

St. Charles Church proclaims, celebrates and lives the more abundant life of Jesus through comprehensive formation in the faith, a rich sacramental and prayer life and fellowship in charity.

The parish is committed to the missionary discipleship of the new evangelization through a culture of welcome and encounter. St. Charles encourages its parishioners to support the parish's mission as active members of the community of faith.

The parish hopes one day to redevelop the site with a new church, parish center and rectory, to more effectively accomplish its mission of bringing the Good News to the urban heart of Arlington.

WEBSITE: stcharleschurch.org



COURTESY

The sanctuary of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Arlington is decorated with fresh flowers. People (at right) gather for an event in Benedict Hall at St. Charles.



PARISH PROFILE



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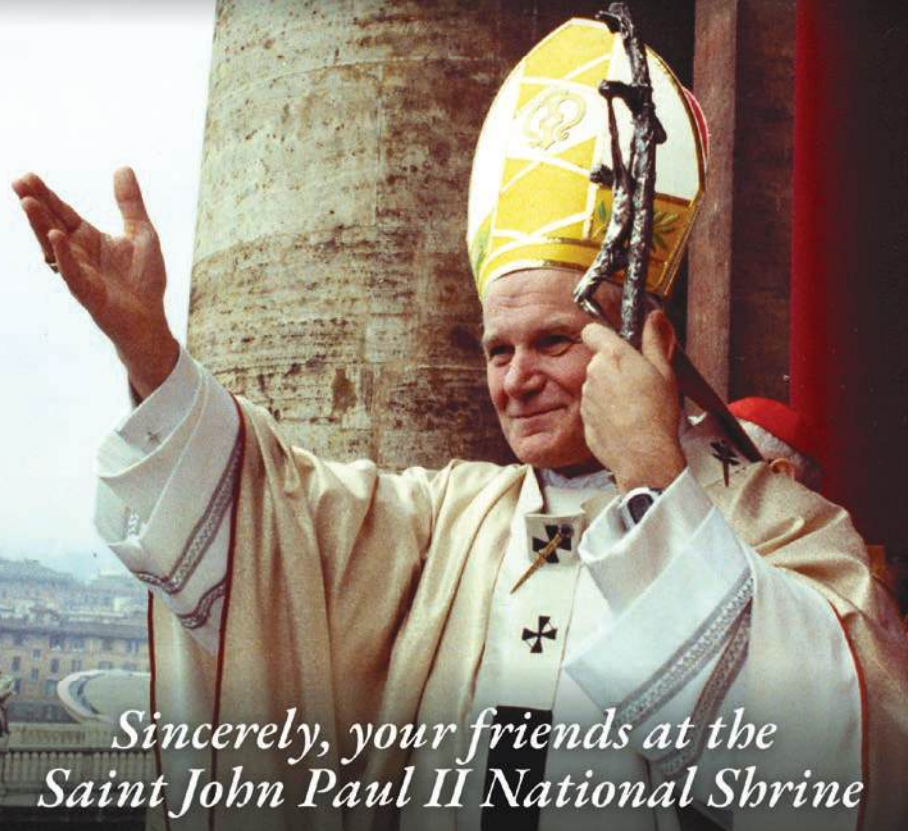
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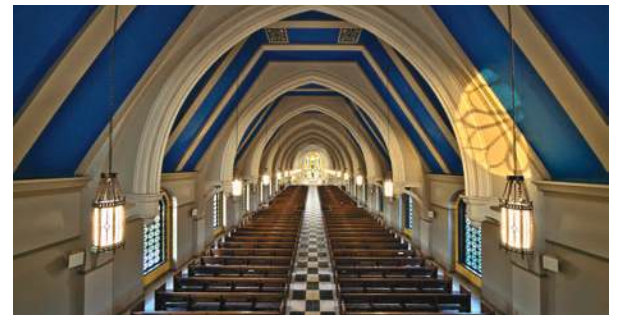
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ST. CLARE OF ASSISI CHURCH

In its Sunday bulletin, St. Clare of Assisi Church in Clifton aptly announces itself as “the Little Church in the Woods.” Situated on about 10 acres in a largely residential neighborhood, St. Clare’s is surrounded by woodlands that abound with wildlife.

Named in honor of St. Clare of Assisi, St. Clare’s was first established as a mission church in 1980. For 10 years afterward, Mass was celebrated in the Old Clifton Fire House, when it was not unusual for the alarm to sound and fire trucks to speed away during the service.

In 1991, Bishop John R. Keating dedicated St. Clare of Assisi, and it became an independent parish Aug. 11, 1996, with Msgr. Frank E. Mahler as the founding pastor. In 2021, Father Michael J. Bazan was appointed pastor of St. Clare’s, assisted by Deacon Michael J. Mochel. Father Bazan celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination in May 2024.

Samantha Williams serves as director of faith formation for the parish’s young people. The Knights of Columbus hold monthly food drives, help care for the elderly and the infirm, and organize various parish celebrations.

Perhaps reflecting the peaceful and humble spirit of St. Clare herself, the staff and parishioners of this little church in the woods quietly welcome newcomers and visitors into this house of worship and prayer surrounded by the bounties of nature.

WEBSITE: stclareclifton.org



COURTESY

St. Clare of Assisi Church in Clifton describes itself as “the Little Church in the Woods.” Flowers adorn the altar (below) at St. Clare’s, which was dedicated in 1991.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY CHURCH ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA MISSION

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church and St. Anthony of Padua Mission, located on the Northern Neck of Virginia, have an interwoven and storied presence in our diocese.

In 1905, a wood-frame church was built in the little fishing and resort town of Colonial Beach. This first St. Elizabeth’s church building was replaced in 1962 by the present edifice.

In 1917, descendants of George Washington’s sister Betty built St. Anthony’s church. The original section of the 1917 church is thus one of the oldest buildings in the Arlington diocese.

In 1943, the Diocese of Richmond entrusted St. Elizabeth’s in Colonial Beach and her five mission churches to the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. In 1992, the Arlington diocese took over the parish and her missions.

Within its ecclesiastical boundaries are found the birthplaces of Presidents James Monroe, James Madison and George Washington and Gen. Robert E. Lee.

In 2019, the parish established Blessed Trinity Catholic Cemetery.

Our humble country parish is firmly maintaining the Catholic faith in this faraway part of the Arlington diocese. Every one of our efforts is caught up in the great mystery of the church that Jesus Christ founded and is directed toward the salvation of souls and the greater glory of God.

WEBSITE: saintselizabethandanthony.com



COURTESY



Parishioners pray before the sanctuary of St. Anthony of Padua Mission Church in King George.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Colonial Beach is seen on a winter’s day.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH

Named after the first American-born saint, the parish began to take shape in 1975 when Bishop Thomas J. Welsh asked Father R. Roy Cosby, pastor of Holy Family Church in Dale City, for his site recommendations for a new parish to be built in the Lake Ridge area. The bishop formally established the parish Sept. 27, 1976, and assigned Father Philip S. Majka as its founding pastor. The first Mass was celebrated at nearby Rockledge Elementary School with approximately 200 people in attendance.

Faced with high inflation, construction of the main church was postponed, and a two-level interim church and activity center were built and dedicated in 1981.

As the parish continued to grow, the existing church and chapel were built and Bishop John R. Keating dedicated them Aug. 28, 1994, the anniversary of the birth of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Beautiful statues, artwork and illuminated Stations of the Cross now adorn the church and chapel offering quiet nooks for prayer and contemplation.

The spirit of Mother Seton shines on the more than 7,500 parishioners of the parish that bears her name. Following her exhortation to “do the will of God ... in the manner he wills it ... because it is his will” is a distinct charism of the parish.

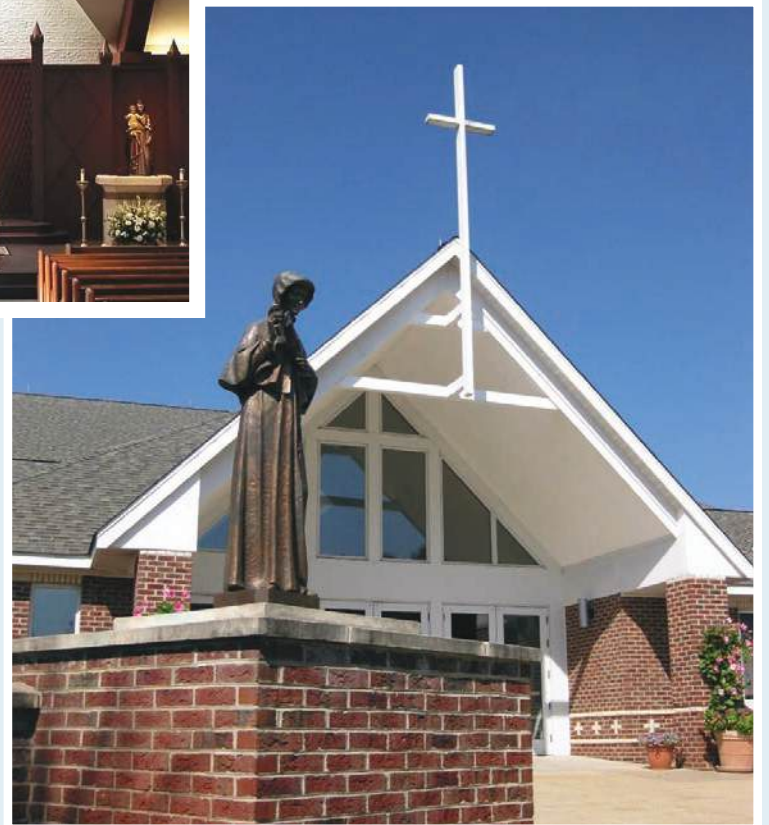
One way parishioners strive to do God’s will is to live their baptismal call, “to make disciples of all nations.”

A wide range of faith formation and evangelization initiatives foster personal encounters with Christ that equip parishioners to be his disciples and disciple-makers inviting others to grow closer to him.

WEBSITE: setonlakeridge.org



The interior of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church (above) in Lake Ridge is inviting. A statue of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (at right) stands on the campus of the church named in her honor.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH

In 1885, St. Francis de Sales Chapel was dedicated in Kilmarnock in Lancaster County. Initially, priests from Fredericksburg ministered to the congregation and later, priests from Colonial Beach served the lower Northern Neck Catholics.

Founded in 1966 as an independent parish, St. Francis de Sales includes St. Paul Mission in Hague in Westmoreland County. Together, St. Francis de Sales Church and St. Paul Mission have 1,865 parishioners in the Northern Neck.

About 130 miles from Arlington, the Northern Neck remains a historic waterfront peninsula, with a population just over 50,000.

St. Francis de Sales Church and St. Paul Mission have ministries that respond to the needs of the local community. The parish supports a bereavement ministry that provides meals; year-round food drives for local food pantries; a college scholarship program funded by parish donations; and AA meetings.

Faith formation is offered through weekly Bible study and RCIA classes. The Knights of Columbus and Women of St. Francis meet regularly and conduct programs for the benefit of the parish and community.

In addition to the church and chapel, the parish facilities in Kilmarnock include the rectory; de Sales Hall, built in 1974; St. Francis de Sales Activity Center, constructed in 2017; and the parish office.

In 2022, St. Paul Mission built a new church in Hague and maintains the rectory and former church. Both sites offer cemeteries for parishioners.

WEBSITE: stfranciskilmarnock.org



FILE

St. Francis de Sales Parish in Kilmarnock was formally established in 1966, eight years before the founding of the Arlington diocese.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH

If the Lord had a set of options for the location of the Garden of Eden, Purcellville would have been on the list. The area is bordered by two great and noble rivers flowing north and east to the Atlantic Ocean and the Shenandoah Valley to the west.

St. Francis de Sales Church in Purcellville was set by the whim of a foreign priest. His name was Father Amadeus J. Van Ingelem. The director of a Belgian program raising money for the foreign missions, he decided in his 28th year of ordination to join the missions. The program was named for St. Francis de Sales.

In 1919, with followers scattered across the vicinity of Purcellville, Father Van Ingelem founded the mission of St. Francis de Sales. A church was built in 1921.

In 1967, the status of the church was upgraded from mission to full parish. With the new identity would come the need for a larger church. Such came about with the arrival of Capuchin Franciscan Friars in 1967 to the budding parish of 99 families.

In 1992, a new church outside town was dedicated. The parish now served 250 families. The new church could accommodate 500 worshippers. In 1997, parishioners said farewell to our Capuchin friars and welcomed our first diocesan pastor.

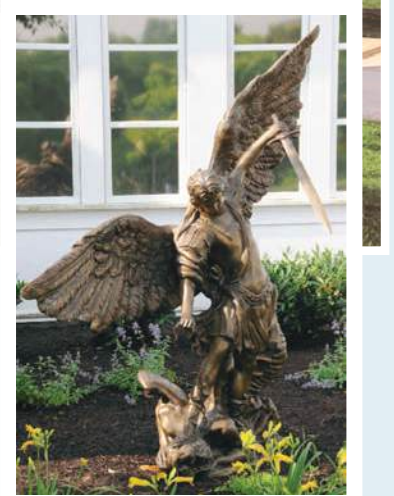
The 100th anniversary was marked in 2021 with more than 1,500 families. As many as four vocations have come from parish families.

WEBSITE: saintfrancisparish.org



COURTESY

St. Francis de Sales Church in Purcellville was dedicated in 1992. A statue of St. Michael the Archangel (inset) stands outside the church.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH

Home today to some 8,000 parishioners, St. Francis of Assisi Church and School originated with a request made by a U.S. Navy chaplain, Father Daniel J. Meehan, who in 1954 was stationed at Marine Corps Base Quantico.

After hearing Father Meehan's proposal for a new parish to serve the hundreds of Catholic families in the area, Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton approved the purchase of 20 acres of land in Triangle, and soon this vision of a new parish became a reality.

The church and school opened in 1957, with the Franciscan Friars of the Holy Name Province assigned to the parish. Franciscan Father James P. Scullion is pastor, assisted by Franciscan Fathers George C. Corrigan and Christopher J. Dunn, parochial vicars, and Deacon Michael Gomes.

The mission of this vibrant parish is "to live the Gospel," a desire mirrored in the many organizations aimed at serving parishioners, the community and society at large. These run the gamut from liturgical ministries and prayer and fellowship groups to prison ministry and an active Order of Franciscan Seculars.

St. Francis House is a special outreach ministry designed to assist low-income, disadvantaged families in the area. Sally A. Nicholson is principal of St. Francis of Assisi School, which educates children from prekindergarten through eighth grade.

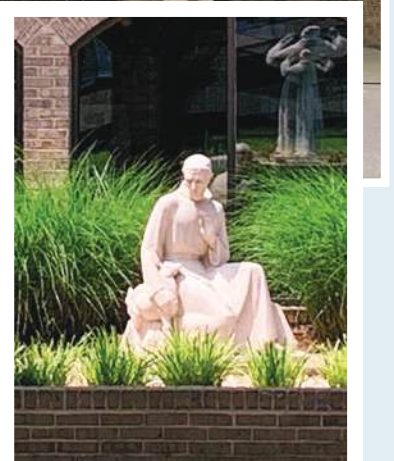
In this parish, the spirit of St. Francis is alive and thriving.

WEBSITE: stfrncis.org



COURTESY

St. Francis of Assisi Church was established in Triangle to minister to local Catholics, including those stationed at nearby Marine Corps Base Quantico. A statue of St. Francis of Assisi (at right) stands in the church courtyard.



ST. ISIDORE THE FARMER CHURCH

The history of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish began with the merger of two Orange County parishes: St. Mark and St. John.

In 1884, St. Mark Church was built as a mission of St. John Parish in Warrenton for Irish railroad workers in Gordonsville. In 1946, the mission was reassigned to Precious Blood in Culpeper. In 1972, the mission was established a parish.

St. John Church in the town of Orange was formed in 1946 as a mission of Precious Blood Parish in Culpeper, which was being administered by the Missionhurst community. In 1995, the Missionhursts gave administration of St. Mark and St. John back to the Arlington diocese.

Father David L. Martin, the founding pastor of St. Isidore the Farmer, led the daunting task of selling the properties of both St. Mark and St. John to build a single parish. St. Isidore the Farmer Church was formally dedicated Nov. 3, 2002. The parishioners of the two communities came together to bond into one vibrant Catholic community.

St. Isidore Church rests on a hill amid the rolling foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, beautiful lands, beautiful farms, beautiful people who appreciate simple rural living. Visitors often comment on the beauty of the church, the solemnity of the liturgy and the friendly welcoming atmosphere.

In all parish groups, events and activities, we seek to support, encourage and strengthen one another by providing an authentic Catholic community animated by truth, love and divine worship.

WEBSITE: saintisidorethefarmer.com



COURTESY

The simple altar at St. Isidore the Farmer Church in Orange is backed by a beautiful stained-glass window. A statue of Mary and the child Jesus (at right) stands outside the church.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. JAMES CHURCH

St. James Parish dates back to 1873, when Jesuit Father Dennis J. O’Kane and Bishop James Gibbons (the future Cardinal Gibbons) went to Falls Church in search of land for a mission church of St. Mary Church in Alexandria. They procured a plot of land at the corner of West and Fowler from the Sewall family for the considerable sum of \$1.

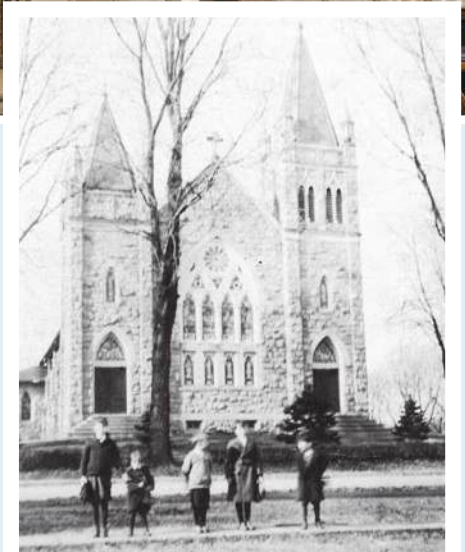
Bishop Gibbons laid the cornerstone for the original clapboard church June 23, 1874. St. James was established as a parish in 1892, and in 1902, its first pastor, Father Edward M. Tierney, erected a new stone church.

