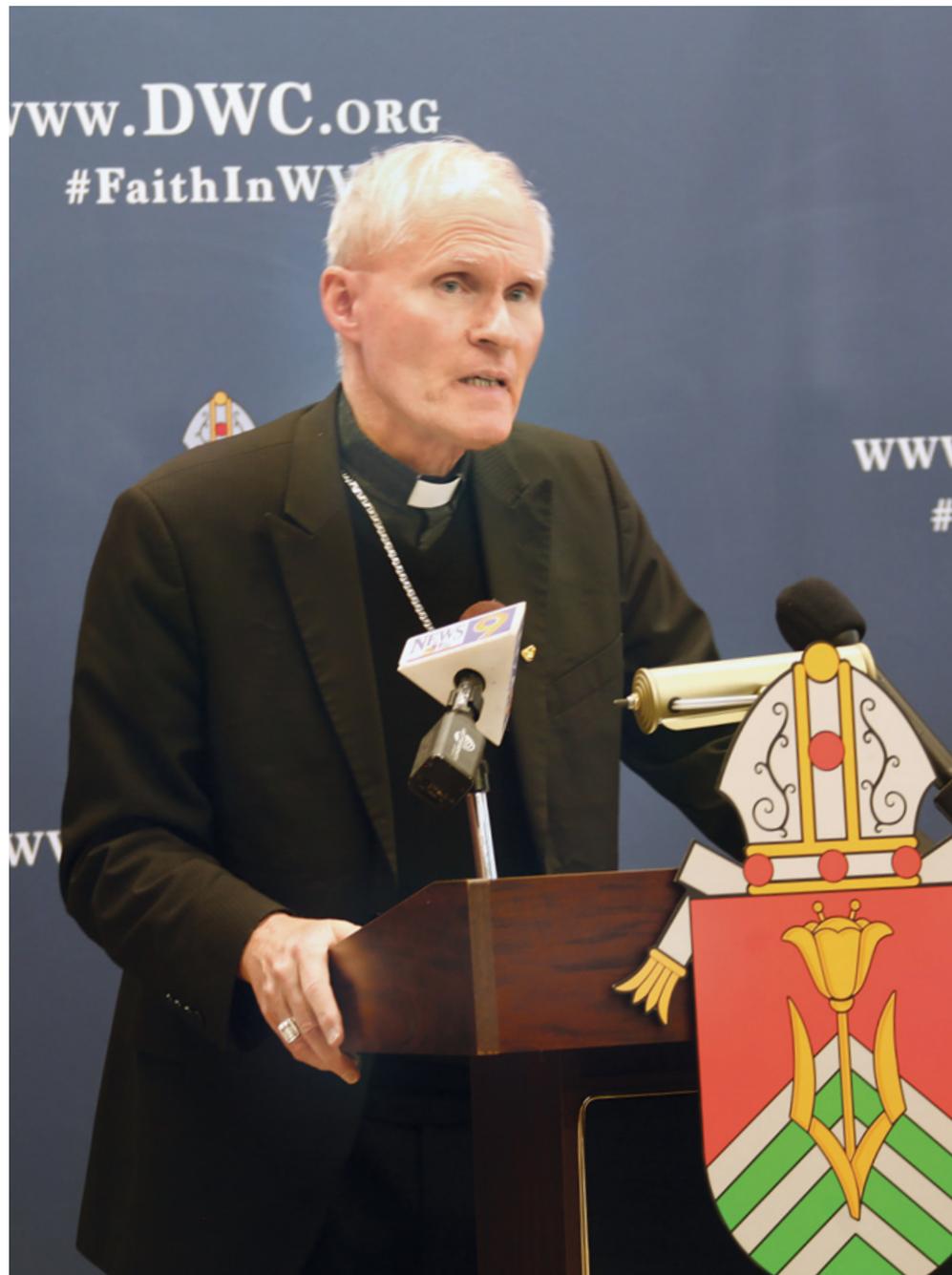




## A Letter from Bishop Brennan on the Congregation of Bishops' Decision on Amends Plan for Bishop Bransfield

Thursday, August 20, 2020



The Catholic Spirit File Photo/Colleen Rowan Photo

In this Nov. 26, 2019, file photo, Bishop Mark E. Brennan speaks at a press conference at the chancery in Wheeling during which he outlined a plan for amends required of his predecessor, Bishop Michael J. Bransfield.

