



The Columbian Gazette

Of Ashburn

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ASHBURN, VA

A Message from Deacon Paul

I was assisting at the 10:30 Mass a few weeks ago, and at the beginning of Mass as we processed down the aisle, something seemed different. Then, I realized I was hearing the congregation singing louder than the choir. I had never heard that before. I happened to be preaching that day, so before I started my homily, I told the congregation of my observation, and I encouraged them to keep it up.

I have an appreciation for liturgical music. My dad was a professional musician and accomplished organist. He was also our church organist and choir director, and I sang in his choir as a teenager before and during the time of the Second Vatican Council. The Council revised the liturgy to encourage participation of the faithful, and that included songs that the congregation could sing. The problem was that since no one other than the choir had ever sung in church before, no parishioner was willing to be the first person to sing out loud at Mass. So, my dad “planted” choir members throughout the congregation hoping that people would get the courage to sing once they heard other individuals singing. It took a while, but eventually people began to sing.

I mention all this because at Pope Leo’s general audience on August 19, he addressed this very topic. It was all about liturgical music, Vatican II, and inculturation. Among the things he said were, “Music, indeed, is part of the liturgical action and is not merely a decorative part of the celebration.” “It helps to open our hearts to God’s action in grace and allow ourselves to be molded by it.” “Singing also fosters communion. It contributes to the unity of hearts, overcoming differences between people, and bringing everyone together in the praise of God.”

Continued next page, Deacon Paul

From our Grand Knight

Building a Culture of Life

One of the most troubling characteristics of our modern society is what Pope Francis called a “throwaway culture.” Specifically, a culture in which people can gradually come to be valued according to their usefulness, independence, health, convenience or circumstances. When something is broken, we throw it away. When something becomes inconvenient, we replace it. The danger comes when that same mentality begins to influence how we view human beings. People are not disposable.

Our Catholic faith teaches something radically different. Every person possesses an inherent dignity because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. That dignity does not disappear because someone is unborn, elderly, disabled, sick, dependent, mentally ill or nearing the end of life. The measure of society is not how it treats the strong and independent, but rather how it treats those who need us most.

The Unborn Child

The issue of abortion brings this principle into sharp focus. Whatever the political arguments surrounding abortion, the fundamental Christian question is straightforward: *Does every human life possess dignity, or only those lives that are wanted, convenient, healthy or independent?* For Catholics, the answer cannot depend upon circumstances. From the beginning of life until natural death, human life is worthy of protection and love.

Virginia will confront this important question this November when voters consider the proposed

Continued next page, Grand Knight

The Knights' principle of Unity states that we are united in faith in building up the Body of Christ. One way of doing this is to help enhance our liturgies by singing. Not only do we open our own hearts to God's action in grace, but we also give the people around us the courage to start singing themselves. Even if we can't carry a tune, we can set the example by opening the hymnal and singing or saying the words softly. It's frustrating for the priests to look out at the congregation during the singing of the Gloria and see people standing with their arms folded waiting for the song to be over. We can help our priests by setting the example with our active participation, even if our participation is mostly visual.

A long time ago, I heard a priest humorously tell the congregation that if God gave you the ability to sing, you should sing loud to thank Him. If He didn't, you should sing loud to get even!

Regardless of your level of talent, pick up a hymnal and sing! As the old saying goes, "He who sings, prays twice."

Vivat Jesus!

- Deacon Paul

Continued from page 1, Grand Knight

constitutional amendment concerning abortion. The language of the amendment is already a central point of debate, with critics contending that the amendment as broadly written could be interpreted as granting a fundamental right to abortion to "every individual", creating a constitutional right for minors to decide independent of parents. This broad and undefined language could override or invalidate existing state laws on parental consent and attempts to explicitly carve out or protect parental consent rules during the amendment's legislative process were voted down.

Regardless of the results, as Catholics and members of our community, our responsibility goes beyond one vote. If we want fewer abortions, we must build a society in which a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy knows that she will not be abandoned. We must be willing to support mothers, fathers, children, families, pregnancy resource centers and adoption. Our council's goal this year is to double our impact to local pregnancy centers and we

continue to support and raise awareness for adoption and mentorship in Loudoun County. We must support the expecting mothers, orphans and young adults who feel they have nowhere else to turn.

