My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ –

Each day, throughout the world and in this local Church, the People of God step beyond the challenges in their own lives to extend a hand of assistance in service to children, women, and men of all faiths and of all cultures. These contributions to God’s work and the greater good of society come in-person and virtually from many people, and in the form of your financial support. These ways allow us as a community of faith to provide for others with food and shelter, social services, education and spiritual guidance. At the core of it all, we provide HOPE, especially in times when there may seem to be little reason for it.

These past two years of a world confounded by the coronavirus pandemic have brought us additional challenges, along with financial hardships, illness, and heartbreaking loss for many. Yet through it all, you have continued to make it financially possible for The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington to support the tremendous outreach in our ministries, parishes, schools and programs.

This Financial Report offers an overview of the many and varied ways the People of God enable this local Church to do Christ’s work right here in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. It reflects the prudent use of funds, which is regularly subject to independent audits and multi-level reviews. You can see more detailed financial reports at www.adw.org.

As we begin to move out of this long pandemic period, our parishes, community services, and workplaces will continue to evolve and transform. One constant amid these changes is that we will always need each other. The good works of the Church through these ministries will be more essential than ever. Let us continue to hold all in our society in prayer. May God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Wilton Cardinal Gregory,
Archbishop of Washington
Sources of Revenue

Archdiocesan operating revenue for the 2020-21 fiscal year was $37.5 million.

As is typical for The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, the largest source of revenue for the support of programs and ministries continues to be from parish assessments, constituting $11.8 million, or 32% of the $37.5 million in operations revenue in the 2020-21 fiscal year. Assessments fund administration support services, communications, development, religious education and facilities costs. They also help support education, financially needy parishes, schools, organizations and families.

There was a significant increase in investment income, following an upward swing in financial markets a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. Investment income rose from $610,000 in 2019-20 to $19.3 million for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Contributions from the Annual Appeal remained the second-largest source of operating income, 26%, at $9.7 million. Every dollar raised in the Annual Appeal goes to archdiocesan ministries. The Appeal finances a wide range of pastoral and social concern ministries; to support men who are studying to become priests and deacons, and to pay tuition for low-income children at Catholic schools. The Annual Appeal supports pro-life activities in a variety of ways, as well financing ethnic and young adult ministries, and chaplaincies in hospitals and prisons.

Gifts and grants totaling more than $53.0 million were comprised of current year bequests and other one-time gifts to the archdiocese, including some restricted for specific purposes. Fees and other income of more than $8.1 million were collected primarily for services provided to others, such as administering insurance billing and claims, investing and monitoring, the lay and priest retirement and other investment funds, and fees for programs held throughout the archdiocese.

Rental income of nearly $2.6 million includes rent from affiliated service providers such as Catholic Charities and St. Ann’s Center for Children, Youth and Families that pay rent on archdiocesan buildings. The archdiocese then makes equal contributions to these corporations, so there is an offsetting expense in Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns. The balance excludes $1.1 million of non-cash rental income.

In addition to the revenue and expense, the archdiocese has insurance services revenue of $50.6 million and expenses of nearly $47.8 million, primarily representing a pass-through of amounts received from parishes and agencies and paid out in claims and benefits.

Central Pastoral Administration Operating Revenue | Year ended June 30, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Revenue:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Appeal</td>
<td>$ 9,733,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>$11,828,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and grants</td>
<td>$ 5,289,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and other income</td>
<td>$ 8,072,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental income</td>
<td>$ 2,559,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue from operations</strong></td>
<td><strong>$37,481,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Operating Revenue:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>$19,346,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$56,827,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

WHO WE ARE
2020-2021 fiscal year

- More than 667,000 Catholics
- 139 parishes and 9 missions and communities
- 90 schools, including 59 elementary schools and 2 archdiocesan high schools
- 25,557 students in Catholic schools
- 14,366 students in religious education
- 331 priests, including 262 active and 69 retired archdiocesan priests
- 66 seminarians
- 166 permanent deacons serving in active ministry within the archdiocese, and 31 permanent deacons serving outside of the archdiocese
- 391 religious women and 674 religious men serving in the archdiocese
The first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic brought continuing adaptations for Catholic parishes, schools, agencies and traditions. With classes, liturgies and meetings taking place online and people wearing face masks and adopting other safety measures like social distancing, the work of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington continued and even thrived, thanks to creative and determined efforts of the faithful at all levels of the local Church.

Amid a turbulent summer of anti-racism protests around the country, then-Archbishop Wilton Gregory launched an anti-racism initiative, Made in God’s Image. It continues to offer pastoral activities as well as resources for prayer and discussion around the topic of racism and Catholic teaching.

