

Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

25th Sunday in ordinary time

September 20, 2026



SEASON OF CARE FOR CREATION September 1 - October 4 (Feast of Saint Francis):
The Days of Creation, Edward Burne-Jones, 1876
Fogg Museum, Harvard University

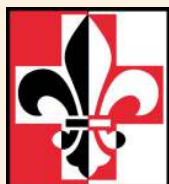


SAINT BERNADETTE
CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

25th Sunday in ordinary time

September 20, 2026

welcome



SUNDAY MASS	Saturday Vigil in church 5pm (live-streaming) Sunday 7am, 9am, 11am, 1pm (Spanish), 5pm
DAILY MASS	Mon.-Fri., 7 & 9am (live-streaming); Sat., 8am (live-streaming) Holy Days of Obligation, as announced
LIVE-STREAMING	Monday-Friday, 9am; Saturday, 8am; Vigil Sat., 5pm and Sundays 9 & 11am
DEVOTIONS	Adoration & Benediction, Fridays, 7-8pm (church) Rosary after 9am weekdays/8am Saturday Masses in church Taizé Prayer Service, 3 rd Mondays, 8-8:45pm (church)
CONFESSION	Sat., 3:30-4:30pm, or by appointment. English and Spanish Confessions
PARISH OFFICE	703-451-8576 , fax 703-269-1121 office@stbermpar.org Monday-Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm Pastor, Fr. Don Rooney frdonrooney@stbermpar.org Fr. James Waalkes frjameswaalkes@stbermpar.org Fr. Daniel Rice frdanielrice@stbermpar.org Deacon Orlando Caicedo Pastoral Associate, Rick Caporali rcaporali@stbermpar.org Business Manager, Linda Patterson lpatterson@stbermpar.org Music Director, David Mathers dmathers@stbermpar.org Bookkeeper/Compliance (OPCYP), Zory Conde, zconde@stbermpar.org Executive Assistant, Jean Corday jcorday@stbermpar.org Executive Assistant, Evelyn Vargas, evargas@stbermpar.org Secretary, Janet Chávez-España
SAINT BERNADETTE SCHOOL	703-451-8696, fax 269-1121 Principal, Dr. Kathleen Burgess school@stbermpar.org Assistant Principal, Jennifer Spencer Registrar, Heidi Thomes
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	703-451-8576 Director, Lynn Jones Ljones@stbermpar.org Coordinator of Religious Education, Arlyn Agasen, aagasen@stbermpar.org Administrative Assistant, Victor Mendez vmendez@stbermpar.org
YOUTH MINISTRY	703-451-8576 Director, Grace Mee gme@stbermpar.org Assistant Director, Mary O'Malley momalley@stbermpar.org
BAPTISMS	Saturday, 10am, 1 st and 2 nd Saturdays in English; 3 rd Saturday in Spanish. Parish registration is encouraged for parents. Class attendance is required. Please contact the parish office to schedule at least four weeks in advance. All required paperwork must be submitted before a baptism may be scheduled.
WEDDINGS	Sat., 12 & 2pm. Parish registration required somewhere; contact a priest at least six months in advance of desired date.
JOIN US	You are welcome! Registration forms are available in the church vestibule, office, or online www.stbermpar.org . Articles for the bulletin must be submitted to the parish office no later than first thing Friday morning, ten days before publication date. bulletin@stbermpar.org .

calendar

september

20 Sunday, TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Live-streaming Masses continue at 9am and 1pm
- **Commitment Weekend**, please return completed **Commitment Cards** this weekend
- Pick up your **St. Lucy Food Drive** blue bags and return them full next weekend!

21 Monday, Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

- **Dining Out Night for Rise Against Hunger** – Silver Diner – 5-8pm, then join us for our
- **Taizé Ecumenical Prayer Service**, 8pm in the church

22 Tuesday, Weekday

23 Wednesday, Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest

24 Thursday, Weekday

- **Fall Confirmation 2027 Kickoff**, Parents and Students, 6:15pm, Gym/Cafeteria

25 Friday, Weekday

- **Flute/Piano Concert** with Guilherme Andreas and David Mathers, 7:30pm.
- Adoration, 7-8pm, chapel

26 Saturday, Weekday [Saints Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs]

- **5K FUN RUN & WALK**, Burke Lake, check-in 7:30am, run 9am
- Bring food donations to the **St. Lucy Food Drive** at all Masses this weekend
- Live-streaming Mass for Sunday begins with the 5pm Vigil Mass

