

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Diocese Announces New Seminarians

A Total of 18 Men Now in Formation for Priesthood



Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Mark Brennan is pictured with the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's seminarians. In the front row, from left, are Andrew Dean, Michael Aiello, Bishop Brennan, Clifton Mastran, Bryan Tedeschi, and Thomas Lough. In the second row, from left, are Joe Derico, Reece Lopatka, Christian Davis, Nathan Schmidt, Chris Nelson, and Sebastian Lasko. In the back row, from left, are Travis Moger; Peter Russman; Dominic Re; Donvito Cortese; David Hensler; Timothy Kawash; and Father Brian Crenwelge, director of Vocations. Not pictured is Michael Tupta who is attending the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — If you want more priests, you must pray for them. This is what Bishop Mark Brennan, the diocese, and the Vocations Office have been stressing year after year. The Catholic faithful heeded that call and their prayers have been answered.

“At the end of the 2000-2021 school year, just three years ago, we had four seminarians. Next month, there will be 18

men in formation for the priesthood for this diocese,” Bishop Brennan said at the Mass at the Heritage Port in Wheeling for the Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival July 28. His announcement was met with applause from those gathered. This, the bishop said, is “the fruit of prayer.”

The seminarians served at the Mass as they were in Wheeling for meetings with Bishop Brennan and the
See “Seminarians” on Page 2

Bishops, Catholics around the World Decry ‘Derision’ of Christianity at Olympics Opening Ceremony

Bishop Cozzens, Chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress Board, Calls for Prayers of Reparation after ‘Heinous’ Depiction at the Ceremony

By Laretta Brown and Caroline de Sury

(OSV News) —The opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games created shock and disbelief as Catholics around the world felt offended by the parody of the Last Supper, which was part of the opening ceremony.

Television cameras showed drag

queens, one of whom wore a crown, seated at a table. The shape of the crown brought to mind a monstrance. The scene was immediately interpreted as a parody of Leonardo da Vinci’s iconic wall painting in Milan’s Dominican convent of the Last Supper.

The drag queen table scene later included a nude singer appearing in the

middle of a fruit basket, to represent Dionysus, ancient Greece’s god of wine.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., spoke out July 27 against the depiction with a special call to prayer for the faithful based on his
See “Derision” on Page 5

Mary’s Refuge Celebrates First Baptism

Mom Shares Story of How Maternity Home and St. Joseph Parish Saved Her and Her Son



Courtesy photo

Tiffany Zimmerman and her son Jaxson are pictured at his baptism at Mary’s Refuge Maternity Home in Martinsburg June 21.

By Colleen Rowan

Tiffany Zimmerman is a young mother who is just over the moon about her baby boy Jaxson’s baptism. Her sweet little guy, who is “always smiling,” received the sacrament June 21 a few months before he celebrates his first birthday on Aug. 6. The joy for this little boy and his mom is contagious in Martinsburg’s Catholic community and has spread throughout St. Joseph Parish and its ministry of Mary’s Refuge Maternity Home—the place Tiffany and Jaxson call home, the place that Tiffany said saved them.

Mary’s Refuge provides a safe haven for young mothers in need in pregnancy and beyond. Last spring, Tiffany found herself to be one of them. She was homeless and staying at a women’s shelter when she found out she was pregnant with Jaxson. She was referred to Mary’s Refuge, and this changed everything.

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Celebrate 'Five with 5' for Bishop Brennan's Fifth Anniversary

By Joyce Bibey

As we honor the fifth anniversary of the installation of Bishop Mark Brennan as the Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, we call upon the faithful to Celebrate Five with 5! This is an opportunity for us to commemorate Bishop Mark's milestone year with gifts Christ taught us were the greatest to give—prayer and works of mercy. Starting Aug. 6 and throughout the year, faithful will be able to go online to <https://dwc.org> and gift their five.

As we learned on his installation day on Aug. 22, 2019, the motto Bishop Mark chose for his Coat of Arms, "Living the Truth in Love," emphasizes that it is in the love of Jesus Christ that we receive the strength to live as God called and Jesus instilled in us.

Gift of Prayer: Choose to mirror the prayers of Bishop Mark. His daily prayerful habits include: Praying the Rosary during a road trip for pregnant women as well as the husband/father; for engaged/newly married couples; for the intentions of the faithful of the diocese; and for Vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life.

Gift of Deed: Opportunities abound through Catholic Charities WV and our local parish and Catholic organizations' efforts. Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the hungry, Give Drink to the thirsty, Shelter the homeless, Visit the sick – the present of your presence with the sick physically, mentally, and spiritually, Visit the prisoners – if not in person do it through ministry of cards/prayers/Mass intentions, Bury the dead – Respect for life God created through prayer, in Mass intentions, or by visiting a cemetery, and Give alms to the poor – gifts of treasure in a way that is pleasing to God.

Your digital The Catholic Spirit and FaithInWV e-bulletin, Aug. 9, will have more information from the Diocese and Catholic Charities of WV.

Seminarians...

Cont'd from Page 1

Vocations Office that weekend. The seven new seminarians were introduced at the Wheeling Serra Club's Burse Dinner at Central Catholic High School in Wheeling July 25.

Father Brian Crenwelge, director of Vocations for the diocese, is proud of these seven men, who are beginning their formal discernment in seminary. "They are prayerful men who truly desire to do God's will," he said. "I know our Lord will guide them in their discernment to see if He is calling them to serve as his priests. They have a love for the people and for the state of West Virginia in general. I am excited to see what the Lord has in store for them. These men said yes to discerning their vocations in seminary. I hope they will be an example to more men to say yes to that initial willingness to discern their vocation."

The new seminarians are:

Reece Lopatka, 24, from St. John University Parish in Morgantown. He is a graduate of Danville Area High School in Danville, Pa., and West Virginia University where he received a teaching degree in 2023. "I am most excited for this introductory year's emphasis on spiritual and human formation in a retreat context: being removed from familiar settings, abstaining from digital technology, and even being distanced for a time from close

friends and family for a unique and privileged opportunity to simply listen—undistracted—for the Lord's silent voice through intense prayer, reflection, and discernment before the Blessed Sacrament," he said. Lopatka will attend The Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, Propaedeutic Year.

Thomas Lough, 21, is a parishioner of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling and a graduate of Penn Foster High School. "One thing I'm looking forward to in seminary is praying the Divine Office with the community," he shared. Lough will attend Pope John Paul II College Seminary in Washington, Third College.

Sebastian Lasko, 18, is a member of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Parkersburg and a graduate of Parkersburg Catholic High School. "I am greatly looking forward to furthering my Catholic education and discernment in the seminary," Lasko said. He will attend The Pontifical College Josephinum, First College.

Andrew Dean, 23, is also a member of St. John University Parish in Morgantown. He holds a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering with a minor in music technologies from WVU. Dean is originally from Manassas, Va., where he attended Osbourn High School. "One thing I am looking forward to in seminary is the opportunity to live in community, See "Seminarians" on Page 3



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

Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or 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:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other 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 WV. EthicsPoint 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.

