

# The Citizen

PENTECOST 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

## 33rd ANNUAL ROSE MASS

### Health Workers Honored

Members of the Society helped honor health workers for following Jesus' example and bringing healing to others at the Rose Mass and luncheon on March 30 at the Church of the Little Flower.



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

Jesuit Father Myles N. Sheehan, a priest and medical doctor gives the homily at the 33rd annual Rose Mass.

The new archbishop of Washington and main celebrant also encouraged participants to seek Christ's healing in their own lives. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy sought God's blessings on medical, dental, nursing and allied health care workers and institutions while thanking them for serving "men,

women and children in their need, to bring them healing in every dimension of their lives."

At the luncheon afterward, Cardinal McElroy said bringing healing to people was central to Jesus's public ministry from the start, noting health professionals' technical skill and the spiritual dimension of their work as they serve patients. "God blesses that work, especially when it is most difficult and trying; God is standing with you, at your side, as you are standing at the side of your patients and their families."

The Rose Mass is named for rose-colored vestments worn on Laetare Sunday, the

*Continued on page 7*

### First American-Born Pope Selected

"Peace be with you," the newly-elected pope told the world. "Beloved brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the Risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who has given His life for the flock of God," he continued. "I, too, would like this greeting of peace to enter your hearts, reach your families, to all people, wherever they may be, to all peoples, to all the earth. ... This is the peace of the Risen Christ, a disarmed peace and a disarming peace, humble and persevering. It comes from God, God who loves us all unconditionally."

Known formerly as Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, Pope Leo XIV is a native of Chicago, a member of the Augustinian order and a canon lawyer who speaks five languages. He selected his name to honor Pope Leo XIII, who led the Church from 1878 until 1903 and is especially known for his 1891 encyclical "Rerum Novarum," or "On the Condition of the Working Classes."

Cardinal Robert McElroy, newly installed Archbishop of Washington was



This screenshot from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington website depicts the moment Pope Leo XIV was introduced as the 267th successor to St. Peter on May 8.

among the 133 cardinals - 11 with ties to the United States - who participated in the conclave May 7-8. According to the *Catholic Standard*, Cardinal McElroy recently held a Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope Leo XIV and described the "awesome responsibility of helping to pick, with God's grace, a shepherd of the Church in every land and nation, for every people."

Cardinal McElroy went on to say that participating in the conclave proved to be "a profoundly deep spiritual experience."

*For additional Member News see page 5.*

### Medals Presented at Dinner



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

John Carroll Society members and guests gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel on May 9 for the 39th Annual Dinner. The dinner included a keynote address, and presentations to four leaders in the community for their witness to the Catholic faith. From left to right: Dr. Eileen Moore, John Carroll Society president; Honoree Marie T. Nolan, dean, Conway School of Nursing at Catholic University; Honoree Beth Reaves, president, Washington School for Girls; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi, society chaplain; Honoree Jim Malloy, president and CEO, Catholic Charities Washington D.C. and keynote speaker; and Gerard E. Mitchell, Esq., partner, Stein Mitchell Beato & Missner, LLP.

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## John Carroll Society

Established 1951 Archdiocese of Washington

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### Executive Director

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### Communication and Outreach Committee

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2025-26

July 16, 2025

### ST. MARIA'S MEALS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Catholic Charities Washington, D.C.,  
4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

September 17, 2025

### RECEPTION AT TOP OF THE TOWN WITH THE YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP

Top of the Town, 1400 N. 14th St.,  
Arlington, Va. from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

October 5, 2025

### 73RD ANNUAL RED MASS

Principal Celebrant and Homilist:  
Cardinal Robert McElroy

The Cathedral of St. Matthew,  
Washington, D.C., at 9:00 a.m.

Brunch to follow.

November 8, 2025

### FALL RETREAT

Mount St. Mary's Seminary,  
Emmitsburg, Md.

December 6, 2025

### ST. NICHOLAS MASS & GIFT DRIVE

The Church of the Little Flower,  
Bethesda, Md. 5:00 p.m. Mass  
Reception and visit with St. Nick  
to follow in Parish Hall.

Please visit the John Carroll Society website, [www.johnccarrollsociety.org](http://www.johnccarrollsociety.org) for updates on these and other upcoming events and service opportunities.