Carroll Media, which includes the archdiocesan newspapers Catholic Standard and the Spanish-language El Pregonero, launched an ongoing series of written and video interviews, “Black Catholic Voices.” The series features archdiocesan laity, women religious and clergy speaking candidly and often poignantly about their experiences as Black Catholics.

In a historic first, just six months after then-Archbishop Gregory observed his first year as leader of the Archdiocese, on November 28, 2020, Pope Francis elevated him to Cardinal, making him the first African American to be so honored. Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Virginia, were the first of three dioceses to be so honored.

The early fall brought a return to Archdiocese-wide in-person learning at Catholic schools. After turning to online education in March 2020, Catholic schools were ahead of their public counterparts in most school districts in resuming full-time in classrooms. Some Catholic schools offered hybrid in-person and online instruction to students, and some continued offering online classes.

The shift to virtual gatherings made it possible to continue many of the usual activities of the Archdiocese, albeit with fewer people in churches and many participants “attending” over a livestreamed video. The Youth Rally and Mass for Life in January, usually held in the Capital One Arena, still attracted the largest possible in-person representation at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, with many more enjoying speakers and musical performers online. Lenten, Easter and Christmas traditions continued, with adaptations such as priests and ministers sprinkling ashes on people’s heads without touching them on Ash Wednesday, and rituals such as the Rite of Election held with a minimum of participants. For example, some Christmas Masses were held outdoors or under tents to provide safer settings.

Parishes and service organizations continued their wholehearted efforts to aid families hard-hit by the pandemic. Catholic Charities food distribution programs and parish and community pantries and kitchens provided staple foods and meals-to-go to thousands of people throughout the year. As vaccines against COVID-19 became more widely available in 2021, parishes around the Archdiocese partnered with government health departments and hospital systems to provide vaccination clinics in trusted environments at church halls.

Other Archdiocesan milestones during the fiscal year included the ordination of one new priest, Father Nicholas Morrison, and seven transitional deacons, as well as the dedication of the Saint John XXIII Residence for retired priests.

### Operating Expenses

The Secretariat for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns expenses included assisting pastors and parish leaders in increasing the parishes’ capacity for evangelization, as well as the formation of laity for active participation in the parish and as witnesses in the world. Through its offices, it gives voice to the truth of the Gospel and promotes the dignity of human life at every stage. The offices of the Secretariat also serve the cultural diversity of the parish through the lens of families, youth, young adults, social concerns, special needs, healing ministry, and ministry to those hospitalized and imprisoned.

The Secretariat for Catholic Education included support for students in Catholic elementary and high schools across the archdiocese as well as the Catholic Schools and Religious Education Offices that provide support to Catholic education for children and adults. A portion of this expense enabled the archdiocese’s Catholic Education Foundation to award $6.3 million in tuition assistance, which is covered in more detail on page 7.

The Secretariat for Ministerial Leadership expenses included the education and training of our seminarians. In the 2019-20 fiscal year, 66 seminarians studied to become priests for the Archdiocese of Washington. The archdiocese owns and operates two seminaries; the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary in Hyattsville and Saint John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. Continuing education and special medical care for priests, the Office of Vocations, the Office of the Diaconate and the Office of Consecrated Life are all part of ministerial leadership.

Archdiocesan administration expenses included the Office of the Archbishop and two auxiliary bishops, the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of Public Policy, the Office of Child Protection, and the Office of General Counsel.

The Secretariat for Communications composed of the Office of Media and Public Relations, Office of Digital Media, and Office of Multimedia Production, exists to tell the story of this local Church through the New Evangelization. By engaging and building relationships with media, managing and creating enriching content and design for online platforms, and sharing the experience of our faith through video, radio, and other multimedia, the office promulgates the beauty and truth of the Gospel throughout the archdiocese and world.

The Catholic Standard and El Pregonero newspapers are also part of the Secretariat but are primarily funded by Carroll Media Company, which is an archdiocesan agency, whose financial results are reported on page 4.

Parish services included the Office of Parish and School Financial Operations and portions of the Office of Facilities Management and the Office of Human Resources.

Gifts and assessments represented required membership assessments from the Holy See and organizations such as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Maryland Catholic Conference, as well as modest gifts the archdiocese made to other Catholic organizations.

General and administrative expenses included the archdiocesan Offices of Finance, Information Technology, and portions of the Office of Facilities Management and the Office of Human Resources.

