

Statement from Bishop Brennan Regarding Antisemitism on College Campuses

As a graduate of a major American university where pro-Palestinian protests and anti-Semitic rhetoric have taken place, I feel compelled to make known how repugnant I find the expressions of antisemitism on many college campuses. I abhor just as much expressions of anti-Moslem sentiment and violence, such as the injuries suffered by a Palestinian student, a

student at my alma mater.

The Hamas-Israeli war has elicited strong feelings from many people but strong feelings are not an excuse for using hateful and stereotypical language about Jews and Moslems. While some students and faculty are trying to understand the conflict and make sober judgments, others, including non-students, indulge in intemperate

chants and threatening behavior toward those who hold other views. I speak out because, with historical perspective, I know where antisemitism can lead if it goes unchecked; the same is true for Islamophobia.

College campuses are supposed to be places where young people can learn to make mature judgments about the world in which

they live and which they will soon be directing. It is the role of administrators and professors to help students engage in that process. Recent events have shown that some of these university-employed adults are unwilling or unable to fulfill this role. They need to examine their consciences. If they are incapable of guiding young people
See "Statement" on Page 3

Make a Difference for Catholic Schools on May 7

By Colleen Rowan

Gifts to One Mission One Day (OMOD) to Make a Difference on May 7 will support the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Catholic schools which challenge children to recognize, develop, and share their God-given gifts and talents, said Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the diocese. "You can make a difference!" she said.

Donations go directly to the school or schools of the donor's choice. Last year, more than \$420,000 was raised. More than \$70,000 of that total was raised for Sacred Heart Grade School in Charleston, the highest amount of the 2023 campaign.

Funds raised for each school can be designated for specific needs. For example, Charleston Catholic High School plans to use funds donated to this year's OMOD to enhance security features and to upgrade instructional technology. St. Patrick School in Weston also will use donations for security upgrades and for other needed enhancements. And those who give to SS. Peter and Paul Catholic School in Oak Hill will help fund replacement of the school's roof as all money raised will go to this project. Many schools plan to use funds to support operations.

To learn about a school or what the plans are for its OMOD donations, visit OneMissionOneDay.org and then click **See "Schools" on Page 3**



Courtesy Photo
Bailey Frederick and John Yelenic hold a poster promoting One Mission One Day (OMOD) to Make a Difference, the annual fundraising campaign for Catholic schools set for May 7.



A Special Section, Pages 5-11 of This Issue
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



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The Catholic Spirit's New Print Schedule for 2024

(Digital issues will continue to be published by date every Friday, delivered by e-mail and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org)

This is the new print publication schedule for The Catholic Spirit. Each print issue is named for a memorial, feast day, or celebration of the Church within the month of publication. The following provides the name of the issue; the date of the memorial, feast day, or celebration; and the publication date of the issue.

Ascension of the Lord
Feast Day, May 12

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is May 10

Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Month of June

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is June 21

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Feast Day, August 15

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is August 2

Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Feast Day, September 14

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is September 6

Our Lady of the Rosary
Memorial, October 7

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is October 4

Advent

First Sunday of Advent is December 1

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is November 29

Christmas

Feast Day, December 25

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is December 20

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Dioceses/Eparchies have 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, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

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 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. **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; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. 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. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at 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 Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. 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, 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.



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Statement..

Cont'd from Page 1

toward maturity, they should resign. It is also unfair that non-students, whose occupation seems to be that of fomenting of trouble, should cause the majority of students to lose the right to go to class because of the disruption on their campus.

The current conflict between Hamas and Israel has complicated historical, political, cultural and religious aspects. I do not have answers to all of its dimensions. As a man of faith in the God who spoke to Abraham, the father in faith of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, however, I will continue to pray for a just and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

But, given the present situation on the campuses of many universities

in our nation, I urge you to raise your voice to say that shouting hateful slogans and intimidating those of other views contribute nothing to the resolution of the present conflict in the Middle East and only exacerbate mutual disdain and distrust in communities of higher education. Treat others the way you would want them to treat you. That saying, known to people 2000 years ago and repeated by Jesus, is one that students, faculty, administrators and professional agitators should take to heart.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Schools...

Cont'd from Page 1

"Find your school." Gifts can be made here. The site offers profiles of each of the diocese's 24 Catholic schools detailing the academic and spiritual opportunities they offer to young people as well as giving options.

OMOD has become a highly anticipated event for Catholic school communities each year, especially because of the fun it brings throughout the day.

"Not only has OMOD become a tremendous FUNdraiser for all our Catholic schools—it has also become a FUNraiser because of all the hard work, dedication and creativity they put into it," Sforza said. "From themes, to videos, prizes and contests—they make it a fun and exciting day for students, families, and donors!"

The West Virginia Catholic Foundation will sponsor three, \$500 awards: to the school that raises the most money; to the school that receives the most donors; and, new this year, to the school with the most Peer 2 Peer Fundraisers. Sforza explained that a Peer 2 Peer Fundraiser is a supporter who rallies around a school to fundraise on its behalf.

"These supporters create their own fundraising page as a spin off of your main school profile," she said. "Your fundraisers will share that page with their friends and family to expand the reach of your cause and bring in new donors. These individuals are passionate about their school, and use their voice to make a difference!"

To become a Peer 2 Peer Fundraiser, individuals must contact their school or e-mail Sforza at hsforza@dwc.org.

Sforza emphasized that there are many ways to get involved in OMOD.

"You can donate at OneMissionOneDay.org. You can post on social media using the hashtag, #OneMissionOneDay—don't forget to tag your Catholic school!" she said. "You can become a Peer Fundraiser. Don't forget to share posts from your school and the diocese to help us spread the word!"



May 7, 2024
One Mission One Day
to Make a Difference

Support West Virginia
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Bishop Brennan among Presenters at LARCUM 2024

CHARLESTON—As the Roman Catholic representative, Bishop Mark Brennan will join religious leaders as presenters at the LARCUM (Lutheran — Anglican — Roman Catholic — United Methodist) Conference at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston May 20-22. Also presenting are Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, United Methodist; and The Rt. Rev. Matthew Lynn Riegel, Lutheran. The Anglican presenter has not been announced.

“We will gather under the theme, ‘Holy Communion: Contemporary Questions,’” planning officials said.