## NEW JCS MEMBERS

As of April 30, 2025

Kelly Anderson  
Manuel Ochoa  
Katherine Payerle  
Michael Velchik  
Sponsor: Elizabeth Meers

Alvaro Anillo  
Karen Anillo  
Sponsor: Andy and Maureen Cook

William Byrne  
Sponsor: Andy Cook

Meredith Schaller  
Christopher Schaller  
Sponsor: Carol Bates

Jonathan Barr  
Nicholas Mowbray  
Karolina Mowbray  
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Joseph Gigliotti  
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Sponsor: Hon. Paul Bauer Eason

Patrick Dever  
Sponsor: Rich Cleary

Arjun Lenin  
Malcolm O'Hagan  
Sponsor: Eileen Moore

Nicholas Petruzzello  
Sponsor: Eric Frank

Trinity Codispot  
Sponsor: Tim Gleeson

Erin Calloway  
Sponsor: Dana Gotfyrd

Judith Best  
Sponsor: Mae Respicio

Michael Sachs  
Rejoined/Former Member

## Retreat Features Lenten Reflections on the Jubilee

This year's JCS Lenten Retreat was held on Saturday, March 8, at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center. After Mass and a continental breakfast, Father Tom Robertson led two meditations on the retreat's theme, "Lenten Hope & The Jubilee Year 2025."

Father Tom drew inspiration for these meditations from Jesus and the Jubilee: The Biblical Roots of the Year of God's Favor by John Bergsma. While many Catholics are familiar with the 2025 Jubilee, in which we are called to be "Pilgrims of Hope," fewer

realize that the idea of the "jubilee" dates back to Ancient Israel and the Book of Leviticus. The Church has routinely celebrated these years of remission since the 14th century, typically every twenty-five years. On occasion, the Church proclaims an "extraordinary" jubilee, like 2016's Jubilee of Mercy. Each jubilee is a respite, an opportunity for pardon and renewal. Catholics are called, too, to recognize the "perpetual jubilee" in Christ's mystical body, the Church. We are hopeful, even as Hope itself has appeared.

For JCS retreatants, reflecting with Father Tom on the Jubilee's gifts — forgiveness, freedom, family and fullness — was a fitting way to begin the pilgrimage of Lent. The retreat concluded, appropriately, with the sacrament of confession.

By Robert Smith



Society members prepare for Lent during a day of prayer and reflection held at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center on March 8.

*Prayer for the Church*

Almighty and ever living God, through the celebrations of Easter and Pentecost, we have become keenly conscious of Your Transformative Love – unleashed from the wood of a tree and an empty tomb.

That Love now reigns at your right side and lives within each and every one of us.

For He has risen as He promised, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA!

We thank you for this year's John Carroll Society events, the opportunities to gather together, to honor others, to serve, and to celebrate the Love of Him who makes love possible.

Who gives love a human face.

With deep gratitude, we give thanks for our beloved Church and those who serve her, those on the periphery of our society, each and every one of us, and the faith we hold so dear.

Help us become more and more - a living and growing, generous and credible family of faith made in Your image.

Loving Father, keep each one of us safe and healthy. Continue to bless our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV; our nation and her leaders; and our families and loved ones.

We pray for all the pope's intentions, and especially for those in the Ukraine and the Middle East and those suffering from violence, poverty and illness.



Sustain us all in an increased generosity and love toward those in need.

In Christ Jesus' name, we praise You as always,

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!!

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

## Welcome Cardinal Robert McElroy

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, new archbishop of Washington greets three altar servers following the Rose Mass on March 30. The Rose Mass, honoring health professionals, marked the first time the archbishop celebrated Mass sponsored by the John Carroll Society.

However it was not the first time the archbishop attended an event sponsored by the Society. According to Msgr. Vaghi, then-Father McElroy gave a presentation to the members of the John Carroll Society over 30 years ago in 1993.

And on March 11, 2025 - a little over two weeks before the Rose Mass - Cardinal McElroy became the eighth archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington.

"We are called to be pilgrims of hope in a wounded world," he said in a homily delivered during the Solemn Mass of Installation. And added, "not ignoring the suffering that abounds, but seeing it as a call to strive even more deeply to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into our lives, and our nation, and our world."

A native of San Francisco, Cardinal McElroy holds bachelor and master's degrees in American history, a doctorate in political science, a master's degree in divinity, a licentiate in sacred theology, and a doctorate in moral theology. He was ordained



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

a priest for the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1980 serving first at St. Cecilia Parish in San Francisco, which was the parish where both of his parents had grown up, attended grammar school, and were later married.

