

# The Citizen

ADVENT 2025

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E J O H N C A R R O L L S O C I E T Y



## JANUARY BRUNCH

### Brunch Speaker Announced

John Carroll Awardee and board of governors member Catherine Ronan Karrels will deliver the keynote address, "Faith and Learning in the Age of AI," at the Society's annual January Brunch following the Mass of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 11.

In 2008 Karrels became the first permanent lay head of school at her



Catherine Ronan Karrels, Head, Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

alma mater, Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart. In 2014, Bethesda Magazine named her "Best Private School Headmaster."

A 1986 Stone Ridge graduate, Karrels helped celebrate the school's centennial anniversary from 2022-2023.

"A Sacred Heart education is focused on the concept of bringing Christ's heart into the world, and we are very proud of the fact that young women leave here with that spirit deeply instilled in them – to do good and to bring Christ's heart and love to the world around them," Karrels told the Catholic Standard during the centennial.

*Continued on page 2*

## 73RD ANNUAL RED MASS

### Law Professionals Issued Challenge to Build Hope

Describing law professionals as "architects of hope by reason of their vocation," Cardinal Robert W. McElroy detailed three areas of action during the 73rd annual Red Mass on Oct. 5. "This Red Mass invites us to reflect upon the realities of suffering and hope," said the Archbishop of Washington in his homily. "It calls us to recognize the landscape of adversity and hope that faces us in our nation today."

Christian hope is not pure optimism nor the belief that everything will turn out great, but rather rooted in accompaniment—the knowledge God is always walking with the faithful, the cardinal explained. Hope, Cardinal McElroy said, "represents an overwhelming impulse in the depths of the human heart that does not obscure the suffering of the present or past, but finds in them chapters of grace and, with courage, a foundation for a new future."

Speaking at the Red Mass for the first time since being installed as archbishop for the nation's capital, Cardinal McElroy pointed participants to three pressing issues of the times: the crisis of institutional life; the decrease of political discourse and increase of political violence; and the urgency to assist the poor and powerless.

"The law occupies a uniquely foundational position within American society," said Cardinal McElroy, whose father served nearly four decades as a lawyer. "Our identity as Americans and our source of patriotism is aspirational, and to a great degree those aspirations are reflected in our law. It is because of this reality that men and women of the law have a particular and pivotal role in being signs and creators of hope in our nation."

Cardinal McElroy urged all law professionals to apply Catholic social teaching in forging a pathway forward by strength-



Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, delivers the homily at the Society's 73rd Red Mass.

Photo by Christopher Newkumet

ening institutional health and rejecting "hyper-criticism" of those institutions vital for serving the common good. He urged "reinvigoration of the countervailing forces in our government and society that constrain harmful accretions of power and delimit their proper scope."

Additionally, the cardinal pressed the importance of raising discussion to remold discourse away from harmful acts of violence, describing students and leaders in the law as the group with the deepest "calling to bring hope." Lastly, Cardinal McElroy pointed to the Gospel call "to keep the poor and the powerless at the forefront of our thoughts and actions."

The archbishop noted that the legal system cried out for reform and offered the following specific guidance to: "... law students, commit ... to integrating substantive and caring pro-bono work as a part of your ongoing career. ... [P]rosecutors, often with overwhelming caseloads, see the humanity deeply both in those you are prosecuting and in those who were victimized. For legislators, provide the resources and processes necessary to make the legal rights of the poor and middle class more than theoretical. For defense attorneys, sustain hope in your own lives even when you confront injustice or indifference. ... [J]udges, shapers of the laws that affect so many so profoundly, let the humanity and thirst for justice that led you to the law sustain and guide you, so that hope is reflected and created by your actions. And ... teachers of the law, lift the minds

*Continued on page 5*

VOL. 32  
NO. 1

## INSIDE

Page 2 **Upcoming: St. Nicholas Mass and Gift Drive**

Page 6 **Members Spotlight**

Page 7 **Young Adult Fellowship**

## John Carroll Society

Established 1951 Archdiocese of Washington

### Officers

President, David Florenzo  
Immediate Past President, Eileen Moore, M.D.  
First Vice President, William E. Lawler III  
Second Vice President, Deacon Darryl A. Kelley  
Secretary, Alissa Ashcroft  
Assistant Secretary, Connie Mitchell  
Treasurer, Timothy Gleeson  
Assistant Treasurer, Mary Ann Dmochowski  
Parliamentarian, Peter Kilpatrick, Ph.D.  
Historian, Jane Sullivan Roberts  
Archivist, Jeffrey H. Paravano  
Chaplain, Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi  
Executive Director, Tracy Ferridge