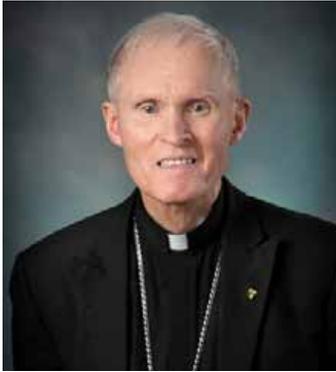
LARCUM WV is a four-partner conference held annually in West Virginia. The partners are Lutheran — West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Anglican — The Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia, The Episcopal Church; Roman Catholic — The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Roman Catholic Church; United Methodist — The West Virginia Conference, United Methodist Church.

Its origins are rooted in the ARC (Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue) in West Virginia more than four decades ago. The Lutherans were invited to join, making it LARC, the longest running LARC at that time in the USA, at three decades. Roughly ten years ago, the United Methodists were invited to join.

One does not need to be a member of the participating judicatories nor even the traditions more generally. If you are interested in the topic, want to enjoy conversation with folks from different traditions, or look forward to experiencing another tradition's worship, you are most welcome. LARCUM is open to laity and clergy. LARCUM is also open to folks from outside West Virginia.

The general outline is available on the LAR-

Presenters



Bishop Mark E. Brennan
Roman Catholic



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
United Methodist



The Rt. Rev. Matthew Lynn Riegel
Lutheran



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20-22 May 2024
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ww-wmd.org/LARCUM



CUM website. A full schedule will be posted prior to the event. The online registration interface is available on the website as well and can be accessed by scanning the QR code above. There are two registration levels: \$256 — lodger registration (includes meals, socials, and lodging in a single for Monday and Tuesday nights at St. John XXIII); \$140 — commuter registration (includes meals and socials). There will be a

small processing fee added that will come up when you get to the payment page.

Participants are free to lodge off-site (or commute); in that case, one would pay the commuter registration fee.

The registration deadline is May 11.

St. John XXIII has 33 single-rooms. Those who want to lodge onsite should register sooner rather than later.

100th Anniversary of Benwood Mine Disaster

*Bishop Brennan will preside
at April 28 Service,*

Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Wheeling

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston invites the public to a special prayer service at 4 p.m., Sunday, April 28, at Mt. Calvary Cemetery, 1685 National Road, Wheeling, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Benwood mine disaster. Bishop Brennan will preside at the service which will be held in the Bishop's Chapel at the cemetery. A procession from the chapel to the nearby monument for the 119 men and boys who lost their lives in the disaster will follow the service, weather permitting.





FORMING
CONSCIENCES
FOR
FAITHFUL
CITIZENSHIP

A Call to Political Responsibility from the
Catholic Bishops of the United States

with New Introductory Note

**A Special Section,
Pages 5-11 of This Issue**



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Introductory Note



Let us look to the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' parable summons us to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders of a new social bond. This summons is ever new, yet it is grounded in a fundamental law of our being: we are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good and, with this purpose in mind, to persevere in consolidating its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals.

(Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 66)

As Catholics and Americans, we are blessed to be able to participate in our nation's political and public life. Our freedoms respect the dignity of individuals and their consciences and allow us to come together for the common good. Election seasons, therefore, should contain a sense of gratitude and hope. Our love for this country, our patriotism, properly impels us to vote.

But increasingly, it seems, election seasons are a time of anxiety and spiritual trial. Political rhetoric is increasingly angry, seeking to motivate primarily through division and hatred. Fear can be an effective tool for raising money. The most heated arguments online often get the most clicks. Demonizing the other can win votes.

We propose once more the moral framework of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* precisely as pastors, inspired by the Good Samaritan, with the hope of binding these wounds and healing these bitter divisions. This document is not based on personalities or partisanship, the latest news cycle, or what's trending on social media. Instead, it reflects the perennial role of the Church in public life in proclaiming timeless principles: the infinite worth and dignity of every human life, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity. Not sure what these mean? We invite you to read a copy of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* and learn more. [Click here to read.](#)

Allowing your conscience to be stretched and formed by these reflections can give you peace! They point to Jesus' challenge to show mercy to those in need, just as the Good Samaritan. As Pope Francis writes, "Here, all our distinctions, labels and masks fall away: it is the moment of truth. Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others?" (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 70). Let this be in our hearts when we talk about politics and make political choices.

Some might be tempted to say: yes, of course, we will be the ones who help by promoting good and opposing evil. But when confronted with so much good at risk and so much evil, it is a great challenge to avoid fear and anger. The threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone. Other grave threats to the life and dignity of the human person include euthanasia, gun violence, terrorism, the death penalty, and human trafficking. There is also the redefinition of marriage and gender, threats to religious freedom at home and abroad, lack of justice for the poor, the suffering of migrants and refugees, wars and famines around the world, racism, the need for greater access to healthcare and education, care for our common home, and more. All threaten the dignity of the human person.

So precisely how we promote good and oppose evil is an essential part of answering the Lord's call, of being a disciple. As St. Paul reminds us:

Never let evil talk pass your lips; say only the good things men need to hear, things that will really help them. Do nothing that will sadden the Holy Spirit with whom you were sealed against the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, all passion and anger, harsh words, slander, and malice of every kind. In place of these, be kind to one another, compassionate, and mutually forgiving, just as God has forgiven you in Christ (Eph. 4:29-32).

Thus, Pope Francis exhorts us to "genuine dialogue and openness to others," by which we may "be frank and open about our beliefs, while continuing to discuss, to seek points of contact, and above all, to work and struggle together" (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 203). This applies to the faithful both as voters and as candidates—we must consider not only candidates' positions on these issues, but their character and integrity as well.

How can we meet this challenge? Again, St. Paul gives us a way: Put on "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). Take time away from social media and spend time with Holy Scripture and the Blessed Sacrament. Turn off the TV and the podcast, and listen in silence. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, a crisis pregnancy center. Serve the poor, the needy, the outcast. Pray often, letting faith inform your political participation.

Participation in political life also requires judgments about concrete circumstances. While the bishops help form the laity in accordance with basic principles, they do not tell the laity to vote for particular candidates. On these often complex matters, it is the laity's responsibility to form their consciences and grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ. Conscience is "a judgment of reason" by which one determines whether an action is right or wrong (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). It does not allow us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere "feeling." Conscience—properly formed according to God's revelation and the teaching of the Church—is a means by which one listens to God and discerns how to act in accordance with the truth.¹ The truth is something we receive, not something we make. We can only judge using the conscience we have, but our judgments do not make things true.