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. 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; sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Training may be completed online or via live workshop. For information, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

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with Fr. Chapin

Sunday Mornings

6:30 WTOV FOX 9	Wheeling-Steubenville
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8:00 WBOY NBC 12	Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
6:30 WOAY ABC 4	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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Mary's Refuge

Giving Moms a Safe Haven in Pregnancy and Beyond

By Colleen Rowan

Mary's Refuge Maternity Home in Martinsburg provides a safe haven for mothers in pregnancy and beyond—a real home for many women and their children in need.

Long before the historic overturning of Roe v. Wade and the U.S. bishops' call for Catholics to not only work for an end to abortion but to also help mothers after the birth of their beautiful babies, plans were underway at St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg to make Mary's Refuge a reality. This ministry was established in 2023 after two years of planning with the intention of saving babies from abortion and providing support for their mothers.

Father Tom Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph's, was approached by Kim Roche in the summer of 2021. She saw the former convent as a great place for the maternity home. "This was a unique opportunity to do something that would make a positive impact for young women in need," he said. "We wanted to provide both a viable alternative to abortion and a safe home where the women and their babies would be able to receive love and care."

Right now, there are 10 women living in the home. Three of them are pregnant and due in September. A total of 10 children, under the age of 5, live there in that safe haven with their moms.



Allison Ferrell, executive director of Mary's Refuge, said the home gives moms in need a safe place to have their babies, have time to recover, and recoup without worrying about "Where's my next meal? Am I going to be homeless?"

"We're there to support them," Ferrell said, "especially during that time when they need to rest and heal and bond with their baby."

Following this important time, she said, the ministry helps the women to work toward independence, save money, pay off bills, or go to school. Mary's Refuge partners with Blue Ridge Technical College and offers scholarships. Classes are also held in the home for the women in the areas of cooking, parenting, and budgeting. "Basically, anything that they need to get back on their feet," Ferrell said.

Mary's Refuge partners with EPIC Early Head Start and Youth Advocate and provides resources for the women and their children when they leave. It is a Catholic organization with the Chapel of Sts. Anne and Joachim inside the home. However, residents are not required to be Catholic or religious. The women and their children have their own bedrooms. There are laundry facilities and rooms for infant care, relaxation, and house meetings.

Mary's Refuge is made possible because of private donors. To find out more or to donate, visit marysrefuge.com.

Baptism...

Cont'd from Page 1

"I don't have friends. I'm coming from a really bad background," Tiffany said. "I was completely lost and alone. I had been kind of shunned by everybody. So, when I came into this program the people at the parish had become our family. ... I would never have dreamt that I would have the kind of support that I have here."

That support completely changed her life. Tiffany had a safe and loving home through her pregnancy and birth of her sweet little Jaxson. She is now a full-time college student and works in the daycare at Mary's Refuge, serving as the house mother. The ministry also helped her secure a vehicle.

"Three and a half years ago, I was homeless with a drug addiction," said Tiffany, who is now an addiction recovery coach. "I would never dream that my life could be this good and I owe it to the people in this parish."

"She's doing really good," said Allison Ferrell, executive director of Mary's Refuge. "She's taking on a lot of responsibility."

Along with Tiffany and Jaxson, there are nine other women living at the home who have found that safe haven they so desperately need. Three of the women are pregnant and due in September. There are also 10 children, all under the age of 5, living with their moms at the home.

After hours, Allison said Tiffany is there to take care of emergencies that may come up and keeps an eye on things in the evening in her role as night matron.

"We are so proud of Tiffany and how far she has come," said Father Tom Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph's. "She has been an inspiration for all our parishioners. We have been blessed by Tiffany and Jaxson and their desire to be a part of St. Joseph Parish."

Allison proudly added that she and her husband, Jeff, had the honor of being Jaxson's godparents. "We're just so excited to be part of that journey for her and



Courtesy photo

Father Tom Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg (left), begins the baptism of Jaxson Zimmerman, held by his mother Tiffany, in the chapel at Mary's Refuge Maternity Home in Martinsburg June 21. Also pictured are Jaxson's godparents Allison and Jeff Ferrell and Deacon Patrick Michel, permanent deacon at St. Joseph's, who assisted. Allison is executive director of Mary's Refuge, where Tiffany and Jaxson live.

Jaxson," she said.

Little Jaxson is very much like his mom, Allison added. "He is always smiling. He just loves everybody," she said. "It doesn't matter who is talking to him, he has a big smile, and he has two little teeth on the bottom."

Having Jaxson baptized was very important to Tiffany, who is Catholic. What made it even more special for her, was that Father Gallagher baptized Jaxson in the Chapel of Sts. Anne and Joachim at Mary's Refuge.

"In our home, which meant even more to me because this place saved my whole pregnancy," Tiffany said. "It's one of the main reasons why me and my son have the life we do now. I want my son to have a good relationship with God, because I didn't always have that close relationship because of my struggles, and I wanted him to have that peace to know God from the very beginning. And that gives me peace to know that he's going to have a good relationship from the very start of his life; and he has people in his life, like his godparents, that are going to guide him in

the right direction."

Father Gallagher said, "I was elated to baptize Jaxson in the Chapel of Sts. Anne and Joachim in Mary's Refuge. Not only is it awesome to help foster new life, but I am overjoyed to bring eternal life in Christ through baptism."

Deacon Patrick Michel, permanent deacon at St. Joseph's, joyfully assisted at the baptism.

Tiffany has shared her story many times at parishes in the area and at the Mary's Refuge Gala last fall, beaming about the people in the parish who have become her and Jaxson's family.

"They're all coming to Jaxson's first birthday," she said. "They all showed up for his baptism. They all come down and play with him and check on him and spend time with him and make sure that we're OK. It's absolutely amazing."

"I tell my son, when you grow up, you're going to realize you have such a huge family," Tiffany said as she fought back tears. "He has so many people that love him and love me and just want the best for us."

Seminarians...

Cont'd from Page 2

especially praying communal hours with my seminarian brothers," he said. Dean will attend Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., Propaedeutic Year.

Christian Davis, 22, is also a member of St. John University Parish and studied history at WVU. "I am excited for this prayerful time to discern what God is calling me to in life," he said. Davis will attend Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Propaedeutic Year.

David Hensler, 24, is a member of St. John Parish in St. Marys. He holds an associate's degree in nursing and is a registered nurse (RN). "What am I looking forward to the most in seminary? The sense of community with the other seminarians as we discern God's call together," he shared. Hensler will attend The Pontifical College Josephinum, Propaedeutic Year.

Chris Nelson, 18, is a member of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town and a graduate of St.

John's Catholic Prep in Buckeystown, Md. He has six siblings and will attend Pope John Paul II College Seminary, First College.

In Wheeling, the new seminarians were joined by the diocese's returning seminarians: Michael Aiello, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Second Theology; Donvito Cortese, The Pontifical College Josephinum, Third College; Joe Derico, Pope John Paul II College Seminary in Washington, Fourth College; Timothy Kawash, The Pontifical College Josephinum, Third Philosophy; Clifton Mastran, Pope John Paul II College Seminary in Washington, Fourth Theology; Travis Moger, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Fourth Theology; Dominic Re, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Second Theology; Peter Russman, The Pontifical College Josephinum, First Philosophy; Nathan Schmidt, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, First Theology; Bryan Tedeschi, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Second Theology; and Michael Tupta, Pontifical North American College in Rome, First Theology. Tupta was unable to be present in Wheeling as he is already in Rome.