### Board of Governors

Richard Cleary  
Dana Gotfryd  
Catherine Ronan Karrels  
Jim Malloy  
Christopher H. Mitchell  
Colleen Mudlaff  
Marie Nolan, R.N.  
Preeya Noronha Pinto  
Scott Rembold  
Paul Scolese  
Robert Smith  
John Tabacco, M.D.  
Philip J. Ward  
Elizabeth A. Young

### Communication and Outreach Committee

Chair, Robert Smith  
Editor, Lynnea Mumola  
Designer, Andy Eng

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2025-26

### December 6, 2025

#### ST. NICHOLAS MASS & GIFT DRIVE

Mass at The Church of the Little Flower, Bethesda, Md., at 5 p.m.

Principal celebrant will be Father Lee Fangmeyer, pastor, The Church of the Little Flower. The homilist will be Father Danny Morrison, parochial vicar, The Church of the Little Flower.

A reception and visit with St. Nick to follow in the parish hall.

### January 11, 2026

#### JANUARY MASS AND BRUNCH ON THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Mass at St. Patrick's Church, Washington, D.C. at 10 a.m.

The principal celebrant will be Father Patrick S. Lewis, pastor, St. Patrick's Church, Washington, D.C. The homilist will be Father Anthony Lickteig, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, Archdiocese of Washington.

Catherine Karrels, Head of School, Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart, will present a keynote address at the brunch immediately following Mass at the Washington Marriott at Metro Center.

### February 28, 2026

#### LENTEN DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Retreat and Mass at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center, 8:00 a.m.

The retreat director will be Father Mark Smith, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish.

### March 15, 2026

#### 35TH ANNUAL ROSE MASS

Mass at Church of the Little Flower, Bethesda, Md., 10:30 a.m. Principal celebrant will be Cardinal Robert McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, and the Homilist will be Jesuit Father James Van Dyke, S.J., President, Georgetown Preparatory School.

Luncheon to follow in the Parish Hall with the presentation of the JCS Pro Bono Health Care Service Awards.

### May 8, 2026

#### 40TH ANNUAL DINNER

Gathering at the Four Seasons Hotel, Washington, D.C., 6:30 p.m. for Cocktails and 7:30 p.m. Dinner. Speaker and honoree will be Hon. Michael Ferguson.

### NEW JCS MEMBERS

As of October 30, 2025

Callahan Burton Andrew and Dr. Jo Ann Regan Sponsor: Elizabeth Meers	Dr. David Pinder Sponsor: Deacon Darryl Kelley
Tim Cummings Sean Raftery Sponsor: Erin Calloway	Stephen Stasko Sponsor: Father Patrick Lewis
Cecelia Cummins Fran Leskovar Sponsor: Tim Gleeson	Leah Roddenberry Sponsor: John Lynham
Richard and Jacqueline Renz Sponsor: George Snyder	Lourdes Robles Sponsor: Judge Stephanie Martinez
Joseph and Ashley Profaizer Sponsor: Ed and Christine Amorosi	Elizabeth DeToro Sponsor: Chief Judge Kimberly Moore
Kevin Sebastian Sponsor: Jim Bishop	Joseph A. Reinkemeyer, Jr. Sponsor: Michael New
Drew Picard Sponsor: David Britto	David J. Britto Sponsor: Edward O'Connell
Nicolas Pascale Sponsor: David M. Connelly	Jakub Berkowicz Sponsor: Nicholas Petruzzello
Courtney Nicole Robertson Sponsor: Mark Cummings	Vincent Bennett Sponsor: James Reed
Heather Murphy Sponsor: Tracy Ferridge	Robert Gottschalk Sponsor: Monsignor Peter J. Vaghi

### Brunch Speaker Announced

Continued from page 1

Prior to her appointment at Stone Ridge, Karrels served as the founding president at DeMarillac Academy, a Lasallian Vincentian Academy educating recent immigrants to the San Francisco area. Earlier she taught and held administrative positions at St. Peter's School and Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory School there as well.

Karrels earned a bachelor's degree in English from Boston College in 1990 and a master's in education from San Francisco State University in 1995. Additionally, she completed one year as a Jesuit Volunteer and Teacher at St. Rita's in San Diego.

