

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## Pope Consecrates Ukraine, Russia to Mary

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

As Russia's violent monthlong invasion continued to devastate Ukraine, Pope Francis laid the fates of both countries at the feet of Mary in the hopes that peace would finally reign.

"Mother of God and our mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine," the pope said March 25, pronouncing the Act of Consecration after leading a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica.

Praying before a statue of Mary that was loaned by the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at San Vittoriano on the outskirts of Rome, the pope pleaded with Mary to "accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end, and peace spread throughout the world."

Sitting in front of the statue, which was placed before the steps of the main altar on a red platform and adorned with white roses, the pope proclaimed the Act of Consecration. During the prayer, the pope paused at several moments to gaze at the statue of Mary before continuing to recite the prayer.

"To you we consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world," he prayed.

After the consecration, the pope, accompanied by a young boy and girl, placed a bouquet of white roses at the feet of the statue. He then remained for a few moments, with eyes closed and head bowed in silent prayer, before stepping away.

According to the Vatican, an estimated 3,500 people filled St. Peter's Basilica, while 2,000 people watched on video screens from St. Peter's Square. Police asked pilgrims who entered St. Peter's Basilica carrying or wearing Ukrainian flags to put them away, since the event was a prayer service.

Among those present at the liturgy were Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See. The consecration, he tweeted March 25, is "another attempt (by the pope) to defend Ukraine from the devil's war," referring to Russia's attacks on the country.

Joe Donnelly, who soon will present his credentials to the pope as the U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, also attended the service.

The Vatican announced March 18 that Pope Francis  
**See "Pope" on Page 2**

CNS Photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis touches a Marian statue before consecrating the world and, in particular, Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary during a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 25.



**Inside:** Bishop Brennan and Clergy Join Pope in Consecration of Ukraine, Russia to Mary, Page 3

Catholic Sharing Appeal is underway, Pages 5-6

# Pope...

**Cont'd from Page 1**

also asked bishops around the world to join him in consecrating Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, led a similar Act of Consecration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

Bishops from around the world had announced special services to coincide with the timing of the consecration in Rome, even in the early hours of the morning.

At the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica in Hagatña, Guam, Archbishop Michael Byrnes led the faithful in praying the rosary before reciting the Act of Consecration at 2 a.m. local time March 26.

Archbishop Georg Gänswein, private secretary of retired Pope Benedict XVI, had told reporters that the former pope would join in the consecration

from his residence.

In a video released before the liturgy, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, major archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, said he would join in the consecration "because today we need very much the victory of good."

The consecration, Archbishop Shevchuk said, "means that it is never possible to make a deal, to cooperate with this evil that emerges from Russia today."

"And that is why we must pray for its conversion, for the eradication of that evil, 'so that it,' as the Mother of God of Fatima said, 'might not destroy other states, might not cause yet another world war.' We, as Christians, have a duty to pray for our enemies," he said.

In Rome, the bells of St. Peter's Basilica rang out after Pope Francis concluded the Act of Consecration.

In his homily during the Lenten penance service, the

pope acknowledged that the war in Ukraine, which "has overtaken so many people and caused suffering to all, has made each of us fearful and anxious."

While calls to "not be afraid" may soothe one's helplessness in the face of war, violence and uncertainty, the pope said that "human reassurance is not enough."

"We need the closeness of God and the certainty of his forgiveness, and once renewed by it, Christians can also turn to Mary and present their needs and the needs of the world," he said.

Pope Francis said the Act of Consecration was "no magic formula but a spiritual act" of trust by "children who, amid the tribulation of this cruel and senseless war that threatens our world, turn to their mother, reposing all their fears and pain in her heart and abandoning themselves to her."

"It means placing in that pure and undefiled heart, where God is mirrored, the inestimable goods of fraternity and peace, all that we have and are, so that she, the mother whom the Lord has given us, may protect us and watch over us," the pope said.

In his prayer, Pope Francis specifically asked Mary to be with those suffering directly because of the war.

"May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs," he prayed to Mary. "May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your sorrowful heart move us to compassion and inspire us to open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside."

**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

**To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

**To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, please go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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## Bishop Brennan, Clergy Join Pope Francis in Consecration of Ukraine and Russia to Mary

Colleen Rowan Photo

Joining Pope Francis and bishops and priests around the world in the consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary March 25, Bishop Mark Brennan prays the Act of Consecration at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. Praying with him, from left, are Father Jason Charron, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church in South Wheeling; and clergy serving in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston—Deacon Doug Breiding; Father Jude Perera, TOR; Father Arul Anthony; and Father Sateesh Narisetti, HGN. Not pictured is Deacon Paul Lim who was also present.

### By Colleen Rowan

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, March 25, bishops and priests around the world joined Pope Francis in the consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Here at home, Bishop Mark E. Brennan prayed the Act of Consecration in a packed Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling during the noon Mass as priests of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston prayed in their parish churches.

The Mass and consecration at the cathedral were livestreamed on the diocese's website and Facebook page for those unable to be present. Following the blessing at the end of Mass, the bishop and clergy processed to the side altar of Our Lady for the Act of Consecration, while the congregation sang "Immaculate Mary."

Joining the bishop and other priests at the cathedral was Father Jason Charron, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church in South Wheeling. In addressing the congregation, Father Charron noted that throughout the history of the church nations of the world have consecrated themselves not just to Christ but to the mother of Christ, Mary most holy. Even Protestant England, he said, was known throughout the centuries as "Mary's Dowry" and down through Europe each nation has had at varying times dedications and consecrations to the most holy Mother of God—Uk-

raine in the year 1037.

"But what's interesting is that from what we can discover and read is that Russia was never specifically set aside and consecrated to the Mother of God," Father Charron said. "And if members are not covered by armor, they become susceptible to the enemy's arrows, and such is what befell us in the 20th century that one of our members was not consecrated by the armor of the holy name of Mary. And so, at the 11th hour, the mercy of God draws us near that we may have recourse to the name of Jesus through the intercession of his most holy mother in her Immaculate Heart that we may consecrate this long-standing member of the Christian household, the nation of Russia, that she may now be guarded from any influence of evil and consecrated to the name and in fact the very heart of Mary, most holy."

Father Charron, who had just returned from leading a mission trip to Ukraine, spoke of an old tradition of the country.

"I was there two weeks ago and people were speaking about it," Father Charron said, "and I'd like to close with this: The oldest church in Eastern Europe is located in Kyiv, the birthplace of both Russia and Ukraine." That ancient church, he said, is St. Sophia, and over that holy altar where that sacred oblation is offered to the Father stands the ancient icon of the Orans—

Mary stretching out her hands lifting up the prayer to the throne of God. "And the tradition among the Ukrainians is that these people will not fall so long as those arms remain outstretched," he said, "and it's into those arms that we now consecrate both of her long-suffering people, Ukraine and Russia."