I wish to announce to the faithful people of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston that the Congregation for Bishops in Rome has reached a decision on how former Wheeling-Charleston Bishop Michael J. Bransfield should fulfill Pope Francis' requirement that the Bishop "make personal amends for some of the harm he caused" while serving in this Diocese. This decision comes after extensive input from me, as the representative of the Catholic people of the Diocese, and with consideration of governing factors in both civil and canon law.

First, Bishop Bransfield has been told to make a public apology to the people of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese for the scandal he created. He is urged as well to apologize privately to certain individuals who reported abuse and harassment. We have received his letter of apology to the Diocese, which is being made public on our diocesan website, and are aware that some individuals have received a letter from the Bishop.

Second, Bishop Bransfield is required to repay the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston the amount of \$441,000 for unauthorized benefits received from diocesan resources. The Bishop has paid the Diocese that amount. These funds will be added to those already set aside by the sale of his former residence for assistance to victims of abuse. The Bishop has already complied with the Diocese's demand that he purchase, at fair market value, the diocesan vehicle he has been using in retirement.

Third, Bishop Bransfield will receive \$2,250 per month as his retirement stipend, adjusted for inflation, the amount recommended by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for retired bishops. However, no other benefits, such as for a secretary or travel, will be provided. This is in accord with the discretion that I have, as the current diocesan Bishop, according to the same USCCB guidelines, to reduce or eliminate additional benefits for a predecessor who did not retire in good standing. Thus, Bishop Bransfield's stipend will be about one-third of the full package of \$6,200 ordinarily given to a retired bishop. He will continue to be covered by the health insurance plan for priests of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese, which will pay his modest long-term care insurance premium.

I am grateful to Pope Francis and the Congregation for Bishops for accepting in large part the outline of the amends plan I presented to Bishop Bransfield in November, 2019. That plan combined an insistence on restorative justice with a gesture of mercy, which is how God deals with all of us. I hope that the people of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will see in

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## To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

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

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

**To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Sr. Ellen Dunn, O.P., ext. 264; Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988.

In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

**Links and information:** WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit, Internet Crimes Against Children

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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

## Letter...

Cont'd from Page 1

the decision of the Congregation for Bishops a fair and reasonable resolution of this unseemly matter.

I am immensely grateful to the faithful of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese for their patience during the past year. This has been an ordeal for all of us. Now, I hope, we can move forward and not let the past distract us from the urgent work of faith that is so vital to the well-being of so many throughout this State who need the Church's ministry. Faith in God can help us heal the wounds we have suffered and give us strength to move ahead with the true mission of the Church: to bring Jesus Christ to the people he came to save and to work his wondrous power of renewal in them.

With my heartfelt affection and prayers for you, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

*Mark E. Brennan*

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

## Diocesan Official Appointments:

Bishop Mark E. Brennan has made public the following appointments:

**Father Joseph Daniel Pisano** is appointed pastor of Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Moorefield, St. Mary Parish in Petersburg, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Franklin, with residence at the parish rectory in Petersburg, effective August 31, 2020.

**Father Joshua R. Stevens** is granted permission to serve as a chaplain in perpetuity in the United States Air Force on extended active duty and is released indefinitely to serve in this capacity, effective August 31, 2020.

In consultation with Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto of the Archdiocese of Delhi, **Father Arul Anthony** is appointed administrator of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg with residence at the parish rectory, effective August 31, 2020.

In consultation with Very Rev. Edward Prsygocki, MSA, provincial animator of the Society of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles, **Father Harold F. Dunn, MSA**, is appointed temporary administrator of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling, St. John Parish in Benwood, and St. James Parish in McMechen with residence at the St. Alphonsus Parish rectory, effective August 31, 2020.

**Deacon N. Rollin Fagert** has retired from active diaconal service, effective July 16.



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MOST REVEREND MICHAEL J. BRANSFIELD

August 15, 2020

Letter to the Faithful

I am writing to apologize for any scandal or wonderment caused by words or actions attributed to me during my tenure as Bishop of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese.

First, during my tenure I was reimbursed for certain expenditures that have been called into question as excessive, and I have been advised that I should reimburse a certain amount of money to the Diocese. I have now done so even though I believed that such reimbursements to me were proper.

Second, there have been allegations that by certain words and actions I have caused certain priests and seminarians to feel sexually harassed. Although that was never my intent, if anything that I said or did caused others to feel that way, then I am profoundly sorry.

I hope that this letter will help to achieve a kind of reconciliation with the Faithful of the Diocese.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Bransfield".