It is our responsibility to learn more of Catholic teaching and tradition, to participate in Church life, to learn from trustworthy sources about the issues facing our communities, and to do our best to make wise judgments about candidates and government actions.

We must also seek wisdom, as Holy Scripture instructs:

Wisdom from above is first of all innocent. It is also peaceable, lenient, docile, rich in sympathy and the kindly deeds that are its fruits, impartial and sincere. The harvest of justice is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace (Jas. 3:17-18).

The teachings of the Church, moreover, offer a vision of hope, where justice and mercy abound, because God is the infinite source of all goodness and love. With this wisdom and hope, we can find a way to bend down as the Good Samaritan did, through the fear and divisions, to touch and heal the wounds.

May God bless you as you consider and pray over these challenging decisions. May God bless our nation with true wisdom, peace, and mutual forgiveness, that we may decide together, through our democratic processes, to uphold the dignity of life and the common good.

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023. Find this and more complementary resources at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

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¹ *Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)*, no. 16. See also, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1785.

The Role of the Church in American Political Life



The Church is the body of Christ, who reigns as king over all Creation. Everything, including political life, belongs to Jesus Christ, and so participation in political life belongs to the mission of the Church. Our mandate is to 'go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15). . . . Here, 'the creation' refers to every aspect of human life. . . . 'Nothing human can be alien to it.'

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 181, quoting *Aparecida Document*, no. 380

Our national tradition of religious freedom permits and encourages all people of faith to bring the insights of their religious traditions to bear on political matters. As Pope Francis affirmed during his visit to the U.S., “Religious liberty, by its nature, transcends places of worship and the private sphere of individuals and families.... Religion itself, the religious dimension, is not a subculture; it is part of the culture of every people and every nation.”¹

“If society is to have a future, it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth. . . . A society is noble and decent not least for its support of the pursuit of truth and its adherence to the most basic of truths” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 207). The truths that guide public life can be known by natural reason. The sanctity of human life, the equal dignity of all individuals, the obligation to protect the vulnerable, the nature and purposes of sex, marriage, and family—these are not exclusively “religious” truths, but truths that all people of goodwill can come to know without the aid of revelation. Our Catholic faith sheds light on these truths, and so we have a duty to bring that light to our nation.

“The truth is something we receive, not something we make. We can only judge using the conscience we have, but our judgments do not make things true.”

Many Parts, All One Body

The bishops and their pastoral collaborators each have distinct roles in the Church’s mission. The bishops have the responsibility to govern the society of the Church, hand on doctrine and tradition, and administer the sacraments. The laity are called to bring the gospel to bear on the world. While many laity are involved in roles of leadership and service within the Church, it remains primarily the role of the laity to advocate for justice, to serve in public office, and to inform daily life with the gospel. “The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29).

Participation in political life requires judgments about concrete circumstances. While bishops together with their coworkers help form the laity in accordance with basic principles, they do not tell the laity to vote for particular candidates. On these often complex matters, it is the laity’s responsibility to form their consciences and grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ.



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Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

Conscience is “a judgment of reason” by which one determines whether an action is right or wrong (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). It does not allow us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere “feeling.” Conscience—properly formed according to God’s revelation and the teaching of the Church—is a means by which one listens to God and discerns how to act in accordance with the truth.² The truth is something we receive, not something we make. We can only judge using the conscience we have, but our judgments do not make things true.

It is our responsibility to learn more of Catholic teaching and tradition, to participate in Church life, to learn from trustworthy sources about the issues facing our communities, and to do our best to make wise judgments about candidates and government actions. These decisions should take into account a candidate’s commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue. Thus equipped, and further impelled by our sense of patriotism, we exercise our right and duty to vote and otherwise to participate actively in public life.³ By forming our consciences for faithful citizenship, we can better pursue the common good and thus obey the command of our Lord to love our neighbors.

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023.

Find this and more complementary resources at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

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¹ Pope Francis, Meeting for Religious Liberty with Hispanic Community and Other Immigrants, September 26, 2015.

² *Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)*, no. 16. See also, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1785.

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2239-40.



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Dignity of the Human Person



In their statement on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the Catholic bishops of the United States identify the four main principles of the Church's social teaching and apply them to some concrete issues. This is not to tell the faithful for whom or against whom to vote, but instead to help them form their consciences in accordance with God's truth as they approach this often-challenging decision. The four main principles are the Dignity of the Human Person, the Common Good, Solidarity, and Subsidiarity. They are all inter-related. This bulletin focuses on the **Dignity of the Human Person**, and the other three principles are covered in three other bulletins in this series.

Because each human person is created in the image and likeness of God, each one of us possesses innate and inviolable human dignity. This dignity is present in each person from the moment of their conception and throughout their lives. As Pope Francis has emphasized, human dignity is central to building a society in which we are "brothers and sisters all."¹

"The dignity of the human person is the foundation for a moral vision of society."

Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations. This does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being. Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity.²

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 107

The dignity of the human person is the foundation for a moral vision of society. As we seek to imitate the Good Samaritan and become neighbor to all, we must work to protect the dignity of all, especially those who are most vulnerable.

As we engage in the public square with a well-formed conscience:

- We work to protect the most vulnerable—children in the womb who are in danger of abortion—while also standing in radical solidarity with mothers.³ Building on their bond of flesh and kinship, and on the network of family, neighbor, and community relationships in which they are situated, the Church actively assists mothers and their children to have a brighter future.

- We continue to protect the dignity of our sister or brother who is elderly, disabled, or ill by strongly rejecting euthanasia and assisted suicide. These practices are symptoms of a "throw-away culture," in which children of God of inestimable worth are cast aside as worthless.⁴

- Likewise, we must recognize the inherent dignity of the migrant and refugee. In our country now, that means comprehensive immigra-

tion reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.

- We support the dignity of the person, created male or female; therefore, we oppose a gender ideology that fails to recognize the difference and reciprocity between man and woman.⁵

- Racism attacks the dignity of the human person by denying that we are all equally made in the image of God, so we must overcome racism in our hearts as well as in our systems and institutions.⁶

- We continue to seek reform of the criminal justice system and to end the use of the death penalty. We support common sense measures to reduce gun violence.⁷

- Finally, we seek to prevent and remedy any aspects of an "economy of exclusion,"⁸ which "does not hesitate to exploit, discard, and even kill human beings,"⁹ and to work instead toward an "economy of communion" rooted in ethical concern.¹⁰

"Social friendship and universal fraternity" Pope Francis writes, "necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere."¹¹ Through our political participation, our accompaniment of those in need, and the witness of our daily lives, may we support the worth of every person, created in God's image.