Bishop Brennan then began the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Praying with him were concelebrants of the Mass Father Sateesh Narisetti, HGN, vice rector of the cathedral; Father Arul Anthony, administrator of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg; and Father Jude Perera, TOR, administrator of St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee. Also praying were Deacon Doug Breiding, permanent deacon of the cathedral and director of cemeteries for the diocese; and Deacon Paul Lim, WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital's vice president of Mission Integration.

"Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end and peace spread throughout the world. The 'Fiat' that arose from your heart opened the doors of history to the Prince of Peace. We trust that, through your heart, peace will dawn once more. To you we

**See "Mary" on Page 4**



Colleen Rowan Photo  
 Father Jason Charron, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church in South Wheeling, speaks at the noon Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling March 25. Bishop Mark Brennan, Father Charron, and clergy of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston joined Pope Francis in the consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

## Mary...

Cont'd from Page 3

consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world," they prayed.

After the consecration, Bishop Brennan announced that the diocese is gifting a relic (from its archives) of Ukrainian Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky to Father Charron and his parish.

As the congregation sang "Salve Regina," the bishop and clergy returned to the main altar for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

The next day, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston shared on its Facebook page that Father Charron invites all to a prayer service for the people of Ukraine April 3 at 4 p.m. at his church, which is located at 4136 Jacob Street in Wheeling. Following the prayer service, Father Charron will speak of his recent experiences traveling into Ukraine to help rescue 22 orphans and several refugees.

Good will offerings will be accepted to help support the people of Ukraine.



## Youth Mass Begins in Hedgesville

Courtesy Photo

The new monthly youth Mass at St. Bernadette Parish in Hedgesville is led by young people of the parish. They serve as the lectors, cantors, choir (shown above), ushers, and servers. Linda Abrahamian, music director and Youth Ministry coordinator for the parish, said: "It has been met with a lot of enthusiasm from the parishioners and the kids are enjoying (being) an active part of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

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## SYNOD Listening Sessions

Check updates at <http://dwc.org/synod-sessions/>

**St. Anthony, Charleston:** April 3, 11:40 a.m.

**St. Elizabeth, Phillipi:** April 3, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

**St. Leo, Inwood:** April 3, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; Virtual Session-TBA

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# Catholic Sharing Appeal is Underway

*Donations Make a Difference in Parishes and Ministries, Directors Say*

**By Colleen Rowan**

**WEST VIRGINIA**—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's annual Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA) is underway giving the faithful the opportunity to support their parishes while at the same time supporting Catholic schools, outreach to the poor, evangelization, vocations, and other ministries around the state.

"The annual Catholic Sharing Appeal makes our proclamation of Christ's lordship credible by showing that we are striving to fulfill his command to love our fellow human beings, be they children in need of education, the homebound in need of the Eucharist or a family needing help with a rent payment or utility bill," Bishop Mark Brennan says in his letter to the faithful on this year's CSA. His letter may be read in full on this page.

"When you give to the Catholic Sharing Appeal you support evangelization, education, and outreach in every parish community across our beautiful state. Together we can do more than any one person or parish can do alone."

—Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the diocese

Donations to the CSA make many programs possible at the parish and diocesan levels. This year's goal is \$2 million.

"The CSA has served as an essential partner for our parishes, missions and ministries in providing them the funding they need to maintain their aging buildings, invigorate Catholic youth, and to assist the poor and most vulnerable," said Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the diocese. "When you give to the Catholic Sharing Appeal you support evangelization, education, and outreach in every parish community across our beautiful state. Together we can do more than any one person or parish can do alone."

The appeal is unique in West

Virginia, said Director of Stewardship and Development Krissie Benson. "None of the money raised goes to support salaries or chancery expenses like it does in most other dioceses across the country," she said. "Appeal money at the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston goes right back out to our parishes, schools, and ministries."

Out of the \$2.3 million that was raised in 2021, she said, more than \$1.6 million went back to parishes.

"That is a phenomenal amount of money going directly back to support the local parishes and their immediate needs," Benson said.

Parishes have traditionally used CSA money to pay off debts, fund building improvements and beautification projects, pave parking lots, among other endeavors.

Another aspect of the CSA that is different in Wheeling-Charleston, Benson noted, is that parishes are not required to reach 100 percent of their goal before they begin to get money back. Rather, once they reach 50 percent every penny is returned to the parish. The first 50 percent funds shared ministries, she said, one of which is grants to parishes, where they have the opportunity to apply for even more funding from the CSA.

"In most other dioceses, parishes who don't reach 100 percent of their goal are required to pay the difference," Benson said. "And only once they reach 100 percent do they start to get money back. So, it truly is a wonderful program here in West Virginia that gives back to the parishes, while also funding the needs of shared ministries throughout the diocese."

If there is anything learned over the last year, Benson said, it is that West Virginia's Catholic faithful are a resilient people, who respond generously to the needs of their local parishes. This was evident in the \$2.3 million raised by almost 4,700 donors in last year's CSA.

"In a year where everything was so uncertain, the generosity of parishioners throughout the state was unwavering," Benson said. "I think people resonated with the needs of their parish and the diocese because they saw the effects of the pandemic first-hand. So many of our parishes immediately jumped into action to respond to the restrictions and changes required because of Covid. From

parishioners volunteering to clean the pews between Masses, to those who made phone calls to check in on parishioners, and to those who donated supplies and monetary support, the faithful of West Virginia, once again, offered their hands and hearts in gratitude."

Building on the success of last year's appeal, Benson said great strides are already being seen this year. This has been a continuing trend since the CSA's inception 15 years ago. St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown has reached 44 percent of its \$77,050 with 53 donors raising \$33,705 already. St. Mary Parish in Petersburg has already reached 75 percent of its goal of \$4,750 with 3,550 raised so far.

The faithful can view the progress of individual parishes by visiting [dwc.org/CSA](http://dwc.org/CSA). Here, they can also find more information and a place to make an online donation. On Page 6 of this issue, the faithful can find a listing of parish/mission goals for the appeal. Parishes and missions are listed by vicariates.

"Over the years the Catholic Sharing Appeal has proven to be an

opportunity for the faithful to unite together to serve the needs throughout our diocese," Benson said. "Donors are making a huge difference in the lives of those who benefit from programs and services made possible through the help of the CSA."

Sforza noted that since the appeal began in 2007, more than \$25 million has been raised to "enliven parishes, support Catholic education, shine light on shared ministries and expand outreach efforts across West Virginia."

There are several ways to contribute to the CSA. Donors can make a secure gift online at [dwc.org/CSA](http://dwc.org/CSA) using credit card or direct debit, or checks can be sent to: Catholic Sharing Appeal, PO Box 230, Wheeling, WV, 26003. Gifts may be broken down into monthly payments to make it easier for supporters to give. Donors may also make a gift of appreciated securities, or donate through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) or IRA.