In the years to come, several missions came out of St. James, including St. Charles Borromeo in Arlington, St. John the Beloved in McLean, St. Francis de Sales in Purcellville, St. Mary of Sorrows in Fairfax, St. John the Apostle in Leesburg and St. Joseph in Herndon.

In 1924, Father Amadeus Joseph Van Ingelgem brought in the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to run the school, their first mission in Virginia. In 1952, responding to the baby boom, Father Edward V. Mullarkey expanded the church by adding the current transepts and worked with the sisters to expand the school as well.

Today, St. James is a parish of more than 3,000 families. Responding to the continued changes in Northern Virginia, St. James now has a vibrant Hispanic community. The parish is rich in history and strong in service by way of its various ministries and apostolates: social outreach, creation care, pro-life, youth and young professionals, men and women Bible studies, choir, parish speaker series, prayer groups and Legion of Mary.

WEBSITE: stjamescatholic.org



COURTESY

The interior of St. James Church in Falls Church reflects its history. Parishioners (at right) stand outside the original St. James in this 1926 photo.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE CHURCH

Catholics in Leesburg and the surrounding region of Loudoun County and one-third of Fairfax County became a mission of St. Peter Parish in Harpers Ferry, W.Va., before the Civil War. After years worshipping at different sites, and under the guidance of Father Augustine Van de Vyver, pastor of St. Peter's, they built the mission church of Immaculate Conception, dedicated Oct. 13, 1878.

Over the years, the Catholic population continued to expand until, by 1922, Mass and the sacraments were being celebrated each Sunday in Leesburg and other nearby communities. Immaculate Conception Mission Church was made a parish July 18, 1926, with responsibility for mission sites in Middleburg, Purcellville and Herndon.

Richmond Bishop Andrew J. Brennan permitted the parish to be renamed St. John the Apostle July 4, 1927.

With various renovations and expansions, the original church continued to be the principal site for worship until 1992 when the parish center was built on the old estate across the street from the church.

The sacraments were celebrated in the parish center with daily Mass in the church until Aug. 3, 2012, when a new church was dedicated by Bishop Paul S. Loverde. The historic church reverted to being the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception and is used for extended Eucharistic adoration and small weddings and funerals.

Today the parish of more than 3,000 families continues to meet the needs of its diverse and growing populations and to continue its legacy of evangelization through varied ministries, programs and liturgies.

WEBSITE: saintjohnleesburg.org



COURTESY

The historic Chapel of the Immaculate Conception (inset) is used for extended Eucharistic adoration and small weddings and funerals at St. John the Apostle Church in Leesburg. With roots preceding the Civil War, the church (above) now serves more than 3,000 families.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

St. John the Baptist Church in Front Royal is an epicenter of Catholic activity. Within the parish boundaries there are numerous Catholic enterprises and educational institutions. From these organizations a vibrant Catholic community has developed around St. John's Church, especially over the past 25 years.

Many of the parishioners moved to the Front Royal area specifically for the Catholic culture and to raise their families in a supportive Catholic atmosphere. The parish is bursting at the seams and continues to grow.

To support this growing population of families, there are eight Catholic-run primary and secondary school options and a bustling homeschool community. Many youth programs have developed including a talented youth drama club, sports teams and groups such as Little Flowers, Trail Life USA, Wonderfully Fashioned and more.

For adults, too, new programs are being added all the time, most recently an active young adult group and young adult drama club, Seven Sisters & Fasting Brothers, a 40-member sacred music choir and Gregorian chant "schola," a mom's group, a food pantry and other opportunities for outreach.

In addition to various faith initiatives and Adoration Chapel, the most important support comes in the form of sacraments with several daily Masses offered and confessions heard twice a day.

To many, St. John's is the heart and home of our Christian community.

WEBSITE: sjtb.org



COURTESY

The sanctuary of St. John the Baptist Church in Front Royal displays biblical events, including the baptism of Jesus by St. John the Baptist.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. JOHN THE BELOVED CHURCH

MCLEAN

Long before St. John the Beloved in McLean became a parish in October 1951, the church had a history of its own. John Carlin dreamed of a church on his own property in rural El Nido, Va. In 1912, his son, William M. Carlin, gave a half-acre of land for the site of a mission church. Richmond Bishop Denis J. O'Connell laid its cornerstone Sept. 21, 1913.

In September 1954, St. John's Grade School opened its doors to 150 kindergarteners through fourth graders in a one-story building designed by architect and parishioner Francis Koenig. The Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary sisters, commuting from their convent at Marymount College in Arlington, staffed the school.

Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton dedicated the new church, also designed by Koenig, Oct. 21, 1956, having entrusted pastoral care of the parish to the Missionhurst priests in the person of Father Paul R. Cauwe.

In 1967, the parish's second pastor, Father Henry E. Hammond, built a convent at 1600 Carlin Lane for the sisters. In 1973, the Sisters of Notre Dame took over running the school until their departure in June 1993. The convent has been home to the Youth Apostles Institute ever since.

In this unique octagonal church with circular pews, worshipping God in the Mass, adoring Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, and proclaiming the Gospel and teaching the deposit of faith from the pulpit are literally and figuratively the center of our lives.

WEBSITE: stjohncatholicmclean.org



COURTESY

Flowers adorn the lawn in front of St. John the Beloved Church in McLean.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. JOHN BOSCO CHURCH OUR LADY OF THE SHENANDOAH MISSION

WOODSTOCK
AND BASYE

The first Catholic church built in Shenandoah County was St. John the Evangelist in 1888. Located in Woodstock, the church was a mission of St. Peter Church in Harper's Ferry, W.Va., and later became a mission of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Winchester.

The church was renamed St. John Bosco in 1972. The new church was built in 1973 and has been the heart of the campus for more than 50 years.

St. John Bosco serves a mission church, Our Lady of the Shenandoah, in Basye. Located next to Bryce Mountain Resort, it offers a place where local families and tourists can worship.

Most recently, all buildings on our north campus have undergone renovations to secure, upgrade, and beautify the spaces where we worship, learn, and have fellowship with our faithful brothers and sisters, and welcome visitors.

Our south campus is where our Catholic outreach and food pantry buildings are located.

Our ministries within the church provide a place to grow in Christ and to serve the church and one another.

These include CCD, RCIA, Legion of Mary (English and Spanish), children, adult and Spanish choirs, Walking With Purpose Bible study, Divine Mercy Cenacle, URS youth group, Praise and Worship, Needles and Threads, Knights of Columbus, young adult group, Father Dobbins theater troupe, Sunday Bible study, Spanish Bible study, Eucharistic ministers, lay readers, altar servers, ushers, Trail Life and Catholic outreach.

WEBSITE: sjbwoodstock.org



COURTESY

St. John Bosco Parish in Woodstock, the new church (above) and old church (at right), offers a variety of ministries to help parishioners grow in Christ and serve the church and others.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH

America “Anne” Semmes Rice wrote letters to the bishop in Richmond asking for Mass to be offered in Warrenton. Her requests were approved, and St. John the Evangelist Church was founded July 16, 1860, as a mission parish. The original brick church building on Lee Street was dedicated in 1861.

After nearly a century in the building, the growing church expanded by purchasing the campus of the old Stuyvesant School for Boys on Winchester Street. A school was opened in the fall of 1960 under the guidance of first the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia and later the Sisters of Notre Dame.

In 1964, after the construction of the beautiful stone church, the parish relocated to its current site. Continued parish growth allowed the construction of a new school in 1987 and the expansion of the church building in 2008.

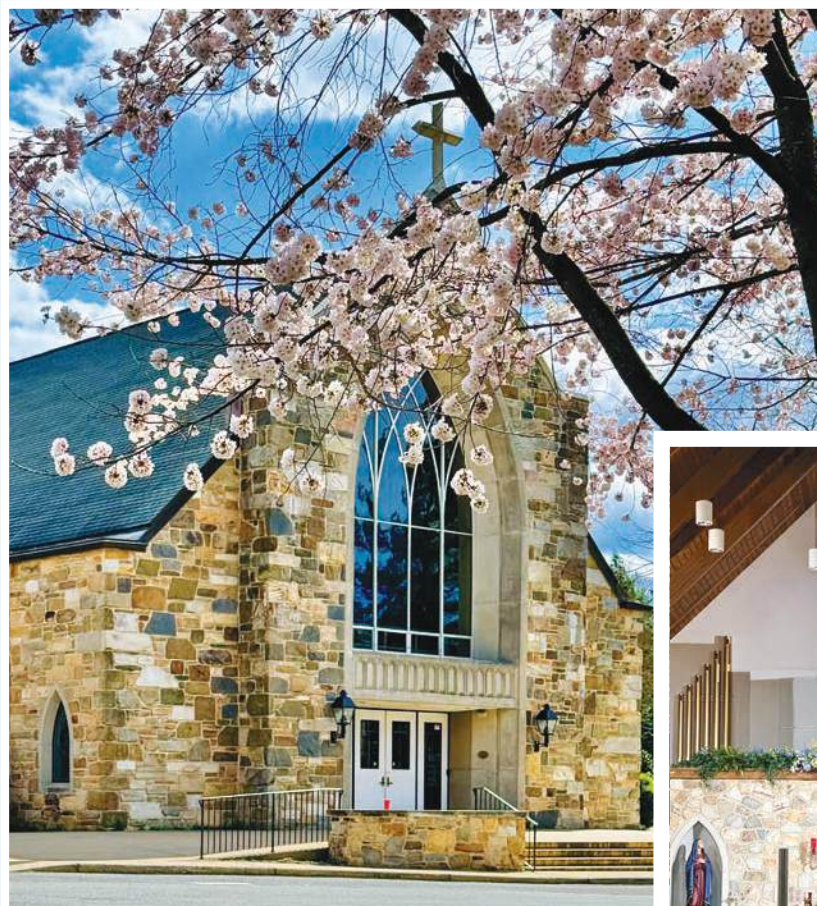
The school, now under lay leadership, serves approximately 275 students from preschool through eighth grade. The parish has more than 2,400 families.

St. John the Evangelist Church is nestled in the geographic heart of the diocese. The parish is vibrant with more than 30 groups and ministries, serving all ages from toddlers to seniors.

Included in the groups are a growing vibrant Spanish ministry and the newly formed marriage ministry, which supports and celebrates the vocation of marriage. Members of the Knights of Columbus Council No. 5561 actively support many parish initiatives.

The parish is still the only Catholic church in Fauquier County.

WEBSITE: sje1.org



D. WENDLING | COURTESY

Cherry blossoms hover over the exterior façade of St. John the Evangelist Church in Warrenton. Blue and yellow flowers (inset) adorn the altar.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. JOHN NEUMANN CHURCH

Throughout the 1970s, the Reston area expanded dramatically, increasing the need for a second Catholic church. Bishop Thomas J. Welsh created St. John Neumann Church July 5, 1979, to serve the surrounding communities of South Reston. The 550-seat church, situated on 18 acres of land, was dedicated June 28, 1982.

The town of Reston continued to flourish, burgeoning the parish needs. In October 1996, the Arlington diocese approved a request to expand. After overcoming a series of delays, the first Mass was celebrated in the new 1,150-seat sanctuary April 4, 2004.

St. John Neumann now enjoys an entire campus with multiple classrooms, meeting areas and the original church, now the St. Francis de Sales Chapel, which serves as an additional worship space. In September 2018, St. John Neumann Catholic Preschool was established.

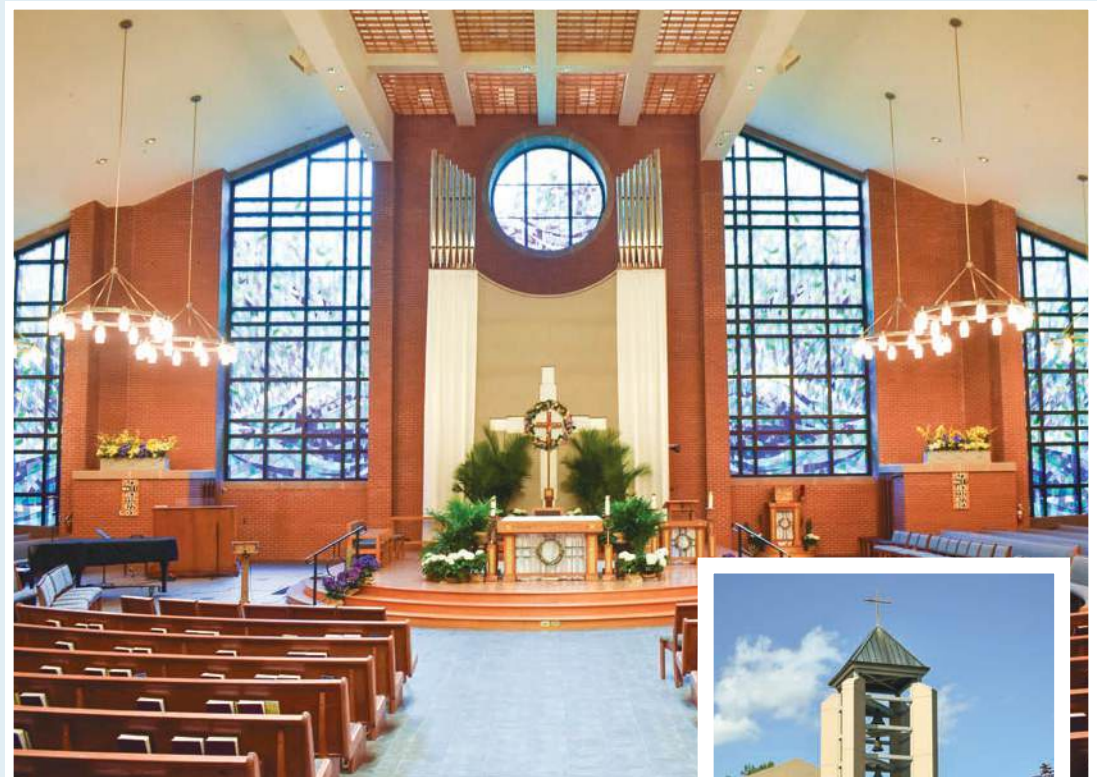
The bell tower chimes before each weekend Mass, welcoming all to celebrate here, while the striking stained-glass windows, serving as a backdrop to the magnificent Eucharistic celebration, remind us of God’s creation and our responsibility as stewards.

Our vibrant parish embraces the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, aiming to do all with compassion, humility and gentleness.

Since its inception, St. John Neumann has been served by the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

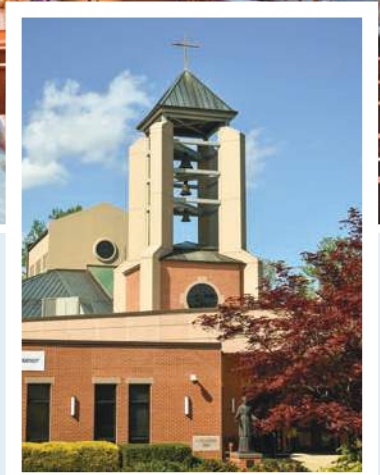
The Oblates guide the faithful in the St. John Neumann mission to give witness to the presence of God in our midst by living the Gospel to its fullest.

WEBSITE: saintjn.org



COURTESY

The stained-glass windows at St. John Neumann Church in Reston shine at Easter. The bells (at right) ring before every weekend Mass.

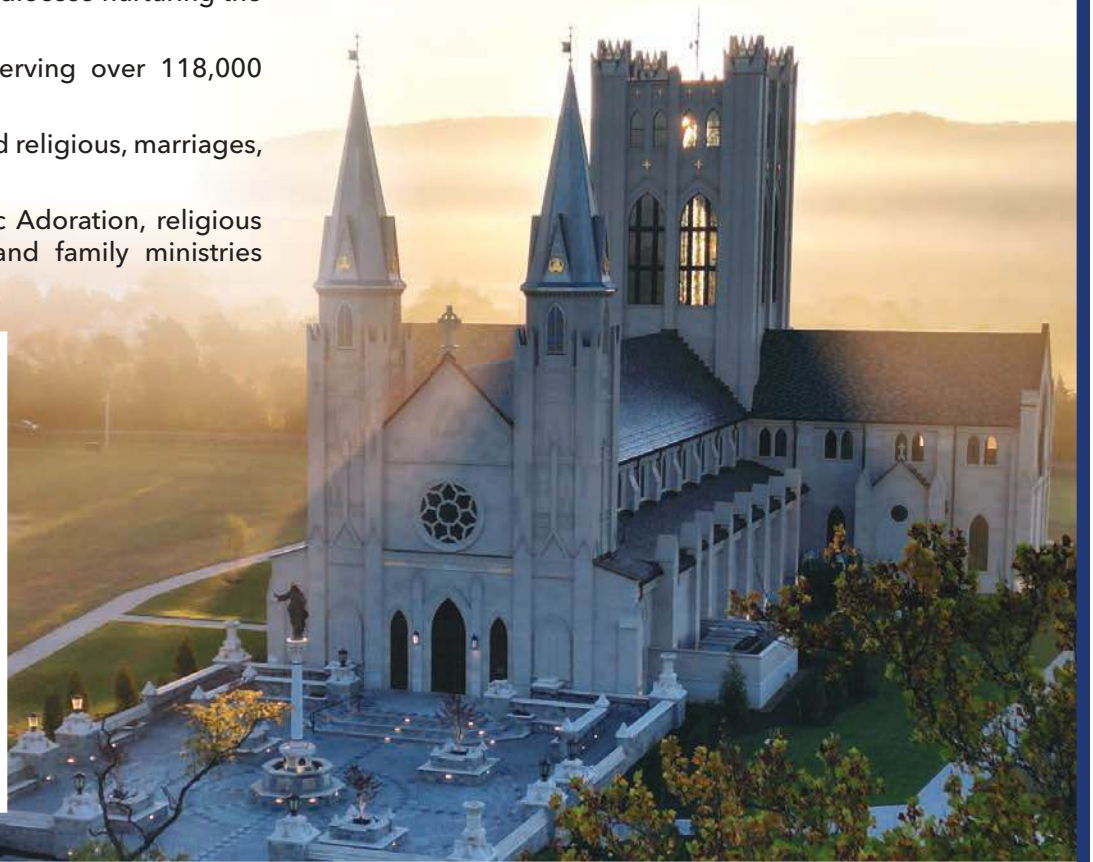


PARISH PROFILE

Celebrating Our Wonderful Diocese with Gratitude

By God's Grace, Our Alumni Are Making an Impact in the Arlington Diocese:

- More than 261 alumnus-to-alumna marriages in our diocese nurturing the next generation of Catholics
- 24 ordained alumni (23 priests and 1 deacon) serving over 118,000 parishioners and students in the Arlington Diocese
- 3 cloistered nuns dedicated to praying for priests and religious, marriages, and the conversion of souls
- Hundreds of alumni actively involved in Eucharistic Adoration, religious education, works of mercy, and various school and family ministries throughout the diocese



CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

Front Royal, Virginia | www.christendom.edu

Heartfelt congratulations
to the Diocese of Arlington on its

GOLDEN JUBILEE,

**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
OF UNWAVERING FAITH
AND DEDICATION.**

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH

St. Joseph Church, founded in 1915 by the Josephite Priests and Brothers, stands as a beacon of faith and community for the area's Black Catholics. Over the years, it has evolved into a vibrant and multicultural parish, yet still retains the legacy of its founding members, with descendants proudly continuing their faith tradition.