At the Other End of Life

We see the same cultural question emerging at the end of life. Virginia lawmakers considered legislation that would have permitted certain terminally ill adults to obtain medication for euthanasia, and while the legislation did not become law the debate is unlikely to disappear. The language around these proposals often center on autonomy, dignity, compassion and relief from suffering. While no one should outright dismiss the fear and suffering experienced by a person approaching death, we should really ask deeper questions. *What if dignity does not depend upon being free from suffering, disability, dependence and loss of control? What if the answer to suffering is not to make death easier, but to make sure that no one suffers alone?* There is an enormous difference between allowing someone to die naturally while providing appropriate comfort and intentionally making death the solution to suffering. This is precisely why the Catholic Church has consistently emphasized compassionate care, hospice, pain management, family support, spiritual care and accompaniment.

The elderly person who needs help getting out of bed is not disposable. The terminally ill patient is not disposable. The person with dementia is not disposable. The person struggling with mental illness is not disposable. The unborn child is not disposable.

What Can We Do?

The answer to a throwaway culture comes down to making it personal. As Knights, we have an extraordinary opportunity to make the culture of life more than a slogan. We can:

Continued next page, Grand Knight

Continued from page 2, Grand Knight

- Support families who are struggling financially or emotionally.
- Assist pregnancy resource centers and organizations that help mothers and children.
- Encourage adoption, mentorship and provide practical support to adoptive families.
- Visit and assist elderly or homebound members of our parish.
- Support hospice and compassionate end-of-life care.
- Stand beside families caring for disabled or seriously ill loved ones.
- Learn about mental health issues and encourage people experiencing crisis to seek professional help.
- Refuse to speak about vulnerable people as burdens or inconveniences.
- Teach our children that every person has worth, regardless of ability, age, appearance, health or circumstances.
- Pray for those whose lives are threatened, forgotten or treated as expendable.

Most importantly, we can become men who show up. A culture of life is built on one act of solidarity at a time, and our council has always understood that faith must become action. The principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism are not merely words in a pamphlet, they are a way of reminding us that we serve a higher purpose and belong to one another.

The opposite of a throwaway culture is a culture of life. We do not throw people away. We do not abandon people because they are inconvenient. We do not measure a person's worth by productivity, independence, health or being wanted. Instead, we stand with them.

As we enter another quarter, I challenge each of us to ask a simple question: *Who in our community might feel forgotten, unwanted or alone, and what can I do about it?* If we can answer this question with action, we will be doing more than talking about a culture of life. We will be building one.
Vivat Jesus!

- Steve Shields, Grand Knight

Honor

Honor is a word that we hear many times in many different phrases -- "Honor thy mother and Father", "Honor Roll", "Honor Flight", "Honor Guard", "Honorarium", "Honor Brewing Company". Okay -- maybe not that last one though the company does honor "service, sacrifice, and community".

So, what does honor mean? It has several other words associated with it -- admiration, reputation, integrity, recognition, guarantee. Overall, it is a quality that combines respect, being proud, and honesty. What does honor have to do with being a Knight?

Honor applies to so many aspects of a Knight's daily life, starting right in his home. Caring for and cherishing his wife and family. Hopefully, that extends to the relatives too. Moving to work, does the Knight perform his job with integrity and honesty? In his neighborhood and church communities, is he a respected member who can be counted on to answer the call when needed -- or is just there when he sees the need without being called? Do we honor those around us who have lived their lives to the best of their ability -- with family, friend, or acquaintance?

As a Knight, we are called upon to be a strong and respected member of the Saint Theresa community. It is more than just attending meetings. It is more than assisting as an usher or helping with the food drives or tootsie roll campaigns. We are called to be a model for the rest of the community and neighborhood, to be seen as a well-respected person. And ... it's alright when someone honors us IF we have lived our lives to the best that we can.

- Doug Smith

Veronica

Through the narrow street in Jerusalem,
Soldiers lashed Jesus on the way to Calvary,
She saw Him—bent beneath the cross,
blood and sweat running in crimson streams.
Compassion stirred within her heart,
and love rose stronger than the threat of whips.

She stepped forward, a lone figure against the power of Rome,
her heart refusing to be silent.
No command, no spear, no shouted warning
could turn her from the suffering before her.
With trembling hands she lifted her veil,
a small act of mercy in a world gone dark.

She touched His face—so wounded, so human—
and the cloth absorbed the suffering of Jesus.
In that moment compassion became courage,
and courage became a blessing.
For when she lowered the veil again,
His Holy Face shone upon it in a quiet miracle.

Yet the truth remains, heavy as the cross He bore:
our sins still mingle with the blood she wiped away.
Every sinful act, every unforgiveness to another
adds to the stains of that sacred cloth.
And yet, He looks at us with the same patient love
that touched Veronica's veil on the road to Calvary.