Most Reverend Michael J. Bransfield

# A Letter from Bishop Brennan on the Opening of Catholic Schools



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1311 BYRON STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 230  
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

August 17, 2020

To our Catholic Schools' Parents and Families:

As we look with cautious optimism toward the opening of the fall semester in our Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, I want to take a moment to personally thank the principals, pastors, faculty and staff at each of our Catholic grade schools and high schools. Their work in completing the spring semester this year was nothing short of heroic, and their diligent planning for this fall has provided an opportunity for your sons and daughters to attend schools five days each week. Each school has filed a "reopening plan" with respective health officials in their counties, and we are proud to say that we have received approval from each of them to resume Catholic education on an "in person" basis. Should certain circumstances arise and we need to engage students through distance learning, we are prepared for that as well, but with a goal of returning to the classroom as soon as circumstances allow.

There are rumors, stories and innuendo surrounding state and local policies regarding "reopening" in our society, and there are even stronger opinions amongst parents and families about returning to school. While our Diocesan and local staff are not Nobel prize-winning epidemiologists, the one thing we do know for certain is that **we have to plan our work, and we have to work our plan.** In order to maintain adequate physical distancing space, and to decrease the flow of students within each building, several alternatives are in place that are building-specific to your school(s). Please learn now what the "new normal" is at school, and please reinforce with your children the positive steps we are taking. Your school will provide this information to you. From new desk arrangements to new hallway traffic patterns, from different recess and lunch protocols to possibly having a lot of empty seats at sporting events, we all must adjust to the new normal as it evolves—simply just to stay in school. To teach children, parents must lead the way, and there are at least four ways I ask you to do this:

First, please pray for our school employees, their pastors and our school families. We need the Holy Spirit to be present in our lives, particularly during these difficult times. Second, I ask you to trust the process and work with your principals and teachers on the modifications they are making. Your cooperation is paramount to our continued success! Third, I ask you to be a positive ambassador for your school in the community. Whether it's a supportive comment on social media, publicly thanking your teachers, or favorably speaking to non-Catholic school families about your experiences with Catholic education, we can all be beacons of hope. Finally, I implore you to be flexible and patient. Like me, this is likely your first pandemic, and we are researching and experiencing the best ways to proceed so our children may go to school. So far in West Virginia, we've learned how to shop at the supermarket differently, we've found a way to worship at Mass differently, and we can roll with the punches and get our kids back to school as well. Catholic school communities are a resilient flock!

Therefore, please review your school's plans and details regarding our students' return to Catholic school. In addition to the precautions we are taking, and in order to minimize the spread of COVID-19, your principals and pastors have made many unpopular decisions, and I stand by them. Among these, I ask you to cooperate and to encourage your son or daughter to help prevent the potential transmission and spread of the disease by wearing a mask, sanitizing hands and physically distancing. These are rules, not suggestions. I follow them, and I ask you and your children to follow them as well. I also ask that you also refrain from taking vacations or long trips in the two weeks leading up to the start of the fall semester.

Please know that I recognize that this is a challenge for everyone. I am confident that we will get through the pandemic, together, but I need your assistance to do so. Thank you for playing such important roles in the lives of our Catholic schools, and thank you again for your continued, unwavering support of your children. Your love and dedication make this a brighter world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

# CCHS's Albert Bucon, OLP's Jessica Glenn Honored as Teachers of the Year in Wheeling

**WHEELING** — Central Catholic High School's Albert Bucon and Our Lady of Peace School's Jessica Glenn were two of three Ohio County educators honored as Teachers of the Year by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber describes its winners in the following way:

"Mr. Bucon is a well-respected educator with over 30 years of experience. He is the chairperson for the English department and exhibits a passion and love for his content area."

He serves on the academic council which aids in school improvement. He moderates the NHS, Student Government Association and most recently, the

Chess Club. He has also coached boys and girls basketball. Last summer, Bucon published his first book, "My Corner of the World, Life Lessons From the Classroom." He also writes a blog post titled "Time and Space" that gives his readers insight to his class and his students.

"Mrs. Glenn is an exceptional early childhood teacher. In her nine years as teacher she has proven to be organized, enthusiastic, flexible, and fun. Mrs. Glenn transforms her classroom into a hands on, project-based learning environment. She wears many hats and is a counselor, nurse, and/or cheerleader to her students as needed."

