

*He saw the spirit of God
descending like a dove*

Matthew 3:16



6400 Nativity Lane,
Burke, Virginia 22015
nativityburke.org

REV. ROBERT C. CILINSKI, PASTOR
REV. CHRISTOPHER H. HAYES, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. EDWARD BRESNAHAN, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. CEDRIC P. WILSON, ASSISTING PRIEST/
SPANISH MINISTRY
DEACON RICHARD F. KELLY

SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES OF THE PARISH:

Adrienne Swidal, Parish Secretary
Ann Benson, Business Manager
Carlos Gutierrez, Facility Manager
Cat Sands, Pastoral Minister
Maureen Andersen, Liturgical Minister
Johana Brown, Parish Receptionist
Anna Marty, Receptionist/Baptism Coordinator
Caroline Chase, Receptionist/Bulletin Editor
Ayse Kenner, Mass Intentions
Alison Fram, Director of Young Adult/College Ministry
Rebecca Judge, Director of Youth Ministry
Mary Castellano, Director of Social Media
Jennifer Sturgeon, Director of Marriage Enrichment/
Ecumenical Ministry
Carole Fischl, Co-director of Music
Debbie Doyle, Co-director of Music
Mai Tran, Traditional Choir Director
Sara Prince, Youth Choir Director/Cornerstone Choir
Natacha Hines, Gift Shop

MINISTERS OF OUR SCHOOL:

Maria Kelly, Principal
Richard Godwin, Assistant Principal
Jen Behan, Preschool Director/Extended
Care Director
Shannon Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Registrar
Kim Vu, Business Manager
Mary Helen Chapman, School Secretary

**MINISTERS OF OUR RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

Sister Donatella Merulla, A.R., M.R.E.
Sister Mary Attilia Todaro, A.R., M.R.E.
Fania Jimenez, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Sturgeon, Confirmation Coordinator

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELOR

Marguerite Turner, MS, LPC (703) 454 2415



PARISH OFFICE: (703) 455-2400

PARISH FAX: (703) 455-6832

NATIVITY SCHOOL: (703) 455-2300

NATIVITY FAX: (703) 569-8109

PRE-SCHOOL: (703) 455-2300 ext. 136

CCD OFFICE: (703) 455-0372

CCD OFFICE FAX: (703) 455-6832

SUNDAY MASSES: 5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
7:00 p.m. Vigil Mass in Spanish
7:00 a.m./9:00 a.m./11:00 a.m./
1:00 p.m./5:30 p.m.

WEEKDAY MASSES: 7:30 a.m. Monday through Friday
12:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 a.m. on Saturday

HOLY DAY MASSES: As Announced

RECONCILIATION: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Saturday
or, if necessary, by appointment

BAPTISM: For more information and how to schedule a baptism,
please visit our website: <https://nativityburke.org/baptism/>

MARRIAGE POLICY: Please contact the Church as soon as
you are engaged, and at least six months prior to your
wedding date.

BULLETIN DEADLINE: Announcements for the bulletin **must**
be submitted **in writing** by 9:00 AM on Tuesday (5 days
prior to publication). Please note: this deadline can change
due to holiday office closings. You may email submissions
to bulletin@nativityburke.org.

WEBMASTER: Emilia Hartline, webmaster@nativityburke.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: Mary Castellano,
socialmedia@nativityburke.org

Assisted hearing devices are available from the
Sacristy staff at all services.



@Nativity Parish Burke



@nativityparishburke_

A Message from our Pastor
Fr. Bob Cilinski



"Here I am. You called me."

My dear parishioners,

This Sunday we enter "Ordinary Time." Christmas with its glitter and excitement is behind us and Lent followed by the glory of Easter is in the future. In this "ordinary" time we reflect on the everyday ministry of Jesus. God enters the ordinary moments of our lives and truly makes them extraordinary.

We are ordinary human beings, but something extraordinary happened when we were baptized. St. Paul describes this when he says that ordinary human beings are members of Christ; their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit!

We do not recognize Christ in the ordinary moments and ordinary people of our lives. John the Baptist almost missed God when He came calling. We do not hear the voice of God calling so we need to attune our ears and adjust our sights. When God calls we should respond, "Here I am. You called me."

John Henry Cardinal Newman gives us this reflection:

God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep his commandments.

Therefore, I will trust him. Whatever, wherever I am. I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about. He may take away my friends, he may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me – still he knows what he is about.

Love and Blessings,

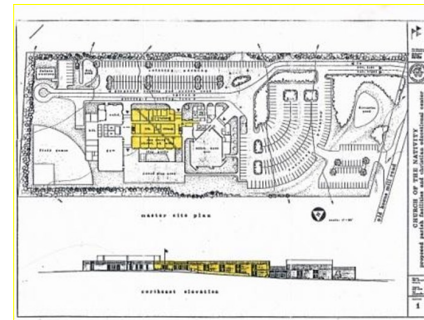
Fr. Bob Cilinski
Fr. Bob Cilinski,
Pastor

The Stella Marina, Operation Starfish project is collecting new and gently used Pack 'n Plays for moms in Haiti to use for their babies and young children. The collection runs year round. Feel free to contact Susan at swelchparis@stellamarina.org to coordinate pick-up or leave in the parish office marked Stella Marina.

Please visit <https://nativityburke.org/packnplay-needed/> for more information. Thank you!

On This Date in Nativity History
December 1985

In this month, December 1985, Nativity pastor Father Sal Ciullo unveiled a plan for the construction of two additional buildings to sit alongside the Worship Center: the Spiritual Formation Center and School, and the Community Center. This ambitious plan was to move forward in stages, as funding became available. On the plan below, the portion shaded in yellow became the spiritual formation center and eventually Nativity School, opened in 1996. The unshaded area to the left of the school, which would include a gymnasium and cafeteria, was not built during this second phase. Instead, in phase two the cafeteria and parish hall were incorporated into the ground floor of the school. The full plan came to fruition in 2015, thirty years later, with the dedication of the Father Martin Center.



This historical note is the 32nd of a weekly Bulletin feature leading up to Nativity's fiftieth anniversary, 11 June 2023.