Sponsored by the Society, the January Brunch is an annual event that highlights Catholic education and focuses on members of the academic community. This year the brunch will follow the 10 a.m. Mass for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord at St. Patrick's Church in D.C. The principal celebrant is scheduled to be Father Patrick Lewis, pastor at St. Patrick's. Father Anthony Lickteig, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, is scheduled to deliver the homily. Brunch will follow at the Washington Marriott at Metro Center.

By Lynnea Mumola

*My dear John Carroll Society members,*

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for everyone who was able to attend the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating my 40th anniversary as a priest and 21st anniversary as pastor of The Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda earlier this year.

Also, I urge everyone to read the text of Cardinal Robert W. McElroy's beautiful homily delivered at the Red Mass on Oct. 5. It is printed in full in the Catholic Standard here: <https://www.cathstan.org/voices/text-of-cardinal-mcelroys-red-mass-homily-men-and-women-of-the-law-as-architects-of-hope>

May the light of the Advent wreath be a reminder that God has called you out of darkness, into His glorious light. May you experience God's kindness and blessings, and be strong in faith, in hope, and in love.

*Monsignor Peter J. Vaghi*  
Chaplain, the John Carroll Society



From Left to Right: former presidents Dr. Tom Loughney, Jeffrey Paravano, Jane Belford, Andy Cook, Greg Granitto, Carol Grefenstette Bates, Elizabeth Meers and Dr. Eileen Moore with Msgr. Vaghi, longtime chaplain of the Society on the occasion of his 40th anniversary as a priest.

## Society Wins at Nats Park

The John Carroll Society held its 9th annual outing to a Washington Nationals game on June 4 – this time to cheer the home team to victory in a matchup against the NL Central Division-leading Chicago Cubs. Thoughtfully arranged again by member Ray McKenna, founder and president of Catholic Athletes for Christ, our group of 30 fans enjoyed the game, fellowship, and a pregame talk by noted baseball author Fred Day. Drawing from the 2021 book, “Feeling a Draft,” co-authors Day and McKenna recounted amusing stories of MLB’s amateur draft. Since its inception in 1965, the draft has seen many highly-touted top draftees fail, and some unknown and undrafted players become Hall of Famers – underscoring the ongoing tension between modern analytics and old-school “feel” as the best approach to assessing a player’s likelihood of success. We also heard from Father John Barry, pastor of the Church of the Resurrection in Burtonsville and part-time team chaplain for the Nats and Washington Commanders. The pastor shared both humorous and heartwarming stories of his work ministering to professional athletes.



Pictured from left to right: Father John Barry, pastor of Church of the Resurrection, Burtonsville and part-time Nationals and Commanders chaplain; Fred Day, baseball writer; Ray McKenna, writer and founder of Catholic Athletes for Christ; and Chris Mitchell, JCS member and chair of the Nationals Outing event.

By first-pitch our group filled a block of seats beside shallow right field to see Nats’ southpaw pitcher MacKenzie Gore notch his third win in this young season. Although a somewhat dull defensive battle through six innings, in the bottom of the seventh Nats’ third baseman Amed Rosario connected on a solo homer. An insurance run followed in the eighth by second baseman Nasim Nunez’ RBI double sealing a 2-0 win.



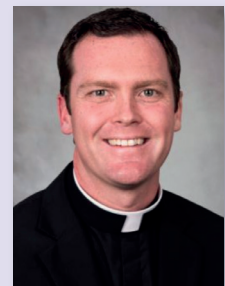
Society members enjoying the Washington Nationals game on June 4.

Our group included members and their families, former president Dr. Tom Loughney, and incoming president David Florenzo all enjoying an evening of great fellowship and weather. The Society looks forward to planning next year’s event and seeing another curly W recorded at Nationals Park next season.

*By Chris Mitchell*

## Fall Retreat

Father Michael M. Romano, Rector at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, presented “Living in Hope as Friends of Jesus Christ” for the Society’s Fall Retreat held on Nov. 8. The annual day of recollection and renewal featured two talks by Father Romano, Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, opportunities for Confession and time for reflection while participants enjoyed the beautiful setting of the seminary in autumn.



## Brunch Highlights Include Awards and Photos

In an annual tradition following the Red Mass, members gathered for a brunch to recognize the *Pro Bono* Legal Service Award recipients. This year, photographer Christopher Newkumet prepared a video featuring over 25 years of photographs from Society events as Edward O’Connell, chair of the Red Mass for the past six years, welcomed guests.

