

**SOWING FAITH IN A CATHOLIC FRONTIER:
A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND**

By Anthony E. Marques © 2019

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A Grain of Wheat and Rocky Ground: Introduction

“Once we reached this bay, the military governor ordered us to search for Alonso, the boy who came with Father Baptista, whom we were told had not been killed.”¹

In 1572, Father Juan Rogel, a Spanish Jesuit priest, gave this account of his missionary work around the *baía de la Madre de Dios* (Bay of the Mother of God, today the Chesapeake Bay) to the superior of his religious order in Rome. Rogel’s letter contained a portent and a parable: the Catholic Church in Virginia had begun with nine people in a vast country.

Like the grain of wheat (John 12:24), or the seed on rocky ground (Matt. 13:5–6, 20–21), the Church in this territory would grow slowly under adverse conditions. Here, Catholics would contend with low membership, religious and secular hostility, geographic isolation, economic deprivation, and a chronic lack of priests. Furthermore, events in Virginia, the United States, and the wider Church would have an impact on the community’s development. The presence of the Diocese of Richmond four-and-a-half centuries later bears witness to the perseverance of Virginia’s Catholics, who overcame hardship, and who experienced both successes and failures, as they carried out the Church’s work.

Seed Among Thorns: Inauspicious Beginnings (1570–1794)

Catholics faced tribulation during their first two centuries in Virginia, as a band of Spanish missionaries suffered martyrdom in that territory (1571), and religious intolerance permeated the English colony (1607–1794). These developments formed part of the broader narrative of the European colonization of North America, during which sectarian concerns shaped national interests.

Spanish Jesuit Mission (1570–1571)

Two years before Father Rogel wrote his letter, on September 10, 1570, eight Jesuit missionaries, led by Father Juan Baptista de Segura (1529–1571), and a boy, Alonso de Olmos, disembarked near the future site of Williamsburg. To Spanish ears, the native word for the region sounded like “Ajacán”; Spain claimed this land as part of *la Florida* (North America). Indians of the Chiskiack tribe, led by Don Luis de Velasco (formerly Paquiquineo), an indigenous guide who betrayed the priests and religious brothers, killed these men between February 4 and 9, 1571. Only the boy survived, having been rescued after living with his captors for a year after the massacre. Three of the missionaries—Cristóbal Redondo, Gabriel de Solís, and Juan Baptista Méndez—made their Jesuit profession sometime between their arrival and the attack. These were

¹ Juan Rogel, SJ to Francis Borgia, SJ, Bay of the Mother of God, August 28, 1572, in Clifford M. Lewis, SJ, and Albert J. Loomie, SJ, *Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia: 1570–1572* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 103. The author made the translation from the original document. Used with the permission of the Virginia Historical Society.

the first religious vocations in what became Virginia.² The cause for the canonization of the Jesuit Martyrs of Virginia was introduced in 2002.

The short-lived Jesuit mission was one of many difficulties Spain encountered in its colonization of North America. Unlike Central and South America, North America lacked precious metals, its terrain and climate were sometimes harsh, and its inhabitants proved more resistant to conquest and conversion. Spain eventually controlled what is today the southwestern and southeastern United States. On the Atlantic coast, the fort of St. Augustine—the site of several battles and a base for launching operations against Spain’s enemies—encapsulated the region’s strategic role. (Founded in 1565 on the Florida peninsula, St. Augustine was the first permanent European and Catholic settlement in what became the United States.) Ultimately, *la Florida* was a barrier for protecting Spain’s more lucrative southern colonies against potential incursions by France or England.

Catholics at Jamestown (1607–1619)

In the decades following the collapse of the Jesuit mission in Ajacán (1571), England advanced upon North America (1584), intent on gaining a foothold in the territory it called “Virginia,” likely in honor of its virgin queen, Elizabeth I (1558–1603). After two attempts at colonization failed (Roanoke Island off the coast of present-day North Carolina, in 1585 and 1587), the first permanent English settlement in America was established in 1607 at Jamestown. The colony was named after the reigning king, James I (1603–1625). (Jamestown was coincidentally located in the vicinity of the earlier Spanish mission.)

Since religion, national identity, and foreign policy were closely associated at that time, Virginia became decidedly Protestant. The Reformation had begun in England in 1534, when King Henry VIII renounced the authority of the pope. The movement continued during the reign of Henry’s son, Edward VI (1537–1553). Following a brief restoration of Catholicism under Mary I (1553–1558), Henry’s daughter and Edward’s half-sister, England became Protestant once more during the long reign of Elizabeth (1558–1603). The Church of England had been reinstated for nearly fifty years at the time Jamestown was founded. The Anglican Church was officially established in the colony (1606) and Catholicism was formally outlawed there (1609), as in the mother country (1558–1559).³

In this religiously hostile environment, one of Virginia’s original settlers may have been a Catholic in secret: Captain Gabriel Archer (ca. 1574–ca. 1610), a prominent leader in the Jamestown community. Two reasons support this claim. First, Archer’s parents and others living in his family’s home in Mountnessing (Essex), England were known Catholic recusants. The term “recusant” designated a person who refused (Latin: *recusare*) to adhere to the Church of England, and who was fined for not attending Anglican worship services. Second, an archaeological dig at Jamestown in 2015 yielded a remarkable discovery. In the grave beneath

² Lewis and Loomie, *Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia*, 3–64.

³ Gerald P. Fogarty, SJ, *Commonwealth Catholicism: A History of the Catholic Church in Virginia* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 8–10.

the chancel (sanctuary) of the church, a reliquary—usually a token of Catholic devotion—lay on top of Archer’s coffin.⁴

Some three years after Archer’s death, a French Jesuit priest arrived at Jamestown as a prisoner (1613). Captain Samuel Argall (ca. 1580–1672) had captured Father Pierre Biard (1576–1622), along with fourteen soldiers, in a raid on the fledgling French outpost of St. Sauveur (Holy Savior) on Mount Desert Island, off the coast of present-day Maine. (St. Sauveur was one of several attempted French colonies in North America; it followed the establishment of Quebec in 1608, France’s first permanent settlement on the continent.) Argall brought the captives to Jamestown, where they were eventually released. Father Biard wrote an account of these events in which he narrated that Argall’s doctor had treated another French Jesuit priest who was wounded in the attack and who later died. According to Biard, this unnamed physician was “a Catholic and known as such.”⁵ This report, together with the clues surrounding Gabriel Archer, suggests a Catholic presence early in Jamestown’s history.

The next Catholics who came to Jamestown may have been slaves. The first Africans arrived in 1619 from the Portuguese colony of Angola. Since Portugal had mandated that slaves be baptized before leaving Africa (1607, 1619), it is likely that these men and women were at least nominally Catholic. Portuguese law also required baptized slaves to receive religious instruction during the passage to the Americas, although this norm was often disregarded.⁶

The slaves who came to Jamestown were transported on the *São João Bautista* (St. John the Baptist), a vessel bound for Veracruz in New Spain (present-day Mexico). But off the coast of Campeche in the Gulf of Mexico, two privateer ships attacked the *São João Bautista* and seized approximately fifty slaves. British captains commanded the corsairs, which were operating under the authority, respectively, of the Netherlands and Savoy (a duchy comprising parts of present-day France and Italy).

The first ship, *White Lion*, which flew the Dutch flag, eventually brought “20. and odd Negroes” to Point Comfort (today Fort Monroe, Hampton), at the mouth of the James River on the Chesapeake Bay. The slaves were traded for provisions and then taken to Jamestown.⁷ Some of the other slaves, transported on the second ship, *Treasurer*, arrived later. At least one of the original slaves is known by name: Angelo (probably Angela), a woman on the *Treasurer* who became a household servant at Jamestown.⁸

⁴ Christopher M. B. Allison, “Jamestown’s Relics: Sacred Presence in the English New World,” *Conversations: An Online Journal of the Center for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion* (2016), <https://doi:10.22332/con.ess.2016.2>.

⁵ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 10.

⁶ Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the African Slave Trade: 1440–1870* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 398; John Thornton, “The African Experience of the ‘20. and Odd Negroes’ Arriving in Virginia, August 1619,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (July 1998): 434.

⁷ Engel Sluiter, “New Light on the ‘20. and Odd Negroes’ Arriving in Virginia, August 1619,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (April 1997): 395–98.

⁸ Margaret McCartney, “Virginia’s First Africans,” in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Virginia_s_First_Africans.

These first slaves were bartered in late August 1619. Astonishingly, this odious transaction took place just one month after the House of Burgesses—the forerunner of today’s Virginia General Assembly, the oldest democratic institution in the Western Hemisphere—met for the first time (July 30, 1619). This juxtaposition of events marked a contradiction at the outset of American history that would affect the Catholic Church in Virginia: the acceptance of a system, amid the development of democracy, that oppressed persons of African descent for centuries.