National Eucharistic Congress was Lifechanging

By Joyce Bibey

It's no exaggeration — there are absolutely no words to adequately express the emotions, energy, and breathtaking reverence that our 250+ strong WV delegation at the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) experienced.

How do you put into words the pounding of your heart, the tears of sheer joy, and the intense sense that the Holy Spirit was traveling through our veins?

Everyday a sea of faithful of 50,000 to more than 60,000 at a time packed Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center. More than 200 bishops, an estimated 1,000 priests, well over 500 seminarians, and countless religious orders clothed like us and thousands more in robes and habits of various humble colors and designs joined together to celebrate Christ's Presence in the Eucharist and learn to love Christ and our neighbor MORE!

"We've lived an experience of Heaven," said Bishop Andrew Cozzens in his address to the faithful at the closing Mass of the NEC. Bishop Cozzens, of the Diocese of Crookston, Minnesota, serves as chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress.

All 50 states, 17 countries, 43 languages, and faithful ages 0-96 were represented at the NEC and the Eucharistic procession on Saturday, July 20. They were all to witness and celebrate what Bishop Mark Brennan's clarion call has been — to proclaim and praise that "The Eucharist is nothing less than Jesus Christ in Person."

"The Eucharist is a foretaste of heaven," Bishop Cozzens emphasized. "At our (NEC) procession, the thousands upon thousands in the streets (walking and watching) became truly an image of the Church as our Holy Father says, 'in salita' —going out; and going where? Going to Heaven, following Jesus, walking together as the Church going to Heaven."

The congress now transitions to the National Eucharistic Revival's Year of Mission – Walk with One.

"Invite one, and unite as one," Bishop Cozzens said.

Go Forward, Invite One, Share Your Gift

Speaking to the audience and all Catholics (70 million in number) in the U.S., Bishop Cozzens said, "This year we have invited you to walk with one person. What would happen if each of you thought of one person you know that has been away from the faith, and you decided to pray for them, befriend them, and invite them to take one step closer to Jesus and His Church.... What would happen if 70 million Catholics did that? My question to you is will you do it?"

"Go, and tell others of the gift (CHRIST JESUS) you have received."



Joyce Bibey photos

Clockwise from top: Faithful are gathered at Eucharistic Adoration at Lucas Oil Stadium; one of the bus groups for the West Virginia delegation pauses before heading into the National Eucharistic Congress Closing Mass July 21; a few diocesan Parish Point Persons for the Eucharistic Revival (from left) Joel John, Teresa Blaker, Edward Borkowski, Chuck Griffin, and Mary Malamisura, gather after a special recognition event where they were announced as the Eucharistic Missionary leaders for their local communities; and Seminarian Dominic Re speed walks to the lineup for the closing Mass.

Your Parish Point Persons for the Eucharistic Revival in our local parishes are now Parish Point Missionaries, Bishop Cozzens said, charged to rally all the faithful as true missionaries of Christ.

Throughout the next year diocesan and parish leaders will emphasize the lessons and energy of this moment — this movement in the Church with small groups in our parishes, vicariates, and diocese.

May it lead to a transformation — wanting to be a missionary and form small groups in their parishes—we have hopes that this movement of Eucharistic renewal that's been born through the USCCB initiative will continue far into the future, Bishop

Cozzens said during his first press conference at the congress.

As a diocesan bishop, Cozzens noted that in the last 10 years there are 30 percent less people in church (in his rural Minnesota diocese), reflective of that is happening to many dioceses.

"If the church herself doesn't embrace a missionary culture we will fade," he said.

Bishop Cozzens wants us to establish a missionary culture — a culture with the same joy, compassion, love, energy, and reception that all the faithful in Indianapolis for the NEC were part. "My hope is that I can walk with my people young and old to be able to make that interior transformation — become a missionary Church sharing

the gift of Christ," he said. "We all should do that. Invite one."

The NEC Eucharistic Procession, Our Walk Towards Christ

Let us be a great witness of the Lord for the sake of the world!

The purpose of this and all of our Eucharistic processions are "simple," said Bishop Cozzens.

"We hold up the Lord and we say that we love Him; and people see that we really treat Him as if we love Him," he said. "We walk along and sing songs of love — so simple, so beautiful. We take him out into the streets. It is so consoling to the heart and a great witness to the world."

More than 80,000 faithful processed or crowded the streets along the mile-long route, there to witness and be with Christ present in the Eucharist placed in the glorious four-feet tall golden monstrance that was blessed by Pope Francis for this historical holy moment in the U.S.

Grace filled moments were experienced time and time again by our WV faithful as they waited for the procession, during the procession, at the Indiana War Memorial where the Monstrance was displayed for all to see and praise in song and reverent prayer, and even in the leisurely walk back to our starting place — all felt the Presence of Christ!

Between sipping and sometimes chugging their water WV faithful were making memories. Like when:

- Dominic Massimino (of St. Agnes, Shepherdstown) and Fran Inman (of St. Joseph, Martinsburg) had WV faithful and dozens from others states around formed an impromptu amateur choir singing a cappella Communion songs like Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! "He is near us.... Bread of heaven...!"

- Young adults Grace Cronen (of Morgantown) and Adam Marquart (of Wheeling), leading the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

- Barbara Napple (of St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling), who stumbled scraping her knee and toes, but was immediately swarmed by loving faithful including Lorraine Javorsky of Maryland (parishioner of St. Joseph, Martinsburg), who cleaned her wounds and bandaged her ever so gently to enable her to finish the spirit fulfilling walk with Christ.

- Deacon Harry Evans, who maneuvered an electric scooter down curbs, through the streets, and across the memorial lawn, because even with his many aching bones, he was not going to miss this chance of a lifetime. An experience to be part of a moment in our Church that generations of Catholics have never witnessed in the U.S.

- Parents Dr. Michael and Maria (Rendinell) Tupta, took every step closer to Christ with prayers certainly going to the heavens for their son, our

See "Congress" on Page 5

By the Numbers

By Joyce Bibey

More than 160 WV faithful took advantage of the full five-day event pass for the National Eucharistic Congress, 77 attended for one or more of the days. The approximate 270 from WV parishes and missions were not only from our state, but also our bordering Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky.

In addition to Bishop Mark Brennan 12 priests registered and attended through the diocese including Fathers Sojan Xavier, Shinto Mathew, Tijo George, Steve Vallelonga, Chris Turner, Priyesh Sebastian, Carlos Melocoton, Rayappa Kurakula, Jojan Joseph, Sebastian Devasya, Ram Dakkamadugula, and Doney Chacko.

Three deacons from WV included Harry Evans, James McCullough, and Aaron Talbott. Plus religious Sisters Martha Gomez, Placxedece Mugore, Agatha Munyanyi, Placida Shumba, Marita Sithole, and other sisters and missionaries who serve our Hispanic faithful in WV.