The Secretariat for Development serves the archdiocese through running the Annual Appeal for the Central Pastoral Administration, parishes, and certain Affiliated Corporations, planned giving, and other financial outreach.
Highly personal stories of faith, joy and pain abound in the Black Catholic Voices series posted online by the Catholic Standard newspaper, part of Carroll Media, The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington’s publishing arm for the Catholic Standard and El Pregonero, its Spanish counterpart. Enduring faith and determination are common threads of the award-winning article and video series (available on the Archdiocese’s YouTube channel) launched in 2020.

As part of cost-saving measures amid the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the two newspapers in September 2020 shifted to monthly print publications, from their previous bi-weekly schedule. To ensure that information about the Archdiocese was readily available between print editions, both publications began publishing many more articles online and linking regularly to video reporting. The Black Catholic Voices series became a regular anchor of this approach.

One of the first Black Catholic Voices participants was Gail Carter, a native of Washington, D.C., who grew up in St. Martin of Tours Parish and is a longtime active member of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in Capitol Heights, Maryland. She told of hurtful incidents of being treated poorly on the basis of race in Catholic settings when she was a child and as an adult. But she also found support and empowerment in her Catholic community. “Watching my grandmother and my mother and my father on their journey of faith has helped me to keep my faith strong. I learned from them, that when things are rough, we’re never alone,” she said in her interview.

The printed and virtual pages of El Pregonero also took on the topic of race in various ways, with reporting on racism directed at Blacks, Hispanics and Asians. The connections between poor health and race, the particularly hard blow COVID-19 dealt to Latinos in the Archdiocese and Church-based efforts to teach about justice for all were regular themes of El Pregonero.

You can find the newspapers online at cathstan.org and elpreg.org.

The following financial summary of corporations affiliated with the Archdiocese of Washington does not replace the annual reports produced by these entities, which have various sources of income and their own structure and governance, but is included to provide an understanding of the impact they have within the context of the archdiocese and its mission.
CATHOLIC CHARITIES

The 52 programs in 34 locations operated by Catholic Charities of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington offered a welcome embrace to more than 235,000 people in the 2020-21 fiscal year. Even with all the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic Charities served 22 percent more people than in the previous year.

With 5.4 million meals, 2.2 million pounds of food offered through pantries, emergency rental assistance, job training and assistance obtaining behavioral health and specialty health care met burgeoning needs.

With affordable housing problems being made worse by the pandemic, Catholic Charities was able to provide 1,500 beds to those experiencing homelessness each night. Shelters were open 24/7 during the pandemic, and special accommodations were made for 400 seniors and individuals with underlying health conditions. Other assistance gave 265 individuals and 110 families access to Permanent Supportive Housing; 220 households were helped in securing rental units. Others found shelter at Angel’s Watch in Southern Maryland.

The agency’s Newcomer Network and Catholic Charities Immigrant and Refugee Services helped recent immigrants with a range of legal, health care, housing, employment, education and other social services. Clients received assistance with mental and physical health issues, had consultations over their legal situations or were connected to pro-bono attorneys. With the help of Catholic Charities, 140 lawful permanent residents became U.S. citizens.

Please see Catholic Charities’ annual report, which is available online at catholiccharitiesdc.org.

ARCHBISHOP CARROLL HIGH SCHOOL

The enthusiastic welcome for the virtual guests at Archbishop Carroll High School outshone the auditorium’s spotlight when Pope Francis appeared from Rome, on a video screen, to launch a Washington headquarters Scholas Occurrentes, a project of the pope’s aimed at developing young adults’ commitment to the common good.

With internet connections to Scholas Occurrentes groups in Spain, Australia and across Latin America, the virtual audience with Pope Francis May 20, 2021, was the latest in a global series of events supporting the worldwide expansion of the educational organization. Participation of Archbishop Carroll students gathered in the school’s auditorium was made in collaboration with the school’s Jim Vance Media Program, founded to give students practical experience with the journalism profession.

The pandemic-limited audience was well represented by students shooting video and interviewing participants.

Other students worked behind the scene, shadowing the archdiocesan media team responsible for lighting, cameras and sound for the program.

One of those students, junior Ijeoma Okere, who had been in the media program for three years, said she was “most excited about hearing input from all over the world. I’ve lived in Maryland all my life, so the chance to hear from other places is exciting.”

To learn more about Archbishop Carroll High School, visit archbishopcarroll.org.

CONSORTIUM OF CATHOLIC ACADEMIES

The schools in the Consortium of Catholic Academies – a coalition of four center-city Catholic elementary schools in the District of Columbia – entered the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic without having lost any days of learning.

Vincent Spadoni, the consortium president, explained in 2021.

The Consortium includes St. Anthony Catholic School, Sacred Heart School, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Academy, and St. Thomas More Catholic Academy.