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023.

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1 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (*On Fraternity and Social Friendship*), no. 8.

2 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 107. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*), no. 45.

3 USCCB, "Letter and Policy Recommendations Supporting Women and Children," October 26, 2022.

4 St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*), nos. 8, 15, 18, 23, 94. See also: Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* nos. 18-21.

5 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*), no. 56.

6 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, 3-8.

7 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 263-270. See also: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 84.

8 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*Joy of the Gospel*), no. 53.

9 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 22.

10 Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 45-47.

11 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 106.

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In their statement on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the Catholic bishops of the United States identify the four main principles of the Church’s social teaching and apply them to some concrete issues. This is not to tell the faithful for whom or against whom to vote, but instead to help them form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth as they approach this often-challenging decision. The four main principles are the Dignity of the Human Person, the Common Good, Solidarity, and Subsidiarity. They are all inter-related. This bulletin focuses on **the Common Good**, and the other three principles are covered in three other bulletins in this series.

The Common Good is “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”¹ Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency.

Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, to the larger society, and to the earth.² In short, we should seek “to build that kind of society where it is easier for people to be good.”³

In the midst of a “throwaway world” in which some members of the human family “can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence,” Pope Francis urges us to build a “culture of encounter” in which those most in need receive our greatest concern and attention. We must “place at the center of all political, social and economic activity the human person, who enjoys the highest dignity, and respect for the common good.”⁴

As we seek to imitate the Good Samaritan, who was neighbor to all, we pursue the Common Good in order that every individual and all people can flourish.⁵

“In short, we should seek ‘to build that kind of society where it is easier for people to be good.’”

- Marriage and the family are the central institutions of social life – the primary school of virtue, where we first experience common rather than merely individual goods – and so these institutions should be supported and strengthened.

- Likewise, as one human family dwelling in our common home, we must hear “both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” and respond to climate change with actions to better protect creation for our brothers and sisters now and in generations to come.⁶

- Accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father, and as our common home includes accepting our bodies as God’s gift, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation.⁷

- We recognize and protect the right to religious liberty, our first and most cherished freedom. The protection of conscience and religious liberty is an indispensable element of the common good – a fundamental human right that knows no geographical boundaries.⁸

- While the common good embraces all, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need deserve special concern, which the Church describes as the *preferential option for the poor*.⁹ Laws and policies must prioritize those who struggle to make ends meet and must preserve the social safety net and promote decent jobs, affordable housing, and childcare.

Pope Benedict XVI writes in *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth): “To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity.” We must be attentive to the common good “juridically, civilly, politically and culturally” in the life of society. “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors,” he writes, “the more effectively we love them.”¹⁰

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023.

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1 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1906, citing *Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)*, no. 26.

2 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 49, 51.

3 Peter Maurin, as quoted by Dorothy Day. See *All the Way to Heaven: The Selected Letters of Dorothy Day* (New York: Random House, 2010), 457.

4 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)*, nos. 18 and 232.

5 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)*, no. 66.

6 Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’ (On Care for Our Common Home)*, no. 49. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)*, nos. 48-52, and Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*, nos. 58 and 60.

7 Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’ (On Care for Our Common Home)*, no. 155.

8 St. Pope Paul VI, *Dignitatis Humanae (Declaration on Religious Freedom)*, no. 6; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1907, citing *Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)*, no. 26.

9 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no 53.

10 Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 7.

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Solidarity is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."¹ We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. The person is social in nature; we develop and flourish within a community. As baptized members of the community of the Church, we are part of one body in Christ and we are also part of one global human family.²

In *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) Pope Francis places solidarity at the center of what it means to cultivate social friendship as one family:

*Solidarity means much more than engaging in sporadic acts of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all are prior to the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land, and housing, the denial of social and labor rights.*³

Thus, solidarity affects not only the goals we pursue in public life, but also the way we pursue them—ever mindful that we are all brothers and sisters, all children of God.

“Solidarity requires that in our prayer and in our political engagement, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need receive preferential concern.”

Solidarity requires that in our prayer and in our political engagement, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need receive preferential concern.

In imitation of the Good Samaritan, we seek to be neighbor to all.⁴ We are called to practice “radical solidarity” by accompanying pregnant women to choose life and by offering support to new mothers and their children.⁵ As neighbors to all, we also advocate for families affected by poverty, unemployment, or illness, individuals struggling with mental illness or addiction, the elderly and those with disabilities, and all whose livelihoods and homes are endangered by climate change.⁶

In countries ravaged by war, such as Ukraine, West Africa, and the Middle East, we must “touch the wounded flesh of the victims” and support efforts for relief and peace,⁷ while also working collaboratively to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons.⁸

“In imitation of the Good Samaritan, we seek to be neighbor to all.”

We seek policies that “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate” migrants and refugees who arrive at our borders, and which aid development in countries of origin.⁹

Racism is an obstacle to solidarity, and we strive to root it out not only by examining our hearts individually, but also by looking critically at our policies and institutions.¹⁰

In a culture that overemphasizes the accumulation of wealth, we must not forget our “obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development.”¹¹

As we seek to foster solidarity in hearts and policies, let us pray with Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*:

*Lord, Father of our human family . . . Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war. Amen.*¹²

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¹ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193, quoting St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concerns), no. 38. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27.)

² Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), no. 25b. See also: USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 52-54.

³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship), no. 116, quoting *Address to Participants in the Meeting of Popular Movements* (October 28, 2014).

⁴ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 80.

⁵ USCCB Chairmen, “Letter and Policy Recommendations Supporting Women and Children,” October 26, 2022.

⁶ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (On Care for Our Common Home), nos. 25, 48-49. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), nos. 48-52, and Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*, no. 31.

⁷ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 261.

⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 262. See also: St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nos. 23-24.

⁹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 129 and 132. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 62.

¹⁰ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, a Pastoral Letter Against Racism, 2018. See also: *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 20, 41, and 97.

¹¹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 118.

¹² Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 287.