Congress...

Cont'd from Page 4

diocesan Seminarian Michael Tupta, whom they would be taking to the airport in a few days for he would be going to Rome for Major Seminary at the NAC (Pontifical North American College) for the next several years.

With the sun beating down on the seemingly endless crowd

of faithful of all ages knelt, wept, sang, raised their joyful arms, or simply sat before the Lord on July 20, 2024.

In his words to the immense crowd, Bishop Cozzens said, "Jesus, today is a symbol, a sign of our earthly pilgrimage, and it's not over.... We know that you want all to follow you. Jesus, we will walk with them.... Bring them to us... to walk towards you."



Joyce Bibey photo

Bishop Mark Brennan is excited to meet up with some of the WV delegation including Deacon Aaron Talbott's children on the morning of the National Eucharistic Congress Eucharistic Procession Day.

Derision...

Cont'd from Page 1

prayer at the 10th National Eucharistic Congress just one week prior. He recalled the powerful experience when tens of thousands gathered in adoration and prayers for healing July 19 in Lucas Oil Stadium. "We humbled ourselves in the presence of Jesus, Our Lord and Savior," he wrote. "Recognizing that if one member of the Body of Christ suffers, we all suffer, we prayed together for healing and forgiveness."

Only one week later, he continued, "where the newly restored Cathedral of Notre Dame stands as an iconic reminder to our belief in the importance of the Mass, which makes spiritually present to us the Last Supper, nearly 1 billion men, women and children, in person and through live telecast, witnessed the public mockery of the Mass, the 'source and summit of the Christian life.'"

"During the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics, the famous DaVinci Masterpiece The Last Supper was depicted in heinous fashion," he said, "leaving us in such shock, sorrow and righteous anger that words cannot describe it."

"Jesus experienced his Passion anew Friday night in Paris when his Last Supper was publicly defamed," he emphasized. "As his living body, we are invited to enter into this moment of passion with him, this moment of public shame, mockery, and persecution. We do this through prayer and fasting. And our greatest prayer — in season and out of season — is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

In light of the seriousness of the incident, Bishop Cozzens called on the church throughout the world to gather at Mass "with renewed zeal" and "pray for healing and forgiveness for all those who participated in this mockery."

"Let us commit ourselves this week to greater prayer and fasting in reparation for this sin," he urged. "Perhaps you could attend Mass once more this week or do an extra holy hour?"

He concluded with some advice to the faithful about discussing the incident, encouraging them to do so "with love and charity, but also with firmness."

"France and the entire world are saved by the love poured out through the Mass, which came to us through the Last Supper," he wrote. "Inspired by the many martyrs who shed their blood to witness to the truth of the Mass, we will not stand aside and quietly abide as the world mocks our greatest gift from the Lord Jesus. Rather, through our prayer and fasting, we will ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen us with the virtue of fortitude so that we may preach Christ — our Lord and Savior, truly present in the Eucharist — for the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls."

The French bishops issued a statement July 27 deploring the scenes at the opening of the Olympic Games. The ceremony, they said, "unfortunately included scenes of mockery and derision of Christianity, which we deeply regret."

"We are thinking of all the Christians on every continent who have been hurt by the outrageousness and provocation of certain

scenes. We want them to understand that the Olympic celebration goes far beyond the ideological biases of a few artists," the bishops stressed.

Bishop Emmanuel Gobilliard of Digne, the special representative of the Holy See for the 2024 Paris Olympics, said that he "did not watch the whole opening ceremony," as he was praying.

He told OSV News however that on the morning following the ceremony, when he saw the images of the controversial scene massively shared on social media, he was "deeply hurt."

"What shocked me most is that the freedom of spirit and tone claimed by those who set this up shouldn't be directed against others," Bishop Gobilliard said. "You can make fun of your own ideas, laugh at yourself, why not. But to mock the faith and religion of others in this way ... is very shocking. That was my first reaction."

Bishop Gobilliard said that "all the Christians who watched it suffered this derision," adding that "many Christian athletes suffered it..."

The parody of the Last Supper was not the only ambiguous symbol at the opening ceremony. What also stirred controversy was a horsewoman dressed in armor, perched on a metal horse and galloping down the Seine with the Olympic flag — a scene in which some recognized St. Joan of Arc. But according to the organizers, it represented Sequana, the Celtic divinity who inhabited the Seine. Another controversial scene depicted a singer impersonating the decapitated body of Queen Marie

Antoinette.

Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, went to social media July 27. He said after coming back home from the National Eucharistic Congress, in the city he said he loves — Paris — he saw "this gross mockery of the Last Supper."

Bishop Barron said that France, called the eldest daughter of the church, and Paris, the city of saints, "felt evidently ... the right thing to do is to mock this very central moment in Christianity where Jesus in his Last Supper gives his body and blood in anticipation of the cross."

"Would they ever dare mock Islam in a similar way?" Bishop Barron asked, saying, "We all know the answer to that." Bishop Barron stressed that in this "deeply secularist, post-modern society," Christians should "resist" and "make our voices heard."

Bishop Donald J. Hying of Madison, Wisconsin, encouraged in a post on X that "In reparation for the blasphemy in Paris, let's fast and pray, renew our devotion to the Eucharist, the Sacred Heart and the Virgin Mary."

Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, posted on X July 27 that his "vocabulary is not varied enough to find a word for the feeling in the pit of my stomach."

He said he hasn't "watched the Olympics in decades" and that "the agendas just use the athletes; they deserve more respect. So do people of Christian Faith."

(Lauretta Brown is culture editor for OSV News and Caroline de Sury writes for OSV News from Paris.)

August 2, 2024

Dear Jubilarians,

Over the years I have given blessings or offered Mass for a couple celebrating their wedding anniversary of twenty-five, fifty or even sixty years. Surrounded by their children, grandchildren, friends and parish priest, the couple often looked back on many years of faithful love and thanked God for His grace as they asked for His continued blessings. Anniversaries remind us to remember God's blessings and be grateful for them.

You who are religious or diocesan priests celebrating major anniversaries of religious profession or ordination may, just like married couples, look back on the many blessings God has given you and be grateful for His fidelity as you served His people. Whether you are retired from active ministry or are still serving full-time, you have experienced the joys and the sorrows that come with being God's servant. The Lord has stood by you in good times and bad.

Our lay people appreciate your service and your solidarity with them. Be assured that they count on your prayers. We are all members of the one Body of Christ on earth living the different vocations to which He has called us. The vocations to marriage, dedicated single life, ordained ministry and the consecrated life form together the whole Body and support one another. We cannot do without any of them. I trust you have come to know the love and kindness of the lay faithful, just as you have loved and served them.

May our loving Lord, who served rather than demanding to be served, sustain you in your vocation. Pray that more men and women may respond to God's call, so that the Church may be fully equipped for its mission.

Much peace and joy be yours now and in the future!