For more information, visit [dwc.org/CSA](http://dwc.org/CSA).

## Dear Friends in Christ,

As the Lord Jesus was about to ascend back to his Father, he commanded his Apostles: Go, make disciples of all nations [Matthew 28:19]. Bringing others to the Lord, directly through speaking to them of Christ or indirectly through our good works, is our primary mission as followers of Jesus Christ.

The annual Catholic Sharing Appeal makes our proclamation of Christ's lordship credible by showing that we are striving to fulfill his command to love our fellow human beings, be they children in need of education, the homebound in need of the Eucharist or a family needing help with a rent payment or utility bill.

Over the past several years, the need for outreach to the young, the vulnerable and the less fortunate across West Virginia has continued to grow. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to make a significant contribution toward meeting those needs, making more resources available to care for those around us, despite a declining Catholic population. But imagine how much more we could do if we convinced more people to cast their lot with us in following Jesus Christ!

As we join together to bring the Gospel of Christ to those who have left us and those we have never had with us, I ask you to prayerfully consider supporting this year's Catholic Sharing Appeal. By your gift you are putting your faith into action in union with Christ as we serve those in need of prayer, healing and concrete help. Such gifts, I pray, prepare the way for the Gospel to be heard.

Thank you for your willingness to join with me in sharing the Good News of our Savior with those in need. The Appeal enables all of us to reach out beyond the walls of our parish church to advance the Church's mission.

May God richly bless you and all your loved ones!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

**+Mark E. Brennan**

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston



# CATHOLIC SHARING APPEAL 2022

## PARISH & MISSION GOALS

**\$2 MILLION GOAL**

### **WHEELING VICARIATE**

Cathedral of St. Joseph	Wheeling	\$19,740
Corpus Christi Parish	Wheeling	\$27,290
Immaculate Conception Parish	New Cumberland	\$8,130
Our Lady of Peace Parish	Wheeling	\$25,030
Our Lady of Seven Dolours Mission	Triadelphia	\$5,225
Sacred Heart Parish	Chester	\$14,365
Sacred Heart of Mary Parish	Weirton	\$15,530
St. Alphonsus Parish	Wheeling	\$10,050
St. Anthony Parish	Follansbee	\$23,205
St. Francis Xavier Parish	Moundsville	\$21,660
St. James Parish	McMechen	\$4,305
St. John Parish	Benwood	\$5,295
St. John Parish	Wellsburg	\$16,400
St. Joseph Parish	Proctor	\$4,675
St. Joseph the Worker Parish	Weirton	\$47,455
St. Jude Parish	Glen Dale	\$10,785
St. Michael Parish	Wheeling	\$68,045
St. Paul Parish	Weirton	\$30,880
St. Vincent de Paul Parish	Wheeling	\$38,720

### **CHARLESTON VICARIATE**

Ascension Parish	Hurricane	\$24,145
Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart	Charleston	\$68,900
Blessed Sacrament Parish	South Charleston	\$40,055
Christ the King Parish	Dunbar	\$6,695
Holy Trinity Parish	Nitro	\$8,130
Immaculate Conception Parish	Montgomery	\$4,090
Our Lady of Fatima Parish	Huntington	\$41,405
Our Lady of the Hills Parish	Elkview	\$6,135
Risen Lord Mission	Clay	\$1,790
Sacred Heart Mission	Point Pleasant	\$3,465
Sacred Heart Parish	Huntington	\$12,020
Sacred Heart Parish	Williamson	\$8,230
St. Agnes Parish	Charleston	\$19,610
St. Anthony Parish	Charleston	\$10,580
St. Anthony's Shrine Mission	Boomer	\$6,075
St. Barbara Mission	Chapmanville	\$1,410
St. Francis of Assisi Parish	Logan	\$6,800
St. Francis of Assisi Parish	St. Albans	\$25,090
St. Joseph Parish	Huntington	\$65,560
St. Mary Queen of Heaven Parish	Madison	\$2,465
St. Patrick Mission	Bancroft	\$3,420
St. Peter Claver Parish	Huntington	\$5,570
St. Stephen Parish	Ona	\$7,475

### **BECKLEY VICARIATE**

Holy Family Parish	Richwood	\$3,500
Sacred Heart Parish	Bluefield	\$25,420
Sacred Heart Mission	Powhatan	\$2,350
Sacred Heart Mission	Rainelle	\$2,335
Sacred Heart Parish	Princeton	\$19,275
Ss. Peter and Paul Parish	Oak Hill	\$17,395
St. Anne Parish	Webster Springs	\$2,110
St. Brendan Parish	Elkins	\$21,500
St. Catherine of Sienna Parish	Ronceverte	\$8,645
St. Charles Borromeo Parish	White Sulphur Springs	\$7,770
St. Francis de Sales Parish	Beckley	\$45,210
St. John the Evangelist Parish	Summersville	\$13,990
St. John Neumann Parish	Marlinton	\$3,950
St. Mark the Evangelist Mission	Bartow	\$1,510
St. Patrick Parish	Hinton	\$5,925
St. Peter Parish	Welch	\$2,465

### **CLARKSBURG VICARIATE**

All Saints Parish	Bridgeport	\$50,310
Good Shepherd Parish	Glenville	\$2,410
Holy Rosary Parish	Buckhannon	\$13,315
Holy Spirit Parish	Monongah	\$13,065
Immaculate Conception Parish	Clarksburg	\$67,555
Immaculate Conception Parish	Fairmont	\$24,345
Our Lady of Mercy Mission	Parsons	\$5,420
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	Stonewood	\$33,745
Sacred Heart Mission	Salem	\$3,195
St. Ann Parish	Shinnston	\$13,560
St. Anthony Parish	Fairmont	\$16,290
St. Augustine Parish	Grafton	\$8,350
St. Boniface Parish	Camden	\$5,565
St. Edward the Confessor Mission	Terra Alta	\$2,870
St. Elizabeth Parish	Philippi	\$6,010
St. Francis de Sales Parish	Morgantown	\$77,050
St. James the Apostle Parish	Clarksburg	\$10,820
St. John University Parish	Morgantown	\$41,540
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish	Cheat Lake	\$25,830
St. Mary Parish	Star City	\$48,565
St. Patrick Parish	Coalton	\$5,340
St. Patrick Parish	Mannington	\$7,960
St. Patrick Parish	Weston	\$22,030
St. Peter Parish	Farmington	\$6,960
St. Peter the Fisherman Parish	Fairmont	\$23,080
St. Sebastian Parish	Kingwood	\$12,480
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish	Thomas	\$14,500
St. Thomas Parish	Gassaway	\$5,365
St. Zita Mission	Masontown	\$5,870