At the heart of St. Joseph are its blossoming and blessed ministries, including the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver, dedicated to service and fellowship, and its commitment to social justice and pro-life causes, reflecting the parish's unwavering dedication to compassion and advocacy.

As St. Joseph's prepares to celebrate its 110th anniversary, the parish eagerly anticipates commemorating another milestone: the 50th anniversary of its beloved Gospel Choir, whose soul-stirring melodies have uplifted congregants for generations. The parish community looks forward to honoring these milestones with gratitude and joy, reflecting on the rich tapestry of faith and fellowship that has defined St. Joseph's for more than a century.

At the heart of St. Joseph's is its warm, welcoming and spirit-filled liturgy, steeped in the vibrant expression of African American worship traditions. Here, parishioners come together as one family, united in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, as they continue to build upon the foundation laid by those who came before them and carry forward the legacy of faith, hope, and love for generations to come.

WEBSITE: stjosephva.org



FILE

The Gospel Choir performs during Sunday Mass last year at St. Joseph Church in Alexandria. St. Joseph's first Communion class of 1957 (at right) gathers on the church's front steps for a photo before the May crowning of the Blessed Mother.



COURTESY



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. JOSEPH CHURCH

From 1925 until 1944, St. Joseph was a mission of St. James Parish in Falls Church. In 1944, St. Joseph became a separate parish with Father Edward J. Mularkey assigned as the first pastor. The faith community was ministered to by numerous diocesan priests, the Holy Ghost Fathers and Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular.

St. Joseph Church is a faith community of more than 2,700 families and is staffed by the Franciscan friars. All are welcome in the spirit of peace and kindness of St. Francis of Assisi.

The church is one of several buildings on the campus of 14.45 acres. The parish seeks to provide a faithful atmosphere to celebrate the sacraments and Scripture, profess and live out one's faith and grow spiritually in Christ.

The church oversees various ministries, events and catechetical opportunities, as well as a faith-filled Catholic grade school for kindergarten through eighth grade.

A visitor would appreciate the simplicity of the church and its natural lighting. They would be welcomed by the sight of the new baptismal font and ambry, where the holy oils are kept.

They would experience the Franciscan hospitality of the friars and parishioners. As followers of Jesus Christ and Francis of Assisi, the friars encourage the parishioners to remain open to the grace of lifelong conversion, or metanoia.

WEBSITE: sjherndon.org



COURTESY

A graceful courtyard (above) in front of St. Joseph Church in Herndon welcomes parishioners and visitors alike. Natural lighting bathes St. Joseph's sanctuary (at right).



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

FREDERICKSBURG

ST. JUDE CHURCH

In June 2003, Bishop Paul S. Loverde appointed Father David L. Martin as the parochial administrator of the newly formed St. Jude Mission in Fredericksburg.

The first Mass was celebrated in a funeral home in September 2003. By December 2003, the community was meeting in a renovated gym. St. Jude became a parish March 28, 2007, with Father Martin as the first pastor.

The community flourished and soon outgrew the gym. A new, larger rental became the new home of the parish in 2009. Fundraising for the permanent church continued.

In June 2011, Father James C. Hudgins became the new parochial administrator of St. Jude, and eventually pastor in June 2013. Father Hudgins continued to grow the parish while spearheading the construction project and fundraising efforts.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge dedicated the church July 14, 2018, with Bishop Loverde, Father Hudgins, Father Martin and several other priests of the diocese concelebrating. The altar holds a relic of the 12 apostles donated by Father Hudgins.

In June 2020, Father J. Kevin O’Keefe was named pastor. He tasked the staff with reaching out to the local community. The parish is now a distribution site for the Fredericksburg Area Food Bank and has become known as a welcoming place.

The parish welcomed 33 people into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil 2024.

WEBSITE: stjudechurch.us



COURTESY

St. Jude Church in Fredericksburg, dedicated in 2018, is one of the newer churches in the Arlington diocese. A sunbeam (inset) shines through a stained-glass window onto the altar.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH

St. Lawrence Church was founded June 7, 1967, by Richmond Bishop John J. Russell and named in honor of one of the early martyrs of the church.

The founding pastor, Father Frank E. Mahler, first offered Mass in Thomas Edison High School until the new church, rectory and parish hall buildings were constructed. Bishop Russell consecrated the church Dec. 12, 1970.

The sanctuary was superbly renovated in 1991 and a new Roman-style narthex was completed in 2020.

By God’s grace, the parish has continued to grow and flourish, most notably in works of charity and vocations. Our parishioners provide spiritual and economic support to the needy through a sustained initiative to collect food, clothing, school supplies and funds.

St. Lawrence Church has been blessed to provide men and women for the service of the Catholic Church. The Lord has called 16 parishioners to his service in vocations to the religious life, diaconate and priesthood. Most recently, Father Steven G. Oetjen was ordained to the priesthood in 2017 and we currently have a postulant to the religious life.

In the mid-1980s, Father Franklyn M. McAfee began planting and arranging the parish garden, resplendent with countless roses, other flowering and beautiful plants and statues of various saints, the Divine Mercy image, Michelangelo’s “Pieta” and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The garden attracts many visitors to the parish grounds.

WEBSITE: stlawrencealex.org

ALEXANDRIA



COURTESY

A statue of the Sacred Heart greets visitors to St. Lawrence Church in Alexandria. The church is pictured at right around the time of its dedication in 1970.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. LEO THE GREAT CHURCH

A small mission church in the city of Fairfax was formally established as the parish of St. Leo the Great May 21, 1957, and Father Herman J. Veger was named the first pastor.

With 450 registered families, one of the first priorities of the new parish was the establishment of a school. In 1959, the school opened with four religious sisters and six lay teachers navigating the unenviable student to teacher ratio of approximately 50:1.

The present church was dedicated June 18, 1966, under Father Walter F. Malloy. Subsequently, the building has undergone significant renovations. By Easter 1984, the stunning slab-glass windows were installed.

A major redesign of the sanctuary, led by Father John D. Kelly in 2002-03, returned the crucifix and the tabernacle to the center position behind the new marble altar. Later, Father David A. Whitestone oversaw the installation of the statue of St. Leo in the church vestibule and painted the niche himself.

Today, St. Leo is a vibrant parish of over 3,700 households. The diversity of age, race, and culture among parishioners is reflected in the wide range of authentic Catholic traditions and practices embraced here.

Annual parish missions and Forty Hours' Devotion ground the community first and foremost in love for God. More than 65 unique parish organizations bring that love into the larger community. Thus, the universality of the church is truly embodied at St. Leo, reflecting the words of our patron: "In the unity of faith and baptism, therefore, our community is undivided."

WEBSITE: stleofairfax.com



The wall behind the altar at St. Leo the Great Church in Fairfax bears the inscription, "As I have done you must also do." A cross (at right) stands high above the church.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. LOUIS CHURCH

In the early 1920s, Father Louis Smet, pastor of St. Mary Church in Old Town Alexandria, began a Sunday school class for the children living in the community known as Groveton.

He soon discerned a need for a mission church there, and in 1925 he asked a local family to purchase the one-room Groveton schoolhouse and named it Sacred Heart Mission. In the early 1940s, the chapel was enlarged and the community renamed it St. Louis Chapel in his honor.

In 1949, St. Louis Parish was formally established with its first resident pastor, Father Albert P. Campbell. In 1956, the parish school opened and it quickly became a centerpiece of the parish's life and vitality.

As the Catholic population of the Groveton area continued to grow, a new church was dedicated May 5, 1962.

In 1977, the parish gained a new friendship with the cloistered Poor Clare Sisters who accepted an invitation from Bishop Thomas J. Welsh to establish a monastery just five minutes down the road from the parish campus. St. Louis is the co-patron of the Third Order Franciscans.

Special features of the parish include a Sunday Spanish Mass, a Eucharistic adoration chapel, a joint Knights of Columbus council with Good Shepherd Parish in Alexandria and a professional-quality café.

The Little Way Café fosters fellowship among the parishioners and offers a friendly welcome to the community at large. It was dedicated by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge in 2022.

WEBSITE: saintlouisparish.org



St. Louis Church in Alexandria was built in 1962 to accommodate the growing Catholic population in the Groveton area. Parishioners of St. Louis (at right) gather on the patio of the Little Way Café for a wine and jazz event in 2022.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. LUKE CHURCH

The parish mission statement of St. Luke Church in McLean is quite simple: “Love God. Love Neighbor. Nurture Disciples.”

From participation in the Sunday and weekday Masses, to the various discipleship groups for women and men, young and old alike, the parishioners of St. Luke strive to live this mission statement each day. From its inception, the parish has been known for its generous outreach to the local community and beyond.

St. Luke Parish was established in 1961 to cover a roughly 3-by-10-mile region running along the Potomac River, stretching from Chain Bridge Road to the Loudoun County line. The parish was formed from the northeast section of St. John the Beloved Parish in McLean.

The founding pastor, Msgr. J. Louis Flaherty, celebrated the first Mass with four parishioners in attendance May 27, 1961. The following Sunday, 700 gathered for the first weekly Mass, celebrated in the cafeteria at Franklin Sherman School.

In August 1962, construction on the parish school and gymnasium were completed. Masses could now be offered in the school gymnasium.

Mass was celebrated in the gymnasium until a permanent church was constructed. It was dedicated by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh Feb. 10, 1983.

St. Luke is currently home to more than 1,650 parishioner households. The school continues to form students, now from preschool through eighth grade, in becoming socially responsible citizens committed to serving others.

WEBSITE: saintlukemclean.org



COURTESY

From its first Mass with only four parishioners in attendance, St. Luke Church in McLean has grown to include 1,650 households. This triptych (inset) hangs in the church.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. MARK CHURCH

St. Mark Church sits on land distributed to Thomas Lee in 1744 from the Lord Fairfax land grant. Originally a dairy farm, 20 acres of this land was sold to the Diocese of Richmond in November 1964.

Richmond Bishop John J. Russell formally established St. Mark Parish May 25, 1965, and appointed Father Robert J. Walsh as the church's founding pastor.

The emphasis for the first 400 parishioners was on Catholic education for youths and adults; the formation of home-based small groups; and thriving outreach ministries, all of which exist to this day.

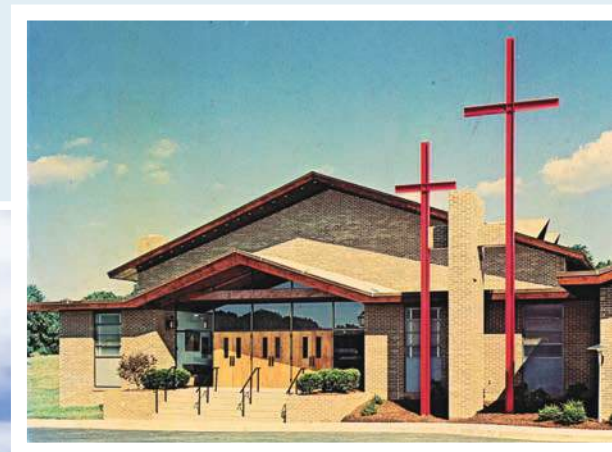
Pending construction of a church, Mass was celebrated in the auditorium of James Madison High School. The parish had quickly grown to 800 families by completion of the church and the first Mass was celebrated Aug. 4, 1968.

By 1980, continued growth necessitated a larger church. Construction began for the present church May 1, 1983, and the first Mass was celebrated Nov. 4, 1984.

The former church became a Parish Activities Center. The Christian Formation Center was added in 2003, hosting an elementary school for pre-K through eighth grade, religious education for youths and adults and a thriving English-as-a-second-language program.

Blessed from the beginning with people of faith and energy, St. Mark continues to be a Catholic community called by Christ to worship God, to invite all with love, to nurture our faith and to serve others.

WEBSITE: stmark.org



COURTESY

St. Mark Church in Vienna stands on land distributed in 1744 as part of the Lord Fairfax land grant. The parish population quickly outgrew this church building (inset) dedicated in 1968.



PARISH PROFILE

FREDERICKSBURG

ST. MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

The first Mass in the city of Fredericksburg was celebrated in 1845. In 1858, James Behan of Norfolk donated \$3,000 to Richmond Bishop John McGill for the purpose of building a church. The cornerstone was laid June 27, 1858, and Mass was celebrated in the building by December.

Officially dedicated March 20, 1859, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception was a mission church of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond, and the priests who served were also responsible for the Catholics in Warrenton, Fairfax and Kilmarnock.

During the Civil War, the church was used as a hospital for bloody battles in the area.

In 1871, St. Mary was elevated to a parish with a full-time pastor, Father McKeefrey. A Catholic school, Montfort Academy, was founded in 1948 and closed in 1998. A new church was built by Father Vincent S. Sikora and dedicated June 20, 1971.

The parish school, Holy Cross Academy, was built in 1998 and currently is being expanded. Father Donald J. Rooney oversaw renovations to the church in 2011.

Today the parish property boasts 11 buildings and hosts Catholic Charities, staff residences, youth house and adult education.

Father John P. Mosimann is the 30th pastor with care of more than 20,000 souls. With more than 80 ministries, our parish is welcoming and fully alive in Christ. We are proud to be an important part of the past and the future of the Diocese of Arlington.

WEBSITE: stmaryfred.org



Holy Cross Academy (above), a ministry of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church in Fredericksburg, is in the process of expanding. The church campus (at right) includes 11 buildings that house a variety of ministries.



COURTESY



PARISH PROFILE

ST. MARY OF SORROWS CHURCH

Since the dedication of its historic church in 1860, St. Mary of Sorrows in Fairfax has ministered to the spiritual needs of its parishioners.

The parish also provides for the material needs of both its parishioners and its neighbors, building off the foundation of care provided by Clara Barton when she and other brave women ministered to wounded soldiers on the church grounds in 1862.

Today, the liturgical anchor of St. Mary of Sorrows is the parish's new church, dedicated in 2020. Daily Eucharistic adoration is a core part of our parish life.

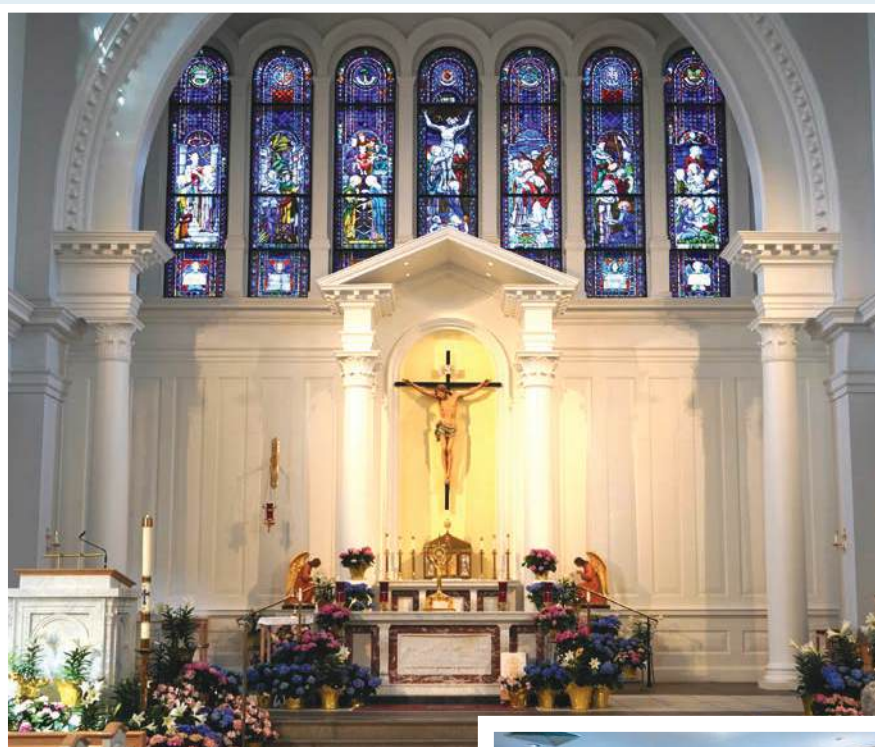
Inspired by the words of Jesus, as expressed in Matthew 25:35-36, St. Mary of Sorrows also provides for the material needs of our neighbors in many ways, including an expanded food pantry.