27 Sunday, TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Bring food donations to the **St. Lucy Food Drive** at all Masses this weekend
- Live-streaming Masses continue at 9am and 1pm

28 Monday, Weekday [Saint Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs]

- **Dining Out Night for Rise Against Hunger** – McAlister's Deli – 5-8pm

29 Tuesday, Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

- **Saint Bernadette School- OPEN HOUSE**, 9-11am, RSVP please (see p.5)

30 Wednesday, Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor

october

1 Thursday, Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor

2 Friday, The Holy Guardian Angels

- Adoration, 7-8pm, church
- **Blessing of Animals**, in front of grotto, 6pm

3 Saturday, Weekday

- **Lord of the Miracles celebration**, Mass at 10, procession, dinner (see p.9)
- Live-streaming Mass for Sunday begins with the 5pm Vigil Mass

4 Sunday, TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Live-streaming Masses continue at 9am and 1pm
- **Life Chain**, parish meets at Key Middle School on Franconia Rd., 2pm
- **Fall Confirmation 2028 Kickoff**, Parents and Students, 6:15pm, Gym/Cafeteria

5 Monday, Weekday [Saint Faustina Kowalska, Virgin]

- **Dining Out Night for Rise Against Hunger** – El Paso – All Day

6 Tuesday, Weekday [Saint Bruno, Priest]

7 Wednesday, Our Lady of the Rosary

8 Thursday, Weekday

announcements

This is Commitment Sunday! Review our **Parish Renewal Handbook, Ministry Catalog and Annual Report** and commit to how you will be involved in parish life and ministry this year!

Check out **Tap to Give**, a convenient and secure way to make electronic donations during the offertory through our Parish Soft Giving Platform. The app also allows for you to update your registration, learn about upcoming events, find daily Mass readings and much more.

Concerts at Saint Bernadette presents internationally prize winning flutist **Guilherme Andreas**, **David Mathers**, piano. Friday, Sept. 25 at 7:30pm. A light reception will follow

All couples celebrating a Golden or Silver Anniversary are invited to a **Wedding Anniversaries Mass on Sunday, October 18, 2:30pm at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More**. Please call the parish office to register no later than Monday, October 5.

Please note the **change in Date and Time for the Blessing of the Animals**. We will gather at the grotto Friday evening, October 2nd at 6pm due to our Lord of the Miracles Celebration the following morning.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) will be selling raffle tickets after all Masses on September 26/27 for a trip for to Ireland! Tickets are \$10 or 3 for \$25. Cash and Proceeds are used to fund our charitable giving to include 8th grade graduation scholarships, Mary's Comfort, Project St. Patrick (Seminarians) and our annual St. Patrick Coloring Contest. Try your luck of the Irish.



7th Annual

AGAINST HUNGER

Parish Dining Out Nights

Support our Work of Mercy ~ Rise Against Hunger

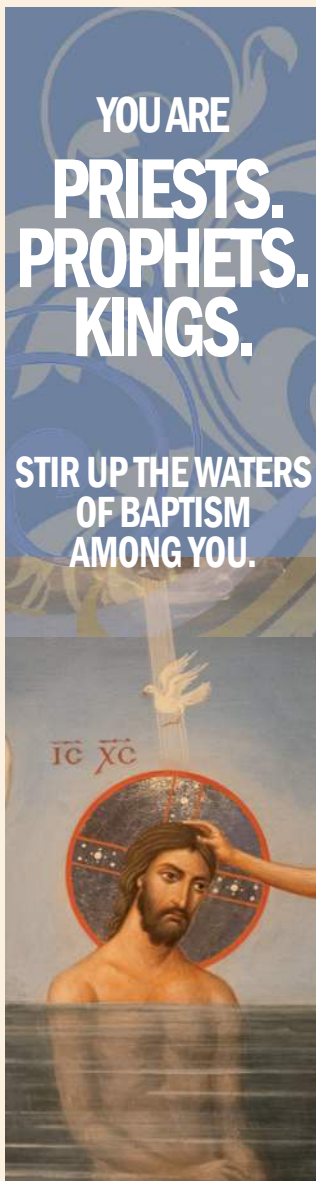
SEPTEMBER

21 - Silver Diner, Springfield Mall

28 - McAlister's Deli, Rolling Road

www.stbernpar.org | page 3

from the pastor



"Stirring up those waters among us...will be the source of healing and belonging for a nation that needs to rediscover its holiness."

Dear Good People of Saint Bernadette,

As I reflect on the bishop's letter which we read at all the Masses last weekend and the responses some members of our parish family had in reaction to it, I have a few reflections.