Next then-Father McElroy served as parochial vicar at St. Pius Parish in Redwood City and in 1995, was appointed vicar general of the Archdiocese. The following year, he was made a prelate of honor by St. John Paul II and appointed pastor of St. Gregory Parish in San Mateo, where he served for more than 15 years.

Then-Bishop McElroy was appointed auxiliary bishop of San Francisco by Pope Benedict XVI on July 6, 2010,

and was ordained by Archbishop George Niederauer at St. Mary's Cathedral on Sept. 7, 2010. He became the Archdiocesan Vicar for Parish Life and Development and served in that role until his appointment to be the sixth bishop of San Diego in March 2015.

Pope Francis appointed then-Bishop McElroy to the College of Cardinals on May 29, 2022. He was installed in a Consistory on Aug. 27 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Pope Francis appointed Cardinal McElroy the eighth Archbishop of Washington on January 6, 2025.

## Speaker Describes First Ladies' Unique Historical Impact

It is impossible to look at the arc of American history or the impact of a president without looking at the first ladies," said Anita McBride, co-author of "Remember the First Ladies: The Legacies of America's History-Making Women."

McBride, director of the First Ladies Initiative at American University's School of Public Affairs, delivered keynote remarks at the Society's brunch following the January 5 Epiphany Mass. A society member who served in three U.S. presidential administrations – those of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush – and was chief of staff to First Lady Laura Bush, she spoke 15 years after her first presentation at the same event.

Born in Connecticut, McBride is the daughter of Italian immigrants. She earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Connecticut and studied international relations and languages at American University and the University of Florence in Italy.

She is a founding member of the First Ladies Association for Research and Education and also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Italian American Foundation, the White House Historical Association and the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council. She and her husband, Timothy McBride, frequently attend Mass at the Italian national parish, Holy Rosary Church in Washington, D.C.

McBride co-wrote "Remember the First Ladies: The Legacies of America's History-Making Women" with Diana B. Carlin, professor emerita of communication at Saint Louis University and a retired professor of communication studies at the University of Kansas; and Nancy Kegan Smith, the retired director of the Presidential Materials Division of the National Archives and Records Administration, and the co-editor of "Modern First Ladies: Their Documentary Legacy."

McBride noted despite curiosity surrounding the wives of presidents, there has been very little research about the first ladies and their influence on society. She noted that since the country's founding "there has been no formalized description of the duties of the first lady. There is no one way to be a first lady. The influential role is written by each individual first lady."

Every first lady "gets to define it as they want," she added. "The position is rewritten by each occupant, and these women have overall been mirrors of their time."

She said that the nation's first three presidents' wives – Martha Washington, Abigail Adams and Dolley Madison – were "intelligent and savvy women ... who taught us how to operate in a



Author and Society member Anita McBride speaks at the January Brunch held on Jan. 5 for the Feast of the Epiphany.

new society." Martha Washington used her own money to keep troops fed and clothed and Abigail Adams was "profoundly devoted to the new nation and an ardent supporter of human rights."

The title of the book comes from part of a letter Abigail wrote to her husband. While John Adams was attending the 1776 Continental Congress, Abigail wrote to her husband to "remember the ladies" and include women's rights in the laws of the new nation.

Dolley Madison "included her husband's critics and supporters in all her social events and had a political acumen,"

McBride said. "She was the first to be called 'The First Lady of the Land.' The term was used at her funeral."

The book features a biographical and thematic approach to the first ladies, their contributions to their husbands' tenures as president and their larger influence on society. Every first lady from Martha Washington to Dr. Jill Biden is included.

Other vignettes McBride shared included, Caroline Harrison, wife of Benjamin Harrison who was asked to use her influence to raise money for Johns Hopkins University's medical school and agreed to do so only if it would admit women students.

Florence Harding was a proponent of women's suffrage and was the first first lady to vote in a presidential election. Eleanor Roosevelt was a trailblazer who refused a Secret Service detail, drove her own car and was the first first lady to hold a press conference. "She was ultimately recognized as the president's eyes, ears and legs," McBride said.