This was made possible by the repurposing of the parish's former Worship Center when the new church was completed. Volunteers expanded the food pantry from a 6-by-8-foot storage unit to a classroom-sized space.

In 2023, our larger food pantry supported 624 families, 3,696 individuals and 25 different organizations, including Fairfax County government entities, A Woman's Choice pregnancy resource center, Catholic Charities Christ House, the Lucy Food Warehouse and the Gabriel Project, providing 146,593 pounds of food and 399 deliveries.

As a parish, we feel truly blessed we can support the spiritual needs of our parishioners, while simultaneously supporting the material needs of many others.

WEBSITE: stmaryofsorrows.org



COURTESY

The altar at St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax is adorned with flowers. The expanded food pantry (at right) provided nearly 150,000 pounds of food to its neighbors last year.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. MATTHEW CHURCH

Originally a mission of St. Patrick Parish in Fredericksburg, St. Matthew was established as a parish in 1999.

Its programs and activities include the Women's Guild, Good Samaritan ministry to the homebound and the Knights of Columbus (Bishop John R. Keating council and the Fathers Cilinski assembly).

The parish's high school and young adult ministries take part in the diocesan WorkCamp and have made mission trips to Mississippi and Costa Rica.

Social outreach ministry is an important part of parish life, with St. Matthew's thrift store, food pantry and baby closet providing help to those in need.

The St. Faustina conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul serves the parish, and St. Matthew's close cooperation with Catholic Charities includes an on-site counselor.

Father Paul M. Eversole is pastor and he is assisted by Deacon Mike Strain, who also serves as director of youth ministry.

The Spotsylvania parish's close-knit community of 700 families is committed to sharing the message of the Gospel through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

WEBSITE: stmatthewspotsylvania.org



COURTESY

St. Matthew Church in Spotsylvania (above) is pictured. The parish garden (inset) features a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. MICHAEL CHURCH

St. Michael Church in Annandale was established in 1953, with Msgr. Thomas P. Scannell as the founding pastor. Sunday Mass was celebrated in Annandale Elementary School's cafeteria for the 125 original parishioners.

Quite the visionary, Msgr. Scannell, who served as pastor until 1986, expanded the property to include a church, rectory, convent, maintenance and two school buildings. He had the foresight over the years to purchase vast amounts of land in Fairfax County for the Richmond Diocese that was later developed into parishes.

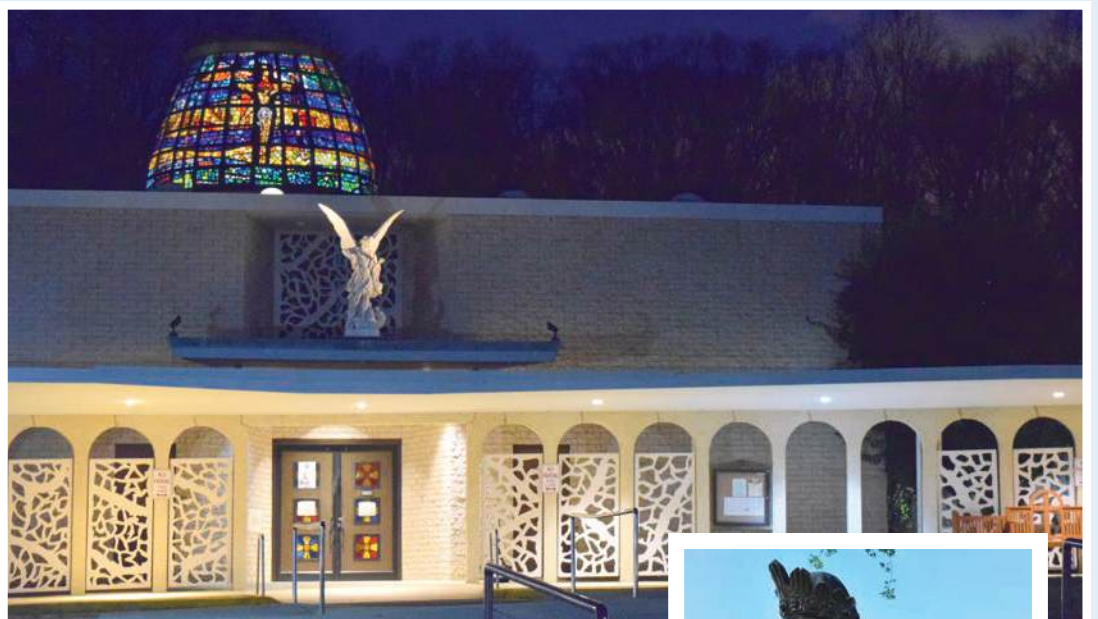
The architectural design of the new church was revolutionary, incorporating an octagonal structure with a dome on top. Directly under the dome was the altar, with 11 pews flanking the altar. A balcony was constructed for additional seating. This design allowed the celebrant to face the congregation and afforded each worshipper an unobstructed view. The new church was dedicated Nov. 26, 1960.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters taught at St. Michael School until 2016, after which lay principals have guided the school.

The Reuter pipe organ is one of the oldest in the diocese; it was purchased exclusively with Green Stamps collected by parishioners. The parish celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2023.

There have been more than a dozen vocations to the priesthood and religious life, much attributed to the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; the perpetual adoration chapel celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2024.

WEBSITE: stmichaelannandale.org



COURTESY

St. Michael Church in Annandale was considered revolutionary at the time of its construction in 1960. The dome was replaced after the 2011 earthquake and now light shines out through the beautiful glass work at night. A statue of Our Lady of La Salette weeping (at right) stands on the church grounds.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. PATRICK CHURCH

On the feast of St. Patrick, March 17, 1983, Bishop Thomas J. Welsh announced the establishment of a new parish in Spotsylvania County in honor of Ireland's great patron saint.

He named Msgr. R. Roy Cosby as its first pastor, and two years later a small country church was built on donated land very near the grounds of the historic Battle of Chancellorsville.

The parish has grown steadily since that time. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge dedicated a new church and middle school alongside the original one June 13, 2021.

The people here are truly enamored with their traditionally designed new church and its attractive furnishings, which include hand-carved Stations of the Cross, beautiful stained-glass windows, and various statues of saints and archangels. The church's rural setting and its wooded natural surroundings lend a peacefulness and serenity to all who visit.

The parish continues to thrive in this area just west of Fredericksburg with Masses that are well attended and a school enrollment at near capacity.

In addition, many of the faithful here are involved in the pro-life ministry, prayer and study groups and a variety of other apostolates. Many of our young people have begun pursuing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and others are prayerfully considering their vocations.

In these and many ways, the people of St. Patrick's strive to live out the message of the Gospel, making Christ better known and loved by all.

WEBSITE: saintpatrickparish.org

FREDERICKSBURG



COURTESY

St. Patrick Church's new church building in Fredericksburg was dedicated in 2021 and stands near the grounds of the historic Battle of Chancellorsville.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E

ST. PAUL CHUNG CHURCH

In 1985, St. Paul Chung Mission was established in the western area of Washington as an extension of St. Andrew Kim Church in Maryland. It began as a community of Korean immigrants sharing faith, fellowship and love, always remembering Christ's command to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

In 1986, the first Mass was celebrated by Father Simon Yong Sik Park, who had come from South Korea's Wonju Diocese to guide the mission. The mission was named for St. Paul Chung Hasang, considered a leading figure in the revitalization and growth of the church in Korea.

Bishop John R. Keating dedicated St. Paul Chung Church in Fairfax Feb. 1, 1996, as the 61st parish in the Arlington diocese and a place to celebrate Mass in Korean.

At the time of establishment, the number of parishioners was approximately 1,100. Currently, there are approximately 2,400 households cultivating their faith in 20 small communities in 13 districts within the parish. St. Paul Chung operates a Sunday school and a Korean school, remembering the inscription carved into the building's cornerstone – "In remembrance of our homeland we left behind, we dedicate this church to our children." Recognizing the need to foster our culture to our next generations, the church provides various programs for young people that celebrate Korean Catholics living in America.

WEBSITE: stpaulchung.org

FAIRFAX



COURTESY

Traditional Korean attire and music are part of the worship at St. Paul Chung Church in Fairfax. A statue of St. Paul Chung Hasang (at right) stands in the garden of the parish named for him.



P A R I S H P R O F I L E



Congratulations!! on the 50th anniversary of the Diocese of Arlington

Rugo Stone's award-winning team delivers skill and craftsmanship to every project. Rugo Stone is the National Stone Institute's Pinnacle Award winner for our masterful creation for Corpus Christi Church's unique altar. Our team of skilled artisans designed and manufactured the altar with custom molded profiling and hand-carved tracery work inspired by the parish's neo-gothic architecture so that this historic church continues to inspire parishioners for decades to come.

RUGO
S T O N E

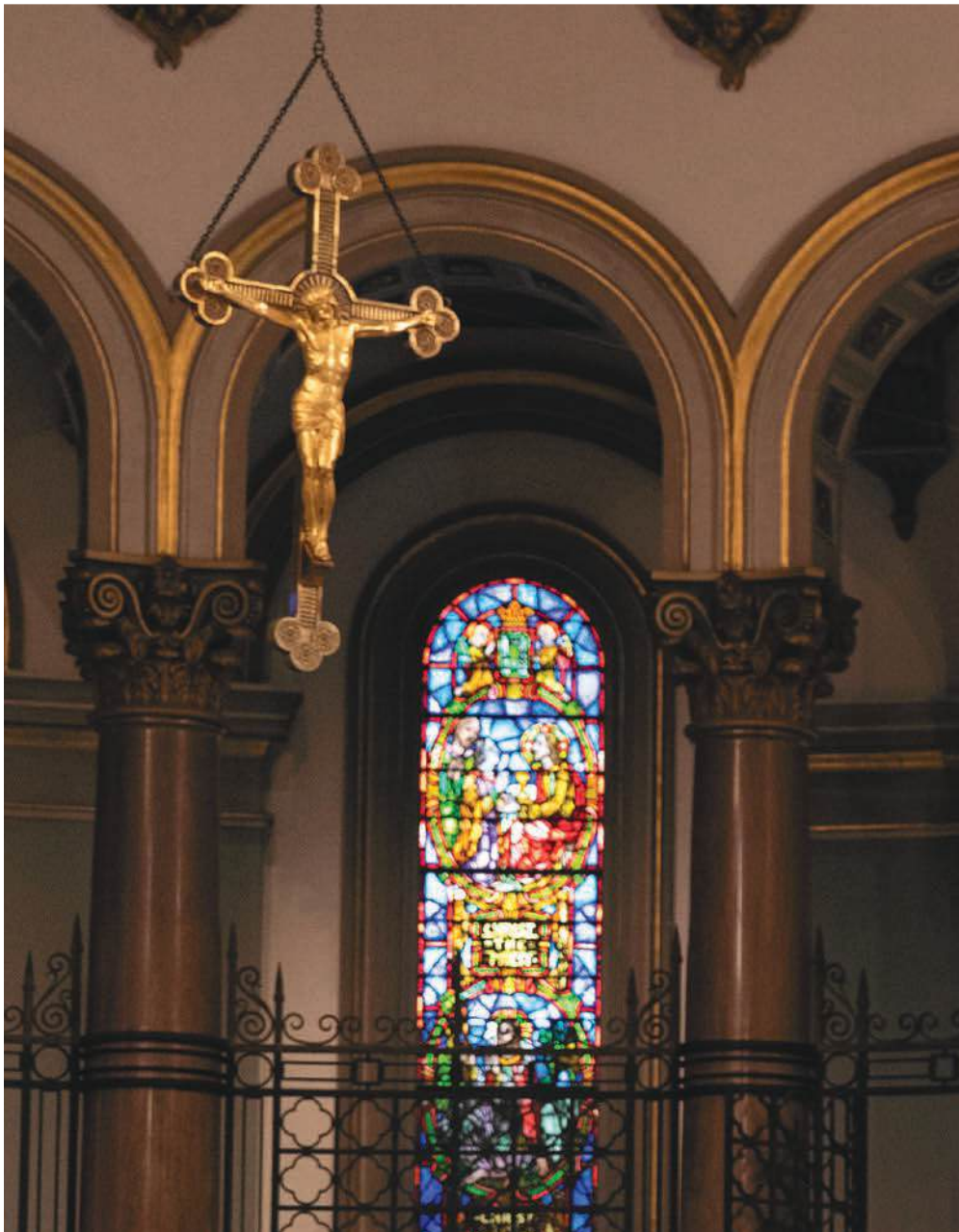
(571)642-2672 | info@rugostone.com
7953 Angleton Ct, Lorton, VA 22079

Congratulations!

We join in celebrating this milestone of our blessed Arlington Diocese. May it stand as a testament to our thriving community which has grown within its folds. We pray that its future be filled with continued spiritual growth and devoted service!

From your friends at The Paschal Lamb

paschallamb.com



*B*ishop Barry C. Knestout
and the clergy and faithful of the
Diocese of Richmond celebrate
the Diocese of Arlington's

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Congratulations on **50** years of service
to the faithful of Northern Virginia



Diocese of Richmond

ST. PETER CHURCH

St. Peter Church is located in Little Washington in rural Rappahannock County, in the foothills of the Shenandoah Mountains. In 1979, a group of Catholics began meeting for Sunday Mass in a school annex building, celebrated by retired Missionhurst Father Maurice du Castillon.

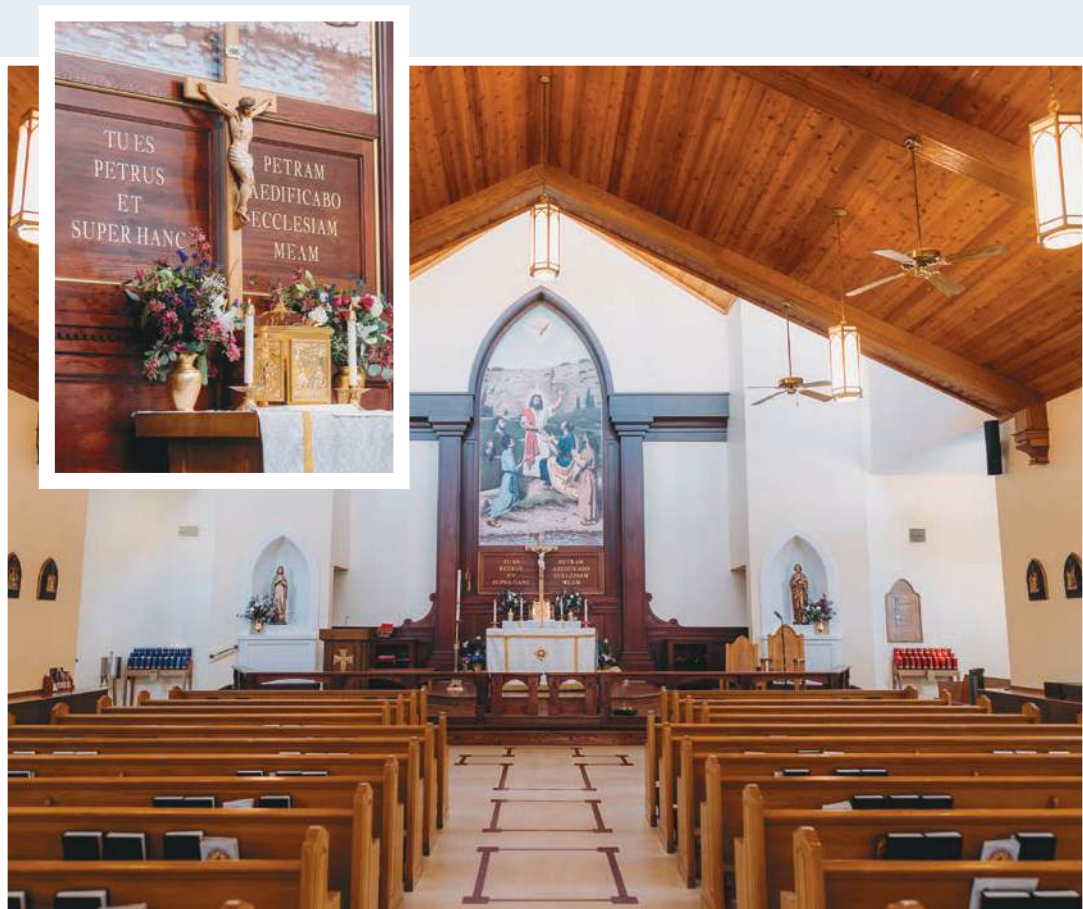
The community was established as a mission of Precious Blood Parish in Culpeper in May 1981 by Arlington Bishop Thomas J. Welsh.

After 10 years of school annex Masses, a new church was dedicated March 22, 1992, by Arlington Bishop John R. Keating. In 2005, the mission was elevated to the status of a parish by Bishop Paul S. Loverde. Father Robert J. DeMartino was named the first pastor of the newly created St. Peter Parish.

Father DeMartino proposed creation of a parish cemetery, which was dedicated in 2006. In 2022, after several years of planning, our current pastor, Father Kevin J. Beres, was able to begin much needed renovations to the sanctuary, including new altar rails and a newly designed altar along with commissioned artwork by artist and parishioner Henry Wingate.

Arlington Bishop Michael F. Burbidge dedicated the new altar in a Mass of consecration Sept. 13, 2022. In the spring of 2024, ground was broken to expand the existing cemetery into an adjacent field.

WEBSITE: stpeterparishva.org



AIDAN DEMOLLI | BENSON PARK PHOTOGRAPHY

The new altar at St. Peter Church in Washington was dedicated in 2022. The tabernacle (inset) sits below an inscription in Latin: "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church."