JANUARY 16th PARISH OFFICE CLOSING

The Parish Office will be closed on
Monday, January 16th in observance of
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Knights of Columbus Council 7992
Basketball Free Throw Challenge

This fun event will be held on Saturday, February 4 from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM in the Father Martin Center and is open to all boys and girls ages 9 - 14. Each contestant will be scored on 15 free throws taken from an age-designated foul line. Boy and girl winners for each age group will be determined by highest score. In case of a tie, five additional tie-breaker free throws will be used to determine the winners. Participants can arrive any time between 6:00 - 9:00 PM and do not have to remain for the entire event. Participation time for each contestant is typically 15-20 mins. This is a community event so all are welcome regardless of parish affiliation. Bring friends and compete with each other! Group winners will be eligible to compete at the Knights of Columbus District Challenge in February at Holy Spirit in Annandale. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Jim Batrla at jbat747@gmail.com.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - APPALACHIA HOME BUILDING SPECIAL COLLECTION - JANUARY 21/22

On the weekend of January 21/22, the Knights will be speaking at all the Masses asking for your help to continue their home building effort in one of the poorest counties in our country. For the last 22 years, the Nativity Knights and Nativity Parish have partnered with the Appalachian Construction Crew operating out of Bellevue, Nebraska, to build one or two homes in McCreary County, Kentucky, which is rated as one of the top counties in this country for income below the poverty level. Throughout the year both crews raise money to offset the normal cost of approximately \$82,000 to build the home. Last year, because of the COVID impact on the supply chain and the three-bedroom home, our costs exceeded \$102,000. With the generosity of Nativity Parish, Nativity has raised over \$90,000 in past collections and is the main funding source for the annual home building effort. Without Nativity's support, the home building effort would have ceased in 2005. Last year, the combined crews built a home for the New family. The family had a total income of approximately \$24,000 and the family of four lived in a rundown trailer with significant mold and electrical issues. We are trying to exceed our past collection efforts to reach \$100,000, but we can't do it without your help. This will be the 25th home built by Nativity and the Knights.

This year Good Shepherd Chapel in Whitley City selected the Creekmore family of three to receive the next home. The family has been living in a dilapidated trailer with mold issues that is nearly impossible to heat in the winter. The family's total income is \$17,000. Over a very compressed two weeks in June, the combined crews will build a 1,100SF, three-bedroom home, complete with porches, heating/AC, appliances, and a septic system -- the family assists if they are able. A handyman prepares the foundation and because of county requirements, we must hire local electricians, HVAC specialists, and plumbers who work side-by-side with our crews to complete the home which has significantly added to our costs. Nativity will again provide new complete beds for all the family members.

Please help if you can, but above all pray that we may be able to continue this important mission! The Knights will be collecting at all the church exits after all the Masses—checks may be made payable to Nativity Catholic Church but annotate Appalachia Home Building on the check and your church envelope number to facilitate posting to your account. Please consider electronic giving if at all possible; Appalachia Home Building is one of the designated charities. If you would like to mail your contribution, please send it to Nativity Catholic Church, 6400 Nativity Lane, Burke, VA 22015. Please call Bob Corsi at 703-239-2890 if you have any questions or email him at bobcorsi@cox.net.



APPALACHIA HOME BUILDING

SPECIAL COLLECTION – NATIVITY'S 25TH HOME

JANUARY 21 & 22

PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN!

Mass for World Marriage Sunday

Married couples are invited to attend the Mass for World Marriage Sunday at St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church in Fairfax on Saturday, February 25, 2023 at 5 p.m., celebrated by the Most Reverend, Michael F. Burbidge. There will be a dinner directly following the Mass for the first 100 couples who RSVP. Register at arlingtondiocese.org/wms. To learn more, call the Office of Marriage, Family and Respect Life at (703) 841-2550.

MEM | Book Reflection with Fr. Hayes

The Marriage Enrichment Ministry invites all engaged and married couples to read "*Spousal Prayer: A Way to Marital Happiness*" by Deacon James Keating and join us for a book reflection with Fr. Hayes taking place on Friday, January 27 at 7:00 pm in the conference room (Training Room) in the back of the church. **To RSVP, visit: <https://nativityburke.org/mem-book/>**

Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home is hosting a free Grief Counseling session designed specifically for those of you who have lost a child.

Join us on Sunday, the 29th of January, 2023 to share, listen, feel & heal.

Location: Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home (9902 Braddock Rd, Fairfax VA 22032)
Time: 1:00pm

Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP by Friday, January 20, 2023 by going to fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com and click on the "Free Grief Support Group" tab on the homepage or call (703) 425-9702.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar Flower Book for 2023 is now open with many dates available. This is a thoughtful way to honor a loved one, living or deceased. If you are interested, please stop by the parish office to sign up. You can now also go online and reserve flowers on our website at: <https://nativityburke.org/altar-flowers/>.



**Handmaids of Reparation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
WE MET OUR ADVENT FUNDRAISING GOAL!**

Thank you for your kind generosity



THANKS TO YOUR DONATIONS OUR SISTERS WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST THOSE IN NEED AND OUR CHILDREN IN ORPHANAGES AROUND THE WORLD

MAY THE LORD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY, WITH LOVE, AND IN CHRIST,

SISTER DONATELLA, SISTER MARY ATTILIA AND ALL THE SISTERS OF THE HANDMAIDS OF REPARATION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS



DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



HANDMAIDSOFREPARATION.ORG

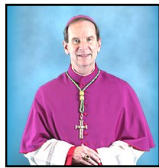
SAVE THE DATE: 2023 PARISH MISSION

This year our Parish Mission will be held from:
*February 13-16, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. evening
with Rev. Simeon Gallagher, OFM Cap, in the church*

The theme and daily topics are: A Spirituality for Relationships
Monday - Sustaining Good Relationships - Faith
Tuesday - Communication in Relationships - Prayer
Wednesday - Breaking Relationships - Sin
Thursday - Building Better Relationships - Grace

HOME VISITS

Are you or someone you know sick and/or homebound for any reason? We can arrange home visits from the parish and provide prayer and the sacraments.
We would love to bring God's Grace and Peace to anyone in difficult times. Please contact Cat Sands, Pastoral Minister, at csands@nativityburke.org to schedule a visit.