She has served on the

technology committee and Advance Ed Committee for Accreditation, as well as being a Technology Target teacher, spelling bee coordinator, school website coordinator, pre-K and kindergarten graduation ceremony organizer and planner, kindergarten screening coordinator and planner, and Christmas show music teacher assistant.

(Information for this story appeared in the Intelligencer Newspaper.)



**Albert Bucon**



**Jessica Glenn**

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# Shinnston's Adoration Chapel Looks at Possible September Reopening

By Colleen Rowan

**SHINNSTON**—The reopening of the Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel at St. Ann Parish in Shinnston could come as early as mid September for scheduled adorers only. Parish officials say that a small task group is currently working on a reopening plan.

"This is not going back to pre-pandemic schedule and open visitation," officials posted on St. Ann Parish's Facebook page. "We need to adjust to the present health situation that we are currently in. We will try reopening in phases."

In Phase Two, the parish is aiming to have the chapel open two days a week—Sunday, the Lord's Day, "when we rest in the Lord and in one another," and Wednesday, mid-week and traditionally like Friday, a day of prayer and penance. Because of the present COVID-19 spiking and Father Chris Turner arriving as associate pastor recently, parish officials say they are hoping for Sunday, Sept. 13, as the reopening date.

"We will need the approval of our pastor, Father Akila, and of our diocese that we have the proper protocols in place for the safety of those scheduled adorers so they can exercise their ministry of prayer," officials said.

The chapel offers the Catholic faithful the opportunity to spend time with Christ, drawing adorers from around the area and the state. Located next to St. Ann Church, the chapel opened Oct. 24, 1999, as one of more than 1,000 perpetual



Colleen Rowan Photo

Pictured is the Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel in Shinnston.

adoration chapels in the U.S. It was dedicated to Blessed Margaret of Castello, patroness of people with disabilities, the unwanted, and the unborn.

"In this world where there are many who are unwanted,

especially the unborn, I thought that she would be a good patroness for the chapel," said the late Father Karl R. Wohinc in an interview with The Catholic Spirit in 2003. Father Wohinc served as pastor of St.

Ann's from 1984 to 2012. There is a plaque honoring Father Wohinc for making the chapel possible.

Parish officials said updates on the reopening will be forthcoming.

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- 10:00 DirecTV 367 World Harvest Television

Episodes Available at [mydailyliving.com](http://mydailyliving.com)

# Knights of Columbus West Virginia State Council Raises Funds to Support Diocese's Seminarians

**WHEELING**—The Knights of Columbus West Virginia State Council concluded its 2020 Seminarian Support Project July 24 by conducting the drawing of the winning tickets.

"We are very thankful for the Knights of Columbus who do so much for our seminarians through prayer and support, and we're very blessed to have our seminarians here with us today to help with this drawing," said Father Brian Crenwelge, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. "Most of all, I want to thank the Knights for all they do and for their dedication to the Lord, to His Church, and to our seminarians."

As a result of this year's Seminarian Support Project, the West Virginia State Council donated \$6,000 to the diocese to support the seminarians as they discern their priestly vocations.

The drawing was conducted by Knights State Warden Brian Gordon with the participation of Father Crenwelge and the diocese's five seminarians: Jacob Dye, John Soplinski, Deacon Phillip Szabo, Ryan Budd, and Tyler Boyd. Father Crenwelge provided some opening remarks and each seminarian came forward and pulled a winning ticket out of the ticket bin. The first-prize winner was Roger Ware from Council 603 and the second-prize winner was Rex Lasure from Council 504. The third-prize winners were Chrissy Talley, Timothy Appel, and Jack Burke.

"The Knights of Columbus are Catholic men building a bridge back to faith," the Knights said. "There is much good and necessary work to be done in this world, and that's



Courtesy Photo  
**Father Brian Crenwelge, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (left), is pictured with West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Warden Brian Gordon.**

what Knights do every day. We come from many places, backgrounds, and stages in our lives,

but we are all of one faith. Find out more about what we do by visiting [KofC.org/joinus](http://KofC.org/joinus)."

## Spaghetti Lunch, Takeout Only, Will Benefit Corpus Christi School

**WHEELING**—A spaghetti lunch fundraiser to benefit Corpus Christi School in Wheeling will be held Aug. 30, noon to 3 p.m. at the parish center. Meals will be take-out only, and include spaghetti, salad, bread, and dessert. The cost is \$10 per adult and \$8 for children 12 and younger. Call ahead to place an order at (304) 277-1220. Orders are being taken now.

