

In addition to playing the trumpet, Tuszynski's musical background includes singing in the Dudley Birder Chorale and cantoring at Holy Cross Church. "I've cantored at the diocese and sung in the diocesan choir," he said.

As a manager of financial advisers for Thrivent financial services in Appleton, Wisconsin, Tuszynski has been working from home during the pandemic. He's not sure when he will return to his office or how that will change his trumpeting schedule. However, he does plan to continue the practice as long as possible.

"I plan to keep playing at least until Nov. 9," the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, he said. "But I may continue after that."

He also intends to join other trumpeters around the country for the second "Taps Across America" on Memorial Day, May 31.

"I think it's somewhere around 960," he said in estimating the number of times he's played "Taps" in the last year. "So by Memorial Day of this year, it will be over 1,000 times playing."

*(Lucero is editor of The Compass, newspaper of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin.)*

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## **St. John the Evangelist Parish in Clinton welcomes 30 churches for distribution of relief supplies for poor**

MAY 29, 2021 [FAITH](#) BY [MARK ZIMMERMANN](#)

Representatives of about 30 local churches gather supplies for the poor during an April 29 distribution outside St. John the Evangelist Church in Clinton, Maryland. The Food for the Poor relief organization provided about 15 tons of supplies that morning. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Just as St. John the Evangelist was at the foot of the cross of Jesus, a Catholic parish named for that saint in Clinton, Maryland, recently served as a hub for a large-scale distribution of items for people in that region who have experienced the cross of hunger and poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff members and volunteers from about 30 Catholic and other Christian congregations from southern Prince George's County and Southern Maryland, along with the Masjid Al-Hikma mosque in Fort Washington, gathered at the parish's parking lot to collect food, drinks, clothing, personal care items and toys for people in need in their communities. About 15.5 tons of the items, worth an estimated \$150,000, were provided by [Food for the Poor](#), an interdenominational Christian relief and development organization.

With the church and a large nearby statue of Jesus on the cross as a backdrop, people loaded up trucks with the items stacked in boxes piled high and spread across the front of the parking lot. The items included bread, soup and other canned goods, juice and soda, tissues, clothes and boxes of shoes, a variety of toys for children, cooking oil, tissues and cleaning supplies.



People collect supplies for the poor on April 29 outside St. John the Evangelist Church in Clinton. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

“Many people are hurting. If we are able to provide any help, that’s wonderful,” said Father Jaime Hernández, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish. He noted that during the coronavirus shutdown, a number of his parishioners who worked in restaurants had lost their jobs.

Father Hernández, who has been pastor there for the past 10 years, said the effort was a way for people to see the Gospel come alive, and he cited *Matthew 25:34-36*, where Jesus describes how God will judge those worthy of entering heaven: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”

The priest added, “We’re providing what Jesus tells us to provide to others.”



Volunteers collect supplies for people in need in southern Prince George's County and Southern Maryland, at the April 29 distribution at St. John the Evangelist Church in Clinton. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

That effort was coordinated by Father Michael Briese, a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington who in February was assigned to a special ministry to the poor in Southern Maryland. Since then, he has organized monthly large-scale distributions of items supplied by Food for the Poor and also donated anonymously by a local businessman, with those items between February and April totaling an estimated 28 tons of supplies worth between \$550,000 and \$575,000. On May 18, another 2.5 tons of food and drinks were distributed to 25 churches and a mosque to give to those in need in their communities.

“This gathering of 30 churches reflects the Lord’s call to feed our neighbors and the strangers in need, to clothe them and care for them,” he said.

Pat Coyle, who has been assisting the priest in his efforts, said, “The need has gotten worse in the last year” during the pandemic. She added, “It’s really been a rough year.”



Father Michael Briese, who has a special ministry serving the poor in Southern Maryland, coordinated the April 29 distribution of supplies provided by Food for the Poor outside St. John the Evangelist Church in Clinton. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Among those collecting items that morning was Father Rodolfo Salinas, the pastor of Most Holy Rosary Parish in Upper Marlboro, which has a food pantry.

“It’s a sign of hope,” the priest said, praising the effort. He noted how it reflected a theme of Pope Francis’s papacy from the beginning. “...Pope Francis reminds us that this is a Church of the poor, and we have these poor people around us, and we should care for them as Jesus did.”

Nearby, another pastor, Father Gary Villanueva from St. Columba in Oxon Hill, was likewise picking up items for his parish’s food pantry.

“This is very helpful to our parish,” he said. “...It (this effort) can really help a lot of needy people in southern Prince George’s County.”



Mary Ann King carries a bag of toys during the April 29 distribution for people in need hosted by her parish, St. John the Evangelist in Clinton. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Mary Ann King, a volunteer from St. John the Evangelist Parish helping out that morning, said, “We’re hoping we can help a lot of people hurting because of the pandemic. It’s heartwarming to see there’s a lot of churches and ministries coming forward in this program to help their own poor, their own people in need.”

She noted that there are a lot of people in the area who are unemployed and fearful of losing their homes.