Fraternally in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Dear Jubilarians

As the Episcopal Vicar of Clergy for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, I am filled with great joy and gratitude as we celebrate the jubilee year for each and every one of you. This is a special occasion to honor and recognize your unwavering commitment and dedication to the ministry, and to express our deepest gratitude for your service to the faithful of West Virginia.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we are reminded of the words of Jesus, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21) Your tireless efforts and selfless service have truly embodied the spirit of these words, reflecting the love and compassion of Christ in all that you do. Your imitation of Jesus in serving others has been an inspiration to us all, and your impact on the diocese has been immeasurable.

The Book of Romans teaches us to "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:12) Your dedication to your ministry has exemplified this message, bringing hope and comfort to those in need, and steadfastly upholding the values of faith, love, and compassion.

As we gather to celebrate your jubilee year, we express our profound gratitude for your faithful and devoted service. May the light of your unwavering devotion continue to inspire us all, and may God's grace and blessings be abundantly bestowed upon each of you as you continue your sacred journey in the service of others.

With deep appreciation and congratulations, I remain
Sincerely in Christ,

Father Sebastian Devasya
Episcopal Vicar of Clergy
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is with great joy that we welcome the time to celebrate our Jubilarians. Jubilee time means stepping back and remembering the highlights of your years of ministerial service, giving thanks for all the blessings, and acknowledging God's handiwork through your ministry! Your faithfulness

and your promises reflect God's unconditional love. We appreciate your service in our Diocese in West Virginia and hope that each one of you can find time and space to celebrate this milestone well, even as you journey on!

Sister Martha Gomez, RGS
Delegate for Consecrated Life

IN GRATITUDE OF OUR CLERGY & RELIGIOUS IN WEST VIRGINIA

**FOR YOUR YEARS OF FAITHFUL MINISTRY
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF
WHEELING-CHARLESTON, WE THANK YOU.
OUR PRAYERS AND HEARTFELT WISHES
ARE WITH YOU AS YOU CELEBRATE YOUR
JUBILEE ANNIVERSARIES.**



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50th Anniversary, Father George W. Pucciarelli

Father George W. Pucciarelli is originally from Boston, Massachusetts, and is a 1970 graduate of Boston College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts. He received his Master of Divinity from St. John's Seminary in Boston and was ordained to the priesthood on May 18, 1974, for the Archdiocese of Boston. He was appointed associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in the archdiocese in 1974.



Father Pucciarelli served the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, from 1981 to 2002. He was associate pastor of the Naval Academy from 1984 to 1987 and pastor of Quantico Catholic Church from 1990 to 1993.

In 1995, Father Pucciarelli became the chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps, overseeing 300 chaplains and 300 religious program specialists around the world. His other career assignments include: Brigade Chaplain, U.S. Naval Academy; ship's chaplain, USS INCHON; Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Va.; Senior Catholic Priest, 2nd Marine Division during Desert Shield/Desert Storm; Chaplain, Marine Forces Atlantic; and Deputy Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps.

Father Pucciarelli is a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus; was national chaplain of the Sons of the Union Veterans; auxiliary chaplain for the Massachusetts State Police; and was chaplain to Needham, Massachusetts, Police Department and Fire Department. He also completed a critical incident stress disorder course and a Menninger Clinic suicide prevention course.

Father Pucciarelli retired from the Navy in 2002 and was appointed pastor of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town in 2003, serving there until 2006. He was then appointed priest-in-residence at St. Bernadette Parish in Hedgesville in 2006 and served there until 2020. Father Pucciarelli retired from active ministry on June 24, 2020.

*Congratulations on
50 Years of Priesthood!*

Father Pucciarelli



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Father George W. Pucciarelli

Happy 50th Anniversary of Priesthood

In 1995, Father George W. Pucciarelli became chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps, overseeing 300 chaplains and 300 religious program specialists around the world. Before that, he served as Brigade Chaplain, U.S. Naval Academy; ship's chaplain, USS INCHON; Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Va.; Senior Catholic Priest, 2nd Marine Division during Desert Shield/Desert Storm; Chaplain, Marine Forces Atlantic; and Deputy Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps.



Father George W. Pucciarelli, circa 1999

Thank you for
serving our country and
the Eastern Panhandle
of Our Diocese of
Wheeling-Charleston

Ad multos annos!

**St. Joseph Parish,
Martinsburg, West Virginia**

Our congratulations to

Clergy and Women Religious of West Virginia

Celebrating their Jubilee Anniversaries in 2024

75th Anniversary

☞ Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ

70th Anniversary

☞ Sister M. Joanne Obrochta, SAC
☞ Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ
☞ Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher, CSJ

65th Anniversary

☞ Sister Mary Clark, CSJ
☞ Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ
☞ Sister Carole Anne Riley, CDP

60th Anniversary

☞ Sister Doris Crinkey, CSJ
☞ Sister Ileana Fernandez, CSJ
☞ Sister Janice Landwehr, CSJ

50th Anniversary

☞ Sister Beritha Mashu, SJI
☞ Father George Pucciarelli
☞ Deacon A. Ray Shaw, III

25th Anniversary

☞ Very Rev. Joseph M. Konikattil, V.F.
☞ Father Michael O. Nwokocho
☞ Sister Paula Ugochukwu Ude, SJS

The Intelligencer.

Wheeling News-Register

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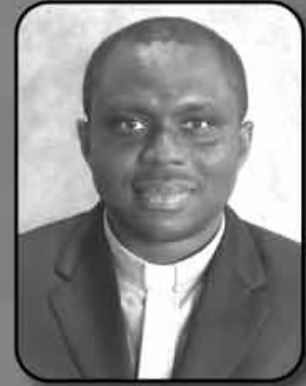
Father George Pucciarelli
50 years



Deacon A. Ray Shaw, III
50 years



Very Rev. Joseph M. Konikattil, V.F.
25 years



Father Michael O. Nwokocha
25 years



Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ
75 years



Sister M. Joanne Obrochta, SAC
70 years



Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ
70 years



Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher, CSJ
70 years



Sister Mary Clark, CSJ
65 years



Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ
65 years



Sister Carole Anne Riley, CDP
65 years



Sister Doris Crinkey, CSJ
60 years



Sister Ileana Fernandez, CSJ
60 years



Sister Janice Landwehr, CSJ
60 years



Sister Beritha Mashu, SJI
50 years



Sister Paula Ugochukwu Ude, SJS
25 years

*May God bless you richly for
your years of service.*



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50th Anniversary, Deacon A. Ray Shaw, III

Deacon A. Ray Shaw, III, was born May 2, 1936, in Grafton. He received a bachelor of science in pharmacy from West Virginia University in 1958 and went on to receive a Master of Science in Pharmacology at WVU in 1962. A pharmacist by training, he taught nursing students at Alderson-Broadus College in Phillipi, where he lived with his wife Anne and three daughters—Rebecca Lawson Shaw, Sarah Anne Shaw Jones Sigler, and Susan Elizabeth Shaw McBee—until his retirement.



Deacon Shaw completed his diaconate formation at St. John's Abbey & University, Collegeville, Minn., from 1970 to 1974. He was ordained a permanent deacon on Oct. 18, 1974, by Bishop Joseph H. Hodges. At that time, Deacon Shaw was one of about 220 permanent deacons in the U.S.