“To all the Red Mass vice-chairs and committee members, thank you all for your hard work and enthusiasm.” He later said his own involvement with the Mass began in 2002 as an usher.

The new president, David Florenzo, reminded guests that the Society will be celebrating 75 years of service in 2026 and listed many ways of involvement throughout the year to honor the Diamond Jubilee. Members are encouraged to assist with St. Maria’s Meals, join the Financial Stability Network, the Catholic Charities Healthcare Network or its Legal Network.

“The John Carroll Society strives to help its members deepen their Catholic faith. It also strives to support those who make a difference in our community, some of whom will honor today,”

Florenzo said. “The John Carroll Society lives and breathes through its members.”

This year’s John Carroll Society *Pro Bono* Legal Service Awards were presented to: Andrea Halverson Harper; Kristine Dunne Maher; Nicholas Mowbray; and Crowell & Moring, LLP.

As a volunteer for Catholic Charities Legal Network, Andrea Halverson Harper, Esq., served on the Network’s Advisory Council for many years. Recently Harper along with awardee Maher stepped in to provide essential logistical support for the Network’s annual Golf Tournament, a critical source of funding for its operations.

Harper is a member of Exelon Corporation’s legal department, where she focuses on energy regulatory matters in Delaware, D.C., Maryland and New Jersey. Prior to joining Exelon, she spent over a decade at Vinson & Elkins LLP, focusing on federal energy regulatory matters and energy transactions. She also dedicates her time to *pro bono* matters through a variety of local organizations.

Harper earned her *juris doctor* from the University of Virginia School of Law and her bachelor’s degree from Harvard. She is a member of the Maryland and D.C. bars and currently resides with her husband, Ian, and their four children in Virginia.

In addition to assisting Harper with the Network’s Golf Tournament, Kristine Dunne Maher, Esq., has served on Catholic Charities Legal Network’s Advisory Council for a number of years. Maher spent her professional career in private practice specializing in employment, education, and nonprofit law before becoming General Counsel of Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School. Now retired,

she continues to serve as the school’s General Counsel Emeritus. Maher is involved in numerous volunteer activities, including conducting mediations in D.C. Superior Court; civil actions through the court’s Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division; serving as an Army Arlington Lady at Arlington National Cemetery; and conducting tours of George Mason’s historic home.

Maher received her *juris doctor* from the University of Virginia School of Law, a master’s degree in education from Harvard and her bachelor’s degree from Gordon College. She is a member of the D.C. and Virginia bars.

Awardee Nicholas Mowbray is a partner at BakerHostetler, where he focuses his practice on U.S. federal income tax matters. Mowbray is the co-author of *Financial Products:*

*Taxation, Regulation and Design; and Energy and Environmental Project Finance Law and Taxation.*

He has worked for over seven years with the Catholic Charities Legal Network including accepting *pro bono* cases involving tax matters. Mowbray regularly takes time to assist the Network’s staff and other volunteer attorneys with questions

and concerns relating to tax. He has been instrumental in recruiting other attorneys at Baker Hostetler to assist the Legal Network with client intake and processing.

Mowbray received an LL.M in taxation from Northwestern University, a *juris doctor* from Chicago Kent College of Law, and his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan. Mowbray lives in Derwood, Md. with his wife, Karolina, and their two children.

Crowell & Moring LLP conducts telephone intake for the Legal Network several days every week. Firm attorneys are the first point of contact for callers – many of whom have never conversed with an attorney. The intake volunteers make each caller feel comfortable in reaching out for help on sensitive matters such as domestic relations disputes, bankruptcy, and consumer fraud.

Additionally, several Crowell & Moring attorneys have accepted complicated child custody and public entitlement cases on behalf of the Legal Network, and have rendered thorough and sound representation to their clients. Many of those clients would not have received any *pro bono* legal representation at all, if not for the diligent and zealous efforts of the firm’s attorneys.

Crowell & Moring Senior Counsel John E. McCarthy, Esq., currently serves as a member of the Legal Network’s Advisory Council, and Senior Counsel Susan M. Hoffman, Esq., formerly served on the Advisory Council and as its chair. Both continue to regularly consult with the Network’s staff about the program’s various *pro bono* cases. Crowell & Moring has also been a major annual donor to the Network’s annual Golf Tournament.