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The principle of Subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society (such as the state or federal government) should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions (such as the family, local schools, or the Church community). Yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, or advance the common good.¹ Subsidiarity reflects the essential freedom and innate human dignity of each person while also recognizing the role higher authorities, such as government, can play to ensure that all people are able to thrive.

Respecting this principle promotes the flourishing of each individual person and the realization of the common good. As Pope Francis has explained, the principle of Subsidiarity “allows everyone to assume his or her own role in the healing and destiny of society.”² By participating in public life locally, each person and the voluntary associations of civil society to which they belong can be “leaven,” bringing “enrichment” to neighbors, to communities, and to society as a whole.³

“Respecting this principle promotes the flourishing of each individual person and the realization of the common good.”

As we assist the faithful to take up the call to be “leaven” in society, we seek policies that allow individuals and communities to flourish.

- As the bishops teach in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, “Family—based on marriage between a man and a woman—is the first and most fundamental unit of society: a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. It should be defended and strengthened, not redefined, undermined, or further distorted.”⁴

- It is important to uphold parents’ rights and responsibilities to care for their children, including the right to direct their children’s education in accordance with their convictions, with support rather than interference from the state.⁵ These include the rights of parents to send their child to the school of their choice, and to protect their child from “gender ideology” at school.

- Moreover, laws, programs, and initiatives should strengthen the social safety net and improve family stability. For example, parents should receive support through work, training, assistance with child-care, health-care, housing and transportation.⁶ The Earned Income Tax Credit and child tax credits continue to be important vehicles to help low-income families out of poverty.

- The Church’s special concern for the poor requires the pursuit of social and economic policies which foster jobs with decent working

conditions and just wages, and which support the rights of workers, including the ability to organize and bargain collectively without reprisal.⁷

As we pursue the principle of Subsidiarity in our public policies, we pray for all families and for those in poverty, and we support their efforts to exercise their rights and responsibilities in society.

“As we assist the faithful to take up the call to be “leaven” in society, we seek policies that allow individuals and communities to flourish.”

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1 USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 47-48. See also: *Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year)*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae (Declaration on Religious Freedom)*, nos. 4-6, and *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.

2 Pope Francis, General Audience, “Catechesis ‘Healing the World’: 8. Subsidiarity and the Virtue of Hope,” Sept. 23, 2020. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)*, no. 57.

3 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)*, no. 142.

4 USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 46.

5 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, no. 84.

6 See Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, nos. 25, 44, on the need for family support through dignified employment, education, health-care and housing.

7 St. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, nos. 7-8, 35. See also: *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 301-309.



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Catholic Couples Struggle through an Infertility Care Desert

By Zoey Maraist, OSV News (OSV News) — Serenity Quesnelle saw six fertility doctors, went through multiple procedures and braved surgery in the hopes of conceiving a child. After four years, one of her doctors felt that nothing more could be done and asked Quesnelle to write down the number of a nearby in vitro fertilization clinic. But Quesnelle and her husband didn't want to go through IVF, a process that often results in the destruction of unborn lives. She wanted to find out what was going on in her body.

Quesnelle is one of many Catholic women who spend years seeking out medical professionals who will ethically and effectively treat the underlying conditions leading to their infertility. Secular doctors often turn to artificial reproductive technology, while Catholic OB-GYNs who are trained to seek out the root cause of infertility are few and far between.

"There's a huge demand and we don't have enough doctors right now," said Dr. Teresa Hilgers, an OB-GYN at the St. Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. The institute has pioneered a restorative health care technique called NaProTechnology, which treats women by supporting rather than suppressing their reproductive systems. Patients have traveled from all 50 states to receive treatment there. "So many are looking for more help and we can't train people fast enough to help them."

'Who can help me?'

Quesnelle, who lives outside Detroit in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, found it difficult to find providers who respected her Catholic beliefs. "At one time I was told just to go on birth control because once I went off of it, it would help me get pregnant," she said. With another non-Catholic doctor, Quesnelle asked about the possibility of going on progesterone supplements, as her blood work had shown low levels of the hormone. "(The doctor's) exact words to me were, 'After your first miscarriage we can talk about it,'" recalls Quesnelle. "So I never went back to see her."

But seeing Catholic doctors wasn't an easy fix, either. "We found a Catholic NaPro doctor a couple of miles away and she was very unkind, her bedside manner was awful," said Quesnelle. They waited months to see a different Catholic NaPro doctor, but within three days of their appointment, the doctor went on medical leave.

Eventually, one doctor found and removed a polyp that was carpeting Quesnelle's uterus, preventing the implantation of an embryo.

She also found Dr. Lydia Rayes, a family doctor in the midst of receiving NaPro training, who was able to prescribe Quesnelle progesterone. Quesnelle attributes those factors, the Mira fertility monitor and God with the gift of her son.

Quesnelle co-founded The Fruitful Hollow as a resource for those experiencing infertility as it's not always easy to find answers or support within the church, she said. "It really comes down to women on the internet who have had to walk this path (and) are now helping other women to educate themselves."

Stephanie Koch realized something wasn't right after she and her husband spent a year trying to conceive their third child. But her OB-GYN and two different reproductive endocrinologists couldn't explain why. Worse yet, the miscarriage she experienced was seen as just part of the process. "It never even occurred to the doctor that this was a profound loss for our family," said Koch. "It didn't even occur to her that my then four-year-old was sobbing at home because he's been begging God for a little sister every night."

Eventually, Koch was able to see her nearest NaPro doctor, located two and a half hours away from her home in Chesapeake, Virginia. Dr. Karen D. Poehailos suspected Koch had endometriosis, an often painful condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside of the uterus. One of the closest NaPro surgeons who could treat her was in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania — Dr. Naomi Whittaker.

"That consultation (with Whittaker) completely changed my life," said Koch. "She spent about two hours with me just going over a thorough history. She asked questions that nobody had asked before. To feel heard and not totally dismissed meant everything." During Koch's 10-hour surgery, Whittaker found Stage IV endometriosis. Two months later, Koch naturally conceived twins.

Koch says the whole process made her lose faith in much of the medical system. "Infertility is a symptom — something causes it. It was such a foreign concept for some of these doctors," she said. "If the experts seem to only be interested in helping me if I'm willing to pay \$30,000 for IVF, who can help me?"

