



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Richmond

September 27, 2018
Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious, and Lay Leaders,

“Shine like stars in the world, as you hold fast to the word of life” (Philippians 2:15–16). When we look at stars, we are actually looking back in time, to the moment when light from those celestial bodies began traveling to our present location. Stars also provide guidance for navigation. In the same way, the commemoration of the bicentennial of the Diocese of Richmond in 2020 will provide a look back in time and will chart our course for the future.

The text from the Letter to the Philippians, which is the bicentennial motto, illuminates the two vital forces at work in each local Church: communion and mission. Communion refers to the bonds of fellowship that unite members of the Church to God and to one another. Mission designates the purpose of the Church, which is to proclaim the Good News of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ to all people. Communion keeps the Church intact; mission enables the Church to grow.

The commemorative year will run from January 19, 2020 to January 19, 2021. (The Diocese of Richmond was erected on July 11, 1820; the first bishop of the diocese, the Right Reverend Patrick Kelly, set foot on Virginia soil on January 19, 1821.)

Dynamic events and activities are being planned for the bicentennial: special, diocesan-wide Masses; pilgrimages to historic churches; service opportunities; education in multi-media formats; competitions to design a logo and compose a hymn; and the publication of a commemorative book. The centerpiece will be a Eucharistic Congress held at the Richmond Convention Center from Friday, November 6 to Saturday, November 7, 2020.

The Bicentennial Task Force will provide more information in the coming months. In the meantime, please save the dates in your parish, school, and personal calendars for the major events listed in the attachment. The bicentennial prayer is also included in the attachment.

Looking forward to the great anniversary of our local Church of Richmond, I invoke Mary, Star of the Sea, and Saint Vincent de Paul, the patron of our diocese, to help us carry out the bicentennial endeavor with vigor, generosity, and joy.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond

**BICENTENNIAL PRAYER
OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND (1820–2020)**

Father of lights,
the radiance of your Son has guided the advance of the Gospel
across the Diocese of Richmond for two centuries,
strengthening our Church
from the waters of the Eastern Shore to the mountains of the Blue Ridge.

Grant that the nearness of your Son may dispel the darkness of our sins,
so that as our love increases more and more,
we may dare more than ever to proclaim the word fearlessly.
Holding fast to the word of life,
may we shine like stars in the world.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

**Diocese of Richmond
Bicentennial Events
2019 – 2021**

Date	Event	Location
Saturday, October 12, 2019	Diocesan Pilgrimage led by Bishop Knestout	Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC
Saturday, January 18 to Sunday, January 19, 2020	Diocesan-wide Masses to commemorate Bishop Patrick Kelly's arrival to Virginia and the Opening of the Bicentennial Year	All parishes
Sunday, January 19, 2020	Mass celebrated by Bishop Knestout in recognition of the Catholic presence in the Eastern Vicariate	Basilica of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Norfolk
Saturday, May 16, 2020 (tentative)	Diocesan Pilgrimage led by Bishop Knestout	Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore
Saturday, July 11, 2020	Vigil Mass celebrated by Bishop Knestout to commemorate the erection of the diocese (July 11, 1820), and in recognition of the Catholic presence in the Central Vicariate	Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond
Saturday, July 11 to Sunday, July 12, 2020	Diocesan-wide Masses to commemorate the erection of the Diocese	All parishes
Sunday, September 27 to Saturday, October 3, 2020	Diocesan Octave of Service	All parishes
Saturday, September 26 to Sunday, September 27, 2020	Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul (diocesan patron)	All parishes
Sunday, September 27, 2020	Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul (diocesan patron) celebrated by Bishop Knestout in recognition of the Catholic presence in the Western Vicariate	Saint Andrew, Roanoke
Friday, November 6 to Saturday, November 7, 2020	Eucharistic Congress	Greater Richmond Convention Center
Saturday, November 7 to Sunday, November 8, 2020	Diocesan-wide Masses to commemorate the conclusion of the Eucharistic Congress	All parishes
Saturday, January 16 to Sunday, January 17, 2021	Closing of the Bicentennial Year	All parishes