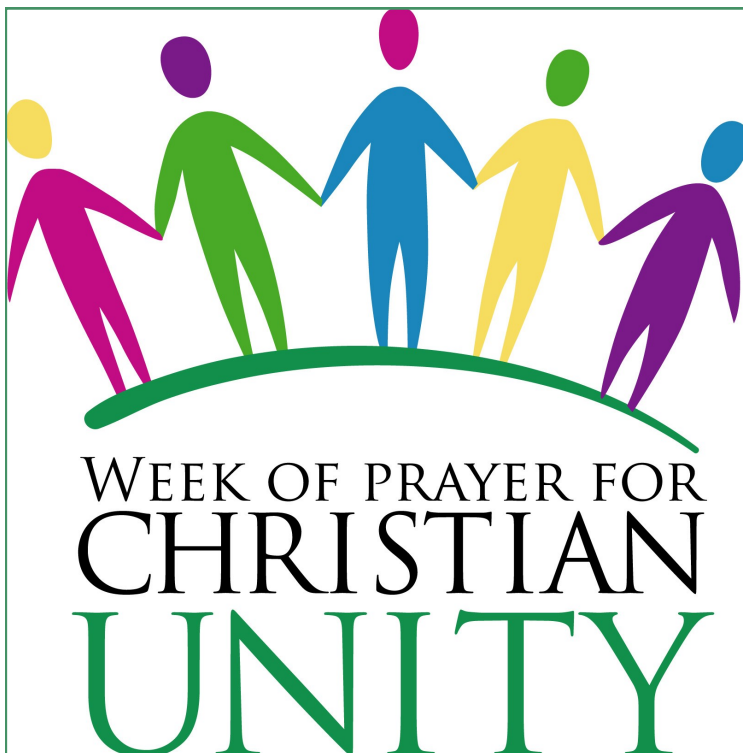
Statement from Bishop Michael F. Burbidge in recognition of Poverty Awareness Month

The land will never lack for needy persons; that is why I command you: "Open your hand freely to your poor and to your needy kin in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

Each January, we observe Poverty Awareness Month as a way to bring light to those who are in desperate need of fundamental human necessities, often left to suffer in the shadows of society.

In Virginia alone, more than 10% of our population lives in poverty. These brothers and sisters — often joined by their Children — may even be homeless, living in their cars or on the streets. They are hungry for food, and desperate to keep safe and away from the elements. Through Catholic Charities and the many ministries of our parishes, may we continue to reach out to our vulnerable neighbors. May we help them experience Christ's healing and consolation, especially in their times of struggle and need. Finally, may each of us consider a new way in which we might support a local charity that serves the poor, ensuring them of our care.

In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.



Rosary Making

This month consider joining the rosary ministry and learning how to make mission rosaries. You can register today on the Nativity web site (search Rosary Ministry). A rosary maker will contact you and a day and time will be set up convenient for you. Our rosaries go to hundreds of parishioners and to dozens of foreign missions around the world. Our Blessed Mother asked us to pray for peace when she appeared at Fatima. Join us and become a part of that mission. The world needs us!
Contact: rosaryministry@nativityburke.org

MASS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN HAITI

For much of the past year the people of Haiti have suffered from political turmoil, gang violence, and lack of food and fuel. Our parish, through Operation Starfish, has developed deep relationships with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. While our project work has continued, the population generally is out of work, food is scarce and people are fearful. We need to pray for them.

So we are bringing our community together for a Mass for Peace and Justice in Haiti on Wednesday evening January 25th at 7:00 p.m. here at Nativity Catholic Church.

Please join us and bring a friend to Mass to pray for the people of Haiti on January 25th. You can also watch this short video from Food For The Poor discussing the situation in Haiti and the work that has still continued in the past year.

Visit: <https://youtu.be/54crVBIRLTM>



Welcome to
NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

6400 NATIVITY LANE, BURKE, VA 22015

- COMMUNITY WORSHIP
- FAITH FORMATION
- FELLOWSHIP
- SERVICE

Learn More...

www.nativityburke.org



JOIN US FOR A *fiesta!*

NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL SPRING AUCTION

WHEN: SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023
6:30 - 10:00PM

WHERE: NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL,
FATHER MARTIN CENTER

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Nativity Parish and School cordially invites you to Join Us for a Fiesta! Mark your calendars and join us for an evening of delicious tapas & cervezas, live music, fun and fellowship with an overflowing silent and live auction to help raise funds for Nativity Catholic School.

While this event is the school’s BIGGEST Fundraiser of the year, it is open to the ENTIRE Nativity Parish & School community! We HOPE to see you there!

Funds raised during the event will provide financial assistance for:

- Science lab apparatus
- Mathematics manipulatives
- Student enrichment activities, such as school field trips
- Scholarships
- Other needs which directly impact our children’s continued success Scan for info

Questions: Contact auction@nativityschool.org

SAVE THE DATE: St. Lucy Winter Food Drive
Saturday, February 11th from 9:00AM-1:00PM

The St. Lucy Winter Food Drive will take place from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturday, 11 February to support Catholic Charities in its continuing fight against hunger in the Diocese. The St. Lucy truck will be parked at the rear of the church parking lot nearest Old Keene Mill Road (like in the October drive). During that time, you can drive to the truck and our team will take any donations from your vehicle (please place your donations in your trunk for safe and easy removal). Catholic Charities also accepts monetary donations, including grocery gift cards (Giant, Safeway, etc.); any donation is welcome! Please make checks out to CCDA, with “St. Lucy Project” in the memo line. We can always use help with loading donations; if you’d like to volunteer, please follow this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D49ADAE29A6FE3-stlucy1>. If you have questions, please email the St. Lucy Team at nativity.stlucyteam@gmail.com. Thank you and God bless you!

Blessed Angel

Jim Boucher

Blessed Angel -- Good Morning
Let us go forward, hand in hand
And search the world of wonder
Returning with grace abounding
I take pride in you

Blessed Angel -- Good Night
Thank you for true bearing
Guiding me along life’s path
A beneficent collaboration
I’m so proud of you

For Young Adults (21-39)

You are part of a larger community that...

Serves with Christ House cooking breakfast every 3rd Saturday



Grows together in 6-week Bible studies



Plays Basketball every Thursday at 8:30pm in the Father Martin Center



Serves at Mass as a greeters, ushers, musicians and more!

New? Contact our Director Alison Fram to join our newsletter

afram@nativityburke.org
(703) 577-5329



ZOOM DATE NIGHT

with Gregory and Stephanie Schutte
“Day to Day Marriage with the End in Mind”

Saturday, January 28 at 7:00 pm

Register on the parish website or contact marriage@nativityburke.org



Save the Dates for two Significant Pro-Life Events in Early 2023!

National March for Life in Washington DC – Friday, January 20, 2023

Join us as we march to Capitol Hill! Please let us know if you tentatively plan to attend so travel arrangements can be made! Simply sign up using Sign-Up Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d4eacac29a2f58-2023>

Depart Nativity ~ 11:00am

Rally at Noon, and March to the Capitol at 1:00pm

Return to Nativity around 3:30pm

“We will celebrate the 50th annual March for Life and the momentous overturn of Roe v. Wade! We will honor those who have gone before us making this historic victory possible. We will present the strategic plan for building a culture of life ...

This year, rather than marching to the steps of the Supreme Court, where we have for decades asked our highest Court’s Justices to undo the destructive decision that was Roe v. Wade, we will now march to a new front in our battle for life, the steps of the United States Capitol.”