First, it wasn't a condemnation of anyone. It is not up to us to judge anyone. Only Jesus knows our hearts and will take care of that on the last day. Our job is to love and respect all people. Society, and in particular politics, has infiltrated our Church culture in a way that many have forgotten this fact. The confusion has extended to matters of faith and our responsibility to all living persons, and made them issues of liberal v. conservative along partisan lines. Truth does not require anyone's endorsement. It isn't something determined by a poll. Something isn't true because the Church says it is. The Church says it is because it is true. As well as what is false.

Our world is shifting all over the place when it comes to public opinion. I had a good friend who was a Baptist pastor and he said that when he became a pastor he was considered pretty conservative. Today, he is considered a liberal compared to where the Baptist Church has gone. I have had this experience, too.

The Virginia bishops' call to reject two revisions to the state constitution with regard to human life and family go to the heart of the process of how people can properly form their consciences. Your conscience is that internal refuge where each of us hears the call to do good and avoid evil. Once formed to the best of your ability, you must follow your conscience. But what happens when the tools you have to form your choice are not true?

Also, conscience is not a license to do whatever you want. It requires life-long education and soul searching through objective truth and divine law. It is possible not to agree, but there must remain

an openness to seek religious assent of intellect and will, rather than dissent.

There is no intention, if I understand the bishops' letter correctly, to overturn anything that is already in place in our laws, whether they agree with them or not, but they are seeking to prevent the erosion of the soil underneath the foundation upon which moral decisions are made.

All are loved; all of us are on this journey of life together seeking what is right. We can't allow ourselves to forget this.

This is Commitment Sunday! Please consider making real commitments of how your prayer life might look in the coming year, how you might get involved in the life of our Church, and how you might more generously support our mission and ministries.

Environments today foster a general lack of commitment. Sociologists say that, driven by social media, people are exposed to a relentless paradox of choice. When a "better option" always seems to be just one click away, the psychological investment in a job, relationship or project seems to rise dramatically. Commitment is increasingly viewed as a restriction of freedom rather than a vehicle for fulfillment. Lack of commitment becomes an unconscious survival mechanism which results in a kind of isolation.

Ironically, what we do as a community is actually what all of us need. Ministry to others is, in itself, a supreme good. But it is also good for us. Social connectedness and a deep sense of belonging are fundamental human needs that profoundly protect our long-term physical and mental health. Holiness from prayer raises a sense of self-worth in relationship with God who loves us unconditionally; service gives us a sense of purpose and fulfillment; giving activates our ability to love. Renew your commitments with us!

The Lord be with you. *Fr. Don*

Lunch with your child

Our teachers were so excited to invite parents to join their child for a special "Lunch with Your Child" event at our school on Friday, September 11. This was a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time together, enjoy a meal, and experience a small part of the children's school day. After praying The Angelus, families enjoyed a lovely picnic on our

back field and around the playground, in the gym, and in the cafeteria.

Chef Butler served delicious hamburgers and hot dogs or parents brought lunches to school. Students were encouraged to wear red, white, and blue accessories. The atmosphere around our campus was one of gratitude and joy, as our community came together to have lunch and spend time together. We are very thankful to all the staff that made this special event such an amazing success.



cardinal corner



**FORMING
HEARTS
& MINDS
IN CHRIST**

**Come to our
OPEN HOUSE
September 29,
9-11am and
experience our
great school!
Please RSVP so
we know you
are coming!**

religious education program

Weekly update

Please contact Lynn Jones, Director of Religious Education, at 703-451-8576, ext 136, Arlyn Agasen, Coordinator of Religious Education, at ext 132, or Victor Mendez, Admin Assistant, at ext 138.

youth ministry

Email our director of youth ministry, Grace Mee at gmee@stbernpa.org, or assistant director Mary O'Malley, momalley@stbernpa.org with any questions you may have.

RE Program upcoming schedule

Regular classes: Sept. 15/16, 22/23, 29/30
SPRED Classes: Sept. 12, 19
Family Mass Learning: Sept. 12/13 after all Masses
Family Faith Formation: Sept. 20
Sunday Doughnut Social: Sept. 27

Please remember there are no cellphones and electronic devices allowed in the classroom. Children should bring their book(s) in their clear plastic folder each week to class, and parents should check the folder weekly for assignments and information from the catechist. Class times on Tuesday and Wednesday are 6-7:15pm – please arrive and pick-up on time! Students arriving more than 15 minutes late will have to be signed in by a parent at door 1.

