

1/20/2024

Based on the feedback to last week's message, I am seriously considering letting all messages come from Moose going forward. He wanted to let you know that he is humbled by your responses to his cuteness.

That said, I feel like there are some pet labor laws that require me to give him a break, so you are stuck with me this week.

I have written often about how big our Diocese is (33,000 square miles) and how many parishes and missions we have (146.) Add in 30 Catholic schools and a couple dozen Catholic Campus Ministries, and there's a lot of ground to cover to see it all.

Although I am coming up on 14 years in my role at the Diocese, I still haven't made it to every parish. I have been to churches large and small – from my recent visits to Jonesville and Gate City, to more frequent stops at St. Bede in Williamsburg or St. Joseph in Petersburg.

Last week I had a wonderful time visiting St. Stephen the Martyr in Chesapeake – for the first time – as part of the kick-off to the 2024 Annual Diocesan Appeal. This is a large parish and a relatively new one, founded in 1997. Parishioners have clearly been very busy since then, attracting a congregation, building a church, and continuing to expand the facilities to meet the growing needs. In fact, driving up to the church, the progress is visible, with construction currently underway. Although I am not from the area, I understand the region around St. Stephen is developing at a rapid clip. It is impressive and indeed important that this parish is keeping pace.

Of course, the best thing about any parish is its people. Those of us visiting from the Diocese, including Bishop Knestout, were warmly welcomed by Fr. Charles Ssebalamu, Deacon Adrian Marchi, the staff, and parishioners. We were joined by members of neighboring parishes as well (equally as friendly and welcoming!), as we took the opportunity to talk about how the Appeal benefits both parishes and ministries of the Diocese.

I will be talking more about the Appeal in the coming weeks. In fact, I am pretty sure Moose wants to talk about it, too – so stay tuned!

God Bless,  
Margaret

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