*Catholic Communities in Virginia:
The Colony and Early Republic (1619–1794)*

It was illegal to be a Catholic in Virginia throughout the colonial era (1607–1783) and for the first years of American independence (1783–1786). However, Virginia enforced its laws against Catholics unevenly, as two examples demonstrate. On the one hand, the Brent family, which came from Maryland and settled in Stafford County (1651), managed to advance in Virginia society for over a century. The Brents were known recusants, but they probably avoided legal trouble because they lived in a rural area and were discreet about their faith. On the other hand, court records mention the arrest of two priests in Norfolk—a Father Edmonds and a Father Raymond, who may have been the same person—for performing a marriage and for celebrating a Mass (1687).⁹

Jesuits and Franciscans in neighboring Maryland ministered to Virginia’s Catholic families during the colonial period. An English Catholic, George Calvert (1580–1632), the first Lord Baltimore, had requested a charter from King Charles I of England to establish the colony of Maryland. The charter was granted just after Calvert’s death (1632). His son, Cecil Calvert (1605–1675), the second Lord Baltimore, who was also a Catholic, subsequently founded Maryland on the principle of religious freedom (1634).

Priests in Maryland made clandestine visits to Virginia. Then, in a strange turn of events, Virginia became a refuge for a number of them. The English Civil War (1642–1651) and the Glorious Revolution (1688) emboldened Protestant colonists to overthrow the Maryland government on three occasions and to persecute Catholics, with the result that several Jesuits and some Franciscans fled to Virginia (1645, 1654–1655, 1689).¹⁰

In the following century, the American Revolution (1775–1783) helped to lessen anti-Catholicism in Virginia, as the British colonies were allied with Catholic France.¹¹ Following the Revolution, Virginia enacted the Statute of Religious Liberty (1786), written by Thomas Jefferson. This law finally allowed Catholics and others to openly practice their faith in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

⁹ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 14–18.

¹⁰ Fogarty, 13–14, 16, 22; Robert Emmett Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574–1783* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 65, 71, 133.

¹¹ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 20, 22.

The first organized Catholic communities in Virginia appeared in short order: St. Mary's in Alexandria (which was then part of the new federal capital of Washington), and St. Patrick's in Norfolk, both around 1794. Significantly, each city was a port with a sizable population.¹² Developments in transportation—shipping ports, canals, railroads, trolley cars, and highways—would largely determine where most people, including Catholics, settled in Virginia.

A property record from 1794 indicates that lay Catholics in Norfolk owned a parcel of land used for religious purposes. The community built a small church named St. Patrick's around this time (ca. 1795). The lay trustees' ownership of the property sparked a conflict with Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, the country's first Catholic bishop (1789–1815), and with his successors (1815–1821), whose area of jurisdiction at that time included Virginia. The trustees asserted their right to hold property in the name of the Church. They also claimed authority to appoint pastors, just like Protestants (and some Catholic European monarchs and nobles). This dispute came to be known as the Norfolk Schism (ca. 1794–1821), which led to the creation of a diocese in Virginia.¹³

Taking Root: A Diocese Founded and Suspended (1817–1841)

The establishment of a formal Church structure in Virginia, under the leadership of a bishop, took place while the United States was still a young country and a missionary territory. America had just turned forty-four years old, and James Monroe (1758–1831), the last Founding Father, was president, when Pope Pius VII erected the Diocese of Richmond on July 11, 1820.

Formed from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, which originally had jurisdiction over the entire United States (1789–1808), Richmond was the nation's seventh diocese. (The Diocese of Charleston in South Carolina was created on the same day.) The Richmond Diocese encompassed the Commonwealth of Virginia, which at that time extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ohio River. Approximately one thousand Catholics inhabited this massive area.¹⁴ Just two years later, however, Baltimore once more governed Richmond, which remained a separate diocese, albeit without its own bishop, for the next two decades (1822–1841).

Insurrection in Norfolk (1817–1820)

In 1817, lay trustees from the Catholic community in Norfolk sent a delegate to Rome to request the establishment of a diocese in Virginia. This maneuver was successful because the trustees' petition deliberately misrepresented the situation in Norfolk, and because Vatican officials were ignorant of American geography. The trustees contended that the distance between Norfolk and Baltimore was so great that their community's pastoral care was being neglected, and that they

¹² Fogarty, 17, 28–29, 33.

¹³ Fogarty, 33–37.

¹⁴ Fogarty, 54.

did not have a priest who could speak English well. They also pressed for the right to appoint their own pastors.¹⁵

Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal of Baltimore (1764–1828) vehemently opposed the creation of a new diocese on several grounds: it was unnecessary because he could feasibly travel by ship between Norfolk and Baltimore; it was unsustainable because the Catholic population in Virginia was small and poor; and it was imprudent because there was already a French émigré priest in Norfolk (who spoke passable English), whom the trustees were seeking to control. Maréchal also warned Vatican officials against setting the precedent of allowing lay Catholics in the United States to appoint their own pastors.¹⁶

Maréchal was unable to appease the trustees, either by meeting with them (1818) or by assigning a second, Irish priest to the area (1819). Meanwhile, the trustees procured their own priest whom they hoped to make a bishop (1818–1819). This Irish Dominican friar, Father Thomas Carbry (d. 1829), ministered in Norfolk (1819–1821) despite Maréchal's prohibition against him. The dispute over lay trusteeism had now become a schism.¹⁷

Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), the Vatican department in charge of overseas missions, which included the United States, responded to the crisis by establishing a diocese in Virginia (1819–1820). This decision mostly favored the trustees over the archbishop of Baltimore. *Propaganda Fide* viewed the presence of a bishop in Virginia as the solution to the Norfolk Schism: a new diocese would respond to the trustees' ostensible request for better pastoral care, and a residential bishop would uphold the principle that only a bishop could appoint pastors. Although the schism was based in Norfolk, Richmond was chosen as the headquarters of the new diocese because it was the capital of Virginia.¹⁸

*Bishop Patrick Kelly:
Resolving the Norfolk Schism (1820–1822)*

Father Patrick Kelly (1779–1829), a priest of the Diocese of Ossory in Kilkenny, Ireland, was appointed the first bishop of Richmond in 1820. He was the president of St. John's Seminary in Birchfield, Ireland at the time.¹⁹ The trustees had asked for an Irish bishop so that he could better minister to the Norfolk Catholic community, which was composed of Irish and French immigrants. Presumably in response to this request, *Propaganda Fidei* recommended to Pope Pius VII that he name Kelly as bishop of Richmond. Kelly was the first in a line of Irish-born clerics to serve the Diocese of Richmond as bishops or priests. Through the years, these men eased the persistent shortage of native priests in the diocese.

¹⁵ Fogarty, 39–41.

¹⁶ Fogarty, 41–43, 45.

¹⁷ Fogarty, 42–45.

¹⁸ Fogarty, 45–47.

¹⁹ Fogarty, 40, 45.

After being consecrated bishop in Dublin (1820), Kelly traveled to America. He went first to Baltimore, where a belligerent Archbishop Maréchal used his meeting with the new bishop to condemn the establishment of a diocese in Virginia. Kelly left Baltimore and arrived in Norfolk on January 19, 1821. Once there, he appeared to shift sides in regard to the schism. Eventually the more vocal partisans left Norfolk and the dispute mostly died of its own accord (1821). All the while, Kelly received no income from the Catholic community, and had to resort to teaching in order to support himself.²⁰

Propaganda Fide, realizing that Catholics in Virginia could not support their own diocese, had Bishop Kelly transferred to the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore in Ireland. Kelly left Virginia in June or July 1822, having never visited Richmond. He had assigned five priests to lead four main Catholic communities in the diocese: Martinsburg, Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk. These congregations were mostly composed of poor, working-class immigrants.²¹

The Diocese Suspended (1822–1841)

With no residential bishop in place for the Richmond Diocese, the archbishop of Baltimore administered the territory, which continued to be a separate diocese, for the next nineteen years (1822–1841). During this period, the bulk of the small Catholic population in Virginia shifted from Norfolk to Richmond.

The construction of St. Peter's Church (1834) in the shadow of the Virginia State Capitol raised the profile of the Catholic community in Richmond. This church eventually became the cathedral of the diocese. Father Timothy O'Brien (1791–1855), a native Irishman and an enterprising priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, was responsible for the building feat. But his accomplishment stirred controversy, as O'Brien, who ministered in Richmond for twenty-two years (1832–1850), became embroiled in a financial dispute with future bishops of the diocese over St. Peter's and its property.²²

A few months after the dedication of St. Peter's, the first religious sisters arrived in the diocese at O'Brien's invitation: the Daughters of Charity (then called the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph). This order, based in Emmitsburg, Maryland, was founded by Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774–1821), the first American-born saint to be canonized (1975). The sisters opened St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum and Free School in Richmond (1834), which O'Brien had founded.²³ The contribution of the Sisters of Charity was the first of many that women religious would make to the Diocese of Richmond in the fields of education and healthcare. Over time, the sisters' work helped Catholics, who were often hampered by low socio-economic status and religious bigotry, to enter the middle class and to participate more fully in Virginia society.