Volunteers needed for this year!

If you feel called to help with the Religious Education program, we are in need of volunteers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6-7:15pm (arrive by 5:45pm).

Living the Liturgical Year

On September 21, we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist. He was an apostle and one of

the writers of the Gospel. Did you know he was a tax collector who became an apostle? Tax collectors in Jesus' time were despised and put in the same category as sinners. They were seen as traitors to their nation. You can find activities to teach your kids about St. Matthew here: <https://catholicprintableclub.com/blogs/september-feast-days/how-to-celebrate-the-feast-of-st-matthew-september-21>

Feeling called to help? Need to know more? Please contact Lynn Jones at ljones@stbernpa.org or 703-451-8576 ext 136.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) is a program for 3-6 year olds. The children leave the 9am Mass with their catechists during the Liturgy of the Word so they can hear the Word of God at their level. Child-



All students MUST be pre-registered so we can have parent contact information. <https://forms.gle/Kfxe3miZDQJ5j5TZ8>

High School Tuesday Socials

All high schoolers are invited to join us for Tuesday Socials every Tuesday from 7-8:30pm! Meet in the youth room (in the parish office) for games, ice cream, and a discussion on the faith. Contact Grace Mee for more information!

RALLY 2026

Join high schoolers all throughout the diocese of Arlington at RALLY on October 25 from 11am-9pm. RALLY is an all-day event that includes Mass with Bishop Burbidge, speakers, music, games, and more! Check out the Youth Ministry page on the parish website for more information and permission slips.

Middle School Youth Ministry

All 6th-8th graders are invited this Wednesday, September 16th for games, snacks, and fun from 6:45-8pm! We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month in the school gym.

CYO Sports

A rewarding experience for young athletes, Saint Bernadette CYO sports offers a variety of options, including cross country, tennis, track & field, basketball, cheer, and volleyball, fostering both physical fitness and teamwork, as well as the importance of faith, sportsmanship, discipline, and community in a supportive environment where players can build lasting friendships and learn valuable life lessons. CYO sports are open to children who attend St. Bernadette School or are enrolled in the parish's religious education program this year year.

Registration for Cross Country, Tennis, Track & Field is now open for registration. Please register at - <https://reg.sportspilot.com/106541/leagues>

Questions? Please reach out to parish CYO Reps - Gina Soriano (gvsoriano@gmail.com) or Catherine Luby (catherineeluby@gmail.com).

Join one of our choirs!

The choirs on summer break will resume in a few weeks, and all choirs are welcoming new members at this time.

Our Children's Choir, for 1st-6th grade singers, serves at 5pm Saturday Mass once a month. They rehearse every Thursday 5-5:45pm. Our Youth Choir, for 7th-12th grade vocalists and instrumentalists, sings most Saturdays at the 5pm Mass. We have four adult choirs: Sunday Mass at 9am (English), 11am (English), 1pm (Spanish), and 3rd Saturday Filipino Vigil Mass, 7pm.

Please contact David Mathers, Director of Music Ministries, at dmathers@stbernpar.org or (703) 451-8576 x112. Rehearsal days/times, list of instruments that can participate, and guidance on instrumental experience levels can be found at <https://www.stbernpar.org/praying/music-ministry> or by contacting David Mathers.

Catholic Women's Group

Come and enjoy warm fellowship and great food. For more information, please email us at women@stbernpar.org.

Tuesday, October 6 is our next **Dinner with Friends** at 5pm, at Saratoga Pizzeria, 8050 Rolling Road. We meet for this casual meal on the 1st and the 3rd Tuesday of every month. No need to RSVP.

St. Lucy Food Drive for hungry kids

Pick up your St. Lucy bag today after Mass and return it next weekend. Donations will be collected prior to the Vigil Mass and all Sunday Masses (September 26-27). The truck will be parked at the base of the steps below the church office and will leave the church parking lot at 5:15pm on Sunday, September 27.

Monetary donations and grocery gift cards are welcome. Checks should be written to CCDA (Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington) with St. Lucy on the memo line and mailed in the envelope attached to the bag or handed to one of the Saint Bernadette food drive team members. You may also contribute online at <https://secure.cdda.net/Give/Give/Donate/Giving.aspx> choosing St. Lucy Project as the specific project.