PARISH PROFILE

ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE CHURCH

In May 1962, Richmond Bishop John J. Russell announced the formation of St. Philip the Apostle Parish from portions of three existing parishes: St. James and St. Anthony in Falls Church and St. Michael in Annandale. The first parish Mass was offered Sept. 9, 1962, by Father L. Longmire Speight, the first pastor, at Whittier Junior High School, now Falls Church High School.

By 1966, all the buildings of the parish were built, with the Sisters of St. Joseph teaching in the school, an apostolate they continued through the 1980s. In 1990, St. Philip School combined with St. Anthony School to form the interparish Corpus Christi School, which continued until 2020.

In 2007, Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist moved into the convent and have been engaged in various apostolates throughout the Arlington diocese ever since.

The worship space was initially a church hall that served as a gymnasium and a place for parish events. That changed in 2007 with a major renovation under the leadership of Father Kevin B. Walsh, which featured an altar of Jerusalem sandstone, a full immersion baptismal pool and nine stained-glass windows.

Eight of the nine stained-glass windows depict Jesus' parables; the ninth window contains scenes from the life of St. Philip the Apostle.

Following the example of our patron, St. Philip, whose invitation to "come and see" drew St. Nathaniel to his first encounter with Jesus, parishioners of St. Philip worship, pray and serve together through ever-deepening encounters with Jesus in the sacraments.

WEBSITE: stphilipfc.org

FALLS CHURCH



COURTESY

Parishioners worship during Mass (above) at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Falls Church earlier this year. The interior of the church (at right) shows how it looked in the 1980s.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT CHURCH

St. Raymond of Peñafort Church was established by Bishop John R. Keating July 5, 1997, with Father Salvator L. Ciullo as the first pastor. In 2000, Father James R. Gould became pastor and led the parish into a period of amazing growth.

For almost a decade, Masses were celebrated in various locations, and finally in a fire hall. Bishop Paul S. Loverde broke ground June 4, 2003, for a new 850-seat beautiful traditional church. He returned to celebrate the Mass of dedication Dec. 19, 2006.

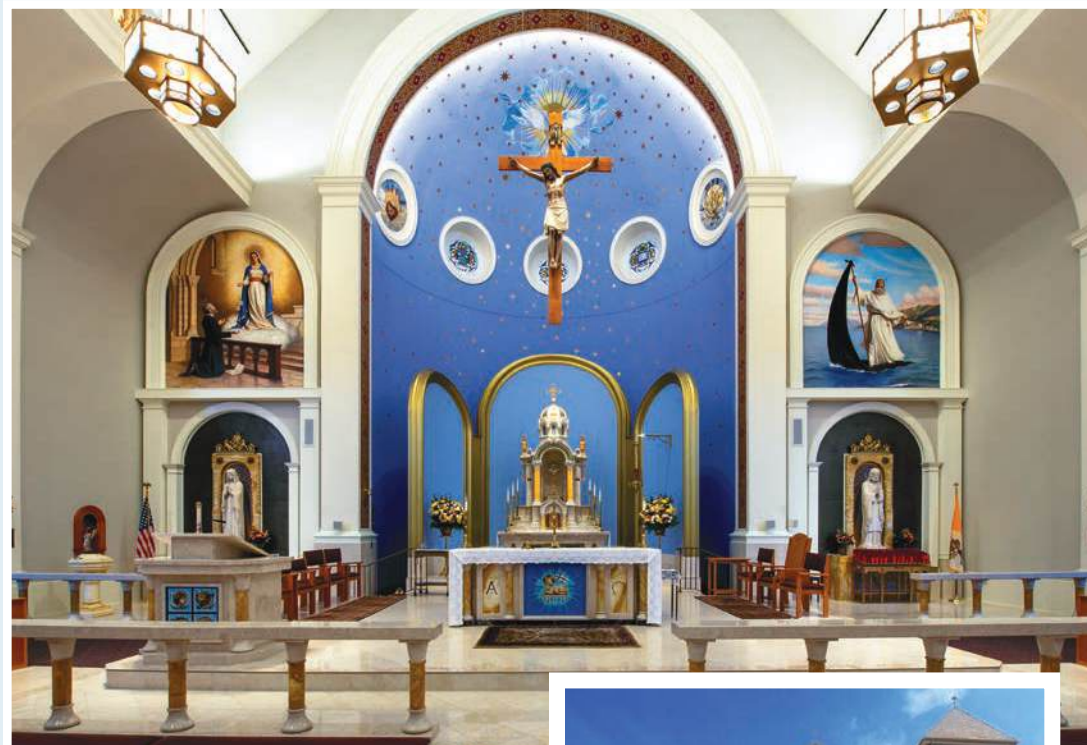
Today the parish is a vibrant spiritual home to more than 1,600 families and dedicated to promoting Eucharistic reverence and love for the rich treasury of the liturgical, doctrinal, and devotional traditions of the church.

For adults we have Bible studies and a speaker series. For the kids we have a demanding K-12th grade CCD program, a large homeschool group, an energetic youth apostolate and a close relationship with Angelus Academy in Springfield. We are also proud of our scholarship program that supports families who choose Catholic schools or homeschooling.

And we are a pro-life parish, supporting every effort to end abortion and to care for both pregnant mothers and post-abortive mothers.

The parish has a great devotion to our patron, St. Raymond, a priest and professor who was born in Spain in 1175 and lived to be 100. The patron saint of lawyers, he is most famous for his work synthesizing 12 centuries of church decrees to publish the first Code of Canon Law.

WEBSITE: straymonds.org



COURTESY

The interior of St. Raymond of Peñafort Church in Springfield is traditional with high ceilings, shrines and stained-glass windows. The church is a vibrant spiritual home to more than 1,600 families.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. RITA CHURCH

St. Rita Church in Alexandria, celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, has a long history of meeting the spiritual needs of its parishioners in ways that allow them to experience and grow in their faith through many diverse programs and liturgies, including Masses in English, Spanish, and Latin, as well as frequent opportunities for confession and Eucharistic adoration.

This history began in 1912, when a group of dedicated women gathered the children of local Catholic families in a cobbler's shop to instruct them in the Catholic faith.

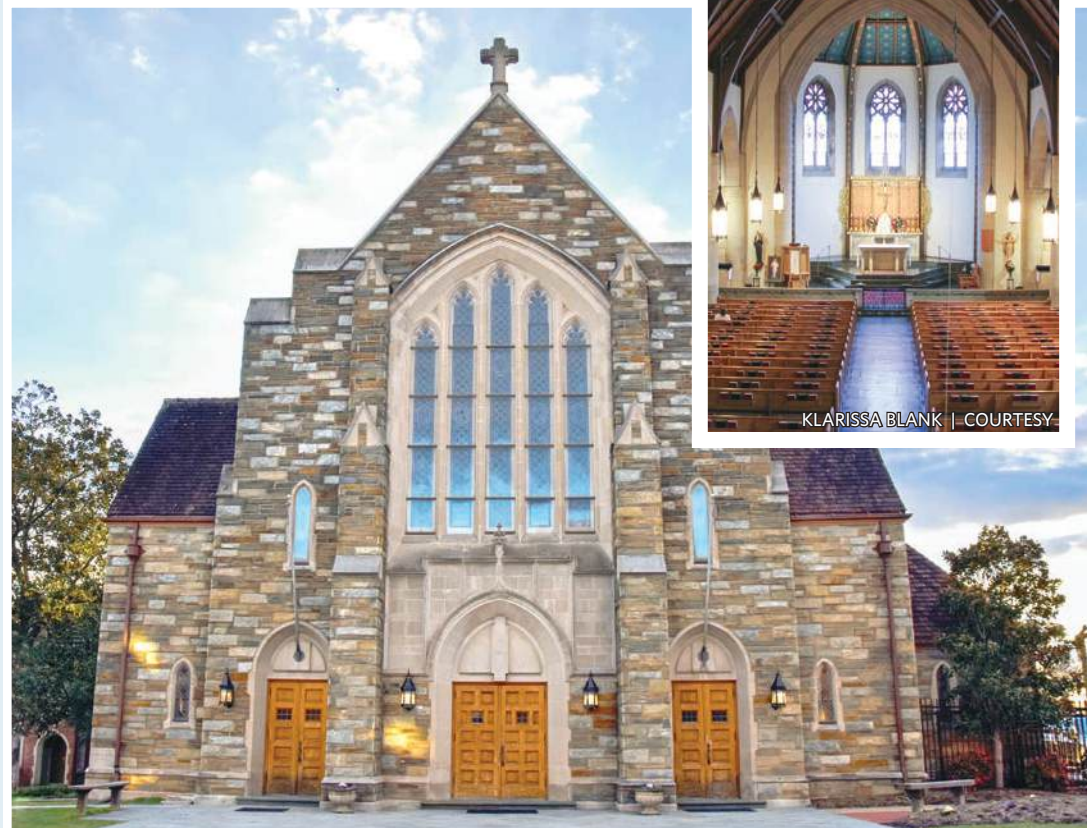
The first Mass for the mission was offered at the same cobbler's shop by Father A.J. Van Ingelgem of St. James Church in 1913, and the mission was established as a parish Sept. 21, 1924, with Father Leonard J. Koster as the first pastor. The current church, a beautiful example of Gothic architecture, was dedicated in 1949.

Originally staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Rita School was dedicated in 1952. Building on the foundation laid by the sisters, the school forms children both intellectually and spiritually by means of a classical Catholic curriculum.

In recent decades, a demographic shift in the area has fostered a thriving Hispanic community, which provides a rich contribution to the life of the parish and supports many apostolates.

More recently, many families and young adults have also moved into the parish, complementing the base of long-standing parishioners, and bringing the total number of parishioners to around 3,500.

WEBSITE: stritaalexandria.com



KLARISSA BLANK | COURTESY

DORI RUTHERFORD | COURTESY

St. Rita Church in Alexandria traces its roots to a group of dedicated women who began teaching children about the Catholic faith in a cobbler's shop. Masses in English, Spanish and Latin are celebrated at St. Rita.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR CHURCH

In 1957, the pastor of St. John the Apostle Church in Leesburg, Father Albert Pereira, established the mission of St. Stephen the Martyr in Middleburg. Just eight years earlier, Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton had sold property in town, thinking resources would be better used elsewhere.

This unforeseen community of about 70 welcomed the first Catholic president of the United States for Sunday Mass in the community center. President John F. Kennedy's plan to weekend in Middleburg prompted a church to be built by April 1963.

It was probably the only Catholic church equipped with a direct telephone line to the White House. Despite such important connections, it remained a small country church. In addition to this unique status, it was the lone Catholic church between Chantilly and Winchester; by the turn of the millennium, the developments of South Riding and Haymarket would stress the little country church's charm and capacity.

Rather than enlarge the church, the pastor, Father Joseph P. Biniek, brought the Masses to the masses. With a horse trailer of church supplies, he rode circuit each weekend from Middleburg to South Riding and Haymarket. In June 2005, Bishop Paul S. Loverde elevated the Haymarket and South Riding communities to missions named for St. Katharine Drexel and Corpus Christi, respectively. The latter became a parish in 2014 and opened a church in May 2021. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge is expected to dedicate a new church for St. Katharine Drexel soon.

WEBSITE: saint-stephen.org



COURTESY

The small country church of St. Stephen the Martyr welcomed President John F. Kennedy in 1963. A gold plaque marks the pew where the first Catholic president and his family worshipped.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. THERESA CHURCH

St. Theresa Church in Ashburn was founded in 1991. Since its founding, St. Theresa has grown from 118 to more than 4,300 registered families and over 14,000 parishioners. Parishioners are imbued with the spirit of our patroness, St. Theresa of Lisieux, whose spirituality of the "little way" has made her one of the most beloved saints in history.

St. Theresa, one of only 37 doctors of the church, summarized her spirituality in these simple but profound words, "My little way is all love." Her complete and unshakable trust in the love of God our Father was the foundation of her spiritual life, a childlike relationship with our Creator that raised her to the heights of sanctity in only 24 years of earthly life.

One reason St. Theresa is so popular is that her spirituality is not inaccessible, but can be imitated and practiced by all souls, no matter what their state in life. Her spirituality has been recognized by the church as a special gift from God for ordinary people everywhere to reach heroic sanctity. We strive to imitate the spiritual childhood of our patroness in all we do. It is the spirit that inspires our priests, our parishioners, our teachers and our elementary school students. We hope to spread this same infectious joyful spirit to all the members of our parish, our diocese and our worldwide church.

WEBSITE: sainttheresaparish.com



COURTESY

St. Theresa Church in Ashburn is seen at twilight. Students at St. Theresa Catholic School (inset) welcome visitors.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. THOMAS À BECKET CHURCH

St. Thomas à Becket's establishment began with the founding in 1964 of Reston, one of the nation's first planned communities.

Parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Herndon desired to create a Catholic presence in Reston and, in 1968, obtained permission to create a mission church and become the Reston Catholic Community. The first Mass was celebrated Nov. 10, 1968, in the Lake Anne School cafeteria. The mission became a parish when it was approved by Richmond Bishop John J. Russell in 1970, and the name St. Thomas à Becket was adopted. Ground-breaking occurred in June 1972 and the church was dedicated in September 1973.

The wooden church with large windows against the backdrop of nature consisted of one large multipurpose room with movable altar and chairs so it could be used by other community groups, including the church's neighbor, the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation.

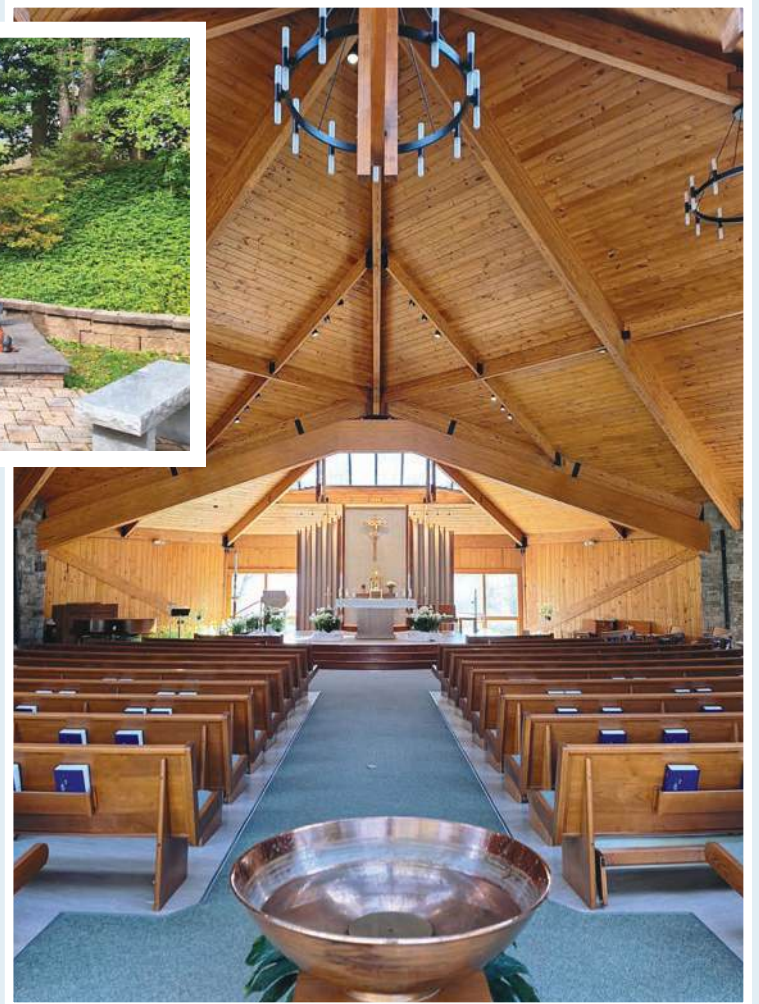
As growth continued, St. Thomas à Becket built a new parish center in September 2002 that included a parish hall and classrooms for religious education. Renovations of the original church, consisting of the installation of a permanent altar and pews, were completed in 2016. On June 27, 2021, St. Thomas à Becket celebrated its 50th anniversary and continues to be a welcoming community faithful to the truth, beauty and goodness of our Catholic faith.

WEBSITE: stbchurch.com



COURTESY

St. Thomas à Becket Church in Reston (at right) is seen after renovations in 2016 gave it a permanent altar and pews. A Marian statue (inset) stands in the parish garden.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH

St. Timothy Church began in Centreville in 1923 as a mission of St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax Station. It then became a mission of All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas after World War II.

In the early 1960s, parish growth necessitated that Mass be switched from its original location in Centreville to the Chantilly Firehouse. A few years later, they moved the location for Mass to Greenbriar East Elementary School.

In 1969, St. Timothy was elevated to the status of parish with its first resident pastor being Father Robert E. Nudd. It then found a permanent home at Poplar Tree Road in 1974, where it has continued to flourish to this day.

St. Timothy is a vibrant parish of nearly 5,000 families. The parish is rich in history and strong in service by way of its various ministries and apostolates: St. Timothy School (more than 715 students currently enrolled), St. Vincent de Paul, pro-life, youth and young adults, Bible studies, choir, prayer groups, etc.

But the life-giving strength of the parish comes from the people's devotion to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, especially in the Adoration Chapel of Divine Mercy conceived by Father Gerald Weymes in 2009.