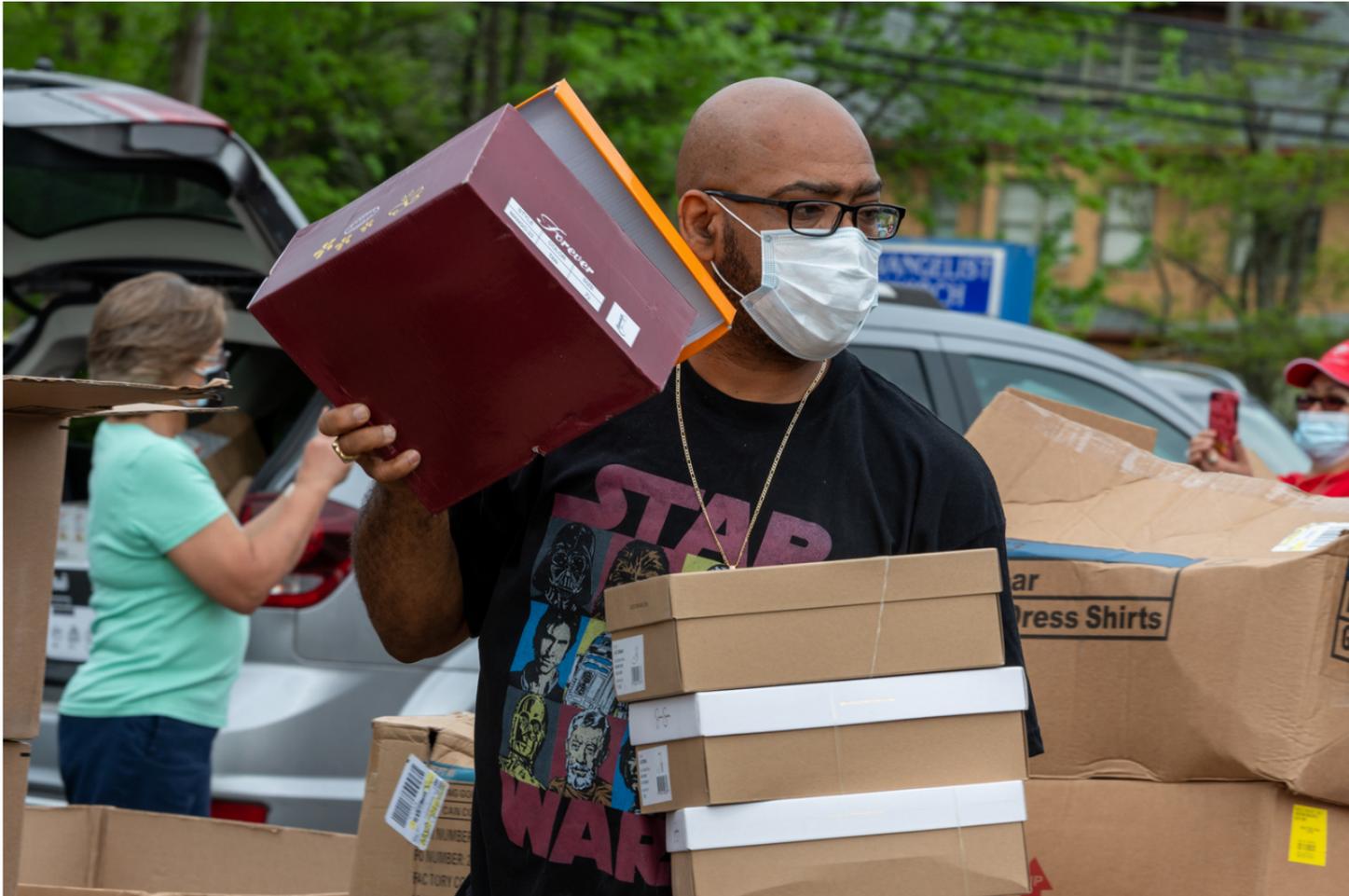
“This is the soul of our faith, to be charitable, to show our love to people,” she said.



Jeff Koscho at right joins fellow members of the Knights of Columbus at the distribution of relief items for the poor held at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Clinton on April 29. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Also pitching in that morning and collecting relief supplies were several members of the Knights of Columbus, including Jeff Koscho, who noted there were Knights there from councils at St. John the Evangelist Parish, and also St. Mary's Parish of Piscataway in Clinton, St. Mary Star of the Sea in Indian Head, St. Columba and Most Holy Rosary.

"It's important to give back to the community," said Koscho, who works for the government and goes to Mass at the Catholic chapel at Joint Base Andrews. Noting how the representatives of different churches were working together to serve the poor, he said, "It shows an ecumenical spirit."



Pastor Calvert Edison collects boxes of shoes at the Food for the Poor distribution outside St. John the Evangelist Church in Clinton on April 29. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Pastor Calvert Edison of Believers of Faith Ministries in Oxon Hill, which he pastors with his wife Rachel, was loading up his Toyota Tundra truck with toys, shampoo, hand sanitizer, shoes and other items.

"It's important because during this pandemic, people are still struggling. To me, it's a blessing to help people. Any time there's a need, the church, the body of Christ, should meet that need," he said, adding, "I believe we do that in coming together, no matter what our denomination is."



Joyce McIntee, at right, loads up a van with items for the poor, joined by her friend Ronda Logan. The effort outside St. John the Evangelist Church on April 29 drew participants from about 30 local churches. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

Joyce McIntee of According to the Word Church in La Plata was also gathering items for the poor that morning, helped by her friend Ronda Logan.

“We have 25 families in need. We get whatever we can for them,” McIntee said. Reflecting on her church’s outreach to those in need, she said, “We’ve got to show them that we love them... We don’t just pray for them. We show them we are about God’s word.”



Rev. Eric Dixon packs his Ford-150 truck with boxes of items supplied by Food for the Poor outside St. John the Evangelist Church on April 29. (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

While loading up his Ford-150 truck with relief items for the poor, Rev. Eric Dixon of Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Capitol Heights said, “I love giving back to God’s people and helping God’s people, because we’re supposed to help one another.”

He added, “God has me out here doing this to help his people.”

Rev. Dixon wore a hat displaying the words, “GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME.”

“I wear it every day,” he said.



Joining the church representatives at the April 29 distribution of relief supplies for the poor, Rev. Eric Dixon of Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church wore a hat with a message reflecting his faith, “GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME.” (CS photo/Mihoko Owada)

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