For almost 40 years, Deacon Shaw served as permanent deacon and pastoral associate at St. Elizabeth Parish in Phillipi from Oct. 18, 1974, to Jan. 1, 2014. He also served as chaplain for Catholic students at Alderson Broaddus from 1974 to 1975.

Deacon Shaw was a consultant at St. Elizabeth's as well as St. Augustine Parish in Grafton from 2008 to 2014, and has served on the Religious Unity Commission. He is a passionate ecumenist and served on the Diocesan Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the diocese's Diaconate Executive Committee.

Deacon Shaw retired from active ministry on Jan. 1, 2014. He currently lives in Martinsburg and attends St. Agnes Parish in Shepherdstown, where he helps out as needed.

Happy Anniversary, Jubilarians of 2024

We are grateful for your life-long ministry and service in our diocese. Be assured of our prayers in your Jubilee Year and always.



SERRA CLUB
of Wheeling, West Virginia

The Wheeling Serra Club is a member of Serra International, which exists to foster and promote vocations to the Catholic priesthood and religious life and to encourage its members to fulfill their own Christian vocations to service. Find out more about the Serra Club and membership at the address below.

wheelingserra.org



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Anniversaries this year.

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The Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are pleased to honor

DEACON RAY SHAW

On the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination to the
Order of Permanent Deacons



‘A true pioneer of the restored permanent diaconate’



Fifty years of faithful service to the clergy and people of West Virginia is reason enough to honor Deacon Ray. But there's more to his story than meets the eye. After a hiatus of nearly a millennium, the Second Vatican Council restored the diaconate in 1964 as a permanent order. It took another seven years for the US Bishops to finalize Guidelines for Deacon Formation and Ministry. That was in 1971. Ray jumped at the chance. Even if it meant having to juggle work and family life. A pharmacist by training, he taught nursing students at Alderson-Broadus College in Phillippi, W.Va., where he lived with his wife Anne and three daughters—Rebecca Lawson Shaw, Sarah Anne Shaw Jones Sigler, and Susan Elizabeth Shaw McBee—until his retirement.

Deacon Shaw was the first West Virginian to be ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston by

Bishop Joseph H. Hodges in 1974. At the time there were about 220 permanent deacons in the United States. That makes him a true pioneer of the restored permanent diaconate. Deacon Ray cherished his formation at St. John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minn. He returned every few years to visit his teachers and mentors. He is particularly fond of Saint John's Illuminated Bible developed there. Should you receive a card or note from the good deacon, it will inevitably be one of the many reproduction pieces available from his alma mater. Deacon Ray is a passionate ecumenist and served on the Diocesan Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Diaconate Executive Committee. For many years, Deacon Ray served at St. Elizabeth Parish in Phillippi, W.Va. He currently lives in Martinsburg, and attends St. Agnes Parish in Shepherdstown where he helps out as needed. Join us in congratulating Deacon Ray on this important Jubilee.

25th Anniversary, Very Rev. Joseph M. Konikattil, V.F.

Very Rev. Joseph M. Konikattil, V.F., is originally from Idukki, Kerala, India, and is a 1993 graduate of St. Anthony's College and a 1999 graduate of Oriens Theological College—both in Shillong, Meghalayn, India. He received a Master of Arts in history in 2006, a Master of Arts in English in 2009, a Master of Arts in education in 2010, and his doctorate in American literature in 2013. He was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Joseph Mittathany for the Archdiocese of Imphal, Manipur, India on April 28, 1999. In India, he served as secretary of Diocesan Fraternity from 2009 to 2010, a member of the Diocesan Senate from 2008 to 2012, a member of the Diocesan Finance Committee from 2008 to 2011, and director of the Catholic Education Society from 2008 to 2012. He was vice principal, principal, and pastor of Catholic schools and parishes in India and dean of St. Thomas



Seminary in Imphal.

He came to West Virginia in 2017 and was appointed associate pastor of St. Paul Parish in Weirton. A year later, he was appointed administrator of St. Peter the Fisherman Parish in Fairmont and chaplain of the Knights of Columbus Council #942. In 2019, he was appointed to Presbyteral Council and appointed designated pastor of St. Mary Central School and Notre Dame High School in Clarksburg. He was appointed pastor of St. Peter the Fisherman and associate vicar forane of the Clarksburg Vicariate in 2021 and designated pastor of Fairmont Catholic School in 2022. He was incardinated into the diocese in 2022. He was again appointed designated pastor of St. Mary's Central and Notre Dame in 2023. He also is a diocesan consultant and is a member of the diocese's International Priest Committee and Clergy Personnel Committee.

25th Anniversary, Father Michael O. Nwokocha

Father Michael O. Nwokocha is originally from Nigeria and is a 1999 graduate of Seat of Wisdom Seminary in Owerri, Nigeria. He holds bachelor's degrees in philosophy and theology.

Father Nwokocha was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Anthony Ilonu for the Diocese of Okigwe in Nigeria on Aug. 28, 1999. In Nigeria, he was a teacher at St. Peter's Seminary from 1994 to 1995, associate pastor of All Saints in Avutu from 1999 to 2000, and pastor of St. Jude Umueze II in Ehime Mbano from 2000 to 2003. He then became pastor of St. Theresa Church in Annotto Bay, Jamaica in 2008 where he served until 2011. He then moved to Nyssa, Oregon, in 2012 and served as pastor of St. Bridget of Kildare Parish until 2018.

He came to West Virginia in 2018 and was appointed chaplain at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital and of the hospital's Continuous Care Center.

**Congratulations, Father Joe**

on your 25th anniversary of ordination to priesthood



We THANK YOU for being a blessing to all of us at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish and Fairmont Catholic School. Through your ministry of teaching us that "God is always with us" our faith has become stronger and our lives are richer through our love for the Sacrament of the Eucharist and our Blessed Mother. We pray that God will continue to bless you with His Grace and Mercy.

The Parish of St. Peter the Fisherman & Fairmont Catholic School

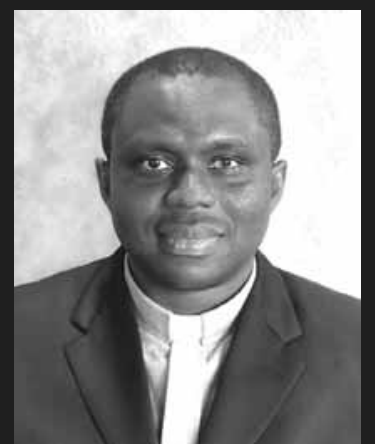
*Wishing Our Chaplain a Happy Anniversary
as he celebrates 25 Years of Priesthood*



**Father Michael O.
Nwokocha**

Chaplain of

WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital
and the Continuous Care Center



WVU Medicine

WHEELING HOSPITAL

75th Anniversary, Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ

Sister Caroline Benken entered religious life from St. John Fisher Parish in Newtown, Ohio, and professed vows in 1954. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from Our Lady of Cincinnati College, a master's in education from Xavier University (Cincinnati), and a master's in theological studies from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. She taught and was principal in Catholic schools in the Cincinnati area for 28 years. After teaching, she joined St. Francis Xavier (Cincinnati) as a pastoral associate, a position she held for 18 years. She was then elected to congregational leadership and served on the leadership team for eight years until retiring from active ministry in 2007. She currently resides at Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling where she is active in prayer ministry.