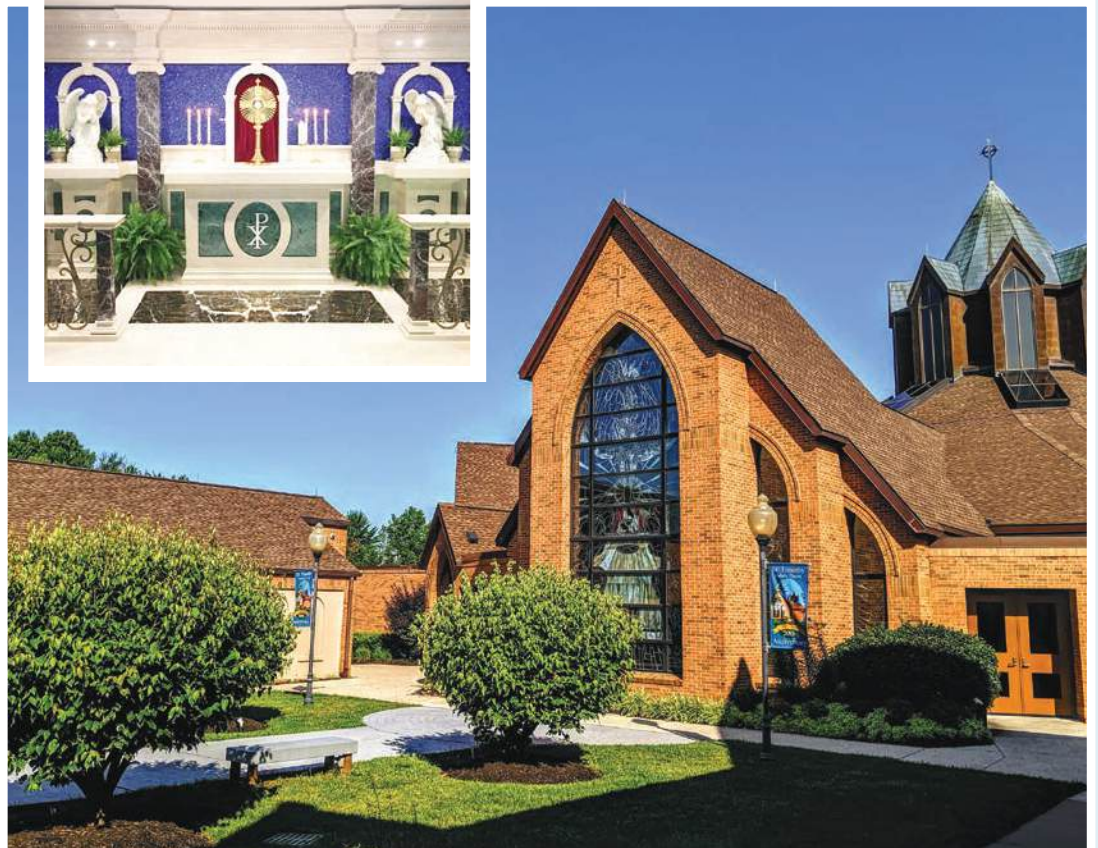
May the Good Lord bless the Arlington diocese on its golden jubilee now and for many years to come. Ad multos annos!

WEBSITE: sttimothyparish.org



COURTESY

A large stained-glass window welcomes visitors to St. Timothy Church in Chantilly. The adoration chapel altar (inset) is flanked by statues of angels.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. VERONICA CHURCH

Named after the saint who wiped the face of Jesus, St. Veronica Parish was established by Bishop Paul S. Lovrde June 17, 1999.

Founding pastor Father Marcus A. Pollard celebrated the first Mass Aug. 14, 1999, at the Community of Faith United Methodist Church in Herndon. Ground was broken for the church building June 22, 2003.

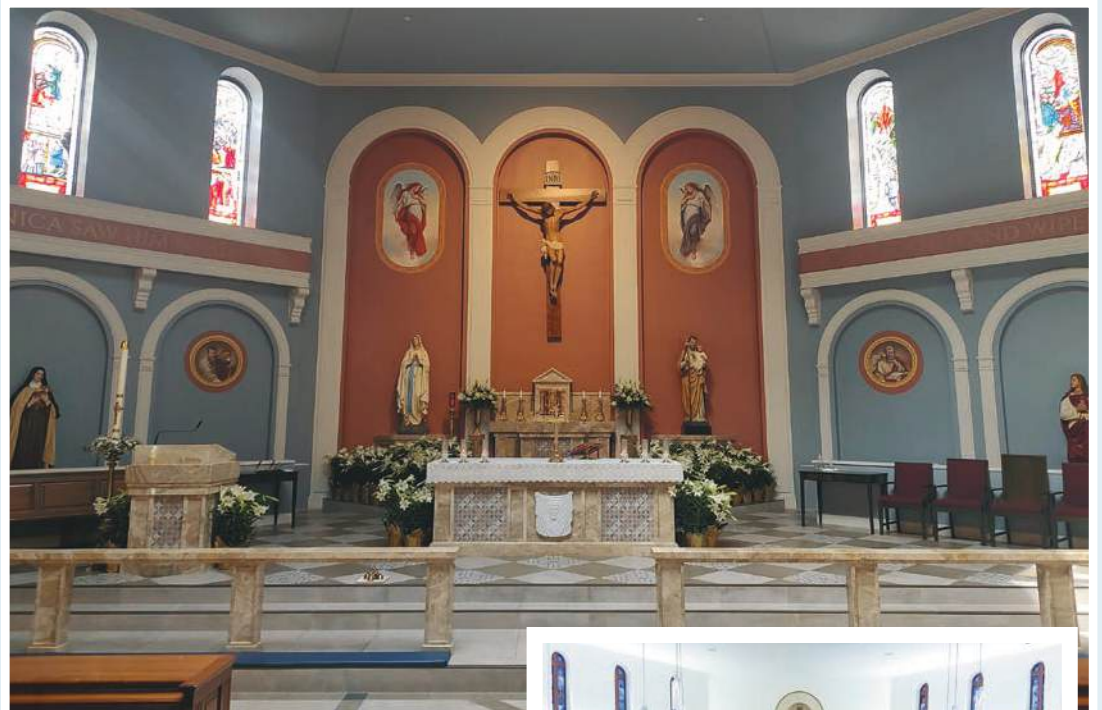
St. Veronica School opened its doors in September 2004, and the first Mass in the new church building was celebrated Dec. 24, 2004.

Initially intended as the narthex, the renovated worship space is imbued with history. Sacred objects, including pews from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore and German-titled Stations of the Cross from a Croatian church, serve to unite the church with the past, bridging generations in a shared journey of faith.

In 2012, the parish began sharing the facilities with the Vietnamese Catholic community, Our Lady of La Vang. This union pays homage to the profound devotion of Vietnamese Catholics. Located on Centreville Road in Chantilly, St. Veronica is a vibrant spiritual hub of more than 1,200 families. Currently, the parish thrives, offering frequent confession and daily adoration.

With a compassionate outreach, St. Veronica extends its hands to the community, ministering to the sick at Fair Oaks Hospital, serving five nursing homes and assisting with various charities, all in service to and for the greater glory of God.

WEBSITE: stveronica.net



COURTESY

The sanctuary at St. Veronica Church in Chantilly includes pews from the first basilica in the United States and Stations of the Cross from a Croatian church. The church (at right) is pictured before renovations.



PARISH PROFILE

STAFFORD

ST. WILLIAM OF YORK CHURCH

The origins of the Catholic community in Stafford date back more than three centuries. The area around Aquia Harbor, just north of the present church building, was the site of the settlements of the first Catholic families in Virginia who arrived around 1650. The Catholic community in the area was never large, and as late as 1925, priests traveling up from Fredericksburg would celebrate Mass in private homes since the community was too small to maintain a regular church.

However, because of the military buildup of World War II, the Catholic community in the area continued to grow and soon the need for a permanent parish church in Stafford was recognized.

Richmond Bishop Peter L. Ireton dedicated the present St. William of York church building May 6, 1956. It remained a mission of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church in Fredericksburg.

When it was finally established as a separate parish in 1971, St. William of York had only 25 families officially registered. However, by the 1980s this number had increased to around 600. Because this growth included many families with children, in 1992 the parish began operating an elementary school that now has an enrollment of nearly 230 students.

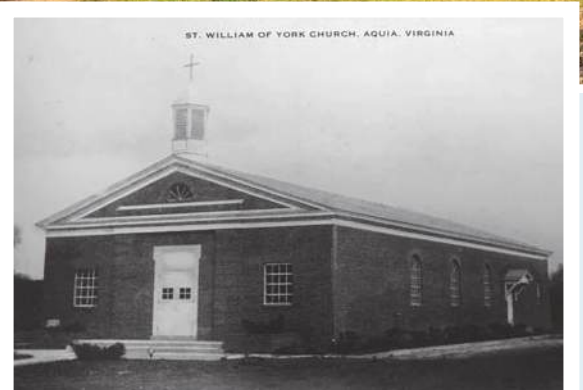
Today, the parish serves nearly 5,000 parishioners and offers a broad range of ministries for all ages including youth ministry, an altar boy guild, the Legion of Mary, a Knights of Columbus council and an active Hispanic community.

WEBSITE: swoycc.org



COURTESY

Bishop Peter L. Ireton dedicated St. William of York Church in Stafford May 6, 1956.



PARISH PROFILE

OUR LADY OF LA VANG MISSION

Our Lady of La Vang Mission is a Vietnamese Catholic community named after the apparition of Mary to a group of Catholics at La Vang, Vietnam, who were hiding in the jungles to avoid religious persecution in the late 19th century.

The mission's first presence was in 2006 as a community with about 50 families living around Reston, Sterling, Chantilly and Ashburn.

With the permission of Bishop Paul S. Loverde, the community began gathering at St. Thomas à Becket Church in Reston for weekend Masses and CCD classes for children.

In 2011, when St. Thomas à Becket renovated the church, our community moved to St. Veronica Church in Chantilly and has been there since.

On Sept. 3, 2017, at a Mass with Bishop Michael F. Burbidge and in the presence of Dominican Father Liem Tran, pastor of Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Parish, the bishop established the community as a mission within the personal parish of Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Church in the Arlington diocese.

The community has been growing and currently has more than 550 registered families. We have three weekend Masses, CCD, Vietnamese language classes and youth activities.

We do not yet have our own church. The diocese has given us a piece of land located at Pleasant Valley Road and Herndon Avenue in Chantilly for our future church. We do have a plan for our building project and are currently working on the site development.

WEBSITE: ourladyoflavangva.org



COURTESY

The Vietnamese Catholic community of Our Lady of La Vang Mission plans to build a church, bell tower and worship center on land in Chantilly.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL MISSION

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge formally decreed the establishment of St. Gabriel the Archangel Mission Sept. 3, 2017, to serve the growing Catholic population of Manassas Park. The mission exists within the parish boundaries of All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas.

Since celebrating its first Mass together Dec. 24, 2010, this growing faith community joyfully offers many ministries, prayer groups, and liturgical and sacramental opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of its more than 400 families.

The mission celebrates Mass at 8 and 10 a.m. each Sunday at the Manassas Park Community Center. Although St. Gabriel Mission does not yet have a church home, the Pastoral Center at 9110 Railroad Drive in Manassas Park is a hub of activity throughout the week.

The faithful gather at the Pastoral Center to celebrate Mass in Spanish on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays at noon. A noon Mass in English is also offered on Friday. Eucharistic adoration is held in the Pastoral Center chapel on Wednesday mornings, and opportunities for confession are available on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

St. Gabriel Mission is planning for the future as it advances its fundraising efforts to build a church on land already purchased in Manassas Park through the Arlington diocese.

Known for their generous spirit, welcoming hearts and focus on serving others, this community is committed to its mission of being "called and sent by Jesus Christ to be missionary disciples in today's society."

WEBSITE: saintgabrielmanassaspark.org

MANASSAS PARK



COURTESY

Sunday Masses are celebrated for St. Gabriel the Archangel Mission at the Manassas Park Community Center. Eucharistic adoration is held weekly in the Pastoral Center.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. KATHARINE DREXEL MISSION

In Haymarket the first Mass of Convenience was celebrated Sept. 10, 2000, at Pace West Elementary School by Father Joseph P. Biniek, pastor of St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Middleburg. It is estimated that 135 people attended the first Mass. By the end of 2000, attendance had grown to more than 300.

To accommodate this growth, in 2002, Mass was moved to Bull Run Middle School and additional Sunday Masses were added. A cadre of visiting priests, as well as the pastor, served on a rotating basis to provide Mass each Sunday.

In June 2005, the community officially became a mission and Bishop Paul S. Loverde christened it St. Katharine Drexel. By 2013, a 28-acre parcel of land for the future church had been purchased by the diocese at Route 15 and Waterfall Road.

During the pandemic most communities lost the ability to attend Mass in person for many months. The St. Katharine Drexel Mission was in danger of many more months since it depended on a public-school facility.

When it was deemed appropriate to return to public Mass, through the generosity of the Medina family, two Sunday Masses for a full year were offered in a barn at Four Hills Farm in Catharpin. At the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, Battlefield High School became home.

On the feast of St. Katharine Drexel, March 3, 2022, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge broke ground for the new church. He is expected to dedicate it soon.

WEBSITE: katharinedrexelcc.org



COURTESY

After years of Masses in public schools and a barn, St. Katharine Drexel Mission in Haymarket anticipates having its first church dedicated soon.



PARISH PROFILE

ST. PAUL MISSION

St. Paul Mission in Hague, founded in 1890, has a brand-new, beautiful, country-style Catholic church, dedicated in March of 2022, which has a number of Gothic elements.

On the façade of the new church is inscribed “Domus Dei” or House of God and “Porta Caeli” or Gate of Heaven, which describes the purpose and function of the church.

There are two shrines in the new church building, located on either side of the sanctuary.

One is dedicated to the Infant of Prague and Blessed Karl of Austria. The Infant of Prague is an image of Jesus from when he was a boy and Blessed Karl is one of our adopted saints in the parish. The shrine was placed here in remembrance of the founders of our parish, who were Austro-Hungarians from Prague also known as Bohemians.

The other shrine honors Our Lady of Guadalupe and San Joselito Sánchez del Río especially meaningful for the many current parishioners from Mexico. San Joselito is a boy martyr from the 1920s in Mexico.

WEBSITE: saintpaulhague.com



COURTESY

St. Paul Mission in Hague dates back to 1890. The brightly colored sanctuary (inset) is one of the features of the new church built in 2022.



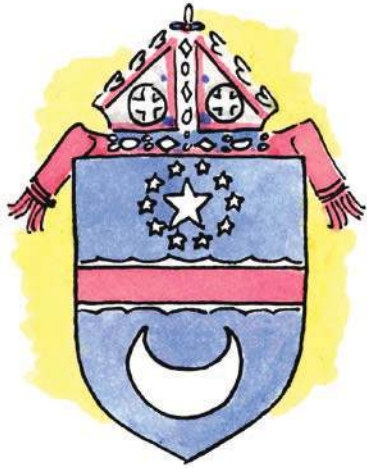
PARISH PROFILE

JUBILEE EDITION PUZZLES

THE KID'S CONNECTION

ARLINGTON DIOCESE WORD FIND

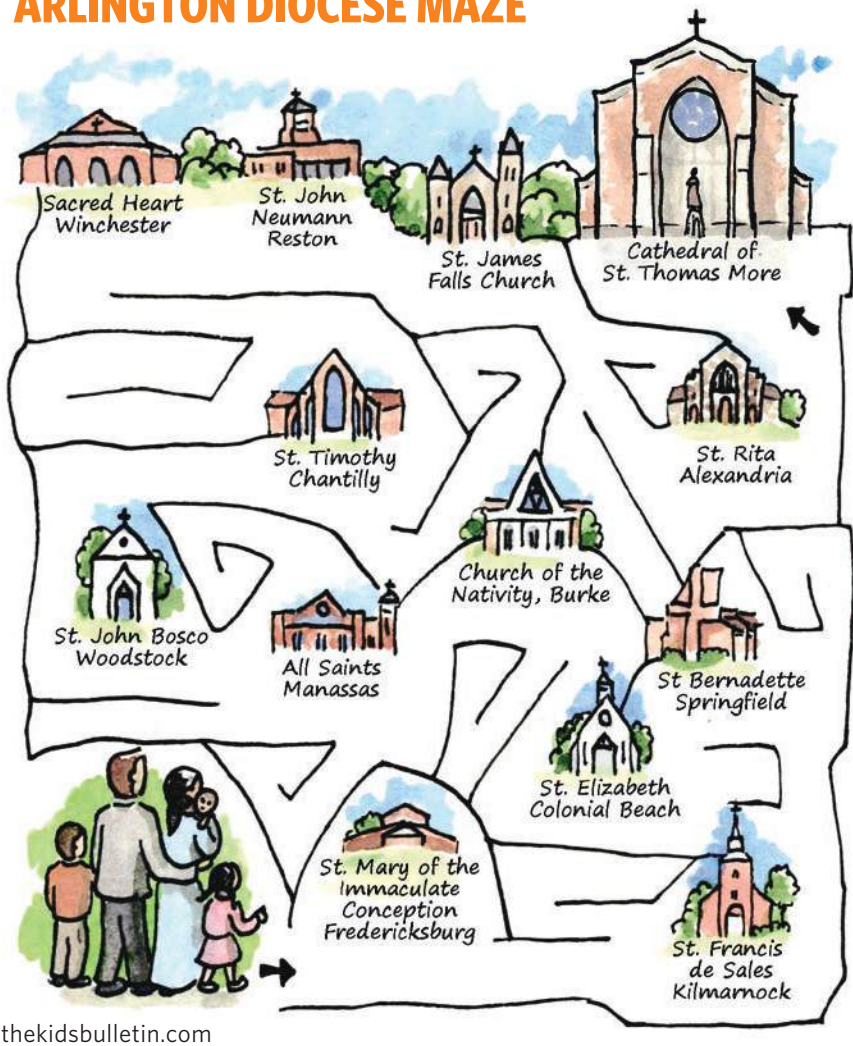
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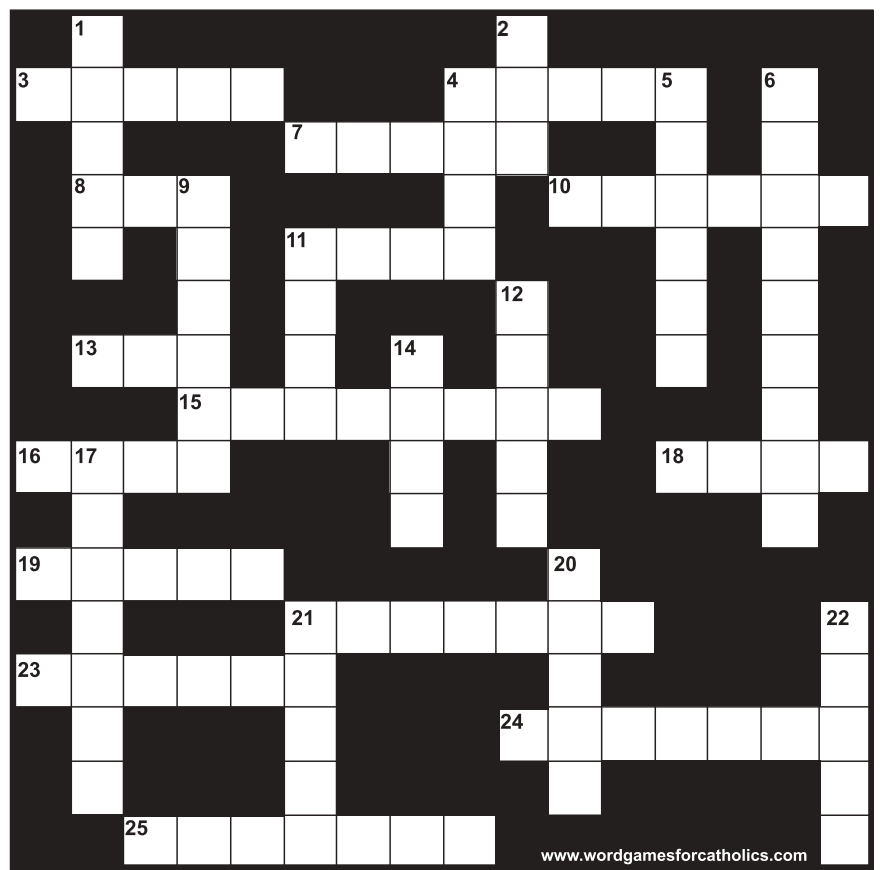
Catholicism has a rich history in **VIRGINIA**, dating back to the arrival of English Catholics in **JAMESTOWN** in 1607. However, the **FAITH** was frequently suppressed until the late 1800s, with the establishment of the Diocese of **RICHMOND**. As the Catholic population and number of parishes continued to **GROW**, **PRIESTS** in the Arlington **DEANERY** sought to establish **ARLINGTON** as its own diocese. In 1974, **POPE PAUL VI** granted their request, creating the **DIOCESE** of Arlington, with **BISHOP** Thomas **WELSH** serving as its **FIRST** bishop. The **CATHEDRAL** was established at St. Thomas **MORE** Church, and the diocese's **PATRON SAINTS** were designated as **THOMAS** More and **ELIZABETH** Ann **SETON**.