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

From left to right are: Nicholas Mowbray; Andrea Halverson Harper, Esq.; David Florenzo; Msgr. Peter Vaghi; Edward O’Connell; Kristine Dunne Maher, Esq.; John E. McCarthy, Esq., and Cardinal McElroy.

## Dispatch from the Conclave

For Members who watched this spring's papal conclave from afar, Cardinal Robert McElroy's address at the Top of the Town event on Sept. 17th was a rare treat—a relatively candid, firsthand account from a conclave participant in Rome.

The election of Cardinal Robert Prevost came as a surprise to Cardinal McElroy, who, though supportive, had not thought an American pope likely. But then-Cardinal Prevost had spent the past several decades in Peru and was well known to many of the electors, having advised Pope Francis on the selection of bishops in recent years. It is likely, then, that most cardinals did not primarily regard him as an “American candidate.”

Cardinal McElroy was not surprised by the conclave's swiftness. Commentators had suggested that it could drag on, given the number of new cardinals appointed during Francis's pontificate and the increasingly global nature of the college. But, Cardinal McElroy explained, thanks to recent synodal meetings, the electors had come to know one another better than in many previous conclaves, allowing consensus to emerge more readily. The prelate also noted a deep desire for unity in the Church following the death of Pope Francis.

He said that the new pope's chosen name, Leo XIV, is also forward-looking, signaling a clear interest in Catholic social teaching and the “second industrial revolution” of artificial intelligence. It was Leo XIII who authored *Rerum novarum*, widely considered the first modern social encyclical.

Beyond these broad strokes, Cardinal McElroy reflected on how the conclave differed from the caricature. He did not see a college dominated by factions or intrigues like those depicted in the recent film *Conclave*. Rather, he said, the cardinals prayerfully sought a unifying figure. He described listening sessions before the conclave that fostered genuine discernment and insisted that, far from being caught up in theatrics, the cardinals felt the weight of their task and the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit.

For members of the John Carroll Society, the evening was also a welcome introduction to the Cardinal's personality and pastoral style. Since arriving in the Archdiocese, Cardinal McElroy has taken an active role in Society events, celebrating the Rose Mass in the spring and the Red Mass this fall.

Top of the Town's familiar setting overlooking the Potomac proved a fitting place to join the Cardinal in deeper reflection on the life of the Church.

By Robert Smith  
Chair of the Communication and Outreach Committee

## Law Professionals Issued Challenge to Bring Hope to Nation

*Continued from page 1*

and the hearts of your students always to the noble and the compassionate, rather than the easy or the expedient.”

After the Mass, Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi, Society chaplain, described the cardinal's homily as “spot-on,” calling the 73rd Red Mass “beautiful.” “Lawyers and judges are trained to build up our country—and that's the challenge,” Msgr. Vaghi said, adding that law professionals have a “unique gift to give our country—unique skills in building up the body politic. There is a ministerial function of judges, lawyers and law students.”

Deacon Darryl Kelley, second vice president, noted he originally discovered the Society through the Red Mass. Now a permanent deacon and lawyer, Deacon Kelley originally provided protective detail at the annual event as a U.S. Marshal in the late 1980s. “I did not know what a Red Mass was,” he explained. “I was there to protect those government officials who needed to be protected.”

The deacon said he agreed with Cardinal McElroy's homily adding that lawyers need to “be pilgrims of hope with an obligation to help society move forward in peace.”



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

Washington Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, at center, leads the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the 73rd Red Mass on Oct. 5.

As a deacon he realizes that many of his law clients require prayer and he also sees similarities as lawyers often hear about life's difficulties that a priest might also hear in ministry settings. Lawyers have the ability and training to work together with people to change situations for the better, he noted. “Clients need assistance to navigate life—not through a harmful way but through peace.”

Becoming a lawyer is an excellent career but also an excellent education that can help everyone, Deacon Kelley said. “Law is a way of thinking—it teaches you how to reason, how to see things from all sides.”

For additional Red Mass coverage including links to video coverage, go to:

<https://www.cathstan.org/local/men-and-women-in-the-law-can-be-architects-of-hope-to-the-nation-cardinal-mcelroy-says-in-red-mass-homily>

Please Join the John Carroll Society in Celebration of  
The Feast of  
**Saint Nicholas**  
Saturday, December 6  
5 pm Vigil Mass

**RECEPTION & GIFT DRIVE**

Principal Celebrant:  
Fr. Lee Fangmeyer, Pastor, Church of the Little Flower

Homilist & Concelebrant:  
Fr. Danny Morrison, Parochial Vicar, Church of the Little Flower

Concelebrant:  
Msgr. Peter Vaghi, Chaplain, John Carroll Society

**Reception in Little Flower Parish Hall directly following Mass**

Families are invited to kick-off the holidays with a special visit from St. Nicholas! Children will enjoy creating a holiday art project.