### **MARTINSBURG VICARIATE**

Annunciation of Our Lord Parish	Fort Ashby	\$10,485
Assumption Parish	Keyser	\$18,140
Epiphany of the Lord Parish	Moorefield	\$5,930
Our Lady of Grace Parish	Romney	\$9,000
St. Agnes Parish	Shepherdstown	\$48,200
St. Anthony Parish	Ridgeley	\$4,160
St. Bernadette Parish	Hedgesville	\$20,505
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish	Franklin	\$2,890
St. James Parish	Charles Town	\$71,565
St. Joseph Parish	Martinsburg	\$56,820
St. Leo Parish	Inwood	\$29,540
St. Mary Parish	Petersburg	\$4,750
St. Vincent de Paul Parish	Berkeley Springs	\$14,740

### **PARKERSBURG VICARIATE**

Christ Our Hope Mission	Harrisville	\$1,895
Holy Redeemer Parish	Spencer	\$5,540
Holy Rosary Mission	Sistersville	\$4,765
Mater Dolorosa Parish	Paden City	\$5,730
St. Elizabeth of Hungary Mission	Elizabeth	\$2,525
St. Francis Xavier Parish	Parkersburg	\$32,200
St. John Parish	St. Marys	\$8,335
St. Margaret Mary Parish	Parkersburg	\$49,575
St. Matthew Parish	Ravenswood	\$10,425
St. Michael Parish	Vienna	\$30,090
St. Monica Mission	Lubeck	\$3,550
St. Vincent de Paul Parish	New Martinsville	\$16,000

## Bishop Brennan Will Celebrate Holy Week and Easter around the Diocese

**WEST VIRGINIA**—Bishop Mark Brennan will be traveling the diocese for Holy Week and Easter celebrations. Below is his schedule for Masses:

**Saturday, April 9:** 5 p.m. Mass, Holy Family Parish, Richwood

**Sunday, April 10, Palm Sunday:** 9 a.m. Mass, Holy Family Parish, Richwood; 11 a.m. Mass, St. Anne Parish, Webster Springs

**Monday, April 11:** Chrism Mass, 4 p.m. at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston

**Tuesday, April 12:** Chrism Mass, 4 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling

**Holy Thursday, April 14:** 7 p.m. Mass at the Basilica Co-Cathedral, Charleston

**Good Friday, April 15:** 7 p.m. Lord's Passion at St. Brendan Parish, Elkins

**Holy Saturday, April 16:** 8 p.m. Easter Vigil at Sacred Heart Parish, Chester

**Easter Sunday, April 17:** 10:30 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral, Wheeling

## Charles Town Parish Helping Fund Relief Efforts in Ukraine

By Colleen Rowan

Like their fellow Catholics across the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the people of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town answered Bishop Mark Brennan's call to help support the suffering people of Ukraine through the special collection on Ash Wednesday. And like many of their fellow faithful, they wanted to do more.

St. James has former parishioners, partner organizations, and other individuals in Ukraine and neighboring countries actively working to provide relief, the parish reported. St. James is blessed to have parish ties in Poland, said Deacon Galvin, permanent deacon at the parish. In the early 2000s, many Polish students came to work at the Charles Town Races, he said. No accommodation was made for their housing and 11 of the students were taken in by parishioners.

"Those incredible Polish friends have not forgotten their Catholic faith or hospitality that they received in West Virginia," Deacon Galvin said. "They are giving that same comfort and welcome to Ukrainians that are desperate for safety. We are working with these former parishioners to support



Courtesy Photo  
**Gus Boné of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town makes rosaries in the colors of the Ukrainian flag for donations for relief efforts.**

them financially so that they can help on our behalf." Their parish in Poland has taken in 160 Ukrainian refugees, St. James Parish reported.

For the rest of Lent at St. James, money collected through the Wednesday night collection and the poor boxes will go to help with relief for Ukrainian refugees.

"We are also working with individual Ukrainian parishes where

their clergy have heroically stepped up and have joined in the relief efforts personally," Deacon Galvin continued. "We have a long relationship with the Divine Word Missionaries and we are working with them to help orphans as well as the Sisters of St. Basil."

One of the Catholic teachings that is near to the hearts of the parishioners St. James is subsidiarity, Deacon Galvin said. "When we have the opportunity to do something that is within in our capability we should," he said.

Parishioner Gus Boné is doing that by hand-making rosaries in the colors of the Ukrainian flag for donations to fund relief efforts.

"They ... have provided a more intimate way to pray for those in Ukraine," Deacon Galvin said. "We have been praying daily at our Masses for the conversion of Russia, for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for the safety of Ukrainians."

Through all its efforts, Deacon Galvin said, the parish wants to offer hope and make the impact very personal to the experience of the parish.

Those who would like to help support efforts can call the parish office at (304) 725-5558.

## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

# Broadcast of Holy Week, Easter Masses

Easter Mass will be broadcasted on: WTRFDT3/ABC - Wheeling Area • WBOYDT/ABC - Clarksburg Area

LIVE STREAMED THROUGHOUT THE STATE AT [WWW.DWC.ORG/MASS](http://WWW.DWC.ORG/MASS)

### MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Holy Thursday, April 14

*Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston*

7:00 p.m. - Live Stream

Closed captioning provided.



The Easter Mass broadcast is sponsored by the Welty Corporation.

### PASSION OF THE LORD

Good Friday, April 15

*Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Wheeling*

3:00 p.m. - Live Stream

### EASTER MASS

Sunday, April 17

*Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Wheeling*

10:30 a.m.

Live Stream and Broadcasted



# Parish Cluster Fills 250 Easter Baskets for Children in Need



Courtesy Photo

Cecilia Wetzel, the volunteer who runs the food pantry for the cluster of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in New Martinsville, Mater Dolorosa Parish in Paden City, Holy Rosary Mission in Sistersville, and St. Joseph Mission in Proctor (right) and Theresa Schoolcraft, parish pastoral council member, show some of the 250 Easter baskets parishioners filled for children whose families are served by the cluster's food pantry.

Parishioners of the cluster of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in New Martinsville, Mater Dolorosa Parish in Paden City, Holy Rosary Mission in Sistersville, and St. Joseph Mission in Proctor came together to do a little extra for families with children who are served by the cluster's food pantry.

"We do the Secret Santa at Christmas and we wanted to do something similar for Easter," cluster officials said.

So, on the first Sunday of Lent at Masses at all four churches, 250 Easter baskets

were distributed to parishioners to fill for the 250 children of client families served by the food pantry.

All baskets have been returned, filled with goodies and gifts, wrapped, and are ready for little ones to enjoy. The parish office at St. Vincent's is overflowing with the baskets, cluster officials said. Cecilia Wetzel, the volunteer who runs the food pantry, has already started handing out baskets to families.

The cluster is thankful for the generosity of parishioners in bringing joy to the children this Easter.

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# Catholic Author Christine Anghie Brings the Good News to Children in Latest Book

By Colleen Rowan

Catholic author Christine Anghie brings the Good News to children once again in her latest book, "Asterix the Star and Trebonius the Tribune."