Behold, I _____

ARLINGTON DIOCESE MAZE



CROSSWORDS PUZZLE



ACROSS

3 The coat-of-arms of Bishop Burbidge includes a quote from this Old Testament prophet.
4 In 1950, the Religious of the Sacred _____ of Mary established what would become Marymount University in Arlington.
7 Saint Elizabeth Ann _____ is the secondary patron saint of the Diocese of Arlington.
8 In 2000, the Office for Family Life started the Young Adult Ministry program, Theology on _____.

10 Bishop Welsh established the newspaper of the diocese, The Arlington Catholic _____.
11 In preparation for the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Arlington, a focus was upon _____, the model disciple.
13 _____ Saints Catholic Church was the first church dedicated under the new Diocese of Arlington.
15 In 1650, Pope Urban VIII established the Prefecture Apostolic of _____ and entrusted it to the Capuchin Fathers.
16 The pope affectionately known as _____ named John Keating as bishop.

18 The Cathedral of Saint Thomas _____ is the seat of the bishop.
19 Year Three Jubilee theme
21 St. _____ the Martyr was the first parish dedicated under the new Diocese of Arlington.
23 The Diocese of Arlington operates a mission church in the town of _____ in the Dominican Republic.
24 The Most Reverend _____ F. Burbidge is the current bishop of the Diocese of Arlington
25 This bishop served until 1998 and is best known for his encouragement of vocations.

DOWN

1 In 2024, the Diocese of Arlington celebrates its jubilee - _____ years a diocese.
2 There are _____ stars on the coat-of-arms of the Diocese of Arlington to represent Virginia's admission to statehood.
4 _____ Martyrs of Vietnam was the first Vietnamese parish in the United States.
5 In 1982, Mother _____ visited the diocese.
6 The Diocese of Arlington is within the Province of the Archdiocese of _____.

9 This pope erected the Diocese of Arlington in 1974, removing it from the Diocese of Richmond.
11 In 2018, three priests, Fathers Robert Avella, John Cregan, and Stanley Krempa were given the papal honor of "Chaplain to His Holiness" and the title _____. (abbr.)
12 Bishop Loverde established four goals for the diocese: evangelization, _____, reconciliation, and service.
14 In 1820, Pope _____ VII established the Diocese of Richmond, which covered most of Virginia, including Arlington.
17 In honor of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Arlington, Pope Francis granted a _____ indulgence for visitors to the cathedral.
20 Bishop _____ J. O'Connell High School is the oldest high school in the diocese.
21 Thomas More is a patron _____ of the Diocese of Arlington.
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ARCHIVO

Una mujer sostiene un incensario que contiene incienso como parte de una procesión en la Iglesia del Cristo Redentor en Sterling en honor al Señor de los Milagros, una imagen de Cristo venerada por los peruanos.



CORTESÍA

Mujeres bailan una danza folclórica durante el Festival de la Herencia Hispana 2023 organizado por la oficina diocesana del Ministerio Hispano.

La respuesta de la diócesis a los católicos hispanos

Más sacerdotes hispanohablantes y misas en español son parte de la respuesta al explosivo crecimiento de la población hispana.

Por **JIM HALE**
Escritor del Catholic Herald

Cuando los inmigrantes irlandeses, italianos, alemanes y polacos llegaron a Estados Unidos en el siglo XIX y principios del XX, trajeron consigo a sus sacerdotes. Se establecieron en comunidades católicas con fuertes identidades étnicas.

Para los inmigrantes hispanos, la historia es otra. “Los latinos vienen a Estados Unidos sin sacerdotes”, dijo el padre Juan Puigbó, párroco de la Iglesia San Leo Magno en Fairfax. “Entonces voy a una iglesia y el pastor no me entiende. No sólo mi idioma, sino a mí como persona. Lo que enfrentan los latinos es un enorme desafío. A menudo son ovejas sin pastor”.

El crecimiento hispano es difícil de cuantificar, ya que muchos inmigrantes son reacios a registrarse en sus parroquias. Pero la oficina diocesana del Ministerio Hispano estima que los hispanos constituyen al menos la mitad de la población católica en la diócesis, y una sólida mayoría en menores de 18 años.

“La chispa de esperanza es que la mayoría de los que están siendo ordenados ahora saben español”, dijo el Padre Puigbó, quien dirigió un retiro de Pascua para los 12 diáconos recién ordenados en la diócesis. “El porcentaje de seminaristas que pueden comunicarse en español es del 80 por ciento”.

El conocimiento del idioma español es un requisito para los seminaristas. “El Obispo Michael F. Burbidge espera que cada hombre que haya sido ordenado sacerdote haya estudiado dos años de español”, según el Padre Michael C. Isenberg, director diocesano de vocaciones. Los seminaristas también participan en

un programa de inmersión en español de ocho semanas en Antigua, Guatemala, reuniéndose individualmente con un tutor de español durante cinco horas al día.

Si bien a los seminaristas no hispanos les toma tiempo conversar en español, rápidamente llegan a apreciar la cultura hispana, dijo el Padre Isenberg. “Lo que sienten es que entre los hispanos hay un mayor sentido de comunidad”, dijo. “Eso es atractivo para los seminaristas”.

Pero la necesidad de más sacerdotes hispanos es urgente. “Es un tema que los obispos de todo el país están abordando”, dijo Joel de Loera, director diocesano de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano. “Es difícil llegar a los adultos jóvenes de la comunidad hispana”, dijo, y agregó que uno de los principales desafíos proviene de dentro de la cultura hispana.

“Los padres de familia hispanos aman a sus sacerdotes, pero a menudo ven el sacerdocio como algo distante e inalcanzable para sus hijos”, dijo de Loera. “Muchos padres inmigrantes vinieron a Estados Unidos para que sus hijos pudieran encontrar mejores oportunidades profesionales. Quieren que se conviertan en abogados, médicos y empresarios. En muchos países latinoamericanos, es mucho más fácil convertirse en sacerdote que asistir a la universidad o tener una carrera exitosa. También, es común que muchos de estos padres tengan fuertes deseos de tener nietos, lo que puede hacerlos menos receptivos a la idea de que sus hijos entren al sacerdocio o a la vida religiosa”.

A pesar de los desafíos, la evangeliza-

ción hispana está prosperando en muchas parroquias diocesanas. En la ceremonia del Rito de Elección de este año para adultos ya bautizados que entraron en plena comunión con la iglesia, la Iglesia de San Antonio de Padua en Falls Church tuvo 18 adultos, el número más alto en la diócesis. Dieciséis de ellos eran hispanos.

“Hemos estado construyendo una cultura que da la bienvenida y conoce a las personas dondequiera que estén. Los visitantes en la puerta son recibidos personalmente. Las llamadas telefónicas se devuelven rápidamente”, dijo el Padre Mateo H. Zuberbueler, párroco de San Antonio. “Los recién llegados pronto sienten una conexión con un grupo o feligrés que los invitó. Nuestros equipos de catequesis son evangelistas alegres y nunca rechazamos a nadie ni los hacemos esperar demasiado”.

En San Leo, el Padre Puigbó pastorea una congregación de más de 9.000 personas. El 18 por ciento son hispanos. El único país latinoamericano que cree no está representado, es Paraguay.

“(Los hispanos) no tienen la formación teológica que tiene la comunidad anglosajona”, dijo. “Pero su comprensión espiritual es mejor y entienden la necesidad de tener un compromiso con una iglesia. Dicen: ‘Padre, ¿cómo puedo ayudarle? No tengo dinero, pero puedo arreglar todos esos reclinatorios. Hay disposición a ayudar. Es una hermosa lección que podemos recibir de esta comunidad”.

Los tres sacerdotes de la Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús de Winchester ofrecen misa en español. La formación espiritual hispana se ofrece a través de la Escuela de Evangelización de San Andrés del Sagrado Corazón.

“Este ministerio está formado por una gran comunidad deseosa de aceptación, información, amor y que necesita recibir el amor de Dios”, dijo Ana Fitzpatrick, coordinadora del ministerio hispano

en Sagrado Corazón. “Los hispanos son inmensamente generosos con la iglesia. Sólo invítalos y te llenarán de amor”.

El modelo de ministerio en San Antonio, que tiene dos misas dominicales en español, es intencional y personal, con un enfoque en grupos de oración. “Estos grupos ofrecen el regalo de un apoyo más personal para vivir la fe a través de una comunidad más pequeña de creyentes que luchan juntos y se acompañan unos a otros”, dijo el Padre Zuberbueler. “Siempre enfatizamos en la necesidad de conectar lo que aprenden en la catequesis con lo que viven día a día”.

Treinta y seis de las 70 parroquias/misiones diocesanas tienen al menos una misa en español los fines de semana. “Uno puede decir: ‘¿Por qué no aprenden inglés?’ No es nuestra tarea enseñarles inglés”, dijo el Padre Puigbó. “Estas personas tienen dos o tres trabajos, por lo que muchos no aprenden inglés. Es un hecho. Estamos aquí para evangelizar sin importar de dónde vengan”.

Los picnics parroquiales en San Leo reúnen a personas de todas las razas y de muchos idiomas. “Lo que veo aquí es obra del Espíritu”, dijo el Padre Puigbó. “La capacidad de todas estas personas que se unen para formar una comunidad es impresionante. No es sólo una mesa de latinos. Están justo al lado de gente de Camerún, Uganda o Kenia. Es tan hermoso”.

La demografía de la diócesis ha experimentado cambios drásticos en 50 años y, seguramente, producirá más cambios. “Lo que veo es que, desde las oficinas diocesanas hasta las parroquias, hay un enorme compromiso y deseo de servir a la iglesia tal como es”, dijo el Padre Puigbó.

Puede comunicarse con Hale en Jim.Hale@catholicaherald.com.

Traducido al español por Ana Lucía Batista.

Mártires Jesuitas trajeron el catolicismo a Virginia 450 años atrás

Por P. ANDREW J. FISHER
Especial para el Catholic Herald

Mientras la diócesis de Arlington celebra su 50 aniversario y recuerda a personas y eventos que han dado forma a su rica historia, es posible que muchas personas no sean conscientes del extraordinario comienzo del catolicismo en la Mancomunidad de Virginia.

En septiembre de 1570, un pequeño grupo de nueve misioneros españoles llegó a la región de Tidewater, Virginia, para comenzar la evangelización de los indígenas. El equipo estaba formado por dos sacerdotes jesuitas, tres hermanos jesuitas, tres catequistas laicos y un monaguillo adolescente. Construirían la primera capilla cristiana, harían los primeros esfuerzos para predicar el Evangelio y celebrarían la primera misa y el primer bautismo registrados. Este fue el primer asentamiento europeo en Virginia, 37 años antes de que los ingleses fundaran la colonia de Jamestown en 1607.

Ya en 1520, España había identificado la importancia estratégica de la Bahía de Chesapeake, que en sus mapas se llamaba "Bahía de la Madre de Dios". Debido a los vientos y corrientes favorables, la costa atlántica se convirtió en la ruta principal de la flota del tesoro de España. Sin embargo, los barcos franceses e ingleses lanzaron a menudo ataques para robar su tesoro; e incluso, intentaron abrir colonias a lo largo de la costa dentro del territorio español.

Durante un reconocimiento de la costa en julio de 1561, una tormenta obligó a un barco español a ingresar en la Bahía de Chesapeake, donde tuvieron un encuentro pacífico con los nativos de la región de Tidewater. Cuando el barco zarpó hacia España, traía a dos nativos, uno de los cuales fue identificado como el hijo adolescente de un jefe importante.

Durante los siguientes nueve años, ese adolescente se bautizaría, hablaría español con fluidez y se haría amigo del rey Felipe II. Viajaría por España, México, el Caribe y Florida. En su bautismo, Luis de Velasco, virrey de Nueva España (México), actuó como padrino, dándole al adolescente su propio nombre de pila. A partir de 1562, este joven noble indígena fue conocido como "Don Luis".

En 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, gobernador de Florida y fundador de San Agustín, comenzó a reclutar a los jesuitas recién formados para liderar los esfuerzos de evangelizar a las tribus de Florida. Sin embargo, sus labores se vieron obstaculizadas por la crueldad de los soldados españoles.

En 1568, el viceprovincial de los jesuitas en Florida, el Padre Juan Bautista de Segura, comenzó a escribir a su supe-



En el cementerio de la familia Brent en Stafford hay un letrero que describe los esfuerzos de los mártires jesuitas para establecer un asentamiento católico en Virginia. Una vidriera de la Iglesia de San Paul en Richmond (a la derecha) muestra al P. Juan Bautista de Segura, quien vino a Virginia a evangelizar a los nativos.

rior en Roma, San Francisco de Borja, expresándole la necesidad de un nuevo formato de misión, que fuera puramente evangélico. Creía que libres del maltrato por parte de soldados armados, los nativos inteligentes y espirituales abrazarían el Evangelio. En 1570, el Padre de Segura conoció a Don Luis, quien prometió liderar un equipo misionero jesuita de regreso a su pueblo en la Bahía de Chesapeake, sirviendo como su guía, traductor y protector.

El 9 o 10 de septiembre de 1570, los jesuitas llegaron a Virginia, cerca de Newport News, y celebraron su primera misa. Más tarde, ese día o el siguiente, navegaron por el río James hasta College Creek. Aquí los jesuitas se reunieron con el hermano de Don Luis, un jefe local, y se enteraron de que la zona había sufrido hambruna durante varios años.

A pesar de las peligrosas condiciones, el Padre de Segura insistió en quedarse para servir a los nativos, e incluso envió una carta a las autoridades españolas en La Habana pidiendo un envío inmediato de semillas y equipos agrícolas para que los jesuitas pudieran ayudar a plantar nuevos cultivos. Cuando el barco español zarpó, los jesuitas llevaron su equipo por tierra hasta el pueblo de Don Luis, probablemente el pueblo de Kiskiack ubicado en el río York, donde construyeron una cabaña y una capilla.

Después de sólo unos días, Don Luis abandonó a los jesuitas y se mudó a la aldea de un tío, donde regresó a su posición tribal y tomó varias esposas en matrimonio. La situación de los jesuitas se deterioró rápidamente, siendo rechazados por la tribu local y teniendo que so-



CORTESÍA

brevivir a base de raíces comestibles y bayas recolectadas en los bosques. El duro invierno trajo enfermedades y miedo, ya que quedaron aislados tanto del mundo nativo como del español. Pero el Padre de Segura sostuvo al equipo con oración, sacramentos y conferencias espirituales. Ya que la muerte parecía inminente, se cree que tres catequistas laicos fueron recibidos en la orden de los jesuitas y se convirtieron en novicios.

Dos veces el Padre de Segura envió miembros del equipo misionero a Don Luis, pidiéndole que regresara a sus promesas bautismales, pero fue en vano. Sin estar seguro de cuándo regresaría el barco de rescate retrasado, el Padre de Segura hizo una propuesta más y envió al otro sacerdote y a dos hermanos jesuitas a pedir ayuda a Don Luis.