Prior to the brunch, Father Mark Ivany, director of priest vocations for the archdiocese celebrated Mass for John Carroll Society members at St. Patrick Church in Northwest Washington, D.C., to mark the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Father Ivany said that the Magi saw in the star they followed "something more important than themselves... they knew this was in a sense the whole point of their existence... they saw God."

Father Ivany urged the faithful to be inspired by the three kings, "and ask the great question – what am I seeking? – and then learn the lesson to seek the greatest thing."

"Recognize the signs all around us that we can have the great joy of falling down on our knees and adore the Lord," he said.

By Richard Szczepanowski and excerpted with permission of the Catholic Standard.



Participants – including new members of the Society – gather for a photo at the annual January Brunch.

## MEMBER NEWS



■ After eight years of service in the archdiocese **Sister Romana Uzodimma**, program manager for the Catholic Charities Health Network, is moving. A member of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, Sister Romana has been reassigned to Texas by her religious order. Thanking the support of the Society, Sister Romana promises to remain a member for life. "I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to have served alongside the committed professionals who constantly put their faith into action through their selfless services to the underserved of our communities." In a letter to the board, Sister Romana described the Society's members' unwavering commitment to the Catholic faith and the option for the poor as inspirational – adding that her ministry here "deepened my own faith in the profound love that God has for each of us." She concluded her note praying, "May the love of God be with each of you and may the John Carroll Society continue to grow in faith, hope, love, and service to God's people."



■ Catholic Charities honored seven volunteers for their extraordinary commitment and contribution at the annual Caritas! reception on April 10. **Dr. Melanie Buttross**, a former member and chair of the Rose Mass received the Monsignor Geno Baroni Award for Advocacy in recognition of her career-long dedication to pro bono service through the Catholic Charities Healthcare Network. This award recognizes an individual who has been a strong advocate for vulnerable and oppressed populations through their activities in the Archdiocesan community over a long period of time.

■ **Kathy Kelly** accepted a new position as a File Clerk for OCT Consulting at the U.S. Coast Guard in Anacostia.

■ President Donald Trump nominated **Edward O'Connell** for the position of Associate Judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

■ **Tim Gleeson**, treasurer, announces his son, Ryan Gleeson's upcoming graduation from St. John's College High School. Ryan Gleeson will be attending Purdue University this Fall.

## POPE FRANCIS

December 17, 1936 - April 21, 2025



*Photo of his 2015 visit to Washington by Christopher Newkumet*

## DECEASED MEMBERS

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

**Margaret Florenzo**

**Robert Hellmuth**

**Larry Pilot**

**Sylvia Mitchell**

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Vaghi the Inimitable

If you've ever attended a John Carroll event, chances are you've met the inimitable Monsignor Peter Vaghi, the Society's long-time chaplain. Indeed, for many of us, Monsignor's persuasive *je ne sais quoi* sparked our own participation.

But nearly 40 years ago, Monsignor found himself on the receiving end as he entered the office of one James Aloysius Hickey, not yet a cardinal but already the Archbishop of Washington. It had been Hickey who guided Monsignor's vocation as he made the plunge from legal practice into holy orders.

At the time, the young Vaghi, ordained 40 years ago this June, didn't know what to expect. "Cardinal Hickey called me over on a Sunday evening. I thought I'd done something wrong," he recalls. But Hickey had something else in mind: "I'd like you to be chaplain of the John Carroll Society." The trouble was, Vaghi didn't know a thing about it. "All the more reason for you to be chaplain," Hickey reportedly replied.

As Monsignor tells it, the John Carroll Society, by that time more than thirty years old, had become an "old man's club." It was an "aging group" in need of a "spark of new energy." Hickey



*Photo by Christopher Newkumet*

Cardinal Robert McElroy at left exchanges the Sign of Peace with Msgr. Peter Vaghi, Society chaplain during the annual Rose Mass for health workers held on March 30 at the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda. In March, Cardinal McElroy became the eighth archbishop of Washington to be served by the John Carroll Society. Cardinal James Hickey, the fourth archbishop of Washington asked Msgr. Vaghi to serve as the Society's chaplain shortly after Msgr. Vaghi's ordination 40 years ago.

recruited Vaghi, then associate pastor at Saint Ann's, in part because he had practiced law. From the beginning, Monsignor recalls, "It was intentional that it should be lawyers, medical professionals, professional businessmen and women."