“It’s been hard, supplying families with the technology and meeting the Wi-Fi needs required for distance learning, and we thank our donors for their support,” Spadoni told the Catholic Standard nearly a year into the pandemic.

More than 800 students were enrolled in the four consortium schools in the 2020-21 school year. Each year, approximately 93% of consortium graduates who apply to Catholic high schools are accepted. “It is not an overreach to say we take care of the whole child. We educate these children. We pray with these children. We feed these children,” Spadoni said.

Founded by Cardinal James Hickey in 1995 and incorporated in 2001, consortium schools banded together to have one central office overseeing the financial and administrative needs of the individual schools, thereby freeing the principals to take a more active role in supporting the staff and students at those schools.

Some consortium students attend their Catholic school thanks to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP). Founded in 2004, the federally funded voucher program provides scholarships to kindergarten through 12th grade students from low-income families, giving them the opportunity to attend the school of their choice.

For more information on the Consortium of Catholic Academies, visit catholicacademies.org.
Priests’ Retirement Benefit Trust and Priests’ Medical and Care Fund

Statements of Activities and Changes in Funded Obligation

For the year ended June 30, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflows</th>
<th>$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second collection and other gifts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental income</td>
<td>32,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Inflows</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,163,000</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outflows:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retirement benefits paid</td>
<td>1,434,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical and care benefits paid</td>
<td>1,075,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and other fees</td>
<td>668,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Outflows</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,177,000</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in unfunded liability</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in cash position</td>
<td>1,986,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actuarial changes –increase (decrease)</td>
<td>14,401,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in unfunded liability</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,387,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfunded liability as of July 1, 2020: $(35,667,000)

Unfunded liability as of June 30, 2021: $(19,280,000)

Archdiocesan Retirement Savings Plan

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington often continue working in the Church as volunteers. In the case of Harold Thomas Jr. and his father, the late Harold Thomas Sr., the affinity for keeping a hand in “the business” is a family tradition.

The elder Thomas died in December 2020, two months shy of his 82nd birthday, leaving a legacy of family education leadership at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Academy in Washington. He had served as principal of the school for several years, a second career after retiring from federal and local government service.

When the younger Harold Thomas followed in his father’s footsteps by going into Catholic education and became principal of St. Francis Xavier Academy, his father became a regular volunteer. Even after retiring (again) from volunteering, the senior Thomas would return to the school because “my father was very into music and the arts. He loved to come and sit in the music classes and attend (school) shows,” said his proud and grateful son.

Since taking effect in 2013, the Archdiocesan Retirement Savings Plan has met the long-term retirement needs of its employees. Under this tax-deferred 403(b) plan, the archdiocese matches half of an eligible employee’s contribution up to 4% of pay.
Dealing with the 2020-21 school year, the Catholic Education Foundation of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington awarded $5.6 million in tuition assistance awards to more than 5,900 students. The amounts given to help families send their children to Catholic schools has been substantial each year since 2008, when $800,000 was available for tuition assistance. The goal of this Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance Program is to provide assistance to families seeking a faith-filled, academically excellent education for children in our Catholic schools. In addition to the Annual Appeal and other gifts as funding sources, a percentage of the offertory collection in parishes goes toward tuition assistance at local Catholic schools. Other endowments and scholarships further aid students.

**BLACK STUDENT FUND**
This fund provides financial assistance and support to Washington, D.C. metropolitan area African-American students, grades pre-K to 12th grade, and their families.

**LATINO STUDENT FUND**
Founded in 1994 to address disparities in access to education for Hispanic students in the city, this fund has provided year-round, out-of-school programs for more than 4,000 low-income, at-risk students and youth.

**HORATIO ALGER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS**
This need-based college scholarship funds deserving young people in pursuit of higher education. In 2021, more than $18.0 million was awarded to 2,500 scholars nationwide.

**DC OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (OSP)**
The archdiocese encourages and utilizes the public DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, which provides assistance for children from low-income families in Washington to attend private schools in the city. In the 2020-2021 school year, 1,183 DC OSP students in our Catholic schools received some of the $12,280,478 total scholarships funds available.

**BROADENING OPTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TODAY (BOOST)**
BOOST provides scholarships to children from low-income Maryland families to attend a Maryland private school. In 2020-2021, there were 506 students in archdiocesan schools who received a portion of the $1,169,756 total scholarship funds available.

**FITZGERALD PROGRAM**
This scholarship, designated for 9th-12th grade students who demonstrate leadership qualities, the Catholic Church and Catholic schools wish to foster, is awarded annually to students based on their leadership commitment in their high school, community and/or parish.