El 4 de febrero, al regresar los tres jesuitas al lugar de la misión, fueron atacados por Don Luis y sus guerreros. Los tres fueron alcanzados por flechas, dos murieron instantáneamente, mientras que uno se escondió durante la noche, pero fue asesinado por la mañana.

En la mañana del 9 de febrero, Don Luis y sus hombres llegaron al lugar de la misión. Usando las propias hachas de mano de los misioneros, mataron a los jesuitas restantes, pero salvaron al joven monaguillo. El único sobreviviente y Don Luis enterraron a los cinco jesuitas en su capilla y los guerreros saquearon las posesiones de los jesuitas. El joven fue enviado a otra tribu un poco alejada, pero fue rescatado en agosto de 1572 por el gobernador de Florida y una expedición militar. Se cree que el único sobreviviente, Alonso de Olmos, se entrevistó con

varias autoridades civiles y eclesiásticas después de su rescate, y su testimonio es la base de nuestro conocimiento de estos acontecimientos.

En el 2002, la Diócesis de Richmond abrió una causa para la canonización de los ocho jesuitas mártires de Virginia. En el 2018, su causa fue transferida a la Diócesis de Pensacola-Tallahassee, para ser inscrita en una causa más amplia, conocida colectivamente como los Mártires de La Florida. Este grupo de 57 mártires está compuesto principalmente por hombres, mujeres y niños indígenas que se convirtieron al catolicismo y murieron por la fe, pero también incluye algunos misioneros españoles, como los jesuitas de Virginia, que murieron mientras evangelizaban a los nativos. El 12 de octubre del 2023, los obispos católicos de Florida enviaron formalmente toda la documentación histórica a Roma a medida que avanza la causa.

Hoy en día, la Mancomunidad de Virginia reconoce a estos misioneros jesuitas con una placa a lo largo de Colonial Parkway cerca de Jamestown, así como exhibiciones en el Jamestown Settlement Museum. La Iglesia Católica en Virginia los conmemora con una vidriera en la Iglesia San Paul, Richmond, un mural en la Iglesia San Bede, Williamsburg, y un letrero en el Cementerio de la Familia Brent, Stafford. Estos ocho mártires jesuitas trajeron la fe católica a Virginia, y su misión de evangelización se ha transmitido hoy a las diócesis de Richmond y Arlington.

El P. Fisher es pastor de la Iglesia San Ambrosio en Annandale.

Traducido al español por Ana Lucía Batista

THE MOST REVEREND
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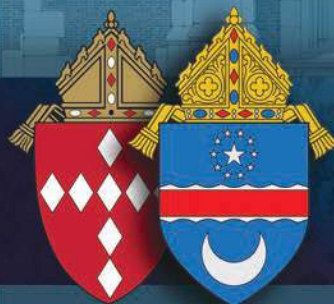
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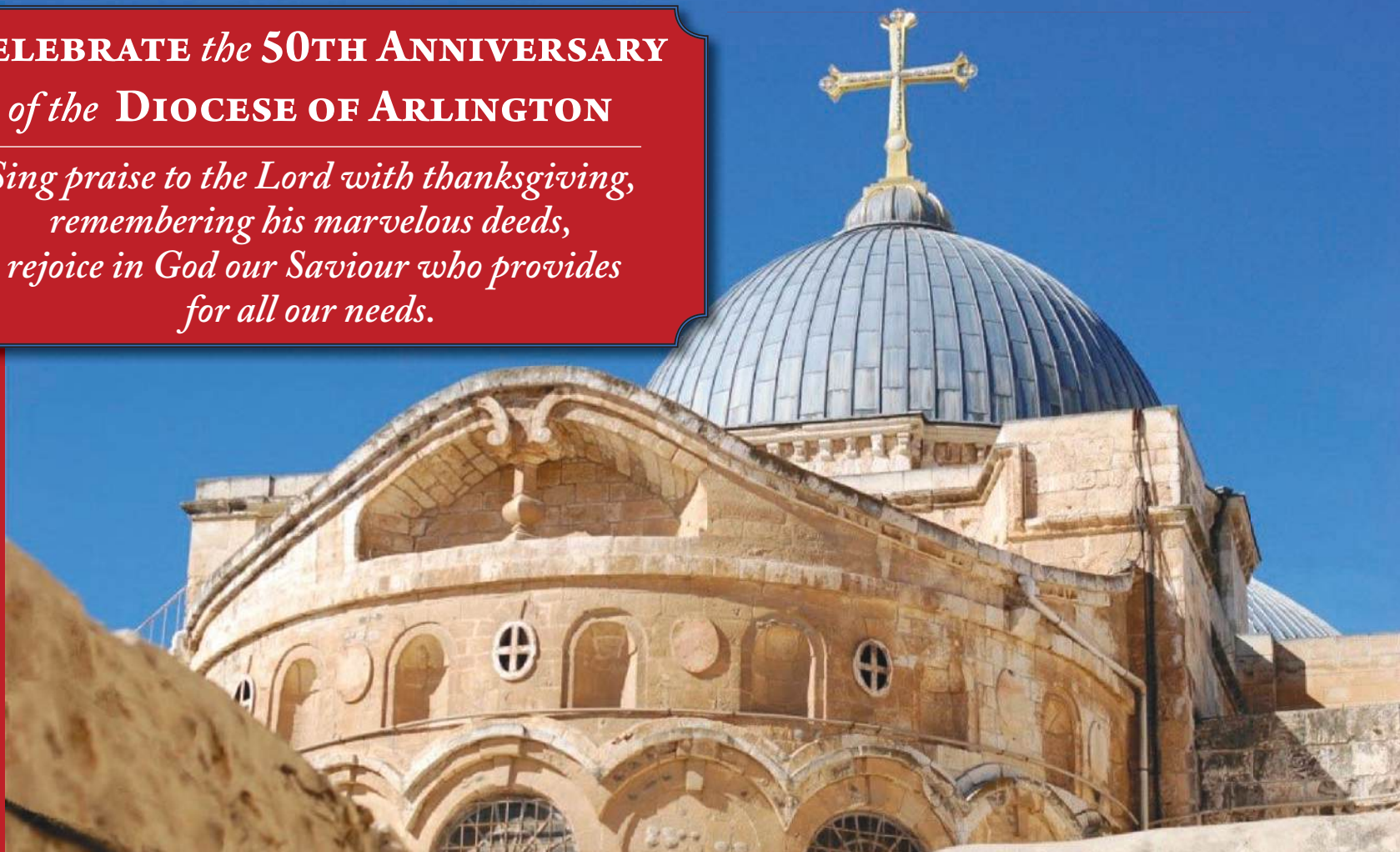
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*Sing praise to the Lord with thanksgiving,
remembering his marvelous deeds,
rejoice in God our Saviour who provides
for all our needs.*



Jubilee Fest brings diocese together



FILE
Mass attendees stand to receive a blessing from Bishop Michael F. Burbidge at the end of the liturgy during the diocesan Jubilee Fest June 8 at the Warren County Fairgrounds. The celebration drew nearly 8,000 people to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Arlington diocese.

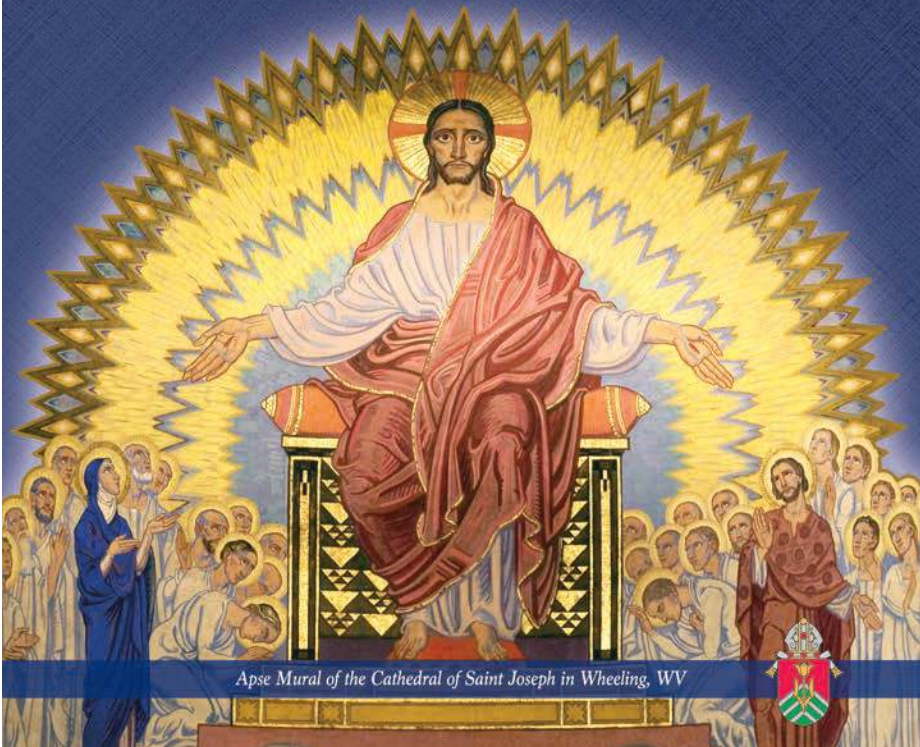
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to the
DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

on the occasion of your Golden Jubilee

from

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan and the
faithful of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston



Apse Mural of the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Wheeling, WV

Congratulations

Bishop Terry R. LaValley
along with the clergy, religious and lay people of the
Diocese of Ogdensburg
extend their congratulations and prayerful good wishes to
The Diocese of Arlington
on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary.



Beacon of hope

Renovations transform the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington during the Diocesan Golden Jubilee year.

By **KIMBERLEY HEATHERINGTON**
For the Catholic Herald

“Everything old,” it’s often said, “is new again.”

When the Cathedral of St. Thomas More officially reopens ahead of a special Mass Sept. 5, celebrated by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge — dedicating its new altar and following more than a year of renovation inside and out — the 63-year-old structure will indeed feature much that is new.

“The Cathedral of St. Thomas More is the mother Church of the Diocese of Arlington where diocesan parishioners gather to participate in the sacred liturgies,” said Bishop Burbidge. “As our diocese has grown in both faith and number over the last five decades, we decided to transform this sacred space to enhance

its beauty and to reveal the sacred to all those who enter and drive by our Cathedral with the hope of drawing others to a deeper awareness of God’s presence in our midst.”

Given the scale of the undertaking, Bishop Burbidge sought the input of groups throughout the diocese, including the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Building Commission, the Cathedral Pastoral and Finance Councils, and the Diocesan Finance Council.

James O’Brien of O’Brien and Keane Architecture, a former parishioner of St. Agnes Church in Arlington, was the project architect. Forrester Construction, which has previously provided services to the diocese, was responsible for construction.

Renovations will be completed to coincide with the Sept. 5 dedication Mass, which is expected to draw bishops from many other dioceses and the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States Cardinal Christophe Pierre.

From the outset, Bishop Burbidge emphasized three essential principles for the renovation funding, all of which were achieved: that no debt would be incurred; no assessments would be taken from any parish; and no capital campaign would be launched. Support instead came from generous individual donors who are also known for their support of charitable works.

Before the 1974 creation of the Diocese of Arlington, the Cathedral of St. Thomas More was a parish of the same name in the Diocese of Richmond. It was later chosen as the seat of the bishop — or cathedra — for the new diocese.

The word cathedral is derived from the Latin “cathedra,” the bishop’s physical chair — a tangible representation of his ministry to, and guidance of, the local church.

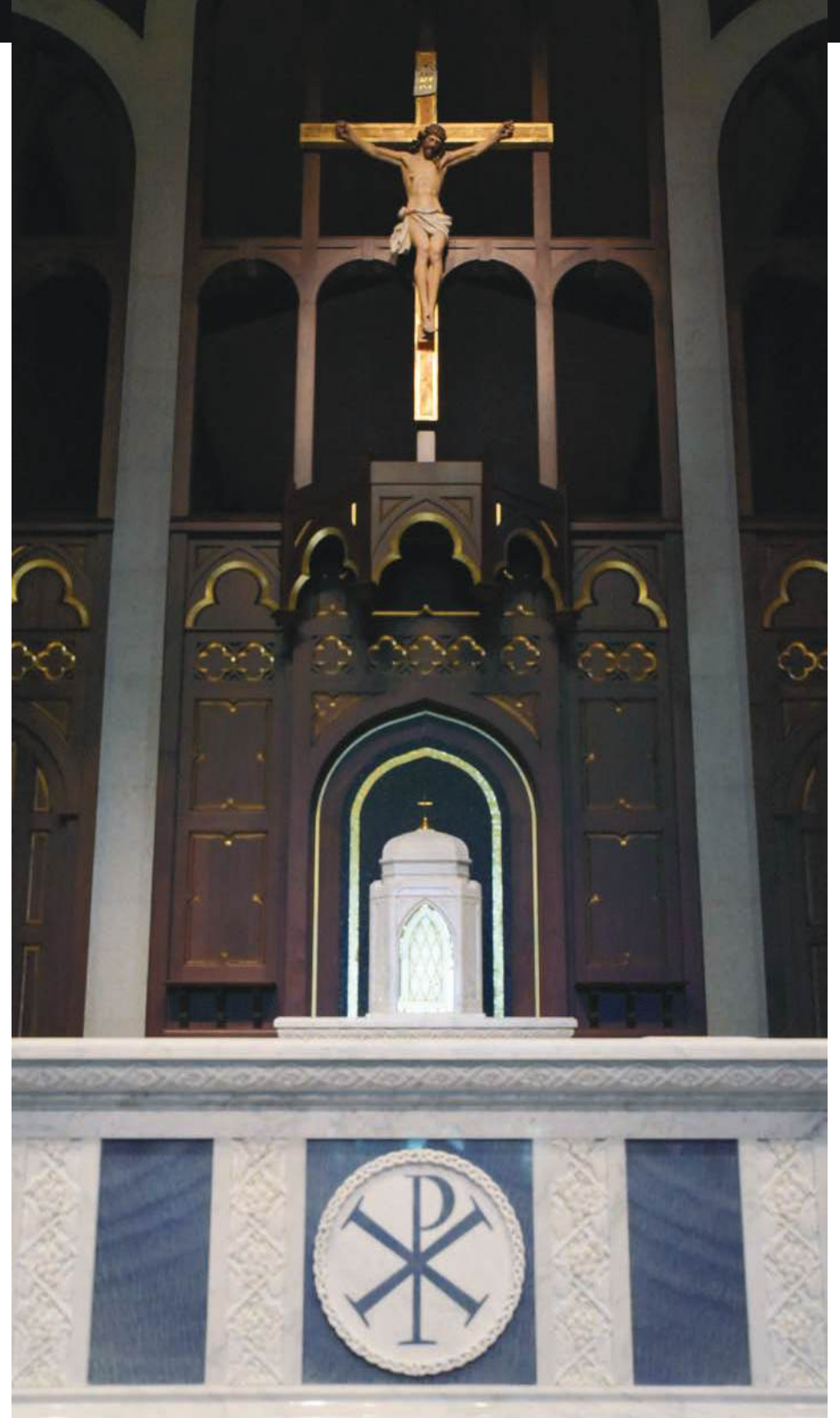
The cathedral is where the cathedra is located and symbolizes the bishop’s pastoral care and his responsibility to teach, sanctify and shepherd the entire diocese, according to diocesan officials. For that reason, the cathedral is the standard in the diocese for clarity of teaching, celebration of church liturgies and pastoral charity.

Reflecting the Tudor era in which St. Thomas More (1478-1535) lived, the cathedral’s renovations prominently feature a combination of Renaissance and Gothic design elements. Light filters through new stained-glass windows, crafted by Philadelphia-based Beyer Studios, with depictions of the Holy Family, Mary,



ANNA HARVEY | CATHOLIC HERALD

Renovations to the cathedral include a large window comprised of 16 panes of stained glass depicting the life of the Virgin Mary.



JIM HALE | CATHOLIC HERALD

Additions to the Cathedral of St. Thomas More sanctuary in Arlington include a traditional crucifix, which hangs above a new, relocated tabernacle.

St. Joseph, and saints for whom parishes around the diocese are named. The light reflects off lustrous dark woods with gleaming golden accents. Contrasting light and dark grey marble accentuates the altar, ambo, cathedra, tabernacle and other sanctuary elements.

A glorious “rose window” — reminiscent of the great cathedrals of Europe, most particularly Chartres in France — is visible on St. Thomas More’s north façade, facing Glebe Road. Depicting Revelation 21’s theme of a “New Jerusalem,” Christ resides at the center, his hand raised in blessing, surrounded by images of angels, the 12 apostles and precious stones.

New devotional shrines, with statues of various saints, whose stories will be told by the stained glass behind them, are also included. The statues reflect the distinctly multicultural population of the diocese and the diversity of its thriving cultures and communities.

The most significant change visitors will notice is the design of the cathedral’s sanctuary.

The bishop’s chair was previously in

the center, with the tabernacle to the side. In the new design, the tabernacle, where our Eucharistic Lord resides, is at the center. It is a decidedly intentional relocation that gives architectural expression to the essential place of the Blessed Sacrament in the lives of the faithful.

Outside, visitors see a more traditional look to the cathedral’s exterior stonework, with light-colored quoins, or cornerstones at exterior angles of the building, contrasting against its red brick. Pointed Gothic arches punctuate archways, while a large stone cross tops the cathedral’s peak above the rose window. Directly in front of the rose window, a new statue of St. Thomas More stands as a proud reminder of the diocesan patron.

“A cathedral is a beacon of hope,” Bishop Burbidge said. “With timeless architecture and art, it is a reminder that while times change, God’s promises never change nor do the truths He has taught us. People can look at the church and know that we stand upon the bedrock of faith and rely upon God’s eternal word.”

Heatherington is a freelancer in Alexandria.