²⁰ Fogarty, 45–50, 52.

²¹ Fogarty, 52–54.

²² Fogarty, 62–70, 79, 104–108.

²³ Fogarty, 67–68.

Wheat Among Weeds: Challenges and Changes (1841–1888)

Pope Gregory XVI restored the Richmond Diocese to independent status in 1841. This decision inaugurated a new era for the Church in Virginia, which included territorial changes and the ravages of the nation's bloodiest war.

*Bishop Richard V. Whelan:
A Missionary Church and the New Diocese of Wheeling (1841–1850)*

Father Richard V. Whelan (1809–1874) was named Richmond's second bishop in 1841. He was the first of four Baltimore priests to head the diocese. At the time of his appointment, Whelan was an itinerant priest in what was then northern Virginia (the present-day northeast panhandle of West Virginia).

A connection was forged between two missionary saints and the Diocese of Richmond during Whelan's time as bishop. In 1842, Father John Nepomucene Neumann (1811–1860), a Redemptorist priest from what is today the Czech Republic, preached an eight-day mission to German Catholics in the basement of St. Peter's Cathedral in Richmond.²⁴ Neumann, a devoted pastor to immigrants, later became the bishop of Philadelphia (1852), a champion of Catholic schools, and the first American bishop to be canonized (1977). The congregation that heard Neumann preach went on to form St. Mary's parish for German Catholics (1848), one of the few ethnic parishes in the Richmond Diocese.

The second missionary saint became the patron of the diocese during Whelan's episcopate: Vincent de Paul (1581–1660).²⁵ This French priest's care for the poor, which included ministering to galley slaves, co-founding the Daughters of Charity, and establishing the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians)—a religious order dedicated to evangelizing rural areas—made him an apt saint to intercede for the Church of Richmond. Numerous parishes, schools, and other institutions in the diocese were later named in honor of Vincent de Paul.

²⁴ Fogarty, 94.

²⁵ There is no extant decree, if one ever existed, declaring St. Vincent de Paul to be the patron of the Diocese of Richmond. The first mention occurs during Whelan's tenure in Richmond, when the saint's patronage was already recognized.

In 1843, Whelan asked *Propaganda Fide* which readings should be used in the Breviary (Divine Office) for the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, patron of the Diocese of Richmond. *Udienze di N.S.*, March 17, 1843, in *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives: A Calendar*, 1st ser., ed. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1977), vol. 7, no. 571.

That same year, Whelan also received permission to celebrate the feast of the diocesan patron in the manner of the Vincentian order. Pope Gregory XVI, *Facultates extraordinariae*, May 14, 1843, in *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives: A Calendar*, 1st ser., ed. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1975), vol. 6, no. 1639e.

In 1853, Pope Pius IX, in response to a request from Whelan's successor, John McGill, declared that Vincent de Paul remained the patron of the Diocese of Richmond even after the Diocese of Wheeling had been created from it (1850). *Udienze di N.S.*, January 2, 1853, in *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives*, vol. 7, no. 1068; see also McGill's request: *Udienze di N.S.*, December 13, 1852 in *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives*, vol. 7, no. 1069.

One of these institutions was St. Vincent's Seminary and College in Richmond, which Whelan founded soon after his arrival (1841). On January 6, 1842, Whelan ordained a seminarian of St. Vincent's to the priesthood, making this the first ordination in the diocese. The priest was Father James Hewitt, who died within a year. There were other priest alumni of the seminary, but it closed several years later because of financial difficulties (1846).²⁶

The Diocese of Richmond experienced modest growth under Whelan, as advances in transportation during the Industrial Revolution gave rise to communities in central Virginia. St. Francis Xavier parish (1843) in Lynchburg, later renamed Holy Cross, expanded as Irish workers came to build the section of the James River and Kanawha Canal that joined the city to Richmond (1835–1840). (The canal was meant to eventually connect Richmond to the Ohio River at what was then Virginia's western border, but the project was only partially complete when it ended in 1851. It subsequently became a railroad.) Farther north, St. Francis of Assisi parish (1845) in Staunton grew more quickly as the Louisa (later Virginia Central) and Blue Ridge Railroads linked the Shenandoah Valley to Richmond (1850–1858). Priests in central Virginia were circuit riders who covered multiple parishes, continuing the missionary lifestyle that Whelan himself had led earlier in his career.²⁷

In 1846, Bishop Whelan moved from Richmond to Wheeling, a transportation hub on the route from the East Coast to the Midwest. Seeing many Irish and Italian immigrants come to the region to build the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1848–1852), he hoped that Catholics would rapidly populate the area. Whelan subsequently recommended that the large and unwieldy Diocese of Richmond be divided and that he govern the western territory. In 1850, he was named the first bishop of Wheeling, a new diocese comprising the portion of Virginia west of the Allegheny Mountains (present-day southwest Virginia and most of West Virginia).²⁸

Bishop John McGill:

"Know-Nothings," Yellow Fever, and the Civil War (1850–1872)

With Whelan's transfer to Wheeling, John McGill (1809–1872) was appointed the third bishop of Richmond in 1850. McGill, who was born in Philadelphia, was a priest of the Diocese of Louisville (formerly Bardstown), Kentucky. In Richmond, he assumed responsibility for a diocese with seven thousand Catholics, ten churches, and eight priests. McGill's long episcopate was filled with adversity: the rise of the anti-Catholic "Know-Nothing" movement, a yellow fever epidemic in Tidewater, and the horrific bloodshed of the Civil War.

The Know-Nothing party (ca. 1850) took its name from the reply its members were to give when asked about their membership in this quasi-secret organization: "I know nothing." The American Party, as it was formally called later on (1855), spread throughout the United States, and falsely accused Catholic immigrants of seeking to overturn religious liberty. In Virginia, stalled public works—projects that typically employed immigrants—strengthened the movement's influence.

²⁶ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 81–83.

²⁷ Fogarty, 88–90.

²⁸ Fogarty, 91, 98, 100.

Bishop McGill, who was a skilled apologist, vigorously defended the Catholic Church against the Know-Nothings (1854–1855).²⁹

While the Know-Nothing controversy was in full swing, an outbreak of yellow fever devastated Norfolk and Portsmouth in the summer of 1855, claiming three thousand lives. Two priests, Father Matthew O’Keefe (1828–1906) in Norfolk and Father Francis Devlin (1813–1855) in Portsmouth, courageously alleviated the sufferings of both Catholic and Protestant victims. O’Keefe was infected twice and survived; Devlin died from the pestilence. In Norfolk, Ann Behan Plume Herron (1802–1855) made her home into a makeshift hospital, where she nursed her slaves. Herron donated her house to the Daughters of Charity before succumbing to the disease herself. This was the first Catholic hospital in the diocese, which was incorporated as the Hospital of St. Vincent de Paul (today DePaul Medical Center) in 1856. All of these heroic acts of charity lessened anti-Catholic bigotry in the region.³⁰

The Civil War erupted several years later (1861–1865). During this most violent conflict in American history, the territory of the Diocese of Richmond was the heart of the breakaway country. In fact, St. Peter’s Cathedral was located just one block from the Capitol of the Confederate States of America. Like most Catholics in the South, Bishop McGill was an ardent supporter of the Southern cause. Few Catholics in Virginia owned slaves but supported others’ right to do so. McGill did not regard slavery as a grave sin, and he blamed the abolitionist movement for the breakup of the Union. Numerous popes, beginning in 1435, had condemned racial slavery, or at least some aspects of it, but their pronouncements went unheeded.³¹ Leading up to the Civil War, American bishops were divided along regional lines over the issue of slavery.³²

Once the Civil War began, McGill was unable to visit or even govern parts of the Diocese of Richmond (1861–1865). Union forces occupied cities such as Martinsburg (1861–1864)—it changed hands thirty-seven times—Norfolk (1862), and Richmond (1865). Consequently, McGill had no communication with his priests who were across battle lines.³³

Following the Union occupation of Norfolk, Father Matthew O’Keefe suggested to Archbishop Francis Kenrick (1797–1863) of Baltimore that he administer those sections of the Diocese of Richmond that were cut off from McGill (February 1863).³⁴ The archbishop was already doing so in the case of Fort Monroe in Hampton. O’Keefe, although himself a Confederate loyalist, and

²⁹ Fogarty, 121–27.

³⁰ Fogarty, 127–30.