**FORWARD IN FAITH, INC.**
Forward in Faith, Inc. was created in 2004 to raise money, mostly in the form of permanent endowments, for ongoing support of Catholic education, formation of seminarians, needy parishes and schools, campus ministries, women religious housing and Catholic Charities. For the year ended June 30, 2021, approximately $3.8 million was distributed. Audited financial statements for Forward in Faith, Inc. are available online at: www.adw.org/about-us/who-we-are/financial-reports/

**Source of Funds for Tuition Assistance Awards for the 2010-21 fiscal year**
- Appeal and other major gifts $2,313,000
- Parish contributions 2,200,000
- Forward in Faith 1,337,000
- Income from endowments and quasi-endowments 413,000
- Total Sources of Funds $6,263,000

**Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Awardees</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>% of Need Met</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>8,683</td>
<td>5,193</td>
<td>$45,754,000</td>
<td>$6,200,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>9,203</td>
<td>5,983</td>
<td>$50,221,000</td>
<td>$6,200,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>9,614</td>
<td>6,225</td>
<td>$51,035,000</td>
<td>$6,200,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>9,793</td>
<td>6,392</td>
<td>$52,114,000</td>
<td>$6,100,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>9,643</td>
<td>6,621</td>
<td>$54,064,000</td>
<td>$6,000,000</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>9,514</td>
<td>6,359</td>
<td>$50,695,000</td>
<td>$5,955,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR PARISHES

With food pantries, online worship and education, vaccine clinics and all manner of services, parishes in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington wholeheartedly fulfilled their role as the essential base of Catholic life through the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Parishes juggled how to keep parishioners safe as they carried out all the usual functions of faith, community and education.

Major anniversaries marked during 2020-2021 included the 100th birthdays of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Gaithersburg and the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington. For both parishes, the pandemic forced changes in timing for events marking the anniversaries, of St. Martin’s in 2020 and Sacred Heart in 2021. Speaking at St. Martin’s delayed closing celebration dinner, Father David Wells, St. Martin’s pastor, said, “Rather than this being a centennial year bust, the pandemic brought out the best in our parish. We put off celebrating for a year, because we were called on to respond in time of crisis.”

From Southern Maryland to the western edges of Montgomery County that attitude was reflected in parishes doing the everyday work of parishes on top of extra tasks because of the pandemic. At a March 2021 food distribution in Clinton, Maryland, volunteers from parishes filled cars and trucks with donated food to hand out to people across the region. It was a scene repeated around the Archdiocese, month by month, as parish volunteers helped feed thousands of families and individuals. Also in March, events around the Archdiocese celebrated the Year of St. Joseph, proclaimed by Pope Francis as an opportunity for Catholics to model their lives on the example of the foster father of Jesus. And within a few weeks, Holy Week, Easter and all the celebrations of the season – First Communions, Confirmations and graduations – were in full swing.

The community of St. Francis of Assisi Deaf Catholic Church in Landover Hills welcomed a new chaplain, Father Min Seo Park, one of fewer than two dozen Deaf Catholic priests in the world. Father Park, who is from Korea, also serves as chaplain at Gallaudet University and ministers to the Deaf Catholic community throughout the Archdiocese.

OUR SCHOOLS

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese led the way in reopening to in-person classroom education when the 2020-21 term opened in August 2020. Over the course of a few days in March 2020, Catholic schools had shifted to all remote learning, scrambling to ensure every household had necessary computer technology. By August, the Catholic Schools Office staff worked with administrators at schools to prepare for reopening after the summer break, adapting as necessary for each school. Some began with virtual learning, others returned to classrooms modified with safety measures, still others offered a combination of in-person and distance classes.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory addressed teachers over a video as they returned. “As we move to reopen schools for the new school year in a variety of models, we will take a careful step toward normalcy in our daily lives. This will be a long journey – one that will rely on our perseverance and our commitment to the new health and safety guidelines that will govern how schools operate.”

Our Lady, Star of the Sea School in Solomons, Maryland, epitomized the range of changes that allowed a return to the classroom. In addition to spacing desks, requiring masks and other health-focused policies, it had an outside patio set up as a classroom, a large tent providing another outside classroom, and with middle school students sitting on blankets for classes on the lawn overlooking the water.

Of course, the return to classrooms also brought many more typical Catholic school highlights. Our Lady of Mercy School in Potomac, Maryland, and St. Peter’s Catholic School in Olney, Maryland, were recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2020. The two were among only 10 Maryland schools – four of which are non-public – to be designated as Blue Ribbon Schools in 2020. Our Lady of Mercy had been designated twice before and St. Peter’s was so honored once previously.