Jeanne Mancini, President of the March for Life

Guest speakers/performers for the Rally include:

- Jonathan Roumie, best known for his award-winning role as ‘Jesus’ in the series, THE CHOSEN
- Coach Tony Dungy, Pro-Football Hall of Famer and a New York Times best-selling author
- We Are Messengers, the Dove-nominated and K-LOVE Award-winning musical group

Virginia Defending Life Day & Virginia March for Life – Wednesday, Feb 1, 2023

Join Bishop Burbidge and us—your personal presence will powerfully support pro-life members of the Virginia General Assembly and encourages others to reconsider their views. We want our legislators to see that we expect them to pass life-affirming legislation. Bishop Burbidge, as the new Chair of the USCCB Pro-Life Committee, is keenly aware of how important this state-level representation is. Although this may be a bit out of the norm for you, we believe you will enjoy the comradery and find it empowering to stand up for this noble cause!

What's the plan?

- 6:30am Depart Nativity
- 8:30am Gather at the Richmond Convention Center
- 10:00am Senate and Delegate Meetings
- 12:00pm March for Life Rally
- 1:00pm Virginia March for Life
- 2:00pm Depart Richmond
- 4:00pm Return to Nativity

Don't worry! Should you be interested in talking, tips for effective advocacy, talking points and legislative updates will be provided by the organizers to make your day fun, easy, and successful. Please let us know if you tentatively plan to attend so sufficient travel arrangements can be made!

Simply sign up using Sign-Up Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D4EACAC29A2F58-20231>

More details to follow. Please contact Rick and Linda Loffredo at rickloffredo@outlook.com if you have any questions.



MASS INTENTIONS

*"We are God's People"
1 Peter 2:10*

Monday, January 16th

7:30 am Special Int. for Alice Pachon

Tuesday, January 17th

7:30 am † Connie Rathbone

12:00 pm † Dennis Patrick Treanor

Wednesday, January 18th

7:30 am † Richard Ferraro

(Burke R.) 3:00 pm Special Int. for Phyllis Balberchak

Thursday, January 19th

7:30 am † James Lynch

12:00 pm † Mark Tiffany

Friday, January 20th

7:30 am † Jane "Dolly" Martin

9:00 am Dave and Teena Thornton

10:15 am March for Life - the unborn

Saturday, January 21st

9:00 am † Juanita & Gene DePalma

5:00 pm † Fernando Rodriguez

7:00 pm Parishioners

Sunday, January 22nd

7:00 am Parishioners

9:00 am † Dorothy Barbanes

11:00 am † Kelly Sharbel

1:00 pm † Ricardo Villegas

5:30 pm † Juana Hara

In prayer, let us remember the sick and deceased of the parish visit nativityburke.org for the Priest Mass Schedule

For Mass Intentions requests, please visit: <https://nativityburke.org/mass-intentions/>



ITEM OF THE WEEK

Located in the quaint town of Clifton, Paradise Springs Winery and Vineyard is the closest winery to Washington DC and the first in Fairfax County. Reserve a seated tasting or grab a tasting flight for you and 3 family/friends to enjoy with four tasting cards.



This item, as well as other winery tastings, will be available at the Auction!

WORKCAMP 2023

Registration Open!

**JUNE 17-23, 2023
FREDERICK COUNTY, VA**

Teens, parents and adult volunteers are invited to a week-long overnight camp providing the high school teens with an opportunity to encounter Christ through service, faith, and fellowship.

Registration closes on January 22.

Questions?
Contact Brigid Williams | wc@nativityburke.org







JOIN THE NATIVITY EXTENDED CARE TEAM
*Love working with Children? Creative with fingerprint?
 Like to sift sand? The following qualifications are necessary:*

- A LOVE of children and a ‘Can-Do’ Attitude
- Afternoon availability, 2:30pm-6:00pm
- Diocesan compliance to work with kids
- Adhere to COVID-19 Safety Protocols

To apply, please contact: Jen Behan, Director at jbehan@nativityschool.org

Mass in Recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 All are welcome to join Bishop Michael Burbidge celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in the holy sacrifice of the Mass hosted at St. Bernadette's Catholic Church, 7600 Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield. Mass will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2023 at 11:00am, with a reception to follow. This Mass is organized and sponsored by the Black Catholic Ministry, Office of Multicultural Ministries of the Diocese of Arlington. For any questions, please email mcm@arlingtondiocese.org or call (703) 841 3881.

Interested in advertising in the bulletin? Call Mike Jurosky at 717-648-5996 or email: mjurosky@diocesan.com

TRAVEL TO ITALY. MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN THERE, OR MAYBE YOU DREAM OF GOING.

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 26
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: NATIVITY SCHOOL CAFETERIA

AT THIS MONTH'S NATIVITY ITALIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING, WE'LL TALK TRAVEL WITH A PANEL OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE CHOSEN DIFFERENT METHODS FOR THEIR TRIPS. SOME PEOPLE PREFER SIGNING UP WITH A TOUR COMPANY. STILL OTHERS WANT TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS. SOME HAVE DONE FAMILY GENEALOGY, THEN VISITED ANCESTRAL ITALIAN TOWNS WITH HOPE OF FINDING COUSINS. ALL ARE INTERESTING METHODS OF TRIPS. WE'LL HEAR ABOUT DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AND GET TIPS ON PLANNING FUTURE TRAVEL.

AS ALWAYS, A SOCIAL HOUR FOLLOWS. IF YOU CAN, BRING AN APPETIZER OR DESSERT TO SHARE. WINE AND BEVERAGES WILL BE AVAILABLE.

BECOME A MEMBER AT ANY MEETING FOR \$20, FAMILY; \$15, SINGLE. COME AS A GUEST FOR \$5. ALL ARE WELCOMED.

PILGRIMAGE

St. John Paul II National Shrine

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH
10 AM - 5 PM

**FOR ENGAGED AND MARRIED
COUPLES**

**3900 HAREWOOD RD NE,
WASHINGTON, DC 20017**

RSVP to
marriage@nativityburke.org

Love Is Given Prayer Group - note time change
 Please join us every Thursday evening from 7:00PM-8:30 PM for an evening of prayer, praise and community. We meet each week in the Fr. Ready room. Come in through the school entrance, first room on your left. We look forward to seeing you!

Nativity Catholic School

Invites you to a special morning with Nativity School
In celebration of Catholic Schools Week



For our Senior Citizens!

Monday, January 30th

10:30am-11:30am (Please arrive by 10:15am)

Check in at the School Main Office.

Light morning snack provided.

Prizes!