Walking With Purpose – women's Bible study

All women are welcome to join in our 6th year of Walking With Purpose – a women's Bible study. This year we will be participating in two 9-week sessions that compliment each other. They both study the Old Testament and how it points to the coming of Jesus Christ. "Beholding His Glory," the first session, will run from October–December and "Beholding Your King," the second session, will run from January–March. Separate morning and evening sessions will be offered and take place in the Bradican Room. Tuesdays from 9:45–11:30am or Thursdays from 7-8:30pm, beginning October 13 & 15. The book fee is \$30 and the suggested hospitality fee is \$10. More information and registration at <https://stbernadettewwp.wixsite.com/stb-www> Questions about our WWP group? Email: stbernadettewwp@gmail.com.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

The proper name for the English RITE is now the ORDER of Christian Initiation of Adults.

"COME, AND SEE"

OCIA

We invite **YOU** and all who seek a deeper life in **Jesus Christ** to consider becoming members of the Catholic Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Please call the parish office to register. **You are welcome. Begins Sept. 14.**

"VEN, Y VEAN"

RICA

Invitamos todos que buscan a una vida mejor en **Jesucristo** para considerar ser miembros de la iglesia católica por los sacramentos del bautismo, confirmación, y eucaristía. Llaman la oficina para registrarse. **Bienvenidos, el 14 de septiembre.**

up and coming

Parish Offertory

Sept. 13

Offertory	\$ 30,238
Religious Education	3,825

Thank you for your faithful support!



Consider using Faith Direct to make your parish contributions through either direct debit to your checking account or through credit cards, the same way you make car or tuition payments. Faith Direct also offers personalized offertory cards to replace your envelopes for the collection basket. You may enroll securely online. Visit <https://giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/FD-70> or call (866)507-8757. Our parish code is VA70.

*Your
Commitment
Card is a
meaningful
way to express
your dedication
to God and
to our parish
community.*



The card features a blue background with a white cross and a central image of Jesus being baptized. Text on the card includes: "YOU ARE PRIESTS. PROPHETS. KINGS.", "STIR UP THE WATERS OF BAPTISM AMONG YOU.", "2026-2027 Commitment Card", and a form with fields for "First and Last Name (please, one card per family)", "Street Address", "City", "State", "Zip", "Telephone (important)", and "email address (please print)".

how to use your renewal handbook and ministry catalog

All members of our parish are asked to complete a stewardship Commitment Card.

Many of you are already involved in ministries and also faithfully contribute each week or month. If you are one of these parishioners, **we thank you**, because the Church can only accomplish her work if people support it! Please pray about whether there is something different you would like to do. **Please fill out the card and let us know how you plan to continue.**

If you are not currently involved in our parish, or if you feel that God may be calling you to do more, **this is a great opportunity to become a more active member.** Ask the Lord to help you spend more time in prayer. Talk to your spouse or your children about which groups or ministries you might like to join. Try to budget a consistent weekly gift. A ten dollar weekly donation today is equivalent to a five dollar weekly donation five years ago.

Filling out your Commitment Card is the way to take a step forward.

Last weekend was Parish Life Weekend.

Visit with representatives of all parish ministries and groups under the tents at our Saint Bernadette Ministry Fair outside the church before and after Masses. Come with questions. There will **not** be sign-ups this weekend; fill out your commitment card and we will collect them as an offering at Masses next weekend.

Today is Commitment Sunday.

Bring your Commitment Card and make an honest, actual commitment to what you hope to achieve this year: spiritually in prayer, charitably in service, and responsibly in your financial commitment to Saint Bernadette Parish. Place your card, as an offering, at the second collection at all Masses.

taizé

monday, sept 21 - 8pm

Usually, the third Monday of each month. Please invite all your friends to join us in this prayer for Christian unity.



KofC Fall Coat Drive

It's time to clear out your closet again. Springfield Council 6153 will be collecting fall and winter coats again this year for

our neighbors in need. From September 26 through October 10, put your new or gently worn coats in the marked bins in the vestibule. Coats will be donated to our friends at ECHO.

ALL the parish is WELCOME, whatever your language may be!

Join us for the celebration of a patron of Latin America, The Lord of the Miracles, on Saturday, October 3. He is credited with protecting people in difficult times. A dinner will follow in the gym with traditional dances of different countries.