³¹ See, for example, Pope Eugene IV, Bull, *Sicut dudum* (1435); Pope Paul III, Brief to the Archbishop of Toledo, *Pastorale officium* (1537): 1495–1496 in *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, eds. Peter Hunermann, Robert Fastiggi, Anne Englund Nash, and Heinrich Denzinger (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), hereafter Denzinger; Bull, *Sublimus Dei* (1537); Pope Gregory XIV, Bull to the Bishop of Manilla, *Cum sicuti* (1591); Pope Urban VIII, Bull to the Juridical Delegate of the Apostolic Camera in Portugal, *Commissum nobis* (1639); Pope Benedict XIV, Apostolic Letter to the Bishops of Brazil, *Inmensa pastorum* (1741); Pope Gregory XVI, Constitution, *In supremo apostolatus* (1839): Denzinger 2745–2746. An explanation of these documents, and the text themselves, are found in Joel S. Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery* (New York: Alba House, 1996), 7–48, 75–102.

³² Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 141–48.

³³ Fogarty, 177–79.

³⁴ Fogarty, 177.

Father Michael Ferrin, had braved gunfire to minister to Union troops at the fort who were Catholic.³⁵ Archbishop Kenrick then asked Redemptorists from Annapolis, Maryland to assume pastoral responsibility for the installation (November 1862).³⁶ Among these priests who celebrated Mass, heard confessions, and cared for the sick was Father Francis Xavier Seelos (1819–1867). Like his mentor and colleague, St. John Neumann, Seelos was a missionary (from present-day Germany). The “cheerful ascetic,” as he was known, ministered at Fort Monroe for a brief time beginning in December 1862.³⁷ Seelos was beatified in 2000.

Even as the war raged and casualties mounted, parishes in the Diocese of Richmond continued normal activities such as celebrating Mass, holding meetings, and providing religious education. Few Catholic churches were damaged during the war, but the conflict still placed a strain on inhabitants of cities occupied by Union forces.³⁸

The Civil War also had territorial implications for the diocese. After Virginia seceded and became part of the Confederacy (1861), the northwestern part of the commonwealth formed the new state of West Virginia and joined the Union (1863). As a result, the border of the Dioceses of Richmond and Wheeling crossed state lines (Richmond now included the northeast panhandle of West Virginia, while Wheeling encompassed southwest Virginia). This discrepancy between civil and ecclesiastical boundaries lasted until 1974.

By the end of the war, the South was devastated. Nevertheless, the image of the Church improved in Virginia and throughout the region, owing to the ministry of chaplains, the heroic work of religious sisters in caring for wounded soldiers on both sides, and the service of Catholics in the Confederate army.³⁹

The formal boundaries of the Richmond Diocese were altered in 1868, when the Eastern Shore of Virginia became part of the newly-created Diocese of Wilmington (which also covered the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the entire state of Delaware). Father Thomas A. Becker (1832–1899), a priest of the Diocese of Richmond, who was an adult convert and a graduate of the University of Virginia, was named Wilmington’s first bishop.⁴⁰

Across the Atlantic, Pope Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council (1869–1870). This was the first truly “worldwide” (ecumenical) council, in which dozens of American bishops, including John McGill, took part. Significantly, Vatican I proclaimed that the pope’s teaching on matters

³⁵ St. Joseph Catholic Church and St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church, *Frontiers in Faith: History of Catholicism on the Peninsula* (n.p.: Hampton Bicentennial Committee and Syms-Eaton Museum, n.d.).

³⁶ Joseph Wuest, CSsR, *History of the Redemptorists at Annapolis, Md., from 1853 to 1903: With a Short Historical Sketch of the Preceding One Hundred and Fifty Years of Catholicity in the Capital of Maryland* (Ilchester, MD: College Press, 1904), 66.

³⁷ Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos, CSsR, to Ambrose Seelos, Annapolis, MD, December 3, 18, 1862, in *Sincerely, Seelos: The Collected Letters of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos*, ed. and trans. Carl Hoegerl (New Orleans: Seelos Center, 2008), 324–26.

³⁸ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 181–85.

³⁹ Fogarty, 148–76, 188.

⁴⁰ Fogarty, 201–202.

of faith and morals was infallible under certain conditions.⁴¹ McGill, who left the Council early because of health reasons, died in 1872.

*Bishop James Gibbons:
Reconstruction and a Rise to Prominence (1872–1877)*

James Gibbons (1834–1921) succeeded John McGill as the fourth bishop of Richmond in 1872. He was from Baltimore, ordained a priest of that archdiocese, and was then appointed the first vicar apostolic (missionary bishop) of North Carolina (1868) at age thirty-three, earning him the nickname “The Boy Bishop.” During his time in Richmond, Gibbons retained pastoral responsibility for North Carolina (an arrangement that continued until 1882).

Gibbons’s transfer to Richmond took place during the era of Reconstruction (1865–1877), when the Catholic Church in the South began to evangelize freed slaves. American bishops gathered at the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore (1866) had urged this course of action.⁴² (This assembly manifested a spirit of collegiality that characterized the American hierarchy from its inception until the early 1900s, a period during which the Vatican considered the United States to be a missionary territory. The periodic gatherings of American bishops were the forerunners of what became the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB].)

In regard to evangelizing African Americans, the few Catholic slave owners in Virginia always had their slaves baptized. Later, during his episcopate in Richmond, James Gibbons took tentative steps in the direction proposed by the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore. Yet the results were meager, statistically speaking: for example, there were only a hundred black Catholics out of a total black population of twenty-five thousand in the city of Richmond at that time.⁴³

Gibbons was far more successful in the realm of apologetics. There he earned national renown during his tenure in Richmond by writing an influential treatise on Catholicism: *Faith of Our Fathers* (1876). A priest of the diocese and poet, Father John Banister Tabb (1845–1909), made stylistic contributions to the book. *Faith of Our Fathers* presented the Catholic faith positively, a unique approach for the time that reflected a historical reality in the Diocese of Richmond and Gibbons’s own experience: Virginia’s Catholics were a religious minority striving for acceptance. Parish missions, which spread throughout the diocese, used Gibbons’s approach. Often led by religious orders, these missions prompted many people to return to the sacraments.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Vatican Council I, First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, *Pastor aeternus* (1870), chap. 4 and canon: Denzinger 3074.

⁴² Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 196–98.

⁴³ Fogarty, 225–28.

⁴⁴ Fogarty, 221, 235.

Gibbons left Richmond after just five years to become the archbishop of Baltimore (1877). (He was appointed coadjutor, meaning that he would automatically succeed the sitting archbishop, who died before Gibbons even departed Richmond.) Gibbons later became America's second cardinal (1886).

Bishop John J. Keane:

Evangelization of African Americans, Development of Schools, and Lay Spirituality (1878–1888)

The Diocese of Richmond, which expanded in northern Virginia during Gibbons's episcopate, began to grow in the western region (Roanoke Valley) during the tenure of its next bishop, John J. Keane (1839–1918). Born in Ireland and a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Keane was serving as a pastor in Washington, DC when he was appointed to Richmond in 1878. Like his predecessor, Keane was simultaneously bishop of Richmond and vicar apostolic of North Carolina (until 1882). The Richmond Diocese realized three pastoral gains during Keane's tenure: the evangelization of African Americans, the development of parochial schools, and the promotion of lay spirituality.

Bishop Keane himself initiated the evangelization campaign by conducting prayer services for African Americans and instructing them in the basement of St. Peter's Cathedral (1879). After stressing the importance of this ministry to his priests, Keane raised funds for additional missionary outreach to African Americans. This effort led to the founding of the diocese's first black church (St. Joseph's in Richmond, 1885), along with missions and schools. Priests of the Society of St. Joseph for Foreign Missions or Josephites (beginning in 1883), and the Franciscan Sisters of St. Mary (beginning in 1885), were largely responsible for these accomplishments. Both orders had been founded at St. Joseph's Missionary College in Mill Hill (London), England.⁴⁵

The first Josephite priest in Richmond and the founder of St. Joseph's Church, Father John R. Slattery of New York, became the superior of the Josephites when the American mission separated from Mill Hill (1893). Slattery later aroused controversy when he accused the Church of condoning racism. He then left the priesthood and renounced the Catholic faith (1906).⁴⁶

Several parochial schools for white children, also operated by religious orders, were founded during this period. Notably, Bishop Keane improved the quality of Catholic education by creating a board to evaluate student learning and the academic qualifications of lay teachers (1887). He also bolstered the spiritual life of lay people by promoting regular parish missions and devotion to the Holy Spirit. Keane resigned as bishop of Richmond in 1888 to focus exclusively on his position as the first rector of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC (1886–1897). He was later appointed the archbishop of Dubuque, Iowa (1900).

⁴⁵ Fogarty, 255–56, 265–67.

⁴⁶ Fogarty, 226–28, 319.

**Yielding Fruit:
A Centennial Diocese (1888–1934)**

There were signs of growth and maturity as the diocese reached its centenary (1920): immigrants arrived from Europe and Lebanon (Maronites), expanding the Catholic population in Virginia; evangelization of African Americans continued; a diocesan seminarian, Frank Parater (1897–1920), bequeathed a legacy of holiness; and the entry of the United States into World War I (1917), coupled with advances in transportation, brought development to some regions of the commonwealth.