RSVP to 703-455-2300 by January 25th

Provide first, last name and how many attending

Space is limited because of school day schedule





Enjoy a great family dinner while raising money for
Nativity Catholic School

January 18th from 5pm to 9pm

West Springfield Ledo Pizza

8324 Old Keene Mill Road
West Springfield, Virginia 22152

The organizer receives **20%** of dine-in sales for each flyer presented!

Your group also receives **20%** of takeout and online orders when mentioning the fundraiser! For online orders please use the code "Fundraiser" to receive proper credit.

Call ahead for takeout! **703-451-5336**

If any staff or parents order catering the entire week of the fundraiser, our school will get 10% of the check total!

Bring a friend and tell your neighbors too!

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO
Nativity Catholic School**

Linktree Universal Sign-up Link:

Want to volunteer for an event? All event sign-ups can be done through the following link. https://linktr.ee/fr_sikora_council_7992 Event leads can also fill out a form to announce an event, and file an After Action Report through the link.

National March for Life: The annual march in support of the unborn is 20 January. Also, there is still a great need for parade Marshals. Sign up on the link tree to express interest for a bus or to serve as a Marshal.

Annual Appalachia Collection: On January 21- 22, we will need Knights to help with collections after every mass.

Virginia Defending Life Day & Virginia March for Life: Join Bishop Burbidge and us on 1 February for an exciting, full day of advocacy, prayer and witness at the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond! Sign up on the link tree.

St. Lucy Food Drive: Help hand out bags after masses on 4-5 Feb. Volunteer to help with the collection on 11 Feb.

Youth Basketball Free Throw Competition: Sat, February 4, 6pm – 9pm in the Fr. Martin Center (Gym)

Scout Sunday Pancake Breakfast: Help with this annual event and support the Scouts of Nativity Parish on 5 Feb.

Charity Art Auction: Help set up and clean up after the 11 February Auction. Sign up on the linktree. Buy Charity Art Auction tickets on the linktree.

Name Tags: Email Warden Michael Bender at michaelbambender@hotmail.com to order.

Sunday Mass Coffee and Cookies: We are providing coffee and cookies following Sunday morning Masses. Volunteer on linktree.

Handy Knights Ministry: If you are unable to perform basic maintenance tasks or small repairs in your home due to health or other factors, there is a ministry with the Knights of Columbus that may be able to assist – the “Handy Knights.” You can reach us at handyknightsofnativity@gmail.com.

The Fraternal Committee: Brothers helping brothers in need of assistance: Brothers and the families of living and deceased brothers in need of a helping hand, please contact Br. John Landy at navvy8@yahoo.com.

Food for Others: We need volunteers to help with our food distributions. The distribution picks up from the warehouse and delivers to Springfield. It should only take about an hour of your time on Friday evenings once a month based on the current number of volunteers in rotation. If you are interested in helping deliver, contact Br. Matt Stockburger at mstock_w@yahoo.com.

Join the Knights! The Knights of Columbus is an international Order of Catholic men who are called to lead with faith, protect our families, serve others and defend values in a busy changing world. Knights of Columbus membership brings Catholic men together in a powerful way. Join today! Simply go to <https://info.kofc.org/us.html> and enter our council #7992 for local information and to register. E-membership for the first year is free using the new code “blessedmcgivney”. Please email PMDELATTE@gmail.com or the Grand Knight at tjsgk7992@gmail.com if you have questions.

Council Meetings: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. Rosary at 7:15 PM; meeting follows at 7:30 PM. Fellowship follows every meeting. Meetings are now in person in the Nativity school cafeteria, with the option to attend virtually as well. The second meeting of the month is devoted to faith formation including the “Into the Breach” video/discussion series and guest speakers.

Calling all 3rd Degree Knights: Members of the 4th Degree have the special honor of holding the title “Sir Knight,” participating in patriotic activities, color and honor guards and organizing programs that promote Catholic citizenship.

**Gifts for Seminarian Education Endowment Fund (SEEF)**

Please support our seminarians and SEEF, a permanent endowment fund established in 2011. SEEF's income provides funding for annual seminarian expenses such as room, board, tuition, health insurance and books, which total almost \$45,000 per seminarian. Please give generously! To donate, make checks payable to: “*Foundation for the CDA - SEEF.*” Mail to: The Foundation, 200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 811, Arlington, VA 22203. Contact John French at john.french@arlingtondiocese.org or (703) 841-3819 with any questions. Thank you!

Love working with children? Want flexibility? Consider subbing for us...

We are in need of substitute teachers with the following minimum qualifications:

- ◆ 2-plus years of college
- ◆ Ability to follow a lesson plan and give effective instructions in the absence of the teacher
- ◆ Proficiency in maintaining effective classroom management skills
- ◆ Successful completion of Virtus training
- ◆ Successful background check
- ◆ Adherence to COVID-19 Safety Protocols

To apply, email Rich Godwin at rgodwin@nativityschool.org, or call him at (703) 455-2300, ext.146. Thank you!

Struggling with addiction in the family?

Both the afflicted and affected don't need to be alone. There are many resources available including AA, NA, Alanon, Calix and a diocesan chaplain. Call the HELPLINE (970) 989-2670 for support. This is NOT LIMITED to addicts, anybody that would like to speak with a priest or a friend in Christ May call!



You can designate Nativity Church or Nativity School as the beneficiaries of your Amazon Smile! You can choose Nativity by going to: **YOUR ACCOUNT, YOUR AMAZON SMILE and designating Nativity.** Amazon then contributes a small percentage of each purchase to Nativity. For questions, please contact Ann Benson at: 703 455 2400.

**Nativity is a tithing community
Giving back a portion of God's blessings in gratitude****Are you registered in the Parish?**

If you are not receiving mail or emails from the parish, chances are you are not registered. You are free to stop by the Parish Office to fill out a registration form to become a registered member of Nativity Parish or go online to: nativityburke.org and download one. Registration is required to be a Baptismal Godparent or Confirmation Sponsor.

Donate Your Car to Catholic Charities!

If you are thinking of replacing your car with something new, please consider donating your old car to Catholic Charities. Proceeds from the sale of working and non-working cars provide critical funds for our volunteer programs. It's easy, we handle all the paperwork and you receive an IRS donation receipt. Email Cars@ccda.net or call (703) 841-3898.

Come Listen to Dr. John Bruchalski Talk about His Pro-Life Conversion



TWO PATIENTS

My Conversion from Abortion
to Life-Affirming Medicine

Tuesday, January 31, 2023
Lyceum Auditorium, 313 Duke St.