Please contribute to the toy drive by donating an unwrapped toy/gift for a child ages 6-12 or a gift card for teens. The donations will be distributed to children in need.

## Beyond the Flaw, the Jade



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

Natalie Liu reads the first reading at the Red Mass on Oct. 5. Liu's journey to Catholicism and the John Carroll Society is featured below in this edition's member profile.

When Natalie Liu's father passed away, she could not return to China for the funeral. In the eyes of the authorities, her years as a Western journalist were disqualifying; she "knew what she had done."

Unable to stand at her father's grave, she listened to Chopin's Funeral March and read *Death in Venice*. Music and literature sustained her, as they so often had.

Natalie's story begins much earlier, in a very different China. Her grandparents were part of the landed gentry and deeply anti-communist. Yet her grandfather, who at one point served in the nationalist Kuomintang government in Chungking, eventually quit the party due to its corrupt practices. That independent—some might say principled—streak proved costly.

In time, the revolution came. The family was paraded in the streets. Her grandparents, whose identity was so bound up with the land, were to die in a famine.

Natalie's father, born in the 1930s, began his career as a journalist. At Xinhua, the New China News Agency, he tried to walk an honest line. That, combined with his family background, soon caught up with him. He was dismissed from journalism, exiled to a then-remote coastal town to work as a teacher, and eventually sent to work in an industrial complex amid Mao's Cultural Revolution.

Yet even then, Natalie recalls, her father remained kind to others. At the market, he would never buy roasted peanuts from just one vendor; he'd buy a little from each, so that every seller had at least a bit of income that day.

Her mother, too, shared food and clothing with those in need. Compassion was the family's creed, even as they were marked out of suspicion. There was an idiom for families like hers—roughly, that they be "hit and kept underfoot." Ostracized at school, Natalie begged her mother to introduce her to a martial arts master so she would not be easily cowed.

Despite these trials, Natalie excelled in school and earned a place at prestigious Peking University. Following the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square, she came to the United States, eventually earning a master's degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 2002, along with time at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania.

By this point, Natalie had followed in her father's footsteps

as a journalist. In 1998, while working as a producer for CBS News in Beijing, she was detained by state authorities and questioned for two days before being released. Based at Voice of America after 2002, her work, in both English and Chinese, has focused on diplomacy and geostrategic culture.

When I asked Natalie how she came to the Catholic faith, she noted something it shares with reporting: telling stories in pursuit of the truth. She recalled a 1994 *New York Times* article by Fr. Andrew Greeley that had once caught her eye: "Why Do Catholics Stay in the Church? Because of the Stories." In short, Catholics stay because the stories of the Church shape their identities and affections, pointing them toward the truth. In reading Graham Greene and other Catholic authors, Natalie was struck by how they faced the reality of sin and suffering, never downplaying it but still retaining hope. This link between story and truth became a bridge from journalism to belief.

The path, though, was winding. In the early 2000s, grieving her father and looking for answers, she sought God but, thanks to a well-intentioned priest's misguided counsel, "was sent back to people." Still, the yearning remained. A friend, Bernice Anne Reed, took her to the 10:30 Latin Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral, and she became a regular attendee. She would enter the Church in 2022, taking the Confirmation name of Anselm.

Natalie became Catholic at the height of the clergy abuse scandal in Washington. In China, she says, there is a saying that an imperfection does not obscure the luster of a jade. Jade is central in Chinese culture—a symbol of purity and worth. The point is not to excuse the flaw, but to recognize that it does not erase the underlying beauty. As a journalist, she insists on seeing the whole picture. She understands why some have walked away from the Church, but she also sees the devotion and self-giving of countless priests and laypeople. For her, the Church is the Body Christ founded, filled with both sinners and saints.

Natalie was always close to her father. In the Church, she has found new spiritual fathers—figures like Fr. Jack Hurley, a retired priest in residence at St. Matthews, and Monsignor Robert Sokolowski, who taught her at the Catholic University of America. She is reminded of her dad when she sees their love of truth and patient care. Observing priests as a lector at St. Matthew's, she has thought of the sacrifices they have made—and of victims whose suffering cannot be ignored. Christ himself, she notes, is a victim; to belong to his Body is to live with both holiness and wounds in view.