Pointing to the words of St. Jerome: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ," Anghie said the purpose of her books is "to teach the younger ones." In her tales of fictional characters interacting with real biblical characters and events, she hopes to help children develop a connection with the gospel.

Anghie describes the first story in her latest book, "Asterix the Star," as the tale of an underdog. God asks for a star to lead the wisemen to the Christ Child, but regular stars cannot leave their appointed places. So, a little boy star named Asterix confidently steps up to take on the task. To prepare, he goes to star school to learn how to shine. When he begins his job, however, the little star becomes distracted and is convinced by his friends to take a break for a while. When he returns to his post, the wisemen cannot be found. What follows is a sweet story from which children will be able to gain many lessons, especially in faith.

Although written for children, Anghie notes in the book that the story is also an allegory for adults. "We sometimes lose our way because other things are so important," she said. "We need to find our way back just like the little one did."

The second story, "Trebonius the Tribune," begins at Jesus' crucifixion and takes children on a journey with Trebonius to the crucifixion of St. Peter. It is here that Trebonius' conversion takes place.

"He sees St. Peter ... as if he's going to the greatest thing ever and he cannot recognize this man going to his death, but he seems so happy like the other Christians," Anghie said of Trebonius.

"Asterix the Star and Trebonius the Tribune" was published by Christian Faith Publishing in September 2021. Anghie's latest book follows her previous works, "Dismas—The Thief of Paradise" which was published in the U.K. and "Ben—the Hapless Donkey and Amal—the Fisher of Men," published in 2003.

Her books have been recommended by the bishops of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to be incorporated in the religious programs of all 24 diocesan schools, both elementary and high schools.

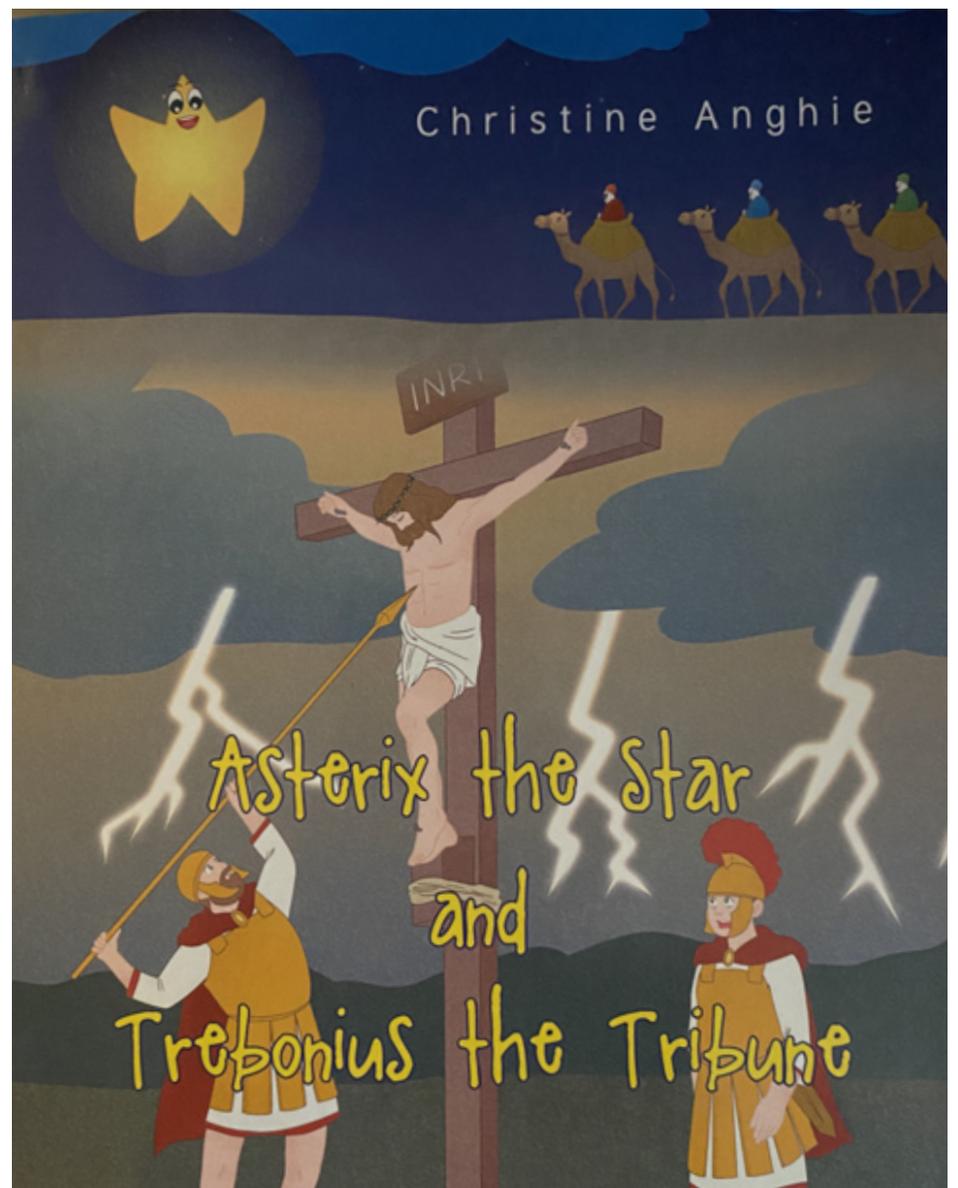
All of the profits from Anghie's books go to the Adopt A Student program at St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling, where she has been a beloved teacher for 43 years. She has served as assistant principal and teacher for seventh- and eighth-grade religion and language arts.

In February, she announced that she is retiring at the end of this school year.

St. Vincent's is currently looking for a sponsor to fund the purchase of 100 books at a discounted price. The books will be used in different grade levels.

For little ones at St. Vincent's, Anghie announced exciting news. The school's Social Media Specialist Jay Yelenic will be helping her with an audio version of "Asterix the Star" with music and characters voiced by eighth graders and high school students.

Consumers can purchase "Asterix the Star and Trebonius the Trib-

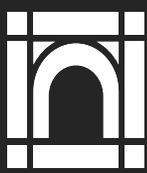


The Catholic Spirit Photo Pictured is the cover of Christine Anghie's latest book, "Asterix the Star and Trebonius the Tribune."

une" at traditional brick and mortar bookstores, or online at Amazon.com, Apple iTunes store, or Barnes and Noble.

For additional information or

inquiries about "Asterix the Star and Trebonius the Tribune," contact the Christian Faith Publishing media department at (866) 554-0919.