7-7:30 p.m.: Social time
7:30 p.m.: Talk begins

**Snacks/Refreshments
will be served**

Dr. Bruchalski is the Founder
and President of Divine Mercy Care
and the Founder of Tepeyac
OB/GYN in Fairfax, Virginia.

To RSVP:

<https://drjohnbruchalski.com/events/>

After a terrible misjudgment in the delivery room, Dr. Bruchalski realized that, with every pregnant woman he attends, there are two patients—the mother and her unborn child. In addition to this discovery, two remarkable spiritual experiences deepened his understanding of the kind of man he had become, and the one he was called to be.

His book is the story of how a physician who practiced abortion came to question the medical status quo and to pioneer an approach to reproductive medicine that respects female fertility, honors the dignity of unborn children, and offers care to patients regardless of their financial situation. Such health care, says Dr. Bruchalski, is merciful medicine, and his talk will give a glimpse of just how merciful the relationship between a doctor and his two patients—mother and child—can be.



Cook & Deliver Breakfast to Christ House

For this past year, young adults have been cooking and delivering breakfast to the men living at Christ House in Alexandria. We do this the third Saturday of every month, delivering it at 8am. Your next chance to join them is on Saturday, December 17. *Future dates are: February 18, March 18, April 15.*

Can you help us make breakfast on January 21? Let us know! They love eggs, tater tots, bacon...all the good things.

We have two awesome coordinators for this monthly service- Grace and Kathleen. If you're interested, **email Kathleen for details: kmerrimanoo1@gmail.com**

Parish App Feature-of-the-Week



Inspiration
Daily

- Thoughts on Catholic life
- Informative and inspirational
- Simple insight for living a deeper faith everyday

Learn more or download our parish app at myparishapp.com

*Available on Apple and Android Phones.

Sign Up For the Diocesan E-Newsletter!

Receive special video messages from our bishop, learn about unique opportunities to get involved, and be the first to know the news about our Diocese - straight to your inbox.

Sign up here: arlingtondiocese.org/email

Sundays with the Sisters Rejoice Tour 2023

Witness the joy of our religious sisters during the Sundays with the Sisters Rejoice Tour 2023! An initiative for the year of preparation for our diocesan jubilee in 2024, the tour will showcase the religious women of our diocese who, like Mary, rejoice in the Lord by their daily surrender.

The tour features an event at a different convent each month, bringing together sisters and lay women for prayer and community. For single women ages 18-50.

Upcoming: January 22, *The Dominicans, Congregation of St. Cecilia*; February 5: *Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*; March 26: *Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist*. RSVP by the Monday before each event to vocations@arlingtondiocese.org.

More info at ArlingtonDiocese.org/RejoiceTour.



Follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter!

Bishop Burbidge has over 21,000 followers on Twitter! His daily reflections and posts are popular and insightful. Follow him [@BishopBurbidge](https://twitter.com/BishopBurbidge).

YA Basketball at Nativity

Catholic Sports Club is a program hosted by the Diocesan YA Ministry and our own Nativity YA Ministry. Anyone is welcome to join at any time for these weekly basketball pick-up games. To learn more CSC, visit the [Facebook page](#).

2023 Season:

Thursdays* from 8:30-10:15 pm in Nativity's gym (Fr. Martin Center)

Now - May 18

*no basketball on 2/9, 4/6



YOU ARE
INVITED TO A
FELLOWSHIP

FOR ENGAGED &
NEWLYWED COUPLES



February 4th at 7 PM

Fr. Ready Room

Nativity Catholic Church

RSVP to marriage@nativityburke.org



NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
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nativityschool.org



Join Us ~ Discover Catholic Schools
During Catholic Schools Week
Sunday, January 29 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 NOON
We Have a Seat for Your Child ~
For details, contact Shannon Murphy at (703) 455-2300,
or smurph@nativityschool.org.

Let's Celebrate Catholic Schools!
We are back from Christmas Break and preparing for our
annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week, beginning on
Sunday, January 29, 2023, with a School Mass at 9:00 a.m., and
a School OPEN HOUSE at 10:00 am. A week packed full of
events will follow for folks of all ages, e.g., Senior Bingo on
Monday, from 10:30 am to 11:30 am, and a Vocations talk for
students with our Religious Team.

On Tuesday, we begin the day with a Parent Breakfast and then
a visit to their children's classrooms afterward. On Thursday,
we honor our Military and Emergency Services Personnel, and
on Friday, our students are involved in service projects, as well
as helping to celebrate the multicultural society that is ours, as
our PTO hosts an assembly celebrating our culturally diverse
society.

Join us at Nativity to see how your child would spend his or her days
here learning, praying, sharing, loving, and laughing.



The PTO's Family Game Night
Saturday, January 21 from 6:30-8:30 pm
In the Father Martin Center
Join in the fun and fellowship for parents,
students, and staff -- Pizza Pre-Orders,
Cornhole Tournament, more Games. Link to
order pizza and to register for the Cornhole
Tournament will be available shortly!

Upcoming Dates At-A-Glance!

- Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Day - No School
Jan. 18: Ledo's Pizza Fundraiser (see info today)
Jan. 20: March for Life Day
Jan. 20: Interims
Jan. 21: PTO's Game Night (see info today)
Jan. 23: 100th Day of School!
Jan. 29: Catholic Schools Week Begins!
Jan. 29: OPEN HOUSE 10 a.m. - 12 NOON

Join us at Nativity to see how your child would spend
his or her days here -- learning, praying, sharing, and laughing.

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Nativity Catholic School is committed to making Catholic
education accessible to those who desire it, and offers financial
assistance to make their dream come true.

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Nativity Stars are filled with the Holy Spirit!

YOUTH MINISTRY

Contact: Rebecca Judge
cym@nativityburke.org

Get connected to our Youth Ministry
community by filling out the free
2022-2023 registration form. See the
website to register or scan the QR
codes below.

LIFE TEEN: GRADES 9-12

Sundays | 6:30-8:30pm

Dinner

Fellowship

Prayer & Formation



EDGE: GRADES 6-8

Alternating Sundays 3:30-5pm
& Fridays 7-8:30pm
See website for schedule

Meet new friends

Play games

Explore your faith



2023 HIGH SCHOOL SMALL GROUPS STARTING

Girls: Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30pm | Weekly
Guys: Thursdays, 7:30-9:00pm | 2x / month

Build meaningful relationships with your
peers through small group discussion,
communal prayer, and fellowship activities



Join Bishop Burbidge at 9am on
January 20th for a Mass in
Defense of Human Life

The morning of the March for Life



ST. LUCY FOOD DRIVE
Feeding the Hungry; Nourishing the Soul



PLEASE
DONATE

---- **SATURDAY, FEB 11 | 9AM-1PM** ----

Nativity Parish Parking Lot

A "Drive-By/Drop-Off" food drive
Please place your donations in your trunk

FOOD ITEMS MOST NEEDED

Canned Meat (tuna and chicken)
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Pasta & Pasta Sauce
Canned Pasta (ravioli)
Hearty Soups
Cereal & Oatmeal
Canned Veggies
Canned Fruit

Please no glass containers

DRIVE UP AND DROP OFF YOUR DONATIONS! THE ST. LUCY TEAM WILL ASSIST YOU!