The first task at hand was the imminent Red Mass. Hickey asked Vaghi who should give the Red Mass homily—"I can't ask a brother bishop within one month of giving it!" So, Vaghi says, he wrote a draft of the homily and Hickey delivered it.

Vaghi went to Rome the following year. When he returned, in 1988, he was assigned to Saint Patrick's and officially became JCS chaplain (having, until then, served as associate chaplain). "Most of my ministry in those days was downtown," says Monsignor. To recruit for JCS, "I would go to law offices, have lunch with people." The Society's First Friday talks at Saint Patrick's attracted many. At the time, Vaghi boasts, JCS was the "only game in town."

After moving to Little Flower, Vaghi continued to maintain his professional ties. "I kept my foot in both circles, with the help of a lot of others." At Little Flower, First Friday talks became First Thursday talks. The Society flourished with the Red Mass, and then the Rose Mass, at its core.

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## Society Members Gather For Annual Awards Dinner; John Carroll Society Medals Presented

About 220 members and their guests attend the Society's annual dinner held on Friday, May 9 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington D.C.

Honoree Jim Malloy, president and CEO of Catholic Charities Washington D.C. presented the keynote address at the celebration. Later the Society presented the John Carroll Medal to Malloy, Gerard E. Mitchell, Marie T. Nolan and Beth Reaves.

**Gerard E. Mitchell** is one of the most respected and honored trial lawyers in Washington, D.C. He is one of the founders of the leading trial law firm of Stein, Mitchell, Beato & Missner LLP, a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the former President of the Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. and a repeated recipient of recognition in SuperLawyers and Best Lawyers in America.

Mitchell has served as a member of the governing boards of The Catholic University of America and The Heights School. He also serves as the President of the Youth Leadership Foundation, an organization that offers character and academic training for inner-city youth.

A native Washingtonian, Mitchell graduated from Gonzaga College High School, followed by Georgetown University and the University of Virginia School of Law, where he was Notes and Decisions Editor of the Virginia Law Review. He and his wife, Germana, are parents of nine children and are parishioners of Holy Cross Parish in Garrett Park.

**Marie T. Nolan** is Dean and Ordinary Professor in The Conway School of Nursing at The Catholic University of America. Prior to her appointment in 2022 as Dean, she served as Executive Vice Dean of Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and Core Faculty Member of the Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins University.

A parishioner at St. Joseph's Church in Beltsville, Nolan spoke to the Society at its January 2024 brunch. She holds degrees across multiple disciplines, all with a focus on nursing and healthcare: a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Niagara University; a Master of Science in Nursing from Boston College; a Master of Public Health from George Washington University; a Master of Science in Education from Johns Hopkins University; and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from the Catholic University of America.

Her research and scholarship are equally extensive, with her work grounded in the dignity of the human person as the foundation of a moral vision for nursing and healthcare.

**Beth Reaves** was appointed President of the Washington School for Girls in 2017, having previously worked as a school leader and administrator in the Philadelphia area. Prior to working in education, Reaves spent a decade working in corporate marketing for a Fortune 50 company. As a graduate of an all-girls high school, Reaves has a strong commitment to the education of girls. She strongly supports an education that allows every girl an opportunity to thrive and flourish.



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

Honoree Jim Malloy, president and CEO of Catholic Charities Washington D.C. presented the keynote address

Reaves holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Accounting from Drexel University, an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a Doctorate in Business from the University of Phoenix. She is a Klingenstein Fellow in the Heads of Schools Program at the Teachers' College, Columbia University, and on the boards of trustees of the Association of Independent Schools Greater Washington, the NativityMiguel Coalition and the D.C. Public Library Foundation.

**Jim Malloy** is the 14th president and chief executive officer of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Malloy grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland, and is a graduate of St. John's College High School of Washington. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and went on to earn three advanced degrees, including a Master of Health Sciences in Emergency and Disaster Management from Touro University of California.

Malloy served 36 years as a naval officer at home, at sea, and abroad, commanding two ships and a squadron, and culminating in the command of the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Manama, Bahrain. His final position prior to retirement in 2022 was as deputy commander of U.S. Central Command.

Throughout his naval career, Jim was a Catholic lay leader aboard the ships on which he served. As a past member of the board of directors of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets Corps, he was a mentor to students in the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps. He has also been a volunteer with Helping Hands for Veterans in Tampa. Malloy and his wife, Kimberly Ann, have three adult sons and are members of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Parish near Ellicott City, Maryland.