- Poem by Robert N. Borghese 2026. All rights reserved.



Book Review:

Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary by Brant Pitre

By ROBERT N. BORGHESE



Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary by Brant Pitre is a richly researched and deeply devotional exploration of Mary's identity, drawing on Scripture, ancient Jewish tradition, and early Christian writings to illuminate her role in salvation history. Pitre's central claim — that Mary can only be fully understood within her first-century Jewish context — becomes the engine of a narrative that is both scholarly and spiritually resonant.

Pitre begins by examining Mary as “the New Eve,” a theme rooted in early Christian theology but strengthened here through Jewish interpretive traditions. He shows how Eve's motherhood and participation in God's plan find their fulfillment in Mary, whose “yes” (the most important “yes” in history) reverses the tragedy of Eden.

The book's middle chapters explore Mary as the New Ark of the Covenant, drawing parallels between Old Testament imagery and the Gospel accounts of the Visitation and the Nativity.

Perhaps the most compelling contribution is Pitre's discussion of Mary's perpetual virginity and assumption into heaven. By grounding these doctrines in Jewish concepts of holiness, purity, and sacred space, Pitre's insights feel both historically plausible and spiritually meaningful.

One of the most striking quotes from the book is: “If you want to understand who Mary is, you have to understand who Jesus is — and who the Jewish Messiah was expected to be.”

Overall, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary* is a compelling blend of scholarship and devotion — a book that enriches understanding and invites contemplation. For Catholics, this work reinforces long-held beliefs with renewed insight; for non-Catholics, it provides a thoughtful and respectful window into Marian theology.

Catholicism

By Bill Lehner

My frugality finally lost out.

After dithering for a year or two, I finally decided to buy Bishop Barron's *Catholicism* series. The pirated copies of the show on YouTube had piqued my interest, but the terrible pixelation and ceaseless commercials eventually drove me to spend \$67 on Amazon for the series. It turned out to be money well spent.

Catholicism is much more than a documentary about the Catholic Church. It is an invitation to encounter the Catholic faith as a unified vision of Jesus Christ, Scripture, Tradition, beauty, reason, worship, and human life. Originally released as a ten-part documentary series, *Catholicism* takes viewers to more than 50 locations in 15 countries, using art, architecture, history, the lives of the saints, the works of the Church, and sacred places to explain what Catholics believe and why they believe it.

One of the greatest strengths of the series is Bishop Barron's ability to make complicated theological ideas understandable without making them simplistic. He moves comfortably from Scripture and the teachings of Jesus to St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Mary, the Eucharist, the saints, prayer, and the Last Things. Each episode explores a fundamental dimension of the Catholic faith, but Barron consistently brings the discussion back to its center: Jesus Christ.

That emphasis is important. The series does not present Catholicism merely as a collection of doctrines, rules, or traditions. Instead, it presents Catholicism as a relationship with the person of Christ and as a way of seeing the world through Him. Barron repeatedly makes the point that Christianity is ultimately not about an idea or an institution, but about an encounter with a person ... Jesus . . . who is God.

The visual presentation is another remarkable feature of the series. Barron takes the viewer into some of the great churches, cathedrals, museums,

and sacred places of the Catholic world to encounter Jesus. The series demonstrates how the faith has been expressed through centuries of art, architecture, music, pilgrimage, and culture. It appeals not only to the intellect, but also to the senses and the imagination.

Barron also takes the viewer to other places where Christ is encountered: slums, food pantries, orphanages, and places where the Church is caring for the poor and vulnerable. It gives the viewer a real sense of the universality of the Church across people, space and time.

Perhaps what I found most compelling is Barron's confidence that Catholicism has been, and continues to be, meaningful to the modern world. He does not apologize for Catholic teaching or reduce it to whatever happens to be culturally acceptable. At the same time, he does not ignore the failures or sinful history of people within the Church. He acknowledges them honestly while arguing that the failures of individual Catholics do not invalidate the truth and beauty of the faith itself.

For anyone seeking to deepen his or her Catholic faith, *Catholicism* is an outstanding resource. But I think its greatest value is that it does more than teach. It invites the viewer to move from simply knowing about the Catholic faith to encountering the person at its center.

And, in my case, it was worth the \$67.