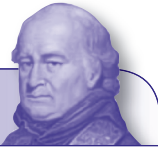
In the John Carroll Society, Natalie has found something she lacked as a child in China: fellowship. No longer "kept underfoot," she is on equal footing with members from different professions and backgrounds. It reminds her of the one child who befriended her back home, the son of a laborer who crossed the invisible line that separated their families.

Now, Natalie talks about "the family outside the family": the discovery that the universal Body of Christ is not foreign to her at all. In many ways, she had been prepared for it all her life. For a woman whose life has been marked by exile, it is no small thing to be able to say that she has found a home.

By Robert Smith

Chair of the Communication and Outreach Committee

## MEMBER NEWS



■ On October 27 **Edward O'Connell** was sworn in as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years. For the past six years, O'Connell served as chair of the Society's annual Red Mass.



■ **Matthew T. Carroccio** Managing Director, The Monument Group at Wells Fargo Advisors recently received the 2025 Founders Award from the Catholic Business Network of D.C. at their 11th Annual Gala held on Nov. 6.



■ **Mary Ann Dmochowski** is recently semi-retired in order to enjoy her new granddaughter, Mary Patricia McMahon. Corporal Michael McMahon, and Julia-Anne Smith McMahon, joyfully welcomed Mary earlier this year. Previously Julia-Anne helped with many of the Society's brunch events before her marriage in 2018. She now lives with her daughter and tuba-playing husband, Corporal McMahon at Fort Benning, Ga.

■ **Joe Barloon** has been appointed Deputy United States Trade Representative and Chief of Mission for the Permanent Mission of the United States to the World Trade Organization. In addition to representing the United States at the WTO, Ambassador Barloon serves as the U.S. Trade Representative's Senior Official in other multilateral fora, such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development and the Group of Seven and Group of 20 meetings.



■ **Paula Gwynn Grant** has accepted the position of Senior National Director of Marketing & Communications at St. Vincent de Paul USA. Earlier in the year she attended the blessing and opening of their new advocacy office in Washington, D.C.



■ **Robert and Bronte Smith** joyfully welcomed a son, Patrick, on November 3. He joins proud siblings Lily (4), Eve (3), and Olivia (1).

■ **Dana and Przemek Gotfryd** joyfully welcomed a baby girl, Aurelia Maria Gotfryd, on September 25, the feast of St. Aurelia.

■ **Timothy Gleeson** recently received a promotion to Head of Credit Risk Management for the Commercial Real Estate line of business at PNC Bank.



■ **Deborah and John Aquino** are commemorating their 50th wedding anniversary this year and will be celebrating their Golden Anniversary with a trip to England.

### DECEASED MEMBERS

Please pray for the repose of the soul of the following members and friends of the John Carroll Society:

**Katie Maher**  
**David Bates**  
**Alfred Brizzolara**  
**Suzanne Shaffer**  
**Charles Knudsen**  
**William McBeath**  
**Rosemary Casey Carter**

## Society Offers Hope, Growth in Faith for Young Adults

Throughout the first few months of Pope Leo's Papacy, he has made multiple efforts to reach out to the younger generation urging young people to aspire to do great things and not to settle for less. The pope spoke directly to people like me – young, recently graduated, eager to begin life's adventure – encouraging us to be bold, ambitious, and unafraid of the unknown.

At the same time, Pope Leo said true adventure is not simply in our careers or travel, but in holiness. He calls us to let the Lord guide our steps as we embrace our faith. In an increasingly secular culture, we see not just indifference but hostility towards Catholics, we must not allow those people to influence our commitment to the Lord. We should be proud of our faith and use it, as Pope Leo described, "as a beacon of hope." Additionally our discourse with others should feature compassion and empathy, rather than divisive rhetoric and aggression. We should serve the disenfranchised and ostracized, rather than turn a blind eye. And we should constantly strive for peace in an age that is scarred with violence, war, and discrimination.

As a young graduate about to begin my legal career, I often find myself overwhelmed by the noise of the world. There is so much going on, so much to worry about, so much to do – and not enough time. Thanks to the prominence of social media in our lives, we are often focused on status and fear of missing out. To top it off, we are experiencing a loneliness epidemic, where over half of Americans reported feeling lonely or isolated, and that number spikes up to almost 80 percent for young adults. People of my generation are anxious, depressed, angry, lonely, and losing hope in what they see as a dark and cruel world.