*Bishop Augustine van de Vyver:
Outreach to African Americans and a New Cathedral (1889–1911)*

Augustine van de Vyver (1844–1911) succeeded John J. Keane as the sixth bishop of Richmond in 1889. He was born in Belgium and was educated at the American College in Louvain, a seminary that trained numerous priests for service in the Richmond Diocese. After his ordination, Van de Vyver came to America and worked in the western reaches of Virginia. He later became vicar general and then diocesan administrator. Two notable benefactions were made to the diocese during Van de Vyver's time as bishop.

First, St. Katharine Drexel (1858–1955) of Philadelphia, and her half-sister, Louise Morrell, opened two schools in Rock Castle (Powhatan County) for black youth: St. Emma's Industrial and Agricultural College for boys (1895), and St. Francis de Sales School for girls (1899). The Drexels used the fortune they inherited to fund charitable causes; in Katharine's case, this included the work of the religious order she founded to care for African Americans and Indians (Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament). Mother Drexel herself visited the schools in Rock Castle (1900), which provided vocational training, secondary education, and religious instruction to generations of African Americans.⁴⁷ Katharine Drexel was the second native-born American to be canonized (2000).

A second philanthropic gift received during Van de Vyver's episcopate became a monument to the Catholic presence in Virginia: a new cathedral in Richmond. Thomas Fortune Ryan (1851–1928) and his wife, Ida Mary Barry (1854–1917), financed the construction of the edifice. It was said that Ryan, who was from Nelson County, decided to become a Catholic after a long discussion with a conductor on a train ride to Baltimore. True to his middle name, Ryan subsequently made his fortune in tobacco, insurance, and transportation. He gave generously to the Catholic Church, both in New York and in Virginia. The papal representative to the American hierarchy, Archbishop Diomed Falconio, dedicated the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Thanksgiving Day, 1906. This event recognized the growth of the Church in Virginia and symbolized the compatibility of the Catholic faith and American society.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Fogarty, 324–28.

⁴⁸ Fogarty, 330–33.

Overall, Van de Vyver's tenure witnessed steady growth in the diocese. By the end of his episcopate, the Catholic population numbered thirty thousand, and there were sixty priests (diocesan and religious), thirty-five parishes with a resident priest, forty-eight missions, and forty schools. There was also a concerted effort to reach out to African Americans, not only by the sisters associated with Katharine Drexel, but also by other religious orders working in new parishes and schools located in cities. Van de Vyver twice sought to resign, but partly at the urging of his priests, he remained in office until he died (1911).⁴⁹

Bishop Denis J. O'Connell:

Americanism, World War I, and Postwar Growth (1912–1926)

Denis J. O'Connell (1849–1927) was the third native Irishman and the second of three Richmond priests to become diocesan bishop. He returned to the diocese after thirty years away.

O'Connell's tenure marked a turning point in the history of the diocese, as Tidewater and northern Virginia experienced their first stage of rapid growth. O'Connell's tenure marked a turning point in the history of the diocese, as Tidewater and northern Virginia experienced their first stage of rapid growth.

O'Connell was a significant figure in the American Church prior to becoming bishop of Richmond. Earlier in his career, he had played a leading role in the "Americanism" controversy (1895–1899) that dealt with the question of the Church's identity in the United States. Significantly, the historical experience of the Diocese of Richmond became a point of reference in this dispute.

Americanism sought to adapt Catholicism to the American way of life. Its leaders included James Gibbons and John J. Keane, both former bishops of Richmond, and O'Connell, who was the movement's intellectual architect. O'Connell was a close aide to Gibbons, his mentor and patron, going back to Gibbons's time in North Carolina and Virginia (1868–1877). O'Connell had also been the rector of the North American College seminary in Rome (1885–1895), where he functioned as a liaison between US bishops and the Vatican.

Americanist bishops held that constitutional norms such as religious freedom and the separation of Church and state were beneficial to the Catholic Church. They also saw the value of ecumenical collaboration in overcoming ignorance of Catholicism and in reducing anti-Catholic bigotry. Opponents argued that this program risked obscuring Catholicism's status as the true faith, and that the spirit of American independence would weaken the Church's unity. The Americanist perspective was based on the experience of bishops like Keane and Gibbons as leaders of a religious minority in the Diocese of Richmond. When Pope Leo XIII condemned some aspects of Americanism (1899), Gibbons denied having ever held such views.⁵⁰ The Americanist position on religious liberty was eventually vindicated at Vatican Council II, which declared the freedom of religion to be a human right (1965).⁵¹

⁴⁹ Fogarty, 318–21, 331–32, 334–36.

⁵⁰ Fogarty, 305–308.

⁵¹ Vatican Council II, Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis humanae* (1965), nos. 2 §1, 4 §1, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html.

While O’Connell was bishop of Richmond, the death of a seminarian in Rome inscribed a witness of heroic sacrifice in the annals of the diocese. Francis (Frank) J. Parater (b. 1897), a Richmonder and student at the North American College, died unexpectedly at the age of twenty-two (1920). He courageously offered his life and sufferings “for the spread and success of the Catholic Church in Virginia.”⁵² The cause for Frank Parater’s canonization was introduced in 2001.

At the time of Parater’s death, the Richmond Diocese was in the midst of a growth spurt. It began when the United States entered World War I (1917). Catholics, as they had done during the Civil War for either the Union or Confederacy, once more demonstrated their patriotism, this time by supporting the national war effort. In the meantime, a naval base opened in Norfolk that quickly brought thousands of people to the area.⁵³

After the war (1918), even as the military demobilized, Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and Virginia Beach continued to grow. The invention of the trolley, as well as the construction of new rail lines, fueled this expansion. Farther north, the opening of the Key Bridge (1923) enabled trolley cars to cross the Potomac River, a pivotal development that made northern Virginia a suburb of Washington, DC. New parishes were opened to accommodate the growing Catholic population in northern Virginia and Tidewater. In several cases, lay persons took the lead in developing existing missions into these new parishes.⁵⁴

O’Connell’s tenure also included the founding of a bureau of Catholic Charities in Richmond (1922), one of the first in the country. This new institution evolved from a long tradition of charitable work done by religious sisters and parishes, especially the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the St. Vincent de Paul Auxiliary. By employing professional social workers, Catholic Charities enabled the Richmond Diocese to provide more systematic assistance to the poor for housing, placement in orphanages, and legal matters.⁵⁵

Bishop O’Connell resigned at the end of 1925 due to illness. He was then named administrator of the diocese and an honorary archbishop (1926), one year before his death (1927).

*Bishop Andrew J. Brennan:
Social Ministry, the Great Depression, and Personal Misfortune (1926–1935)*

Andrew J. Brennan (1877–1956) of Towanda, Pennsylvania, a priest and auxiliary bishop of Scranton, followed O’Connell as the eighth bishop of Richmond in 1926. Under Brennan’s leadership, the diocese launched the *Catholic Virginian* newspaper (1931).

The presidential campaign of 1928 was the impetus behind the diocesan newspaper, when Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York became the first Catholic nominee for president. Some opposition to Smith was based on his stance against Prohibition (1920–1933). Smith also became

⁵² Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 346.

⁵³ Fogarty, 347.

⁵⁴ Fogarty, 359–62, 365–77.

⁵⁵ Fogarty, 415–18.

a target of anti-Catholic bigotry, facing charges that, as a Catholic, he was not a Christian, and that, as president, he would allow the pope to interfere in public policy. In order to dispel such prejudice, Bishop Brennan decided that the diocese should have its own periodical to espouse its views. So the Richmond Diocese purchased the *Virginia Knight*, which the Knights of Columbus had published since 1925, and renamed it the *Catholic Virginian*.⁵⁶

The opening of two schools for children in need were additional accomplishments of Brennan's tenure. The first was St. Joseph's Villa in Richmond (1931), which replaced St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum and Free School (1834). As they had at the previous location, the Daughters of Charity provided housing and education for girls. The second institution was the Barry-Robinson School for Boys in Norfolk (1934), run by Benedictines from Latrobe, Pennsylvania.⁵⁷

James Dooley (1841–1922), a Confederate veteran who became a prominent member of Richmond society while serving in the Virginia General Assembly, and then as a lawyer and businessman, donated the funds for St. Joseph's Villa. Dooley came from a family of distinguished Catholics. He inherited the title of "Major" from his father, John Dooley, an Irish immigrant who ran a successful hat and fur business in Richmond.