Únanse a nosotros para la celebración de nuestro santo patrón, El Señor de los Milagros, el sábado 11 de octubre. A nuestro santo patrón se le atribuye la protección de nuestro pueblo en tiempos difíciles. Una cena seguirá con bailes típicos de diferentes países en el gimnasio.



celebración del señor de los milagros Lord of the miracles celebration

**sábado
3 de octubre
saturday, october 3**

10am - church
Misa / Mass
11:30am - outside
procesión / procession
2pm - 4:30pm - gym
cena / dinner
venta de comida
food for sale
homenaje al Señor con
bailes típicos
tribute to the Lord with
traditional dances

CONCERTS at Saint Bernadette presents

GUILHERME ANDREAS **IN CONCERT**

Friday, September 25 at 7:30pm

Concerts at Saint Bernadette presents flutist Guilherme Andreas, praised as the '**Rampal**' from **Brasilia** for his powerful sound, refined technique and artistry, Andreas has become one of the most prominent flutists of his generation. A native of Brazil, Andreas received First Place in the 2020 International Music Competition "Paris and London" Grand Prize Virtuoso and the 2019 Concert Artists International Virtuoso Competition's professional division. Don't miss this!!

The concert is free and open to all.

*No tickets are required. A free-will offering will be accepted.
A light reception will follow.*



Gratis para toda la parroquia - ¡siempre se necesitan voluntarios!

picnic de familia parroquial

**sábado
17 de octubre
1 - 5pm**

**burgers y hot dogs
bebidas**

**(TRAES guarnición,
postre, o bocadillo)**

SI TU APELLIDO:

comienza con A-M:
guarniciones como
verduras, ensaladas, etc.

comienza con N-T:
postres, galletas, etc.

comienza con U-Z:
snacks no perecederos

**música en vivo,
juegos inflables y más**

**bus desde Daventry
estacionamiento
(considere compartir
el vehículo)**

Las donaciones de pasteles son bienvenidas para la caminata de pasteles en el gimnasio. ¡Hornea un pastel y gana un pastel! Tu creación será aceptada la mañana del evento en nuestro lugar de entrega designado.



Free for all the parish - volunteers are always needed!



family fall parish picnic

**saturday
october 17
1 - 5pm**

**burgers and dogs
beverages**

**(YOU bring a side,
dessert or snack)**

IF YOUR LAST NAME:

starts in A–M:
side dishes like potato
salad, salads, chips, etc.

starts in N–T:
desserts, cookies, etc.

starts in U–Z:
non-perishable snacks

Please consider using
biodegradable containers when
possible; together we can do
better to Care for Creation.

**live music, games,
inflatables**

**shuttle from Davenport
commuter parking
(please consider
carpooling)**

Cake Donations are warmly
welcomed for the PTO Cake
Walk in the gym. Bake a cake,
win a cake! Your creation will be
accepted during morning /after-
noon school carpool on Friday,
October 16 or the morning of
the event at our designated drop
off location.

SAINT BERNADETTE
CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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"vatican council II through its documents"

September 9, 2026

Pope Leo, in his General Audiences on Wednesdays, is giving a catechesis on Vatican II, sixty years later.



"To be a person means to perceive oneself as a gift to be shared, growing and maturing through acceptance, reciprocity, and service."

IV. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (GS 12–22).

2. Human dignity: gift and responsibility.

Brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

The Conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (GS), by dedicating the first chapter to the dignity of the human person, emphasizes that it is the foundation and condition for "those values which are most highly prized today," but these must not lose sight of their "divine source," in order to avoid possible distortions arising from the "taint in man's human heart" (GS, 11).

The journey that made it possible to highlight the fundamental characteristics and rights of human dignity certainly represents one of the most significant chapters in human history. However, the path ahead is not yet complete and must address the contradictions, both old and new, which prevent its full realization.

The Church clearly offers her contribution, reminding us that human dignity arises from the very being of the person. I had the opportunity to reiterate this also in my recent Encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*: "Every human person is planned and willed by God to enter into communion with him, with others and with creation. Human dignity does not depend on a person's abilities, wealth or position in life, nor on the right or wrong choices made; instead, it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person, endowed by God as an expression of his unfailing love" (no. 50). The infinite dignity of the human being, then, is rooted in his identity as a creature made "to God's image" ... capable of knowing and loving his Creator," a plan and gift of love that transcends other created realities, which are entrusted to his care to "subdue them and use them to God's glory" (GS, 12).

In faith we can understand the ultimate foundation for the dignity of the person, inasmuch as the Son, "by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (no. 22).

The person always implies relationship, communion and participation in relation

to God and to others; hence, a filial relationship with God the Father and a fraternal relationship with Christ and with all humankind. It excludes self-centred isolation. To be a person means to perceive oneself as a gift to be shared, growing and maturing through acceptance, reciprocity and service.