**70th Anniversary, Sister M. Joanne Obrochta, SAC**

Sister M. Joanne Obrochta, SAC, a native of West Virginia, and member of the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine), entered the Congregation on December 28, 1951 making her first profession of vows on August 15, 1954 and her final profession on August 15, 1960. Upon completion of her education as a registered nurse, she spent 25 years as a supervisor of Pediatrics at St. Mary's Hospital in Huntington. She also was an instructor at St. Mary's School of Nursing. For over 35 years she served as a Chaplain in the Department of Spiritual Care and Mission. She has continued to serve in her current ministry as a Chaplain volunteer on the oncology unit. Sister Joanne has held leadership positions on both the local community and provincial levels. Sister moved to St. Louis, Missouri where she was Postulant Director for 5 years. Upon her return to West Virginia, Sister served as a member of the Boards of Trustees of St. Joseph's Hospital in Buckhan-



non and at St. Mary's Medical Center in Huntington, while they were under the sponsorship of the Pallottine Missionary Sisters, and is currently serving as a Board Trustee on the Pallottine Foundation of Huntington. She

remains active in her religious community.

Sister Joanne has shared treasured memories from working on the Pediatric unit, where she ministered with compassionate care to children of all ages, during their days of illnesses, surgeries, and sicknesses. She has had meaningful experiences in providing pastoral ministry, to cancer patients and staff on the Oncology unit of St. Mary's Medical Center. She said, "the climax of my religious life is being part of experiencing health care progressing from hospital day to day care inside the hospital walls to extending care and concern to local communities and neighborhoods needing assistance and support as a member of the Pallottine Foundation of Huntington."

70th Anniversary, Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ

Sister Gretchen Shaffer, a native of Clarksburg, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Wheeling in 1954. After earning her bachelor's degree in education, she taught in seven Catholic schools in West Virginia and in Bristol, Virginia. She also served as a Principal at St. Francis Xavier and St. Agnes Schools. These experiences in administration led Sister Gretchen to her next ministry – serving at Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Wheeling, and at Catholic Charities West Virginia. During her time at Catholic Charities, Sister Gretchen was inspired by the social justice teachings of the Church. After reading the Appalachian Bishops' pastoral letter, "This Land is Home to Me," Sister Gretchen responded to an invitation from families in Mingo County to help create a school. She partnered with Sisters Kathleen O'Hagan, SND, and Mary Margaret Pignone, SND, to make their dream a reality. After Big Laurel School opened, Sister Gretchen had the singular joy of returning to formal teaching. After twelve years, Big Laurel School (now Big Laurel Learning Center) expanded ecological education and experience programs with summer camps for youth and immersion trips for college students. Sister Gretchen currently resides in Kermit where she continues to serve as informal keeper of the stories of West Virginia and resident storyteller at Big Laurel.

**70th Anniversary, Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher, CSJ**

Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1954 from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Elm Grove. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education from Marywood College in Scranton, Pa. For over 25 years, she served as a Catholic school teacher at St. Francis de Sales (Beckley), Blessed Trinity (Wheeling), St. Peter (Fairmont), St. Vincent de Paul (Wheeling), and St. Francis Xavier (Moundsville).



After leaving the classroom, Sister Alicia Marie continued to serve the parish of St. Vincent de Paul. In 1983, she was appointed bookkeeper and served as music minister. She also cooked for the priests assigned to the parish during their ten-

ure. Sister Alicia Marie retired from parish ministry in 2008. Since retiring, she has served her community at Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling by volunteering in the finance office and serving as sacristan and organist at liturgy. Her favorite activities include working puzzles, planting a flower garden, doing latch hook crafts, and reading. Her greatest joy in life has been her ability to make and share music by playing the organ for liturgies, singing in choirs, playing the guitar with students at school liturgies, or playing the piano for folk Masses.

She finds inspiration in the passage from Micah 6: "To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."

She finds inspiration in the passage from Micah 6: "To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."

65th Anniversary, Sister Mary Clark, CSJ

A native of New York, Sister Mary Clark entered religious life in 1959 with the Dominican Sisters of Hope in Newburgh, N.Y. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from Mount St. Mary College and a master's degree in special education from the College of New Rochelle, N.Y.



She professed vows anew as a Sisters of St. Joseph in Wheeling in 1987. She came to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in 1978 and served through its Office of Religious Education. She then provided pastoral ministry at St. Peter Parish in Fairmont, St. Patrick Church in West Union, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling, and the L'Arche community in Erie, Pennsylvania. In 1997, she served in congregational ministries as director of Vocations, director of Associates, and director of St. Joseph Center in Wheeling. She completed the Shalem Spiritual Direction Program in 1996 and has provided spiritual direction.

She is currently retired and resides at Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling where she enjoys knitting and is active in prayer ministry.

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70th Anniversary

Sister M. Joanne
Obrochta, SAC



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65th Anniversary, Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ



Sister Ruth entered religious life from St. Louis Church in Owensville, Ohio, in 1959. She spent her early years at the Provincial Novitiate in New Orleans in 1959, professing final vows in 1967. She earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Thomas More College, and holds a master's in theology from the University of Notre Dame. She taught business and religion at McNicholas High School in Cincinnati before serving as assistant principal. In 1976 she became campus minister at the University of Cincinnati; she also taught college-level courses in theology and was director of Cincinnati's Mt. Notre Dame Spirituality Center. She was the Director of Justice & Peace for the Diocese of Covington, Ky., for 10 years. She has given personal witness at rallies to end war, brought awareness to the need for immigration reform, and is an advocate for those experiencing housing crises and homelessness, and a host of other issues. She is most passionate about her work to abolish the death penalty in Ohio, "and we're getting close!" she promises. Sister Ruth resides at Mt. St. Joseph in Wheeling. She volunteers at the soup kitchen, reads at liturgy, plans events, works in the garden, and prays.

65th Anniversary, Sister Carole Anne Riley, CDP



Sister Carole Anne Riley, CDP, formerly Sister Mary Patrick, entered religious life from St. Anne's in Castle Shannon, Pa. She credits the example of Sister Clare Louise with influencing her vocation. She has her Ph.D. from Duquesne University and taught in Catholic schools in Pennsylvania. In 1999, Sister Carole founded the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality in Charleston. From 1969 to 2017 she was professor of music and spirituality at Duquesne University. She has authored many tapes/DVDs/CDs for publication through St. Anthony Publications, Alba House Publications and St. Paul Press.