During the Civil War, John Dooley had helped command a Confederate regiment that was composed of Irish Catholics from Richmond, including two of his sons. He was also an influential figure at St. Peter's Church. Another of John Dooley's sons, John Jr., was also a Confederate veteran and a Jesuit novice, who died before being ordained a priest.⁵⁸

Not long after the dedication of St. Joseph's Villa, the Great Depression (1929–1939) struck Virginia (1932) and left many people destitute. Parishes struggled to meet expenses; building and expansion within the diocese were curtailed. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps (1932–1942) to employ young men for infrastructure projects, priests in the diocese ministered to the estimated 1,400 Catholics who were distributed among 61 camps in Virginia.⁵⁹

Brennan experienced his own calamity in the form of a stroke in 1934. The resulting limitations prevented him from carrying out his duties, although he officially remained the bishop of Richmond for another decade (until 1945).

Branching Out Toward Modernity: World War II, Vatican II, and Beyond (1935–2019)

The Diocese of Richmond changed significantly as a result of World War II (1939–1945). In Virginia, as throughout the country, there was a population explosion followed by social upheavals as the "baby boomer" generation came of age. Around the same time, a momentous event brought change within the Church: the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The

⁵⁶ Fogarty, 405–407.

⁵⁷ Fogarty, 418–24.

⁵⁸ Fogarty, 68, 105, 148–49, 182–83.

⁵⁹ Fogarty, 433–35.

implementation of Vatican II took place amid the convulsion of Western society, and became intertwined with the sense of optimism, the eagerness to break with the past, and the realization of personal autonomy that characterized a stormy decade (ca. 1963–ca. 1974). A key result of these trends was that the Catholic Church in Richmond, as in the rest of the United States, faced an increasingly secular culture in the second half of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the new millennium, a crisis emerged: the scandal of clerical abuse (2002–2019).

*Bishop Peter L. Ireton:
World War II and the Postwar Boom (1935–1958)*

In 1935, Father Peter L. Ireton of Baltimore (1882–1948) was appointed coadjutor and administrator of the diocese. World War II (1939–1945) and its effects on the United States shaped his episcopate.

During World War II, as in previous conflicts, Catholics rallied around the flag by serving in the military and by making other contributions. Numerous diocesan priests, along with religious priests who worked in the diocese, served as military chaplains. One of them, Father J. Louis Flaherty (1910–1975), who later became an auxiliary bishop of Richmond (1966–1975), was awarded the Silver Star for his bravery on the Italian battlefield. Other priests in the diocese ministered to German and Italian soldiers who were interned in prisoner-of-war camps in Virginia.⁶⁰

One month before Germany surrendered to Allied forces, Peter Ireton formally became the ninth bishop of Richmond, when Andrew Brennan submitted his resignation (1945). The nuclear age dawned four months after Ireton's accession, when the United States dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing Japan to surrender. By the end of the war, the position of the United States in the world had changed. Whereas in the period after World War I the United States pursued an isolationist foreign policy, it was now a global superpower locked in an ideological and military struggle with the Soviet Union.

These world events had practical consequences for the Richmond Diocese. In addition to a nationwide population boom after the war, Catholics from other states migrated to Virginia to work for the federal government, including the military, or in related industries—all of which continued to expand during the Cold War (1946–1989). The construction of the country's military headquarters at the Pentagon (1941–1943), located across the Potomac River from Washington, DC, symbolized this phenomenon. Tidewater also underwent significant growth as naval facilities in the region expanded.⁶¹

The number of Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond nearly quadrupled, from thirty-eight thousand to one hundred-and-forty-five thousand, during Ireton's tenure. He established forty-five parishes and forty-nine schools to meet the growing pastoral needs. Furthermore, several religious orders began to staff parishes because there were not enough diocesan priests for this purpose. Fewer diocesan priests served as military chaplains in the Korean War (1950–1953)

⁶⁰ Fogarty, 457–58, 461–62.

⁶¹ Fogarty, 475–79, 480–81.

than in World War II because they were needed at home. The appointment of a local priest, Father Joseph H. Hodges, as the first auxiliary bishop of Richmond (1952–1961) was another sign of the diocese’s growth.⁶²

World War II brought the Great Depression to an end, with the result that large numbers of Catholics entered the middle class and began to live in suburbs. The widespread availability of automobiles and the construction of new highways facilitated this suburban migration. In a state like Virginia, this development led to the broader acceptance of Catholics, who were a minority. But rural areas required a different approach. To evangelize there, Bishop Ireton launched a diocesan mission band (1937) to build on the work of an earlier, independent lay evangelist (1933). A designated team of priests now drove a mobile chapel, named “St. Mary of the Highways,” to teach the Catholic faith and to celebrate Mass in outlying communities.⁶³

The onset of social change was another feature of the postwar era. In this regard, Ireton distinguished himself as the first bishop in the South to integrate Catholic schools. He did so just days before the Supreme Court desegregated the public-school system (1954).⁶⁴

*Bishop John J. Russell:
Vatican II and Social Upheaval (1958–1973)*

John J. Russell (1897–1993) became Richmond’s tenth bishop following the death of Peter Ireton in 1958. Russell was from Baltimore and was a priest of that archdiocese (and later of the Archdiocese of Washington that was created in 1939). He was the bishop of Charleston at the time of his appointment to Richmond.

Like his predecessor, Russell oversaw significant changes in the diocese during his tenure. It was the story, in miniature, of the Church’s initial adaptation to modernity. Just three months after being elected pope, and four months after Russell came to Richmond, St. John XXIII surprised the world by announcing an ecumenical council (1959). The thrust of this council, called Vatican II (1962–1965), was to renew the Church for the sake of evangelizing the modern world.⁶⁵

Prior to Vatican II, Bishop Russell supported official efforts already underway to equip the Church for its contemporary mission. This support included a wider use of the dialogue Mass to facilitate lay participation in the liturgy (1960), a practice Ireton had restricted three years earlier (1957). In another significant achievement, Richmond became the second diocese in the country to form an ecumenical commission (1962). Russell then attended the Vatican Council. Upon returning to the diocese, he promoted its teachings and implemented its reforms: liturgical

⁶² Fogarty, 466–69, 474–75.

⁶³ Fogarty, 442–48.

⁶⁴ Fogarty, 450, 508–512.

⁶⁵ Pope St. John XIII, Apostolic Constitution Proclaiming the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Humanae salutis* (Salvation of Humanity) (1961), nos. 3, 5–7, 12, 23, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/es/apost_constitutions/1961/documents/hf_j-xxiii_apc_19611225_humanae-salutis.html; there is no English-language translation on the Vatican website. Speech on the Solemn Opening of Vatican Council II, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (Mother Church Rejoices) (1962), nos. 2, 6, 11–12, 14–15, trans. Joseph A. Komonchak, <https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf>, n.d.

renewal, greater ecumenical cooperation and interfaith dialogue, emphasis on the laity's vocation to holiness, and even the restoration of the permanent diaconate (1972–1973).⁶⁶

The Diocese of Richmond developed in other ways around the time of Vatican II. More parishes and schools were built in the northern Virginia suburbs to accommodate a growing white population that was becoming more affluent. In Goochland County, St. John Vianney minor seminary opened (1960); it was the first such institution in the diocese since Bishop Richard Whelan's brief initiative a century before (St. Vincent's, 1841–1846).⁶⁷ A cook at St. John Vianney Seminary, Mother Maria Bernadetta of the Immaculate (1918–2001), a Poor Sister of St. Joseph from Italy, was remembered for her everyday kindness and practical wisdom. The cause for her canonization was introduced in 2019.⁶⁸

The second Catholic hospital in the Richmond Diocese opened several years after the minor seminary: St. Mary's in Richmond (1966), run by the Bon Secours Sisters. The Daughters of Charity had founded the first Catholic hospital a hundred years before in Norfolk, during the yellow fever epidemic (1855–1856). Notably, too, a series of auxiliary bishops helped Russell govern the expanding diocese: Ernest L. Unterkoefer (1962–1964), J. Louis Flaherty (1966–1975), and Walter F. Sullivan (1970–1974).⁶⁹

Despite the optimism surrounding Vatican II and the election of the first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy (1960), the Church faced increasing turbulence as the decade unfolded. The quest for racial equality was one source of upheaval, as the civil rights movement (1954–1968) gathered momentum across the South, including Virginia. In July 1963, Dorothy Day (1897–1980), co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement and a candidate for canonization (2002), came to Danville to demonstrate in favor of integration. Danville was a historically significant location, having been the last capital of the Confederacy (April 3–10, 1865). More recently, municipal authorities there had closed the public library rather than allow African Americans to use it (1960), and black protestors had suffered violence during the course of a peaceful protest on “Bloody Monday” (June 10, 1963).⁷⁰

From Richmond, Bishop Russell vigorously supported the civil rights movement, advocating for both racial equality and fair housing. He also reversed the policy of his predecessors, who had established separate churches for black Catholics. Russell, seeking integration, closed some black parishes and turned others into territorial ones (1961–1970). Most black Catholics, however, were opposed to losing their distinctive communities as a result of these decisions.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 487–88, 520, 523–25. One permanent deacon was ordained in 1972; seven were ordained in 1973, following Russell's retirement (Office of Archives, Diocese of Richmond, email messages to author, February 11, 26, 2019).