Maria Ranck from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, sought out treatment from Whittaker because she hoped to preserve her fertility while treating her endometriosis. Oftentimes, surgeons will simply remove a diseased ovary or fallopian tube. "I wanted to have a surgeon look at me and say, 'I'm going



OSV News Photo/courtesy Stephanie Koch
Stephanie Koch is pictured in a 2023 photo with her husband, Michael, and children Declan, 7, Killian, 5, and newborn twins, Keegan and Keira. Stephanie struggled to conceive before Dr. Naomi Whittaker found and treated her Stage 4 endometriosis.

to do my best to save every organ because that's how God created your body to function," she said.

Whittaker removed the endometriosis growth and fibroids around Ranck's abdomen and helped her find a cardiac surgeon willing to operate on her thoracic endometriosis, which affects the

lungs and heart. Before treatment, Ranck had a myriad of crippling symptoms, including coughing up blood. She's grateful she feels better and has a chance of having children one day. "I know so many women that had endo and had surgery because they heard my story,"

See "Struggle" on Page 14

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Struggle...

Cont'd from Page 13

she said. "Now they're going to have a child even though they were told they needed to have all their (reproductive) organs removed."

Peggy Faucheux wanted to move back home to Louisiana, but she was scared to lose Dr. Kathryn Karges, her Houston-based OB-GYN. Karges helped Faucheux discover several health issues impacting her fertility, including Stage 1 endometriosis, a blood clotting disorder that can cause miscarriages, and luteinized unruptured follicle syndrome, or LUFs, a condition where the egg often gets trapped instead of being released. Through Karges, Faucheux frequently got ultrasounds to monitor her cycles.

Louisiana has no NaPro trained OB-GYNs, so after she moved, Faucheux visited a secular doctor. At her first appointment, she brought a spreadsheet listing the times she ovulated, the medications she tried and other medical information. "He just looked at the chart and (said), 'Do I need to keep this?'" she recalled. "He's like, '(LUFs) is such a rare condition. You're probably just not eating enough.'"

So despite the hourslong drive, she kept seeing Karges. Through a friend, Faucheux learned about a fertility-focused nutritionist, who diagnosed her with a severe gluten intolerance. A few months later, with the aid of fertility drugs, she became pregnant with her son, who is due to be born this summer.

Though she doesn't believe in using artificial reproductive technology, Faucheux empathizes with cou-

ples who choose to. "I understand how desperate you become and I understand how lonely and heart-wrenching this journey is," she said. "If the Catholic Church believes that IVF is not an inherently good thing, (that) it's something that preys on (couples') greatest desires, but then you don't give an alternative to that, what are women supposed to do?"

Barriers to better care

For Whittaker, providing quality, compassionate care is personal. During the birth of her first child, she had what she considers an avoidable cesarean section, made all the more traumatic by the fact that her grandmother died during a C-section.

Sadly, many of the patients she sees are victims of callous care. She recently saw one patient who was nearing 40 and hoping to conceive. For years, the patient wanted to treat her polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), but doctors kept prescribing birth control to manage her symptoms instead. "If you don't treat PCOS then you can get endometrial cancer. We found her cancer instead of being able to help her conceive," said Whittaker. "That's just every day. Your heart bleeds for these people."

Because of the current climate, Catholics and other pro-life medical students often are afraid to go into gynecology, said Hilgers. "The concentration in women's health care really is on con-

traception, abortion, sterilization and IVF," she said. "So, in many ways, medical professionals are not well trained in understanding the menstrual cycle and how to diagnose these underlying conditions and treat them."

While many doctors and medical professionals are trained in NaProTechnology, far fewer OB-GYNs have gone through the yearlong training the institute offers. "We have about 30 doctors around the country actively practicing, who are doing the surgeries that we do," said Hilgers. "(The scarcity) is a problem."

There are challenges even within the restorative fertility world, such as a good, standard set of medical protocols, said Whittaker. "The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has practice bulletins updated by a huge panel of doctors. It takes hours and hours to revise these things

and lots of minds that need to come together," she said. "We just don't have the manpower or the money."

But the number of restorative fertility-focused providers is slowly growing. For example, Reproductive Health Medicine & Gynecology has an office near Atlanta, another near Birmingham, Alabama, telemedicine patients from six states and plans to open another physical location in Northern Virginia.

"There are so many Catholics who are struggling with infertility," said Katie Morris, an RHM Gynecology nurse practitioner trained in Fertility Education and Medical Management (FEMM), another root-cause focused health philosophy. "They need a place to land that's not just going to educate but uphold the teachings of the church, so you're not just

getting this teaching from the catechism, you're not just getting it from the priest, but you're also getting it reinforced in your doctor's office, when it matters a lot."

Until the number of restorative health care providers increases, many Catholic couples will devote heartbreaking years searching for competent care. Some may even turn to artificial reproductive technology. "If we're not going to offer IVF, we have to be able to research the medical conditions that are impacting (couples) and develop ways of helping them," said Hilgers. "We just have to keep pushing forward."

More about The Fruitful Hollow, a resource for those experiencing infertility, can be found at www.thefruitfulhollow.com.

(Zoey Maraist writes for OSV News from Virginia.)



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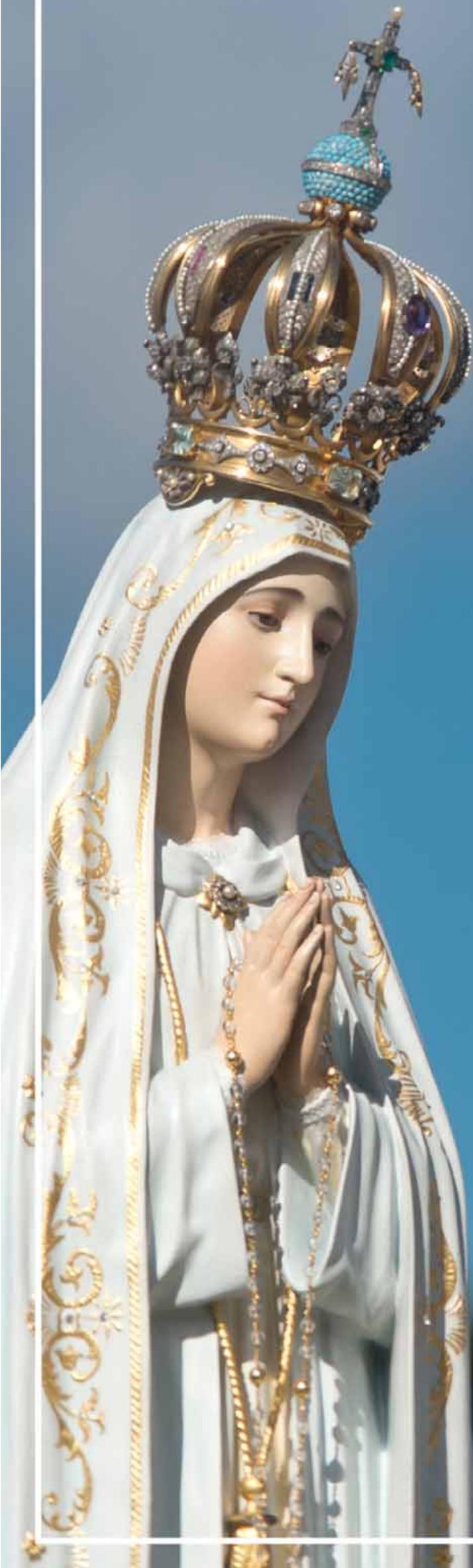
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Rosary Procession