Sister Carole bases her living on the words of the Community's foundress: "Visibly do I see in all things the wonderful Providence of God." Marie de la Roche was led to action through contemplation, and Sister Carole believes her graced collaboration with the Spiritans and with ecumenical communities through music teaching and spiritual direction enables her to be both a contemplative in action and to be a witness to the vibrancy of Providence today. Sister Carole was awarded the Emil Penet National Religious Formation Award acknowledging "mentoring model of incorporation and its impact on the international formation process." She holds Duquesne University's Presidential Service Award, Century Club and Distinguished Alumni Awards. In addition to playing the piano and flute, Sister Carole's other hobbies are cooking, reading, walking and sewing.

60th Anniversary, Sister Doris Crinkey, CSJ



Sister Doris Crinkey entered the Congregation of St. Joseph, Wheeling, in 1964 from St. Anthony Parish in Bridgeport, Ohio. She holds Bachelor's degrees in English and accounting from Wheeling College. She taught first grade at St. Francis de Sales School in Beckley and St. Francis Xavier School in Moundsville. Sister Doris was appointed treasurer for the Wheeling Congregation, a position she held for nearly 20 years before becoming director of the conservator program at Family Service of the Upper Ohio Valley in Wheeling. She later managed Bridgeport Manor, a HUD-subsidized apartment building for seniors; taught accounting at Bishop Donahue High School in Beckley; was parish accountant for St. Vincent de Paul Parish and School in Wheeling; and was bookkeeper for the Visitation Sisters and the Marist Brothers in Wheeling.

She served as a foster mother of three young girls, was her mother's primary caregiver during her illness with Alzheimer's disease, and was on-call chaplain for the pastoral care department at Wheeling Hospital. She has also practiced spiritual and retreat direction and now provides reiki services at St. Joseph Retreat Center in Wheeling.

Sister Doris is driver, runner of errands, substitute receptionist, receiver of prayer requests, and more at the Congregation's Wheeling Center. Philippians 3:7-14 was read at Sister Doris's final profession of vows and has served as a piece of wisdom that has guided her throughout her life. It concludes: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Congratulations

to our Jubilarians and all those in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston who are celebrating this year. We thank you for sharing your lives and ministry with the people of West Virginia.



**75th Jubilee
Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ**



**70th Jubilee
Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ**



**70th Jubilee
Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher, CSJ**



**65th Jubilee
Sister Mary Clark, CSJ**



**65th Jubilee
Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ**



**60th Jubilee
Sister Doris Crinkey, CSJ**



**60th Jubilee
Sister Ileana Fernandez, CSJ**



**60th Jubilee
Sister Janice Landwehr, CSJ**

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60th Anniversary, Sister Ileana Fernandez, CSJ



Sister Ileana (Ily) Fernandez entered religious life in 1964. She holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry and mathematics and a master's degree in religious studies from Incarnate Word University (San Antonio) and a master's degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University (Omaha). Sister Ily taught high school math and chemistry at St. Theresa's Academy (San Antonio) and St. Louis Cathedral (New Orleans) before becoming director of religious education at Sacred Heart (New Orleans) and St. George (Baton Rouge.) She also served as a chaplain and liturgy coordinator at St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge. Sister Ily was involved in campus ministry for 10 years at Louisiana State University. She was vocation director and was on the formation team for the founding community of Medaille, and later for the larger Congregation, for over 20 years. In 2012, Sister Ily began working at Charis Ministries offering spiritual retreats while also serving St. George Parish as a pastoral minister and spiritual director. Currently, she resides at Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling, offering directed retreats and spiritual direction.

60th Anniversary, Sister Janice Landwehr, CSJ



Sister Janice Landwehr entered the Congregation of St. Joseph in 1964. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from West Liberty State College. Sister Janice has taught in Catholic schools throughout West Virginia including St. Mary (Clarksburg); St. Patrick (Weston); Blessed Trinity, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Michael (Wheeling); and was an original team member at Samaritan House offering educational services to incarcerated youth. Sister Janice has served on the boards of various charitable organizations to advance health and human services in West Virginia. She was vice president of the Sisters of St. Joseph Foundation and served as co-executive director of the Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation. She served as bookkeeper for the House of Studies in Wheeling and was on the board of directors for St. Alphonsus Youth Center and West Virginia Philanthropy. Sister Janice also served the Congregation of St. Joseph on the prayer committee and was chair of the reconfiguration committee for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling. She resides in Wheeling where she is a board member for St. John's Home for Children, and continues to serve others in prayer and in action.

50th Anniversary, Sister Beritha Mashu, SJI



My name is Sister Beritha Mashu, SJI, a native of Zimbabwe, Africa. Born and raised of a peasant family of eleven children, 4 girls and 7 boys. My parents were Catholics and we were all baptized as babies. I was educated in Catholic schools.

I joined the Order of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI) in 1964. My first Profession was on January 6, 1974. I did five years of Nurse's Training. I worked in Hospitals and Clinics for couple years, then did a secretarial course. For 22 years I worked in administration in several Institutions prior to my Mission to the United States. My key moment in Religious life was when my Congregation asked me to come to the United States to start a Mission here. It was a big challenge to uproot myself from family, community and country to plunge myself into a new culture and environment. It needed faith and courage and of course, Obedience as a Religious which is not so often easy.

I came to Clarksburg, WV, in 2004 at Immaculate Conception Parish where I have been for the past 20 years now. My main Ministry at the Parish is to visit the sick in homes, Nursing Homes and the Hospital. Praying and bringing Communion to all those who are no longer able to come to Church has been a very enriching and rewarding experience to me. I also work as a Sacristan. I am very grateful and appreciate the Clarksburg Community, especially the Parish community of Immaculate Conception for their hospitality and making a second home for me and my companion sister. We are also greatly indebted to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for allowing us to stay in the Diocese and serve the people of God.

25th Anniversary, Sister Paula Ugochukwu Ude, SJS



Sister Paula Ugochukwu Ude, SJS, member of the Sisters of Jesus the Saviour (Nigeria), had her first profession of vows on March 3, 1999. She served as director for the OSISATEC Medical Lab at Ogui Enugu, Nigeria, and in many ministries in Texas. Sister Paula is Assistant Professor at Concord University, Athens, and is also co-founder of The Mommy Ministry that seeks to walk with moms and babies, thus supporting with compassion. Sister Paula shared: "A key moment in my religious life was my own reaffiliation from Methodism to Catholicism, a profound journey that reshaped my spiritual path and deepened my faith to serve God through religious life. This transformative experience inspired me to dedicate myself wholeheartedly to various ministries across different dioceses. I have had the privilege of nurturing the spiritual growth of young people and adults alike. My involvement in parish ministry has allowed me to engage with the community on a personal level, offering support and guidance to parishioners in their faith journeys. Additionally, my work in religious education has been incredibly fulfilling as I strive to impart the values and teachings of our faith to people of God, and fostering a strong foundation for their lifelong spiritual development. Each of these roles has enriched my faith journey and allowed me to witness the transformative power of dedicated ministry and service. I remain ever grateful to all the dioceses where I served for allowing me to minister to the people of God in various capacities and to all the parishioners I served and continue to serve for the opportunity to work with and alongside them in God's vineyard. My experiences have been richly blessed and would not have been possible without the support I received from each and every person I interacted with during these ministry experiences."

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Kathleen Barton, Director of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
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