⁶⁷ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 81–83, 525–26.

⁶⁸ Zoey Maraist, “Priests, Sisters Recall Wisdom, Kindness of Mother Bernadetta,” *Catholic Virginian*, April 8, 2018, <https://www.catholicvirginian.org/?p=9701>.

⁶⁹ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 520, 523, 526–28, 544.

⁷⁰ Fogarty, 512–513, 533.

⁷¹ Fogarty, 529–39.

The decade's unrest peaked in 1968. That cataclysmic year witnessed the assassination of civil rights champion Martin Luther King Jr. and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy; race riots in major cities; public disorder and police brutality at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; growing opposition to the Vietnam War (triggered by the Tet Offensive); and controversy surrounding the Church's teaching on contraception.

Notably, whereas Catholics had sought to show their patriotism through military service in earlier wars, the Vietnam War (1955–1973) proved bitterly divisive. Some Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond, including priests and religious, protested the conflict as part of the antiwar movement (1964–1972).

At the same time, another movement was overturning sexual mores. The prevalence of artificial birth control and the influence of the youth “counter-culture” propelled the sexual revolution. But despite expectations of change, Pope St. Paul VI upheld the Church's prohibition against contraception (1968),⁷² a decision many Catholics opposed. Finally, at the end of Bishop Russell's tenure, the Supreme Court legalized abortion (1973). American society and the Catholic Church had undergone dramatic changes in just two decades.

*Bishop Walter F. Sullivan:
Implementing Vatican II, Social Justice, and Secularism (1974–2003)*

Walter F. Sullivan (1928–2012) of Washington, DC, a priest and auxiliary bishop of Richmond, became administrator of the diocese following the retirement of John Russell. Sullivan was named the eleventh bishop of the diocese in 1974.

His episcopate overlapped with a tumultuous period in the American Church. There were debates about the meaning of Vatican II, and reactions to the changes being made in the council's name were mixed. At the same time, aftershocks were felt from the seismic decade that had ended (ca. 1963–ca.1974). The ongoing implementation of Vatican II in this environment shaped the Church in the United States for a generation. During his twenty-nine years at the helm of the Richmond Diocese, Bishop Sullivan steered a course with bearings set on a relatively progressive view of the council's legacy. He retired as the longest-serving bishop in Richmond's history (2003).

The diocese experienced a significant change when its boundaries were modified just one month after Sullivan's installation (1974). First, the Richmond Diocese transferred northern Virginia to the newly-created Arlington Diocese. Second, the boundaries of the Dioceses of Richmond and Wheeling (soon renamed Wheeling-Charleston) were finally made to coincide with state lines. As a result, Richmond acquired southwest Virginia and ceded the northeast panhandle of West Virginia to Wheeling. Third, the Diocese of Wilmington returned the Eastern Shore of Virginia to Richmond. The reconfigured Diocese of Richmond comprised thirty-three thousand square miles in the southern three-fifths of Virginia. At its extremes, the diocese stretched from the

⁷² Pope St. Paul VI, Encyclical on the Regulation of Birth, *Humanae vitae* (1968), no. 14, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

Atlantic Ocean on the east to the Appalachian Mountains on the west—the same width as at its creation 150 years earlier (1820).⁷³

This rearrangement involved more than geography. The Richmond Diocese now returned to its earlier history by becoming more missionary (with the reacquisition of southwest Virginia) and poorer (with the loss of relatively affluent northern Virginia). Furthermore, the territorial changes marked an ideological division, as more traditional priests generally went to the Diocese of Arlington, while more progressive priests opted for the Diocese of Richmond.⁷⁴

Among the characteristics of Bishop Sullivan's tenure, both in parishes and in the diocese at large, were social justice activism, including such causes as the abolition of capital punishment, prison reform, nuclear disarmament, the alleviation of poverty, outreach to Haiti (specifically the Diocese of Hinche), and care of the elderly; ecumenical and interfaith worship, dialogue, and collaboration; and the greater involvement of lay persons, especially women, in the ministry and governance of the Church.⁷⁵

Some activities in the diocese aroused suspicion and led to a Vatican investigation (1983). The probe focused on liturgical irregularities; the practice of general absolution (that is, without individual confession) in the Sacrament of Penance; a joint Catholic-Episcopal church (Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach); and questionable teaching about priestly celibacy and women's ordination to the priesthood. The matter was finally resolved with the appointment of Monsignor David E. Foley, a priest of Washington, DC, as auxiliary bishop of Richmond (1986–1994). Foley exercised authority over particular aspects of the diocese in this capacity.⁷⁶

Other developments affecting the Richmond Diocese included the rising tide of secularism, which led to fewer Catholics practicing their faith. The doubling of Hispanic immigrants in the diocese between 1990 and 2000 helped to offset the trend of declining religious practice.⁷⁷ Dozens of parishes responded to the influx of Latin American immigrants by offering Mass and pastoral care in Spanish. In what was another national trend, the diocese began to experience a decline in vocations to the priesthood and religious life (ca. 1980). Noteworthy too was the ordination of permanent deacons to assist parishes (1973, 2003).⁷⁸

The national crisis of clerical sexual abuse, centered in Boston, battered the Church at the end of Bishop Sullivan's tenure (2002). Americans were shocked to learn about the extent of the abuse, and that some bishops had concealed the abuse and allowed offending priests to remain in

⁷³ Congregation for Bishops, Decree on the Changing of Boundaries (Prot. N. 271/74), *Richmondensis-Vilmingtoniensis-Vhelingensis* (May 28, 1974), in the archives of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston; Pope St. Paul VI, Decree Creating the Diocese of Arlington, *Supernae Christifidelium* (August 13, 1974), in the archives of the Diocese of Arlington.

⁷⁴ Phyllis Theroux, *The Good Bishop: The Life of Walter F. Sullivan* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 42–43.

⁷⁵ Theroux, *The Good Bishop*, 57–77, 96–101, 105–106, 111–12, 122–30, 133–64.

⁷⁶ Theroux, 165–93.

⁷⁷ The earliest statistics available (1995–1996) indicate 2,870 Hispanic Catholics in the diocese; by 2000–2001, the total had risen to 7,243 (Office of Archives, Diocese of Richmond, email message to author, February 25, 2019).

⁷⁸ The first permanent deacon was ordained in 1972, during Russell's tenure; 8 were ordained in 1973–1974, during Sullivan's time as administrator; 13 were ordained in 1981–2001; and 49 were ordained in 2003, before Sullivan's retirement (Office of Archives, Diocese of Richmond, email messages to author, February 11, 25, 2019).

ministry. In keeping with the norms adopted by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops—the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2002)—abuser Richmond priests were removed from ministry and safeguards were instituted to protect children.

*Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo:
Restructuring and New Initiatives (2004–2017)*

Francis X. DiLorenzo (1942–2017) of Philadelphia was named the twelfth bishop of Richmond in 2004. A priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, DiLorenzo had been an auxiliary bishop in Scranton and then bishop of Honolulu. During his tenure in Richmond, the diocese found new ways to meet persistent and evolving challenges such as the shortage of priests and declining religious practice. After reaching the usual retirement age for a bishop (75), Francis DiLorenzo continued to lead the diocese until his unexpected death (2017).

In response to the aging of priests and scant ordinations in previous decades (ca. 1980–ca. 2005), the diocese began to recruit more seminarians, an effort that yielded a modest increase of priests.⁷⁹ But with retirements outstripping ordinations, still more priests were needed. To alleviate the shortage, the Richmond Diocese negotiated agreements with dioceses in Africa, the Philippines, and Latin America to bring priests from those places to temporarily staff parishes (2004). These arrangements marked a historic role reversal as some regions supplying priests had once been missionary territories themselves. The clergy of the Diocese of Richmond consequently became more diverse, as eventually thirty-five percent of its priests originated from other countries.⁸⁰

Moreover, some priests were assigned to multiple churches as part of several parish “clusters” (beginning in 2005). These structures hearkened back to an earlier period in diocesan history and reflected the longstanding practice in southwest Virginia. Finally, more permanent deacons were ordained (starting in 2011), who provided ministerial support at both the parish and diocesan level.⁸¹

Education and Catholic identity were distinguishing features of DiLorenzo’s episcopate. New funding, a systematic outreach to Hispanics (Segura Initiative, 2010), and greater oversight made Catholic schools more affordable, accessible, and effective throughout the diocese. In another initiative, the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (2010) began to train professional men and women

⁷⁹ Office of Archives, Diocese of Richmond, email message to author, March 16, 2019. With one exception (12 ordinands in 1874), there were never more than 5 priests ordained per year from the beginning of the diocese (1820) until 1952; in many years, there were no ordinations or only 1. Ordinations began to increase in the 1950s, with relatively large classes of priests from 1958 to 1966 (between 8 and 17 ordinands per year); medium-size classes from 1967 through 1979 (between 3 and 12 ordinands per year); and small classes from 1980 through 2005 (0 to 9 ordinands per year, with several years without any ordinands, or only one). Between 2006 and 2019, there were 0 to 5 ordinands per year, but with fewer years when there were no ordinations or only one.