This dignity is entrusted to the responsibility of each person: at the same time, it also demands solidarity and mutual care, overcoming the many falsifications and manipulations that still disfigure our perception of it and hinder its realization. Indeed, as a result of the choices made throughout history that have run counter to this dignity, even today "man is split within himself," and "all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil between light and darkness." This fragile and limited condition, however, can be regarded with hope, because "the Lord himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly and casting out that 'prince of this world' (John 12:31) who held him in the bondage of sin" (GS, 13).

Furthermore, the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* affirms that human dignity concerns the whole person and, therefore, dualistic views must be overcome: the human being "though made of body and soul, is one." Reducing the body to an "object" to be disposed of arbitrarily is always a denial of the dignity of the person: "man is not allowed to despise his bodily life" and "is obliged to regard his body as good and honorable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day," while ensuring that it does not become enslaved by "the evil inclinations of his heart" (GS, 14), since we are all wounded by sin.

Finally, there *Gaudium et spes* recalls the three most significant expressions of the dignity of the person: intelligence, which makes the human being an insatiable seeker of the truth (no. 15); conscience, through which he gives unity and meaning to his life (no. 16), and freedom, which makes him the responsible agent of his own decisions (no. 17). These dimensions are closely connected to one another: it is in conscience that truth is recognized as such, and freedom can experience it as its foundation and possibility. The Holy Spirit, who gives life in Christ, makes us free and



constantly assures us of our dignity as children of God, delivering us from fear and guiding us towards the ultimate goal, that life in its fullness beyond death which Christ has promised us. It is only in him that the mystery of the human person finds true light; from him we receive light on the enigma of suffering and death; and with him we journey towards the Resurrection.

Dear brothers and sisters, created in God's image, through Christ and for his sake, we have received a unique and indelible dignity. Let us commit ourselves to promoting and defending it always, with the light and strength of the Gospel.

Catholics vote no: pledge to vote

This fall in the two proposed amendments on the ballot threaten the human right to life and the truth of marriage. These proposed amendments are called the "Virginia Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment" and the "Virginia Remove Constitutional Same-Sex Marriage Ban Amendment." They also threaten constitutional justice, the equal protection of the laws, and religious liberty.

As Catholics, we recognize that, if passed, these amendments would enshrine objective wrongs in Virginia's Constitution, overturn basic matters of justice, and gravely damage the intrinsic dignity of persons and the nature of marriage and the family. Although Catholics may in good conscience disagree over most political policies which call for strictly prudential judgments, certain fundamental matters such as marriage and the protection of human life demand a consistent and universal Catholic response to protect and preserve objective goods by which God blesses humanity.

These amendments would be extraordinarily difficult to reverse. Virginia would effectively become a sanctuary for abortion and commercial abortion businesses. Basic health and safety standards that protect women from unlicensed providers would be eliminated, parents would be pushed out of life-altering decisions involving their family and children, and unregulated abortions would be possible, performed even on healthy babies up to the moment of birth for any reason with no limits.

To access the petition text and pledge to vote "no" on these constitutional amendments when voting begins Sept. 18, visit <https://catholicsvoteno.com/>

You are invited to come learn from Amy McInerney, Respect Life Director for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, about the two proposed constitutional amendments in the upcoming election, how they could endanger women's health, your parental rights, and your conscience protections, and what you can do about it. Questions? Email RespectLife@HolySpiritChurch.us.

Tuesday, September 22, 7pm, McGivney Hall, Holy Spirit Parish / Annandale.

KofC Fun Run and Walk next Saturday!

This is the last weekend to register for the Knights of Columbus Annual 5K Fun Run and Walk at Burke Lake Park next Saturday. Scan the QR code at right or stop by the display board in the back of the Church to register.

coming up



Springfield Knights of Columbus



Registration is open!

The 24th Annual Springfield Knights of Columbus 5K Fun Run and Walk is set for 9am on Saturday, September 26 at Burke Lake Park. This family friendly event welcomes runners and walkers of all ages – strollers welcome.

You can register by scanning the QR code to the right. Event proceeds support KOVAR, a Knights of Columbus charity helping Virginians with intellectual disabilities and Saint Bernadette School's Tuition Assistance Program. Please contact Tom Smith at tomsmith6153@outlook.com if you have questions. Early registration and donations help our planning.

Daily Mass Intentions and Readings

Please call the office also if you would like to request a Mass sooner, that is not announced.