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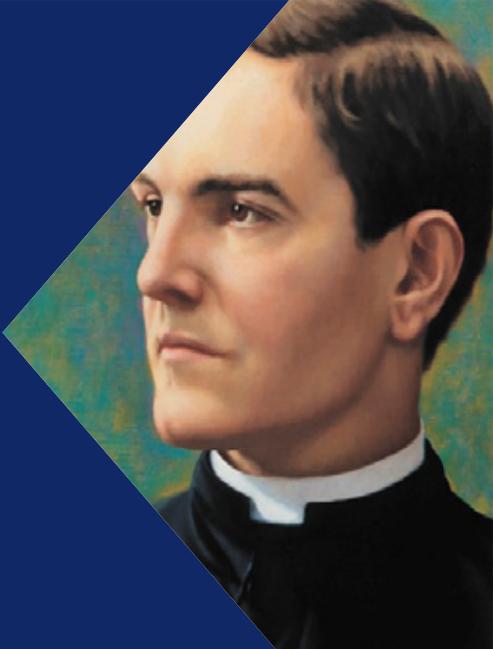
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# Confirmation Schedule

*Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant*

April 2: Annunciation of Our Lord, Fort Ashby, 4:30 p.m.  
 April 23: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, 5:15 p.m.  
 April 26: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling, 6 p.m.  
 April 27: St. John the Evangelist, Wellsburg, 5:30 p.m.  
 April 28: Corpus Christi, Wheeling, 6 p.m.  
 April 30: St. Alphonsus, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.  
 May 1: Combined Confirmation: Sacred Heart, Chester, and Immaculate Conception, New Cumberland, 11 a.m. at Sacred Heart, Chester  
 May 3: St. Michael, Vienna, 6 p.m.  
 May 5: Combined Confirmation: Holy Trinity, Nitro, and St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft  
 May 7: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.  
 May 9: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.  
 May 12: St. Jude, Glen Dale, 6:30 p.m.  
 May 18: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 6:30 p.m.  
 May 19: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 6 p.m.  
 May 20: St. Leo, Inwood, 6:30 p.m.  
 May 21: St. James, Charles Town, 10 a.m.  
 May 22: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 3 p.m.  
 May 28: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg, 4:30 p.m.  
 May 29: St. Margaret Mary, Parkersburg, 2 p.m.  
 May 31: St. Anthony, Follansbee, 6 p.m.  
 June 4: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley, 5 p.m.  
 June 25: St. Brendan, Elkins, 5 p.m.

# CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION PROGRAM

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## 2021-2022 CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION PROGRAM MEMBERS



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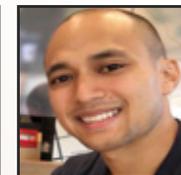
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### 10 Days Vienna- Salzburg- Budapest Sep 19-28, 2022

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### 13 Days Istanbul-Greece-Crete Nov 7-19, 2022

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Judy Doyle, above left, has been playing the organ, piano, and accordion for 29 years at St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale, after surviving a brain aneurism in 1993. Doyle plays the accordion with her grandson Trick at a summer gathering, above right. Trick plays his mini piano for the parish, above center.

Courtesy Photo

### By Joyce Bibey

When the late Father Leroy Beyer handed her the keys to the church the summer of 1993, she happily accepted them with a grateful heart, knowing she had a significant promise to keep.

Judy Perhacs Doyle has been playing the organ, piano, and even the accordion for St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale for nearly three decades. Many current parishioners do not know her story, but the ones who do have a deep appreciation not only to her for sharing her talents, but also to God for gracing their Eucharistic celebration with her presence. They are the parishioners who gathered in the church at 6 a.m., on July 1, 1993, for an around the clock prayer vigil for the beautiful young mother of two, who just two years prior had joined their church family. Doyle was having brain surgery that day for an aneurysm.

For the days and weeks prior, family, friends, and members of the St. Jude community pitched in to help her husband Pat and their two children Jack, who was 9 at the time, and Danny, who wasn't even 3 yet.

Judy had been out for a run, June 14, 1993, when she was overcome with a massive headache. She sought

medical attention, but her symptoms were excused as a migraine. A few days passed and there was no relief, symptoms worsened dramatically, and on June 19 she was placed in the intensive care unit (ICU) for observation and further testing. Doctors found a blood vessel had burst in the exact center of her brain. On July 1, after a full day in surgery they successfully clamped the blood vessel.

While her family and faith community prayed for a miracle for Judy, Judy had been praying for everyone but herself.

"I prayed for Pat," she said. "We had two very young kids. Our youngest was potty training. I prayed for my family and friends. I knew they would help with my kids. I prayed for the surgeons to know what to do. I knew my surgeon was Catholic and would also be praying."

She admitted she did more than pray during those long days that led up to the surgery. She felt the presence of St. Jude her parish patron, her late father and brother, and all her loved ones in heaven, asking all to pray her family gets through this.

"I talked to God," she said. "I knew if I was to survive, I would step up and take on the responsibility of being the

organist at church. I'm not really an organist though. A musician, yes, but a refine and impressive organist, I am not, nor do I pretend to be."

She knew her church had a great need for an organist. Her pastor, Father Beyer, whom she knew as a child at St. Paul's in Weirton, had asked her months before if she was still playing the piano and would consider playing at the Marshall County parish. He had remembered her playing at the Hancock County parish, something she did since she was 11 years old. Because of the pressing needs of her young family, and the time she knew it would take to do the job justice in her mind, she turned Father Beyer down.

She was a math teacher, a job she absolutely loved for 41 years.

"I enjoyed teaching, but I also loved the opportunities we would get to entertain our students," she said. "I played the accordion for special as-

semblies at (Wheeling Park High School), when we would gather the children for (seasonal) sing-alongs, and multicultural days. Some of my favorite memories of teaching were those days, when we put all of our worries aside and came together despite any clicks or divisions to play, sing, and listen to music."

Her love of music was fostered by her parents, Joe and Anne Perhacs, and her brother Jeffrey.

"I had taken lessons on the accordion since I was five or six, the piano at age 10, and ended up playing the organ at age 11 without any organ lessons," she said. "Music is a gift. I taught math all those years, but when I see my old students now, they don't bring up any of our math lessons, they recall those special gatherings with music."

She said it is an element that unites us.

A week after her surgery, Judy was well enough to be released from the hospital. Six weeks later her doctor released her to normal activities.

"After I was out of the hospital, I remember telling Father Leroy, 'I know you need an organist, so...'," she said. Before the conversation was over, he handed her a key to the church. Late that summer she played her first 10:30 a.m. Mass.

"Here I am all these years later," she said with a smile. "I receive so many positive comments after Mass. It doesn't matter if I think I play well or not. I don't play fancy, but St. Jude Parish likes what I play and I'm thankful. For me it's not a labor of love, it's God's plan. I need to be here."

Judy is not the only member of the family that invests her time and talent for the church. Pat has served as usher, youth faith formation teacher (formerly CCD), and parish councilman. When her sons were at home, they were altar servers through high school and ushers afterwards.