⁸⁰ Office of the Vicar for Clergy, Diocese of Richmond, email message to author, April 18, 2019; Ellen Robertson, “The Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Dies at 75,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 18, 2017, https://www.richmond.com/news/local/city-of-richmond/the-most-rev-francis-x-dilorenzo-bishop-of-the-catholic/article_8d6f856f-dced-585c-afc6-7d157289369b.html.

⁸¹ Office of Archives, Catholic Diocese of Richmond. There were 37 permanent deacons ordained in 2012, 2 in 2013, 14 in 2015, and 19 in 2018.

for various roles in parishes, schools, and campus ministries. Bishop DiLorenzo, together with the bishop of Arlington, also established the Virginia Catholic Conference (2004) to advocate for Catholic values in the Virginia General Assembly and with the governor of the commonwealth.⁸² Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond, as in the rest of the United States and other parts of the world, lived in an increasingly secular society. One effect was the continuing ebb in Mass attendance and reception of the sacraments among English-speakers. Religious practice held steadier in ethnic communities where culture was more closely tied to faith, notably among Hispanics and Filipinos, although even there some erosion was evident.

Beyond the Church, there were signs that American culture was becoming more skeptical of institutional religion and hostile toward its values. By way of example, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage (2015) less than a decade after Virginia adopted an amendment to the state constitution outlawing the practice (2007). The Dioceses of Richmond and Arlington had strongly supported this measure as part of the referendum. In another trend, more Americans, particularly those belonging to the “millennial” generation (who were born ca. 1982–ca. 2004), were affiliating with no organized religion, while often still seeking spiritual experience.⁸³

In response to these trends, the diocese reorganized its staff to form an Office for Evangelization (2011), which encompassed ministry to young people (ages 12–17), college students (ages 18–22), and young adults (ages 18–30). This decision reflected an awareness of the many universities and colleges (sixty-eight) within the territory of the diocese. Faced with a changing religious landscape, parishes and campus ministries made greater efforts to reach non-practicing Catholics and to bolster the commitment of those already in the pews.

These were stirrings of the “New Evangelization,” Pope St. John Paul II’s initiative (1983) to rouse the growing numbers of inactive members of the Church in historically Catholic areas (namely, the Americas and Western Europe).⁸⁴ By way of background, Vatican II⁸⁵ (1962–1965)

⁸² Robertson, “The Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo”; “On the Passing of Francis X. DiLorenzo, 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond,” *Catholic Virginian*, August 23, 2017, <https://www.catholicvirginian.org/?p=5696>; Steve Neill, “Diocese Mourns the Passing of Its 12th Bishop, Francis X. DiLorenzo,” *Catholic Virginian*, August 24, 2017, <https://www.catholicvirginian.org/?p=5713>.

⁸³ “‘Nones’ on the Rise,” Pew Research Center, October 9, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

⁸⁴ Pope St. John Paul II, Opening Address of the 19th General Assembly of CELAM (1983), no. 9, in United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012), 6, <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/disciples-called-to-witness/upload/Disciples-Called-to-Witness-5-30-12.pdf>. See also Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, *Christifideles laici* (1988), no. 34, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html; Encyclical on the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate, *Redemptoris missio* (1990), no. 33 §4, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes* (1965), nos. 7 §2, 19, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

and Pope Paul VI⁸⁶ (1963–1978) had recognized the change in religious attitudes. More recently, John Paul II’s successors⁸⁷ have renewed his call for a large-scale evangelizing campaign within the Church.

The newness of this project entailed a paradigm shift in Catholic practice: the full involvement of the laity, emphasis on dialogue and mercy rather than on condemnation, a focus on one’s personal relationship with God, giving testimony to one’s faith, and developing a missionary outlook on ordinary life.⁸⁸ Throughout the history of the Diocese of Richmond, Catholics lived in a missionary territory because they were outnumbered by Protestants. While that disparity continued, Catholics were now a religious minority in another sense: the surrounding culture and population were becoming less religious.

*Bishop Barry C. Knestout:
Preparing for the Diocesan Bicentennial (2018–2019)*

Barry C. Knestout (b. 1962) of Cheverly, Maryland—a priest and auxiliary bishop of Washington, DC—became the thirteenth bishop of Richmond in 2018. A monumental anniversary for the diocese lay on the horizon.

The new bishop began his tenure by crisscrossing the vast territory of the Richmond Diocese to learn about its people, parishes, and other institutions. The various regions of the diocese were subsequently reorganized into deaneries (groups of parishes) in order to foster priestly fraternity and to aid the bishop in his task of governing (2018).⁸⁹

As the bicentennial of the local Church approached, a commemoration was planned to strengthen the bonds of fellowship within it and to revitalize its evangelizing mission, inspired by the exhortation of St. Paul: “Shine like stars in the world, as you hold fast to the word of life” (Phil. 2:15–16). Numerous bicentennial activities were organized: a year-long program of spiritual preparation; Masses in historic churches to recognize key events in diocesan history; pilgrimages; service projects; and, as the culmination, a Eucharistic Congress in Richmond.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Pope St. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975), nos. 2 §3, 4, 52, 54 §2, 55–56, 76, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter (*motu proprio*) Establishing the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Ubicumque et semper* (2010), http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html; Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, *Evangelii gaudium* (2013), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

⁸⁸ *Encounter the Joy of the Gospel: Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond* (Richmond, VA: Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2014), 7–8, 16, 18–19, 24–26.

⁸⁹ Bishop Barry C. Knestout, *Decree Establishing a Deanery Structure for the Diocese of Richmond* (September 27, 2018), <https://richmonddiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Letter-from-Bishop-Knestout-Establishing-Deaneries-September-2018.pdf>.

The clerical abuse scandal reemerged six months into Knestout's tenure (2018). It had become international in scope and involved the personal and professional malfeasance of bishops. Knestout responded to the crisis by meeting with victims of abuse (2018).⁹⁰ He also wrote a pastoral letter on the calamity (2018);⁹¹ he celebrated Masses of atonement and conducted listening sessions throughout the diocese (2018); and, like other bishops in the United States, he published a list of all priests in the diocese against whom a credible and substantiated accusation of sexual abuse of a minor had been made (2019).⁹² These were steps toward rebuilding trust in the Church.

Reaping the Fruit: The Diocese Marks Its Bicentennial (2020)

With advances and setbacks, the Catholic Church in Virginia spread gradually across an expansive, uneven terrain. The two-hundredth anniversary of the Diocese of Richmond (July 11, 2020) is a vantage point from which to survey how Catholics in this commonwealth have practiced and transmitted their faith over that period. The Church has grown since the arrival of the first missionaries. There are now two hundred thousand Catholics in the Richmond Diocese, who make up five percent of the total population. The diocese has 191 priests, 161 deacons, 139 parishes, and 30 schools.

An assessment of the prospects of the Church in Virginia, written around the time of the first Catholic mission (1570–1571), is instructive. Six months after the martyrdom of his fellow Spanish Jesuits, Father Juan Rogel sensed the challenges that the Church would face in this land: “I truly fear that there will be the same hardness in them [the indigenous people] regarding conversion as in the other places we have been; and if there is to be any fruit, it will come about over time, as when they are softened by water dripping on rock.”⁹³

Perseverance has borne fruit over time, as the Catholic Church cultivated the Gospel in all types of Virginia soil, ranging from barren to fertile (Matt. 13:19–23). That story of struggle, failure, and modest growth is the parable of the grain of wheat: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24). Catholics in Virginia have overcome adversity, they have committed errors, and they have bettered society in their continuing effort to serve God.

⁹⁰ Brian T. Olszewski, “Healing Begins,” *Catholic Virginian*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.catholicvirginian.org/?p=9416>.

⁹¹ Bishop Barry C. Knestout, “*From Tragedy to Hope*”: *Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Richmond* (September 14, 2018), <https://richmonddiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Pastoral-Letter-Sept-14-2018-FINAL.pdf>.

⁹² Diocese of Richmond, *List of All Clergy With Credible and Substantiated Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors*, February 14, 2019 (updated June 27, 2019), <https://richmonddiocese.org/list/>.

⁹³ Juan Rogel, SJ to Francis Borgia, SJ, Bay of the Mother of God, August 28, 1572, in Lewis and Loomie, *Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia*, 106. The author made the translation from the original document. Used with the permission of the Virginia Historical Society.

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