September

21 MONDAY

7am † Tim Sutherland
9am* † Dominic Lam Dao
Eph 4:1-7, 11-13/Mt 9:9-13

22 TUESDAY

7am David Gaul
9am* † Luis Novoa
Prv 21:1-6, 10-13/Lk 8:19-21

23 WEDNESDAY

7am Kathy Smith
9am* † Lai Nguyen
Prv 30:5-9/Lk 9:1-6

24 THURSDAY

7am † Thania Russin
9am* David Mathers
Eccl 1:2-11/Lk 9:7-9

25 FRIDAY

7am † David Gardner
9am* Natalia Aued
10am** † Marilyn Spille
Eccl 3:1-11/Lk 9:18-22

26 SATURDAY

8am † Mario Cantu
Eccl 11:9—12:8/Lk 9:43b-45
5pm* † Teresa Randolph

27 SUNDAY

7am † Ferdinand Payabyab
9am* † Mario Cantu
11am For the parish
1pm* † Marta & Anna Gutierrez
5pm † Eveith Lucas
Ez 18:25-28/Phil 2:1-11/Mt 21:28-32

* live-streamed Masses

** Mass at Greenspring Chapel

Masses next weekend

Sept 26	5pm	Fr. Cedric
Sept 27	7am	Fr. Don
	9am	Fr. James
	11am	Fr. Daniel
	1pm	Fr. James
	5pm	Fr. Don

Parish prayer list

John Yost, Wiotto Helenius, Robert Holzhauser, Adolfo Blandon, Esperanza Ayala, Gloria Tortoriello, Bob Atwell, Charles Roby, Kathleen Murray, Alan Curtis, Brian Keller, Cassi Smith, Edward Fitzgerald, John Winkler, Antonio & Maria Benedi, Donna Lash, Llewellyn Salsado, Cristina Perez, Rev. William Hower, Jane Springer, Ed Wyse, Linda Robish, Robin Cookson, Jesse Perry, Carol Flournoy

Pro-life witness

The Saint Bernadette Pro-Life Committee invites you to pray the rosary on Tuesday or Saturday mornings in front of the abortion facility at 2616 Sherwood Hall Lane in Alexandria (ample free parking across the street). We legally, peacefully, and respectfully gather for an hour starting at 10am; no sign-up or commitment required. Questions? Email Tom Palumbo at tompalumbo@outlook.com.

Stewardship resources and reminders: reduce your taxable income!

If you are 70 1/2 and over, consider using your IRA for a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). If you are 73 and over, consider using some or all of a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) as gifts to Saint Bernadette. This is an easy way to reduce your taxable income and benefit the parish. Contact Rick Caporali at or Linda Patterson at the parish office.

ParishSoft giving update:

Saint Bernadette realizes that the transition from Faith Direct to Parish Soft was less than ideal. Online giving enables you to change your giving, set up second collection donations and have access in real time your support of Saint Bernadette ministries.

Here's how you could set up online giving or access Parish Soft to move toward online gifts. <https://giving.myparishsoft.io/app/giving/FD-70> you can click on sign in, using the same username and password as in Faith Direct, log-in, you can give now or set up a one-time gift. If you have difficulty, reach out to Donorsupport@parishsoft.com or call 1-866-930-4774, opt. 6

Feel free to reach out to Linda Patterson, our Business Manager, if you need further

assistance, lpatterson@stbernpar.org or call her at the Parish Office, 703-451-8576, ext. 122.

Mary's Comfort update

Mary's Comfort is welcoming another baby to our home! Thanks to all of our donors and volunteers who help make our home a warm and welcoming environment for mothers and their babies. If you would like to volunteer with us, or provide a meal for our newest mother, send an email to maryscomfortva@gmail.com. More information about our mission and program is on our website: www.maryscomfortva.org/.

Golfing with Wolves-Friday, October 23

Join Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School for our 14th Annual Golf Tournament at Potomac Shores Golf Club! Enjoy a fun day of golf, contests, food, drinks, and fellowship while supporting our students.

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Whether you golf, sponsor, or simply help spread the word, your participation makes a difference for our students. Register or learn more: jpthegreat.org/golf26

Thursday men's group

Join the men's group every Thursday night from 7 to 8pm on the patio behind the rectory. A great way to find support in the faith through reading the Gospel, praying and sharing together.

Life Chain is October 4

The 2026 Alexandria Life Chain will be conducted along Franconia Road on Sunday, October 4, from 2:30–3:30pm, from Saint Lawrence Church to Frontier Avenue near the Springfield Mall. Our parish's location on Franconia Road will be in front of Key Middle School, the same as in previous years. Signs will be available for individual and parish pick up and return from the Saint Lawrence Hammond Hall adjacent to the church starting at 2pm.





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