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for our Church, our world,
and our families.

Monday, May 13

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

7:00 pm

**Procession begins at
ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH
and ends at the
CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOSEPH**

An optional shuttle from the Cathedral
to St. Alphonsus will be available from
6:15 pm to 6:50 pm to allow participants
to park at the Cathedral where the
procession will end.

CDU President Discusses University's Mission and Future on Guadalupe Network Radio

In a recent episode of "Catholic Lunch Break" on Guadalupe Network Radio, Dr. Sophia Aguirre, president of Catholic Distance University, joined host Wyatt Goolsby for a compelling conversation that highlighted her journey in university's mission, education and her innovative vision for the future of CDU.

Aguirre, renowned for her expertise in economics and higher education, brings a unique perspective to the dialogue. As an educator, author, and advocate for the marginalized, her insights resonate deeply with those seeking to integrate their faith into their daily lives and societal interactions.

They talked about the transformative potential of technology, and how CDU is pioneering the integration of AI and big data design into the curri-

culum, providing students with cutting-edge skills that are essential for success in the digital age. However, unlike secular institutions CDU remains deeply committed to ensuring that these advancements are guided by a Christian anthropology—a framework that recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of every human person.

CDU also prepares to launch new initiatives in online education, including an exclusively Spanish-language program on Catholic social teaching. By offering students a holistic education that integrates faith, reason, and technological innovation, CDU seeks to empower them to become leaders in their fields while remaining steadfast in their Christian identity.

In conclusion, Aguirre's goals for Catholic educa-



Photo Courtesy of Catholic Distance University

In a recent episode of "Catholic Lunch Break" on Guadalupe Network Radio, Dr. Sophia Aguirre, president of Catholic Distance University, joins host Wyatt Goolsby.

tion, as shared on "Catholic Lunch Break," offer a compelling glimpse into the future of online learning with a focus on liberal arts education, AI, Ecclesial administration management and big data design that prepares students for success in their careers. "As we embark on

this journey together, may we draw inspiration from CDU's vision and strive to build a world where education nurtures both minds and souls," CDU officials said.

To listen to the full episode, please visit Guadalupe Radio Network.

To watch the full inter-

view please visit Catholic Distance University (youtube.com).

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Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule – Spring 2024

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Sunday, April 28: St. Jude, Glen Dale; 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 5: St. Brendan, Elkins; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 11: St. John the Evangelist, Wellsburg; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 11: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 12: Immaculate Conception, New Cumberland; 8:30 a.m.

Monday, May 13: St. Michael, Wheeling; 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 19: St. Agnes, Charleston; 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 22: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg; 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 25: St. James, Charles Town; 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 25: St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 26: St. Joseph, Martinsburg; 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 1: St. Francis Xavier, Moundsville; 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 8: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston; 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 9: Sacred Heart, Princeton; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 15: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 16: St. John the Evangelist, Summersville; 9:00 a.m.

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Phil Wayman,
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Third Place:

Steve DeLay, Oak Mound Evangelical Church

Remaining finalists

Jamie Gizzi, CrossHeirs Christian Center

Steve Elderbrock, Bridgeport Presbyterian Church

Robert Shingleton, Jewel City Church



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**St. James
Catholic Church**

Second Place:

Clarksburg Baptist Church

Third Place:

Bible Church of God



Remaining finalists

Bridgeport Presbyterian Church

Jewel City Church

Higher Rock

El Vaticano dice que el aborto, la maternidad subrogada, la guerra y la pobreza son ataques a la dignidad humana

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)

-- Ser cristiano significa defender la dignidad humana y eso incluye oponerse al aborto, la pena de muerte, la cirugía de transición de género, la guerra, el abuso sexual y el tráfico de personas, dijo el Dicasterio para la Doctrina de la Fe en un nuevo documento. "No se puede separar la fe de la defensa de la dignidad humana, la evangelización de la promoción de una vida digna y la espiritualidad del compromiso por la dignidad de todos los seres humanos", escribió el cardenal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefecto del dicasterio, en la parte inicial del documento. La declaración, "Dignitas Infinita" ("Dignidad Infinita"), se hizo pública en el Vaticano el 8 de abril. En la presentación del documento, el cardenal Fernández confirmó los informes de que una declaración sobre la dignidad humana y las cuestiones bioéticas -- como el aborto, la eutanasia y la maternidad subrogada -- fue aprobada por los miembros del dicasterio a mediados de 2023, pero el Papa Francisco pidió al dicasterio que hiciera adiciones para "resaltar en el texto algunas temáticas estrechamente relacionadas con el tema de la dignidad, como por ejemplo el drama de la pobreza, la situación de los emigrantes, las violencias contra las mujeres, la trata de personas, la guerra y otros".

En febrero, los cardenales y obispos miembros del dicasterio aprobaron el borrador actualizado del documento, y a finales de marzo el Papa Francisco dio su visto bueno y ordenó su publicación, explicó el cardenal Fernández.

Con sus cinco años de preparación y un proceso de maduración considerable para llegar al texto publicado, escribió, el documento refleja la seriedad y centralidad de la cuestión de la dignidad en el pensamiento cristiano.

El título del documento proviene de un discurso del Ángelus que San Juan Pablo II pronunció en Alemania en 1980 durante un encuentro con personas discapacitadas. Les dijo (según la traducción oficial en español): "Dios nos ha mostrado de un modo insuperable en Jesucristo cuánto ama a cada hombre y cuán inmensa es la dignidad que a través de Él le ha conferido".