MONETARY GIFTS ALSO ACCEPTED

Checks can be made out to "CCDA" with "The St. Lucy Project" in the memo

Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Ps 40:2, 4, 7-10

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Monday January 16

Hebrews 5:1-10

Ps 110:1-4

Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday January 17

St. Anthony

Hebrews 6:10-20

Ps 111:1-2,4-5,9,10c

Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday January 18

Hebrews 7:1-3,15-17

Ps 110:1-4

Mark 3:1-6

Thursday January 19

Hebrews 7:25 – 8:6

Ps 40:7-10,17

Mark 3:7-12

Friday January 20

Hebrews 8:6-13

Ps 85:8,10-14

Mark 3:13-19

Saturday January 21

St. Agnes

Hebrews 9:2-3,11-14

Ps 47:2-3,6-9

Mark 3:20-21

In every Mass, the presiding priest says the words of John the Baptist that are quoted in today's Gospel message: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." To which we reply: "Lord, I am not worthy ... but say the word and my soul shall be healed."

This healing began at the beginning of Mass in the Penitential Rite if we had a sincere attitude of repentance. With this healing, we receive Jesus in all of his humanity and divinity. With this healing, we leave church ready to be like John the Baptist, testifying by word and by the way we live that "now I have seen that Jesus is the Son of God."

Is Mass that kind of experience for you?

All parts of the Mass contribute to this. Jesus is present in the community as we unite in song. Jesus is present in the Penitential Rite, listening to

our sincerity. Jesus is present in the Liturgy of the Word, broken open like bread to nourish our faith, and when the homily is poor or absent, his Spirit preaches to us privately (straying thoughts are often an action of God). And Jesus is present in all the prayers: the ones we offer and those of the clergy.

All of Mass is meant to transform us, prepare us, and send us out from church as witnesses of the true presence of Christ in our world. Like John the Baptist, we can say: "I did not know him." In other words: "I saw



only bread and wine" and "I was sinful and didn't realize the damage I had done" and "I was wounded and did not know how to be healed."

And like John we can add: "Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God. The Holy Spirit revealed to me the presence of my Savior in the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit gently exposed my sinfulness and gave me help in overcoming them. The Holy Spirit leads me to the resources that are healing my wounds."

Reflect & Discuss:

† What is the experience of Mass like for you?

† If you could attend Mass daily, would you? If not, why not? If it's a scheduling problem, will you ask Jesus to change your schedule? If it's a priority problem, will you ask the Holy Spirit to increase in you a desire to sit in the true Eucharistic presence of your Savior?

† Describe a time when you became more aware of Jesus in the Mass.

† Prior to this development, what distracted you from noticing his presence? What changed? Why? How?



Quo Vadis Father-Son Seminary Visit



Quo Vadis events are for young men in high school interested in growing in their spiritual life and exploring their vocation.

What's college seminary like? See for yourself!

Meet the seminarians and their formators
See where they live, pray, eat and study
Tour their campus at Catholic University

Fathers are welcome but not required.

**Saturday
February 11
9 am - 2pm**



For more information and to register, visit
ArlingtonDiocese.org/QuoVadis.

Deadline to register is February 3.

Sponsored by the Office of Vocations

703.841.2514 /

vocations@arlingtondiocese.org

La misión de Juan Bautista

Cristo no amenazó a nadie, sino que se convirtió en alguien que simplemente amaba y quería la salvación para todos.

Por: P. Alberto Ramírez Mozqueda | Fuente: Catholic.net

Marcos, el Evangelista que este año nos tomará de la mano para ir conociendo y viviendo el Evangelio, la Buena Nueva de salvación, comienza este día su mensaje, poniéndonos al frente de una manera directa y precisa, a Jesús, el Cristo, el Hijo de Dios como la Buena noticia de liberación. La Buena nueva consiste precisamente en que Jesús de Nazaret, engendrado en el tiempo en un oscuro pueblecito en las inmediaciones de la gran Jerusalén es precisamente el Cristo, el Mesías, el ungido, el que traería consigo la salvación y la paz para todos los hombres: "Aquí llega el Señor, lleno de poder, el que con su brazo lo domina todo, como pastor apacentará su rebaño: llevará en sus brazos a los corderitos recién nacidos y atenderá solícito a sus madres".

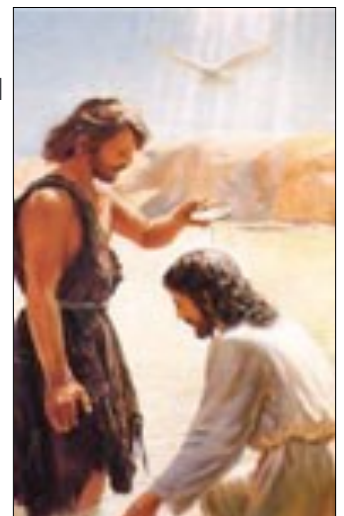
Pero si eso fuera todo, eso no sería noticia, pues Cristo murió en la cruz, víctima de un juicio injusto y lleno de maldad. Lo bueno viene cuando se asegura que Cristo es el Hijo de Dios y que por lo tanto y por su entrega, por su amor y su sacrificio por todos los hombres, el Padre lo resucita y lo hace sentar a su derecha. Es el Señor de todos los tiempos, de todos los continentes y de toda la historia. El profeta Isaías instaba entonces a preparar el camino al Señor que llega: "Sube a lo alto del monte, mensajero de buenas nuevas para Sión, alza con fuerza la voz, tú que anuncias noticias alegres a Jerusalén. Alza la voz y no temas; anuncia a los ciudadanos de Judá: "Aquí está su Dios".

Éste es entonces el personaje que anunciaba San Juan el Bautista, aquél ante quien se sentía pequeño pues él era sólo un enviado, un precursor, que tenía que anunciar precisamente la llegada del verdadero Enviado, el Mesías, el Salvador. Él consiguió entonces el primer milagro de la Salvación que el Señor traería a la tierra: alejar a los hombres de su vida rutinaria, en medio de una sociedad que no funcionaba como tal, un mundo de pecado y de maldad, en la capital Jerusalén y sus alrededores.