Jack and his wife Tammy are members of St. Jude along with their children Trick (short for Patrick) and Rayna. Trick has stolen the hearts of many in the pews, as he not only helps his father and grandfather usher, but also has shared his musical talents, playing Jingle Bells for the congregation on his mini piano after Mass during the Christmas season.

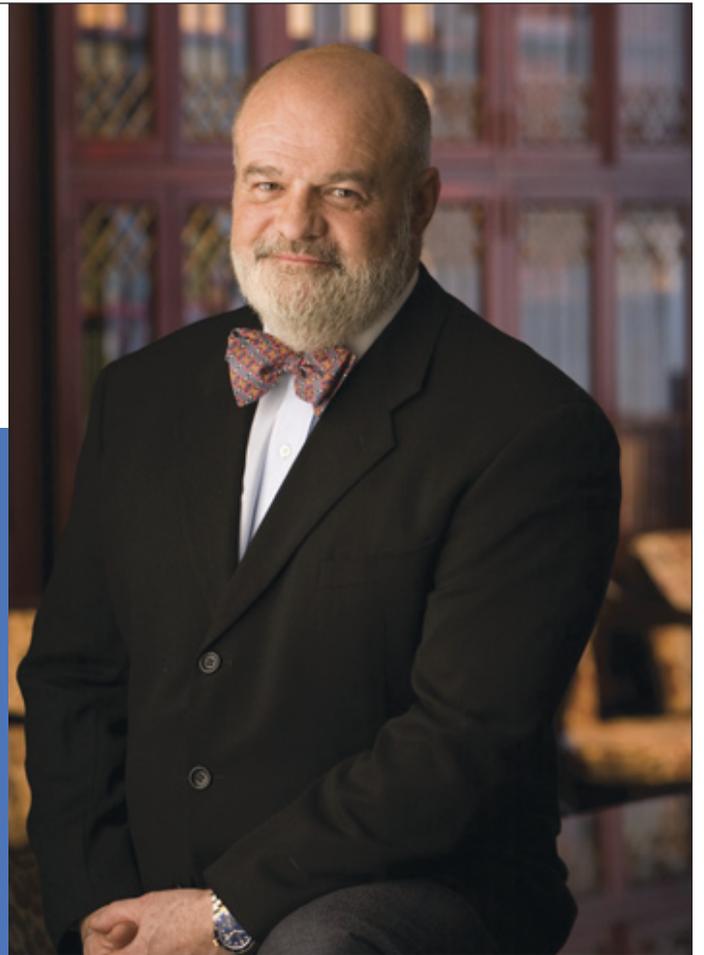
Danny and his wife Kathleen attend St. Michael Parish, Wheeling, with their 1-year-old daughter Charlotte. During the holidays, the extended Doyle family fill up two or three long pews to celebrate the holy day and sing-along with the congregation and of course their beautiful music minister.

#FaithInWV

Do you know an exceptional Catholic in West Virginia, someone or a group who are shining examples of #FaithInWV? Email Joyce Bibey your feature idea to [jbibey@dwc.org](mailto:jbibey@dwc.org). Visit [FaithInWV.org](http://FaithInWV.org) and every issue of The Catholic Spirit to read more inspiring stories.

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# 24/7 Care When Aging at Home

In our experience, people who are aging or disabled have a heartfelt desire to remain in a familiar place — at home. That’s why Catholic Charities West Virginia HomeCare cooperates with a state program called Medicaid Aged & Disabled Waiver (ADW), which helps people stay at home for as long as possible.

“Dottie” is a client who requires round-the-clock care. Before her adult sons contacted us, they were working together to ensure their mom had someone with her at all times. The three sons and their wives, all of whom live close by, worked out a sched-

ule of shifts. They were extremely committed to honoring their mother’s wish to stay home despite her declining health.

Eventually, though, Dottie’s needs exceeded her children’s ability to care for her. Her son called to ask for our support and we were able to enroll Dottie in ADW. At first, she was eligible for HomeCare services five hours per day, seven days per week. And when it became evident that she needed more care, we were able to connect the family with a secondary service.

With both services combined, Dottie has a profes-



Courtesy Photo  
**Martha cares for Dottie eight hours a day, seven days a week. She has developed a relationship of care and trust with the whole family.**

sional HomeCare worker with her for eight hours every day! Her sons continue to stay with

her for the remaining 16 hours. Dottie is now bedfast. She and her sons have come to rely on her HomeCare worker, Martha. Because of their relationship of trust, the entire family is able to best cope with Dottie’s failing health. Dottie is well-cared for in a familiar and comfortable place, and her adult children have support from Catholic Charities West Virginia HomeCare and each other.

ADW is just one way our HomeCare program honors the dignity of our brothers and sisters. We also work with private pay individuals and through the Department of

Veterans Affairs to support even more West Virginians.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, including information about taking advantage of HomeCare services, please visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God’s love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes, and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.





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# Papa consagra Ucrania y Rusia a María

Por Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)

— Mientras la violenta invasión rusa, que ya cumplió un mes, continuaba devastando Ucrania, el papa Francisco puso el destino de ambos países en manos de María, con la esperanza de que finalmente reinara la paz.

"Madre de Dios y madre nuestra, a tu Inmaculado Corazón nos encomendamos y consagramos solemnemente, la iglesia y toda la humanidad, especialmente Rusia y Ucrania", expresó el Santo Padre el 25 de marzo, presidiendo el acto de consagración después de haber dirigido un servicio de penitencia de Cuaresma en la Basílica de San Pedro.

Rezando ante una estatua de María, que fue prestada por el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Fátima en San Vittoriano, en las afueras de Roma, el papa suplicó a la Madre de Dios que "acepte este acto que llevamos a cabo con confianza y amor. Haz que la guerra termine y que la paz se extienda por todo el mundo".

Sentado frente a la estatua, que fue colocada ante los escalones del altar mayor sobre una plataforma roja y adornada con rosas blancas, el Sumo Pontífice proclamó el acto de consagración. Durante la oración, el papa se detuvo en varios momentos para mirar la estatua de María antes de continuar.

"A ti te consagramos el futuro de toda la familia humana, las necesidades y expectativas de cada pueblo, las angustias y esperanzas del mundo", oró.

Después de la consagración, el

papa, acompañado por un niño y una niña, colocó un ramo de rosas blancas a los pies de la estatua. Luego permaneció ahí unos momentos, con los ojos cerrados y la cabeza inclinada en oración, en silencio.

Según el Vaticano, se estima que 3,500 personas llenaron el interior de la Basílica de San Pedro, mientras que 2,000 personas vieron el evento en pantallas de video desde la Plaza de San Pedro. La policía pidió a los peregrinos que entraron a la Basílica de San Pedro portando o llevando banderas ucranianas que las guardaran, ya que el evento era un servicio de oración.