## Father Anderson Begins Facebook Series on the Catholic Faith

**WEST VIRGINIA**—Father William A. Anderson, D Min, PhD, is conducting one-hour video presentations of an overview of the Catholic faith which began July 29. This overview continues every Wednesday at 7 p.m. for an additional 13 weeks for anyone wishing to learn more about their Catholic faith and those interested in the Catholic faith. If you are unable to view the video presentation on Wednesday evenings, that airing will be available at a time of your choosing. Log onto: William A. Anderson, Overview of the Catholic Faith Group, Facebook. No fee.

## Blue & White Golf Tournament Set for Sept. 5 in Parkersburg

**PARKERSBURG**—There is still room for teams to join in the 45th Annual Blue & White Golf Tournament at Worthington Golf Club in Parkersburg Sept. 5. Entry to the four-person scramble is \$85 per player, which includes lunch and prizes, with proceeds benefiting the Parkersburg Catholic Athletic Association. First-place team wins \$500, and second-place team wins \$250. To register a foursome or learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact Athletic Director Amanda Weatherwax ([aweatherwax@pchs1.com](mailto:aweatherwax@pchs1.com)) or Advancement Director Kelli Lewis ([klewis@pchs1.com](mailto:klewis@pchs1.com)) or by calling (304) 485-6341.

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# 'Faithful Citizenship' Reminder: Gospel Cannot be Parsed in Partisan Terms

By **Dennis Sadowski, Catholic News Service**

**CLEVELAND (CNS)** — The U.S. bishops' quadrennial document on political responsibility is rooted in the Catholic Church's long-standing moral tradition that upholds human dignity and the common good of all, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City said.

"The document is meant to give Catholic voters an opportunity to reflect upon how their faith intersects with their political and civic responsibilities," said the archbishop, who chairs the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

Titled "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility From the Catholic Bishops of the United States," the document has been offered as a guide to Catholic voters every presidential election year since 1976.

It has been updated and revised at four-year intervals to reflect changes in the issues confronting the country since it first appeared.

One thing "Faithful Citizenship" is not is a mandate on which candidate for public office to vote for, Archbishop Coakley said.

Voting, he added, is a responsibility to be taken seriously and that requires prudential judgment in determining who can best serve the common good.

"No candidate will likely reflect all of our values," he told Catholic News Service Aug. 18. "But I think we need to begin in prayer. We need to know our faith. We need to study our faith. We need to have recourse to the catechism and what it might teach about certain questions.

"This document is intended to be that, an official guide for the formation of consciences that Catholics can utilize as they weigh these questions," the archbishop said.

Furthermore, he continued, "the Gospel cannot be parsed in political or partisan terms. The Gospel calls us to live by standards and our Catholic faith calls us to embrace standards that are not divisible into left or right, Republican or Democratic terminology."

The document went through no major revisions for this year's election, but it is being supplemented by an introductory letter, which underwent a long debate before its adoption by the full body of bishops dur-

ing their fall general assembly in November.

This time around, the document also is accompanied by a series of five videos that highlight vital public policy issues.

The document has three parts.

The first part outlines the responsibility of Catholics to incorporate Catholic teaching as they consider their vote as well as their support for myriad public policy issues that confront society.

The text explores a series of questions related to why the church teaches about public policy issues; who in the church should participate in political life; how the church helps Catholics to speak about political and social questions; and what the church says about social teaching in the public square.

Part two outlines policy positions of the bishops on numerous issues. Topics addressed include human life and dignity, promoting peace, marriage and family, religious freedom, economic justice, health care, migration, Catholic education, promoting justice and countering violence, combating unjust discrimination, care for the environment, communications, media and culture and global solidarity.

The bishops said they wanted to "call attention to issues with significant moral dimensions that should be carefully considered in each campaign and as policy decisions are made in the years to come."

Part three lists goals for Catholics' participation in political life, whether they are citizens, candidates or public officials. Notably, it invites Catholics to assess moral and ethical questions emanating from public policy issues. It also lists nine goals for Catholics to weigh in public life.

"Faithful Citizenship" also draws from the teaching of Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI, St. John Paul II, St. John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church."

The introductory letter reminds Catholics that "we bring the richness of our faith to the public square" and that "faith and reason inform our efforts to affirm both the dignity of the human person and the common good of all."

The letter also says, "The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the



sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity, such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty."

It concludes by reminding Catholics to "bring their faith and our consistent moral framework to contribute to important work in our communities, nation, and world on an ongoing basis, not just during election season."