- Bill Lehner, Lecturer

First Pancake Breakfast, September 20, 2026

LET'S GET READY TO PANCAKE! Our first pancake breakfast of the fraternal year is coming up on 20 September. Our Charity for this month is the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. They provide the Catholic Church's full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual care to Catholics serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, their families, patients in VA medical centers, and federal personnel overseas.

Our pancake breakfasts are one of the most visible and impactful ways we serve our parish community, and this year we want to make it our most successful ever. Your help—whether setting up, cooking, serving, or cleaning—makes all the difference. No experience is needed; just bring your willingness to pitch in and enjoy the camaraderie that makes these mornings special. Together, we can make every breakfast a standout success and show our parish what Knights in action truly look like. Thank you!

Here's the link to sign up for the 20 September pancake breakfast:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4BAFA92CA1FA7-64416964-pancake>

2026-2027 Pancake Breakfast Dates

Breakfast Date	Charity	Notes
9/20/2026	Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA	Labor Day on 9/7/2026 Parish Picnic 9/27/2026
10/11/2026	The Louverture Cleary Schools Network (The Haitian Project) Associates of Saint John Bosco	Columbus Day on 10/12/2026
11/8/2026	VA Special Olympics	DST ends on 11/1/2026 Veterans Day on 11/11/2026
12/6/2026	Agape Pregnancy Resource Center	with Festival of Trees
1/10/2027	Associates of Saint John Bosco	MLK Day on 1/18/2027
2/7/2027	Diocesan Work Camp	Ash Wednesday on 2/10/27 Superbowl on 2/14/2027 Presidents Day on 2/15/2027
3/7/2027	St. Theresa School Thunder Appeal	DST starts 3/14/2027 Easter on 28 March 2027
5/16/2027	Foster Care Support in Loudoun County	Mother's Day on 5/9/2027
TBD	<i>Eighth Grade Sunrise Breakfast</i>	

American Heritage Girls

Girls ages 5–18 are invited to join American Heritage Girls Troop VA0714 at St. Theresa's!

American Heritage Girls is a Christ-centered character and leadership program where girls grow in their faith, build lasting friendships, develop leadership skills, enjoy outdoor adventures, and serve their communities. We have Troop meetings twice a month on Wednesdays, and we generally have one weekend activity per month like camping, hiking, service projects, and other outings.

If you would like to learn more or are interested in joining, please contact us at:

ahg.va0714@gmail.com or:

visit <https://americanheritagegirls.org/>.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED - KofC LOUIS MARTIN COUNCIL 15256 AUGUST FOOD DRIVE

The August food drive is complete and was a great success. We collected, sorted, and delivered **6,526 pounds** of food this month from our very generous parishioners.

Thank you, Brothers and families, for your tremendous help to make this program so successful. As always, our Youth Group under Paul Dwyer's great leadership helped us to breeze through categorizing, sorting by expiration date, and loading up the Knight's cars. We couldn't do this without them!

September Food Drive dates:

- 14 - prep bags
- 19-20 - stage bags for pick up
- 26-27 - return bags and categorize items
- 28 - sort items by expiration date
- 29 - deliver bags to Food Pantry

See you in September for the next Food Drive!

- Torsten Koehler



CURRENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS (2025 -2026)

Chaplain
Associate Chaplain
District Deputy
Grand Knight
Deputy Grand Knight
Chancellor
Financial Secretary
Warden
Recorder
Treasurer
Advocate
Trustees
Hegarty

Primary Alt. State Del.
Secondary Alt. State Del.
Programs Director
Lecturer
Inside Guard
Outside Guard
Faith Director
Vocations Chairman
Community Director
Life Director
Communications

Family Director
Membership Director
Recruitment Committee
Retention Chairman
Handyman Team Lead
Pancake Breakfast

KOVAR Team Lead
Fraternal Benefits Field Agent
Director of IT and Innovation
Parish Picnic

Father Hudgins
Father Solsma
Jay Hallam
Steve Shields
Todd Kane
Mike Lang
Jim Bonfils
Cooper Hodges
Tim Mason
Steve Kasban
Rob McNamee
1 Yr. John

2 Yr. Mike Boyle
3 Yr. Eric Ciliberti
3 Yr. Trustee
2 Yr. Trustee
Todd Kane
Bill Lehner
Open
Roy Tubergen
Jack Hayes
Bill Lehner
Jim McQuarrie
Open
Rudy Flores
Dave Schreder
Robert Borghese
Cooper Hodges
Savio Thomas
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Mike Lang
Jack Hayes
Jack Hayes
Savio Thomas
Jim Mosesso
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William Lehner



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