Entre los presentes en la liturgia estaba Andrii Yurash, embajador de Ucrania ante la Santa Sede. La consagración, tuiteó el 25 de marzo, es "otro intento (del papa) de defender a Ucrania de la guerra del diablo", refiriéndose a los ataques de Rusia contra el país.

Joe Donnelly, quien pronto presentará sus credenciales al Santo Padre como embajador de Estados Unidos ante la Santa Sede, también asistió al servicio.

El Vaticano anunció el 18 de marzo que el papa Francisco también pidió a los obispos de todo el mundo que se unieran a él para consagrar Ucrania y Rusia al Inmaculado Corazón de María.

El cardenal Konrad Krajewski, limosnero papal, dirigió un acto similar de consagración en el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Fátima en Portugal.

Obispos de todo el mundo habían anunciado servicios especiales para coincidir con el momento de la consagración en Roma, incluso en las primeras

horas de la mañana.

En la Catedral-Basílica Dulce Nombre de María en Hagatña, Guam, el arzobispo Michael Byrnes dirigió a los fieles en el rezo del rosario antes de recitar el acto de consagración a las 2 a.m. (hora local) del 26 de marzo.

El arzobispo Georg Gänswein, secretario privado del papa emérito Benedicto XVI, había dicho a los periodistas que el ex papa se uniría a la consagración desde su residencia.

En un video publicado antes de la liturgia, el arzobispo Sviatoslav Shevchuk de Kyiv-Halych, jefe de la Iglesia Católica ucraniana, manifestó que se uniría a la consagración "porque hoy necesitamos mucho la victoria del bien".

La consagración, señaló el arzobispo Shevchuk, "significa que nunca es posible llegar a un acuerdo y cooperar con este mal que emerge de Rusia hoy".

"Y es por eso que debemos orar por su conversión, por la erradicación de ese mal, 'para que', como dijo la Madre de Dios de Fátima, 'no destruya otros estados, no provoque otra guerra mundial'. Nosotros, como cristianos, tenemos el deber de orar por nuestros enemigos", acotó.

En Roma, las campanas de la Basílica de San Pedro sonaron después de que el papa Francisco concluyera el acto de consagración.

En su homilía durante el servicio de penitencia de Cuaresma, el Sumo Pontífice reconoció que la guerra en Ucrania, que "ha alcanzado a tanta gente y ha causado sufrimiento a todos, ha dejado, a cada uno de nosotros, temero-

sos y ansiosos".

Si bien los llamados a "no tener miedo" pueden aliviar la impotencia de uno frente a la guerra, a la violencia y a la incertidumbre, el papa dijo que "el dar consuelo no es suficiente".

"Necesitamos la cercanía de Dios y la certeza de su perdón, y una vez renovados por él, los cristianos pueden volverse también a María y presentar sus necesidades y las del mundo", dijo.

El papa Francisco dijo que el acto de consagración "no es una fórmula mágica sino un acto espiritual" de confianza por "los hijos que, en medio de la tribulación de esta guerra cruel y sin sentido que amenaza a nuestro mundo, se vuelven hacia su madre, depositando todos sus miedos y dolores en su corazón y abandonándose a ella".

"Significa poner en ese corazón puro e inmaculado, donde se refleja Dios, los bienes inestimables de la fraternidad y de la paz, todo lo que tenemos y somos, para que ella, la madre que el Señor nos ha dado, nos proteja y nos cuide", indicó el papa.

En su oración, el papa Francisco pidió específicamente a María que permanezca con los que sufren directamente a causa de la guerra.

"Que tu toque maternal alivie a los que sufren y huyen de la lluvia de bombas", rezó a María. "Que tu abrazo materno consuele a los que se ven obligados a abandonar sus hogares y su tierra natal. Que tu corazón afligido nos mueva a la compasión y nos inspire a abrir nuestras puertas y cuidar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas heridos y abandonados".

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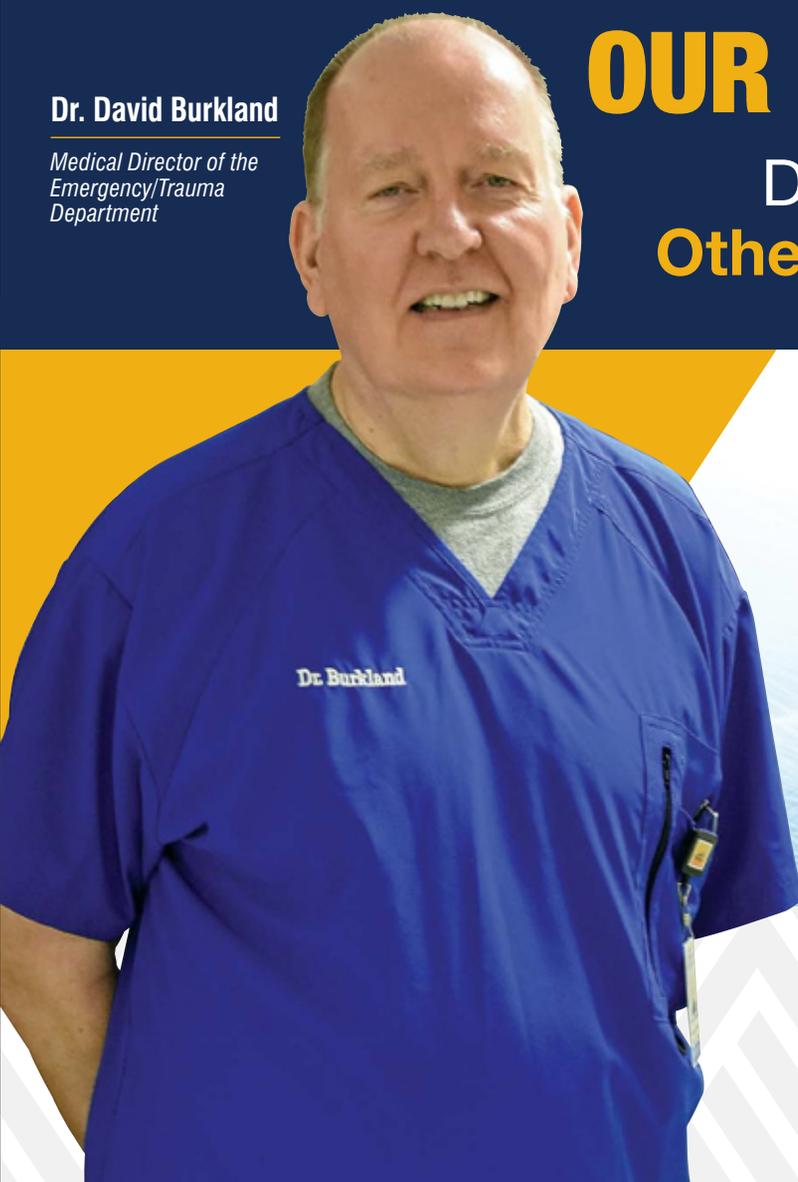
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