In addition to the awards, the Annual Dinner serves as the primary source of funding for the Agnes E. and Joseph P. Vaghi/John Carroll Society Scholarship, inaugurated by the Society in 2004. This scholarship provides a \$4,000 annual award towards high school tuition for five students at Archbishop Carroll High School each year. The 2024-2025 recipients were: Monique Clark (Class of 2025); Hayden Hernly (Class of 2026) Andy Garcia (Class of 2027); Roy Castleberry (Class of 2026); and Giancarlo Villanueva-Rodriguez (Class of 2027).

Jahvin Williams, Jr., a student from Bishop McNamara High School received first prize in the Margaret Mary Missar High School Essay Competition. Other students receiving prizes included: Roy Castleberry, Archbishop Carroll High School, second place; Alyssa Bradford, Bishop McNamara High School and Taia Brown, Archbishop Carroll High School, third place; and Rishab Gulati, Georgetown Preparatory School, Carmen Aguila, Academy of the Holy Cross, and Nick Reisinger, St. Mary's Ryken High School, honorable mentions. The complete essays can be found at the John Carroll Society website.

For additional Dinner coverage go to [www.cathstan.org](http://www.cathstan.org).

## Health Workers Honored

*Continued from page 1*

fourth Sunday of Lent, and from the rose a symbol of life whose care is entrusted to the healing professions.

The concelebrants included 13 local priests involved with health care, parish and archdiocesan ministry, and Washington Auxiliary Bishops Roy Campbell Jr. and Juan Esposito. Msgr. Peter Vaghi, longtime chaplain of the Society and pastor emeritus of the Church of the Little Flower, welcomed participants and was greeted with applause by the congregation. Father Mark Smith, the administrator pro-tempore of Little Flower Parish, and several priest chaplains who serve at health care institutions in the archdiocese concelebrated the liturgy.

In his homily, Jesuit Father Myles N. Sheehan – a priest and medical doctor who serves as the director of the Pellegrino Center for Clinical Bioethics at Georgetown University, where he is also a professor of medicine – reflected on the Parable of the Prodigal Son from that day's Gospel reading from Luke 15:1-3, 11-32.

That parable, he said, is a story of being welcomed, and reflects the love and mercy of God the Father. When people make mistakes in their lives, "Jesus wants to bring you home... and to know your hurts and your wounds can be healed and forgiven," like the father in the parable embracing the prodigal son.

Father Sheehan said those in health professions may sometimes need care, and may feel like the elder son, who resented that the father held a banquet for the wayward son. "We work hard. We put up with a lot. We can end up feeling burned out. We can be angry about our profession, and we can be disappointed that we've given up so much."

But the priest added that Jesus, the Divine Physician, has a prescription for all. "What is the medicine Jesus is giving us here?" Father Sheehan asked. "He's offering us the Father's love, whether we really messed up in extraordinary ways, or whether we tried really hard and feel deeply overburdened, turning bitter and questioning our commitments... Today Jesus is offering you the Father's love. He's inviting you to a celebration that will last forever."

At the luncheon, the Society presented 2025 Pro Bono Health Care Awards to four health professionals who volunteer with the Catholic Charities Health Care Network, and to a priest who serves the health care ministry.



Photo by Christopher Newkumet

The 2025 Pro Bono Health Care Honorees from left to right are: Dr. Mark R. Abbruzzese; Joanne Assarsson; Dr. Mariam Mathai; Father Casmir Onyegwara; with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, the archbishop of Washington; Dr. Kevin Collier, an honoree; Dr. Ricardo Perez, a pediatric dentist who served as the committee chair and Dr. Eileen Moore, a specialist in internal medicine and president of the John Carroll Society.

This year's recipients of the Pro Bono Health Care Awards are:

- Joanne Assarsson, who works as a licensed clinical social worker at Georgetown University Hospital's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.
- Dr. Kevin Collier, a gastroenterologist who has volunteered with the Catholic Charities Health Care Network since the early 2000s.
- Dr. Mariam Mathai, an ophthalmologist with a specialization in vitreoretinal surgery at the Retina Group of Washington. She is active in providing care to underserved populations, both in her clinic and through her volunteer work with the Prevention of Blindness Society in Washington.
- Dr. Mark R. Abbruzzese, an infectious disease physician, received the 2025 James Cardinal Hickey Lifetime Service Award. A longtime volunteer with the Catholic Charities Health Care Network, Dr. Abbruzzese has practiced

medicine for nearly 50 years in the Washington area, including at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Sibley Memorial Hospital.