El documento está fechado el "2 de abril de 2024, 19º aniversario de la muerte del Papa San Juan Pablo II".

El cardenal Fernández dijo que inicialmente el dicasterio iba a llamar al documento "Más allá de toda circunstancia", que es una afirmación del Papa Francisco de cómo la dignidad humana no se ve disminuida por el estado de desarrollo de una persona o dónde haya nacido o los recursos o talentos que tenga o lo que haya hecho. En su lugar, dijo, eligieron el comentario que hizo San Juan Pablo II, cuya versión en italiano menciona la dignidad infinita.

La declaración del dicasterio señalaba que la Constitución pastoral sobre la Iglesia en el mundo actual del Concilio Vaticano II también enumeraba los ataques a la dignidad humana, desde el aborto y la eutanasia hasta las "condiciones infrahumanas de vida" y las "condiciones laborales degradantes".

Los miembros del dicasterio doctrinal incluyeron la pena de muerte entre las violaciones de "la dignidad inalienable de toda persona humana más allá de cualquier circunstancia" y pidieron que se respete la dignidad de las personas encarceladas.

La declaración denunció la discriminación contra las personas LGBTQ+ y, en particular, que en algunos lugares "se encarcele, torture e incluso prive del bien de la vida, a no pocas personas, únicamente por su orientación sexual".

Pero también condenó la "teoría de género" por ser "extremadamente peligrosa porque borra las diferencias en su pretensión de igualar a todos".

La teoría de género, decía, intenta "negar la mayor diferencia posible entre los seres vivos: la diferencia sexual".

La Iglesia Católica, decía la declaración, enseña que "la vida humana, en todos sus componentes, físicos y espirituales, es un don de Dios, que debe ser acogido con gratitud y puesto al servicio del bien". Citando la exhortación del Papa Francisco "Amoris Laetitia", la declaración dijo que la ideología de género "presenta una sociedad sin diferencias de sexo, y vacía el fundamento antropológico de la familia".

Los miembros del Dicasterio afirmaron que es cierto que existe una diferencia entre el sexo biológico y los roles y comportamientos que una sociedad o

cultura determinada asigna a un varón o a una mujer, pero el hecho de que algunas de esas nociones de lo que significa ser mujer u hombre estén influenciadas por factores culturales, no significa que no existan diferencias entre varones y mujeres biológicos.

"Por lo tanto", continuaba, "debe rechazarse todo intento de ocultar la referencia a la evidente diferencia sexual entre hombres y mujeres".

Citando nuevamente la exhortación del Papa Francisco, la declaración decía: "No podemos separar lo que es masculino y femenino de la obra creada por Dios, que es anterior a todas nuestras decisiones y experiencias, donde hay elementos biológicos que es imposible ignorar".

"De ahí que toda operación de cambio de sexo, por regla general, corra el riesgo de atentar contra la dignidad única que la persona ha recibido desde el momento de la concepción", afirmaba. Sin embargo, la declaración aclaraba que "esto no significa que se excluya la posibilidad que una persona afectada por anomalías genitales, que ya son evidentes al nacer o que se desarrollan posteriormente, pueda optar por recibir asistencia médica con el objetivo de resolver esas anomalías".

Los miembros del dicasterio también advirtieron sobre las implicaciones de cambiar el lenguaje sobre la dignidad humana, citando por ejemplo a quienes proponen las expresiones "dignidad personal" o derechos "de la persona" en lugar de "dignidad humana".

En muchos casos, decían, la propuesta entiende por "persona" sólo "un ser capaz de razonar". En consecuencia, sostienen que la dignidad y los derechos se infieren de la capacidad de conocimiento y libertad, de las que no todos los seres humanos están dotados. Así pues, el niño no nacido no tendría dignidad personal, ni el anciano incapacitado, ni los discapacitados mentales".

La Iglesia Católica, por el contrario, "insiste en el hecho de que la dignidad de toda persona humana, precisamente porque es intrínseca, permanece 'más allá de toda circunstancia'".

La aceptación del aborto, decía, "es señal evidente de una peligrosísima crisis del sentido moral, que es cada vez más incapaz de distinguir entre el bien

y el mal, incluso cuando está en juego el derecho fundamental a la vida".

"El aborto procurado es la eliminación deliberada y directa, como quiera que se realice, de un ser humano en la fase inicial de su existencia, que va de la concepción al nacimiento", decía.

El documento también repitió el llamamiento del Papa Francisco para una prohibición mundial de la maternidad subrogada, que, dijo, "ofende gravemente la dignidad de la mujer y del niño; y se basa en la explotación de la situación de necesidad material de la madre". Con la maternidad subrogada, dijo, "el deseo legítimo de tener un hijo no puede convertirse en un 'derecho al hijo' que no respete la dignidad del propio hijo como destinatario del don gratuito de la vida". La pobreza extrema, la marginación de las personas con discapacidad, los ataques digitales violentos y la guerra también violan la dignidad humana, según el documento.

Aunque reconoce el derecho de las naciones a defenderse de un agresor, el documento insiste en que los conflictos armados "no resolverán los problemas, sino que los aumentarán. Esto es aún más grave en nuestra época, en la que se ha convertido en normal que, fuera del campo de batalla, mueran tantos civiles inocentes".

Sobre el tema de los migrantes y refugiados, los miembros del dicasterio dijeron que aunque "nunca se dirá que no son humanos", muchas políticas migratorias y actitudes populares hacia los migrantes pueden mostrar "que se los considera menos valiosos, menos importantes, menos humanos". La promoción de la eutanasia y el suicidio asistido, decía el documento, utiliza "un concepto erróneo de la dignidad humana para volverla contra la vida misma". La declaración afirmaba: "Ciertamente, la dignidad del enfermo, en condiciones críticas o terminales, exige que todos realicen los esfuerzos adecuados y necesarios para aliviar su sufrimiento mediante unos cuidados paliativos apropiados y evitando cualquier encarnizamiento terapéutico o intervención desproporcionada", pero también insistía en que "el sufrimiento no hace perder al enfermo esa dignidad que le es intrínseca e inalienablemente propia".

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños: La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar www.reportbishopabuse.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite www.reportbishopabuse.org.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números variarán según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anonimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas: La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

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