El Papa Benedicto XVI lo decía la semana pasada al describir el panorama de las ciudades postmodernas: "Las ciudades donde la vida se hace anónima y horizontal, donde Dios parece ausente y el hombre el único amo, como si fuera él el artífice y el director de todo: construcciones, trabajo, economía, transportes, ciencias, técnica, todo parece depender sólo del hombre. Y a veces, en este mundo que parece casi perfecto, suceden cosas chocantes, o en la naturaleza, o en la sociedad, por las que pensamos que Dios pareciera haberse retirado, que nos hubiera, por así decir, abandonado a nosotros mismos".

Pero la verdad es que Dios no abandona a su pueblo, sino que envía precisamente a su Hijo pero no para visitarnos, sino para quedarse con nosotros, haciéndose uno más entre nosotros, formando parte de nuestra vida y de nuestro entorno.

El Bautista hizo el milagro de convertir a los hombres, de bautizarlos con un bautismo de penitencia, de agua, en el Jordán, presagiando el bautismo en fuego, en el Espíritu Santo de Dios. Y pudo hacerlo porque el Bautista encarnaba en su propia vida lo que pedía a gritos a los demás. Les hablaba a los hombres con crudeza, con mucho realismo y cuando no conseguía mover a los hombres, no se detenía en la amenaza de castigos terribles para los morosos ante la salvación. Cristo, aunque se dejó bautizar por el Bautista, teniendo que hacer cola para acercarse a él, cambió la técnica usada por el Bautista para convertir a los hombres a la salvación de Dios. Cristo simplemente amaba y quería la salvación para todos. Y si la salvación ya está aquí, si Cristo ya ha llegado, ¿por qué no salir a su encuentro en cada uno de los que él vino a salvar, a los desprotegidos, los pobres y los que son tratados injustamente?



La vida de fe, una gran aventura

La vida cristiana es una vida apasionante, de retos imposibles que sólo son posibles de lograr con la ayuda de un Dios todopoderoso

Por: Maleni Grider | Fuente: ACC Agencia de Contenido Católico

Llárame y te responderé; te mostraré cosas grandes y secretas que tú no conoces.

Jeremías 33:3



Es del dominio público que hay que tener un propósito en la vida, una causa, un proyecto, una pasión, un rumbo específico, a fin de vivir una vida plena, no inútil y sin sentido. De modo que algunos se dedican al arte, otros a la política, otros a deportes extremos, otros a la acción social, otros a la ecología, otros a escribir libros, otros a la familia, etcétera.

Pero hay una clase de personas que han decidido encontrar el propósito divino para su vida, más allá del propósito humano, terrenal. La Biblia, desde su primer libro (el Génesis) está lleno de historias y ejemplos de gente que estuvo en contacto con Dios, bajo diferentes empresas o circunstancias, quienes tuvieron vidas apasionantes, con un propósito eterno cuyo legado persiste hasta nuestros días. El cristianismo es la continuación y culminación de todo ello.

Si bien, en el Antiguo Testamento, todavía Cristo no estaba presente, el plan de Dios ya estaba trazado desde el principio, y fue anunciado a la humanidad a través de los profetas (mayores y menores) de las Escrituras. El Espíritu Santo ya coexistía con el Padre y con el Hijo en las regiones celestes, como una Trinidad.

Adán, Noé, Moisés, Abraham, Josué, David, Salomón, Daniel, Ruth, Isaías, Jeremías, Ezequiel, Juan el Bautista, Pedro, Pablo, Juan, María y José, María Magdalena, etcétera, son personajes cuyas historias nos impactan cuando leemos la Biblia. En general, la gente que no conoce las Escrituras ni la vida cristiana, piensa que es un libro simplemente histórico, referencial, genealógico y doctrinal. La Biblia es todo eso y más, pero mucho más allá de todo eso la Biblia es la fuente principal de revelación de Dios al hombre, junto con el Espíritu Santo que nos enseña todas las cosas.

La vida cristiana es una vida apasionante, de retos imposibles que sólo son posibles de lograr con la ayuda de un Dios todopoderoso, cuyo amor es inconmensurable, quien entregó lo que más amaba: a su Hijo unigénito, para darnos redención. La vida cristiana para muchos puede parecer absurda, o pueden tener una idea de que la santidad es algo aburrido, una pérdida de tiempo o algo fanático, irracional y fantasioso.

Pero la vida de santidad es una vida llena de exigencias y retos cada día, en donde negarnos a nosotros mismos, a los deseos de la carne y la renuncia al pecado son la meta y la prioridad, a fin de poder permanecer en comunión con el Creador, y con Jesús, nuestro Maestro y Salvador, quien nos dijo que permaneciéramos junto a Él pues lejos de Él nada podemos hacer. La vida cristiana tiene como propósito el amor, la expansión del evangelio, el establecimiento de la paz, la restauración de vidas perdidas, la sanidad de los enfermos, la reconstrucción de familias, la salvación de las almas, la justicia divina en la tierra, la vida de plenitud. No sé si pueda existir algo más importante que eso.

Puede parecer una utopía bajo la opinión y la visión social. Pero es una realidad tan clara para quienes la vivimos, que sólo puede explicarse como una vida sobrenatural, de total dependencia en Dios. La humildad, la renuncia a los placeres del mundo, el sacrificio y el servicio a los demás son el propósito medular de los creyentes verdaderos, aquellos que lo han dejado todo para tomar la cruz y seguir a Cristo.

Hay gozo, pasión, plenitud, milagros, pero también hay dolor, sacrificio, persecución en la vida cristiana. Sin embargo, ésta es una vida llena de sentido porque nos transforma de manera individual, primeramente. Y luego nos lleva al servicio a los demás, a dar nuestra vida no sólo por una meta personal y egoísta, sino por una causa comunitaria, compasiva, constructiva, donde el amor es el motor y el amor es algo que provoca milagros inimaginables.


Una vez escuché a alguien decir que aún en el supuesto de que el cristianismo fuera un “cuento”, como muchos creen, no se imaginaba poder tener una vida mejor o más plena que seguir a Jesucristo. Yo apenas comenzaba a andar en este camino. Treinta y tres años después puedo decir que tenía toda la razón: la vida cristiana es una vida que vale la pena vivir, y no puede haber otra más intensa, llena de sentido y fruto que ésta.

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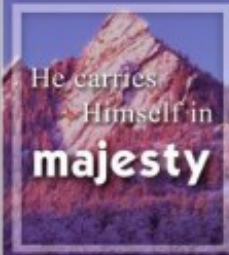
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