- The Msgr. Harry A. Echle Award for Outstanding Service in Health Care Ministry, named for a longtime archdiocesan priest known for that outreach, was presented to Father Casmir Onyegwara, who for the past nine years has served as the manager of the Spiritual Care Department for Holy Cross Health, where he manages a team of 10 chaplains serving patients and staff for Holy Cross Hospital at its Silver Spring and Germantown locations.

Father Onyegwara, a priest of the Diocese of Orlu, Nigeria, said his ministry involves bringing hope to patients, helping them know that they are loved, and bringing "the peace that only God can bring. Love is the universal language," he said.

*By Mark Zimmermann and reprinted with permission of the Catholic Standard.*

## Vaghi the Inimitable

*Continued from page 5*

As chaplain of the Society, Monsignor Vaghi has especially enjoyed "walking with people in their faith journeys, hearing their confessions, teaching, supporting, witnessing marriages, celebrating funerals and baptisms. It's become a community within a community." A fun one too. "There isn't a party I go to that I don't have a John Carroll application in my pocket!"

Monsignor also stresses the Society's outsized impact on the life of the

Church in D.C. "The John Carroll Society has been a unique institution serving this country... One society, serving professionals, businessmen and women, in service of the archbishop." His hope is that JCS continues to be a "way the Church becomes revitalized." The goal, Monsignor reminds us, is to help people become "more deeply knowledgeable and committed to their faith." "It's social, but it's spiritual. And I've tried to guide it in that direction. ... It's not just Peter Vaghi. It's the laity we walk with, who encourage others."

*By Robert Smith*



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**BOOK REVIEW** by Ted Hirt

## A Cardinal Reflects on Today's Challenges to the Church

*The Day Is Now Far Spent*, by Robert Cardinal Sarah, in conversation with Nicolas Diat, (Ignatius Press, 2019).

Members may know of Robert Cardinal Sarah. Born in Guinea, West Africa, he was selected as an archbishop by Pope John Paul II in 1979, and a cardinal by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. He was a vigorous opponent of Sékou Touré's Marxist regime in Guinea, which suppressed political and religious liberties during the 1970s and early 1980s.

In *The Day Is Now Far Spent*, Cardinal Sarah reflects on the state of the Roman Catholic Church, from his perspective of a Church leader of the Third World.

In interviews with French journalist Nicolas Diat, this book examines the many challenges to the Church and believers. The "loss of the sense of faith is the deep root of the crisis of civilization that we are facing," Cardinal Sarah says, adding "the loss of the sense of God is at the origin of all crises."

Our Western Civilization is marked by what the Desert Fathers called "the temptation of the noonday devil" when the heat is "most oppressive" – "acedia," a form of depression and

spiritual lethargy. It becomes the rejection of the spiritual life, a "torpor of mind and heart," and a depression "that has captured the heart of Western man." The "disappearance of God" from modern life in turn has resulted in the "banishment of everything that is sacred in human life."

Modern secularism seeks to undermine our nature as God's creatures, the prelate notes. At "the root of the human condition there is the joyful experience that we are not at the origin of our being, that we are not our own creator, that even before we existed we were wanted and loved," Cardinal Sarah reflects. But modern man has lost this "certitude" and becomes "almost incapable of a total commitment," such as marriage or a vocation. The Church must act as the "guardian of human nature," who "seeks to protect the little ones and the weak," urges Cardinal Sarah. The Church exists "to defend vigorously the incomparable dignity of the body."

Cardinal Sarah laments: "Modern man

in the West disdains the past," and society also believes that advances in science and technology support that illusion.

In the final chapters, Cardinal Sarah offers solutions to the faithful. Christianity should be the "light of the world" and keep humanity from plunging into "darkness." We can counteract modernity by rediscovering the value of the interior life. We must cultivate silence, which, although difficult to practice, "makes a human being capable of letting himself be led by God." Cardinal Sarah also emphasizes that we must deploy the Christian virtues in facing the challenges of secularism. Like the early disciples, we are "called to be strong, vigorous, and unshakable in our faith!"

This sizable book (340 pages), replete with quotations from popes, saints, and theologians is a profound reflection on today's Church.