But into this darkness, the Church offers light. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of young people either returning to or entering the Catholic Church. They see answers and hope in faith. They recognize that the Church does not provide just shallow comforts but gives real answers to life's deepest questions. It is no surprise that Catholics are, on average, happier than the less religious.

For me, faith is what steadies my heart. As a new member of the John Carroll Society, and as I begin my life in a new city and a new profession, I am excited but also nervous about what the future will bring. Yet, in prayer and faith, I find comfort and those fears begin to go away. I know that with God, I will get through the challenges presented in my life, and I will become stronger.

My hope here is that through the John Carroll Society I can grow in my faith, give back to my community, and help others find salvation in Christ, especially those in a similar position to me.

When Jesus told his disciples that he would soon die on the cross and that he would see them soon, he told them that they would weep and lament at his death, but he told them, "I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

We will continue to face hardship in this world, but we will never lose hope because in the end God has won.

By *Nicholas Petruzzello*  
 Co-chair of the Young Adult Fellowship



**John Carroll Society**  
 P.O. Box 454  
 Glen Echo, MD 20812

The Carroll Citizen is published by the John Carroll Society, PO Box 454, Glen Echo, MD 20812 Visit our web site [www.johncarrollsociety.org](http://www.johncarrollsociety.org)

Lynnea Mumola, Editor | Robert Smith, Chair, The Carroll Citizen | Chris Newkumet, Photographer | Andy Eng, Designer

For more information on the programs and services sponsored by the Society, contact: Tracy Ferridge, Executive Director, by phone at (301) 654-4399.



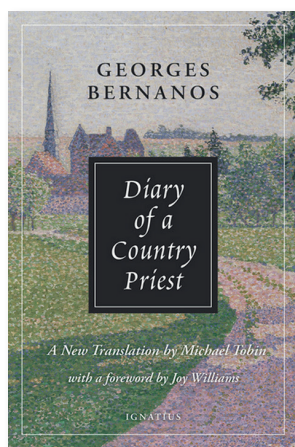
**BOOK REVIEW** by Ted Hirt

## Diary of a Country Priest Confronts Suffering, Doubt and Faith

*The Diary of a Country Priest*, by George Bernanos, Translated by Michael R. Tobin (Ignatius Press, 2025, \$21.95).

In anticipation of preparing my next book review, I reminded myself that I wanted to return to a classic of Catholic literature, *The Diary of a Country Priest* – which I recall reading “decades ago.” First published in France in 1936 (*Journal d’un curé de campagne*), this novel is newly-translated, and apparently much better done than the 1937 translation. George Bernanos (1888-1948) was an author of many novels and a veteran of World War I, and he was awarded the Grand Prix du romain [for literature] by the Académie Française.

*The Diary of a Country Priest* recounts the daily life of a young (not quite 30-years-old) French priest, whose rural parish, like him, is not identi-



fied, but is probably in the Pas-de-Calais area of northern France. The priest maintains a diary, likely written during the 1920s. It recounts his interactions with his parishioners and several fellow priests, one of whom serves essentially as his spiritual director. More importantly, the diary recounts the humble priest’s reflections on his interior life – which is often in turmoil, or self-doubt about his vocation.

The priest suffers from a chronic illness—ultimately diagnosed as a stomach tumor—but he persists in his ministry to a parish that often does not seem very “welcoming.” Some parishioners are rude or indifferent; others gossip or spread false rumors about him! Much of the novel focuses on his complex relationships with members of a local noble

family. I will not disclose that subplot; suffice it to say that the priest struggles to impress upon them the basics of living a harmonious Christian family life.

Throughout the diary, we witness the priest’s valiant efforts, often self-effacing, to care for and counsel his parishioners. Some ultimately share their deepest personal concerns with him, which he also finds humbling. Although not overtly educated, the priest’s entries tell us that he has deeply studied and pondered his faith. His illness forces him to delve into the meaning of Christian suffering. He wishes to give God everything, but he is not always successful – “The best thing is to remain at peace.”

This medium-size novel (288 pages), may be a challenge. The foreword by author Joy Williams cautions that the priest’s account is neither beautiful nor boring – it is “rough, ruthless . . . its comforts not of this world, its message eternally radical.”