The full document also is available in Spanish.

The text of "Faithful Citizenship" can be downloaded as a free PDF from USCCB.org, or it can be purchased by going to Store.USCCB.org.

In addition to English, the videos were produced in Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The productions explore various aspects of Catholic social teaching while reflecting on the teaching of Pope Francis.

The videos are posted on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website at faithfulcitizenship.org and the USCCB's YouTube channel at bit.ly/31DHDGN. They are part of the bishops' effort to broaden their outreach through the document.

"People respond to different media," Archbishop Coakley said. "This is a very technically savvy audience today, especially younger voters. The videos use powerful images and brief statements that illustrate some of the teaching embodied in the formal document."

Four English-language videos of about two minutes in length examine participation in public life, protecting human life and dignity, promoting the common good and loving others. The fifth video is a six-minute compilation of the highlights of the four shorter pieces.

The foreign language videos are slightly longer.

Each video was produced with

young people in mind, said Jill Rauh, director of education and outreach in the USCCB's Department of Justice Peace and Human Development.

Along with the images and voices of young people, each piece features one bishop narrating an aspect of Catholic social teaching. Each production closes with a different prayer specifically written for the series.

Scenes showing people feeding the hungry, protecting God's creation, comforting the elderly, caring for children, migrant people and families, and engaging in civil discussions are prominent in the productions.

"The videos are meant to reflect the teaching of the bishops in 'Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,'" Rauh said. "The videos are really trying to make that teaching more accessible."

Other wide-ranging resources are being made available to parishes, schools, prayer groups and other interested parties through the faithful citizenship web page.

As summer ends and Election Day, Nov. 3, nears, dioceses and parishes have been gearing up their use of "Faithful Citizenship" resources, according to social ministry directors across the country.

Archbishop Coakley said the bishops expect the guidance offered in the "Faithful Citizenship" materials will gain wider attention this year.

"My hope and prayer is that Catholics who really want their faith to influence their decision making when it comes to going to the polls will give the reflections in this document consideration rather than just going to their favorite news source," he said. "That's going to be a very different kind of guidance than what they receive from their favorite cable news anchor or pundit."

"This is our chance to bring a different light to bear to a very important fundamental civic responsibility."

# Thanking God for His Gifts Brings Joy, Pope Says on Marian Feast Day

**By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Taking time out each day to be thankful for God and his gifts will lead to greater joy and mark a great step forward for humanity, Pope Francis said.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, “acknowledges that she is small and exalts the ‘great things’ the Lord has done for her,” the pope said before praying the Angelus Aug. 15, the feast of the Assumption of Mary.

With her assumption — body and soul — into heaven, she “gives us hope,” he said.

“We understand that we are precious, destined to rise again. God does not allow our bodies to vanish into nothing. With God, nothing is lost!” he said to those gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

“In Mary, the goal has been reached and we have before our eyes the reason why we journey: not to gain the things here below, which vanish, but to achieve the homeland above, which is forever. And Our Lady is the star that guides us,” he said.

In fact, Mary’s assumption into heaven represents “an infinitely

greater conquest” than putting a man on the moon, he said.

The pope recalled the famous phrase by Neil Armstrong when he became the first human being to set foot on the moon, saying, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

With that event, the pope said, “humanity had reached a historical goal. But today, in Mary’s assumption into heaven, we celebrate an infinitely greater conquest” in which Our Lady has “set foot in paradise.”

“She went there not only in spirit, but with her body as well, with all of herself. This step of the lowly Virgin of Nazareth was the huge leap forward for humanity. Going to the moon serves us little if we do not live as brothers and sisters on Earth,” the pope said.

Mary wants people to “magnify” God by putting him first, and not focusing first on one’s problems or difficulties, he said.

This approach leads to great joy, he said, not because problems have vanished — they don’t — but because one knows that God is present, close and can help.

“The Lord works wonders with those who are lowly, with those

who do not believe that they are great but who give ample space to God in their life. He extends his mercy to those who trust in him, and raises up the humble,” the pope said.

Just as Mary praises God for this, people should remember to praise and thank God for the great things he does and for each day he gives.

The pope asked if people remember to thank God for always

loving and forgiving them and “for his tenderness? In addition, for having given us his mother, for the brothers and sisters he puts on our path, and because he opened heaven to us?”

If people forget all the good things in their lives, their “hearts shrink,” but if, like Mary, they remember and “magnify” God with praise, “then we would take a great step forward” and “our hearts will expand, joy will increase.”

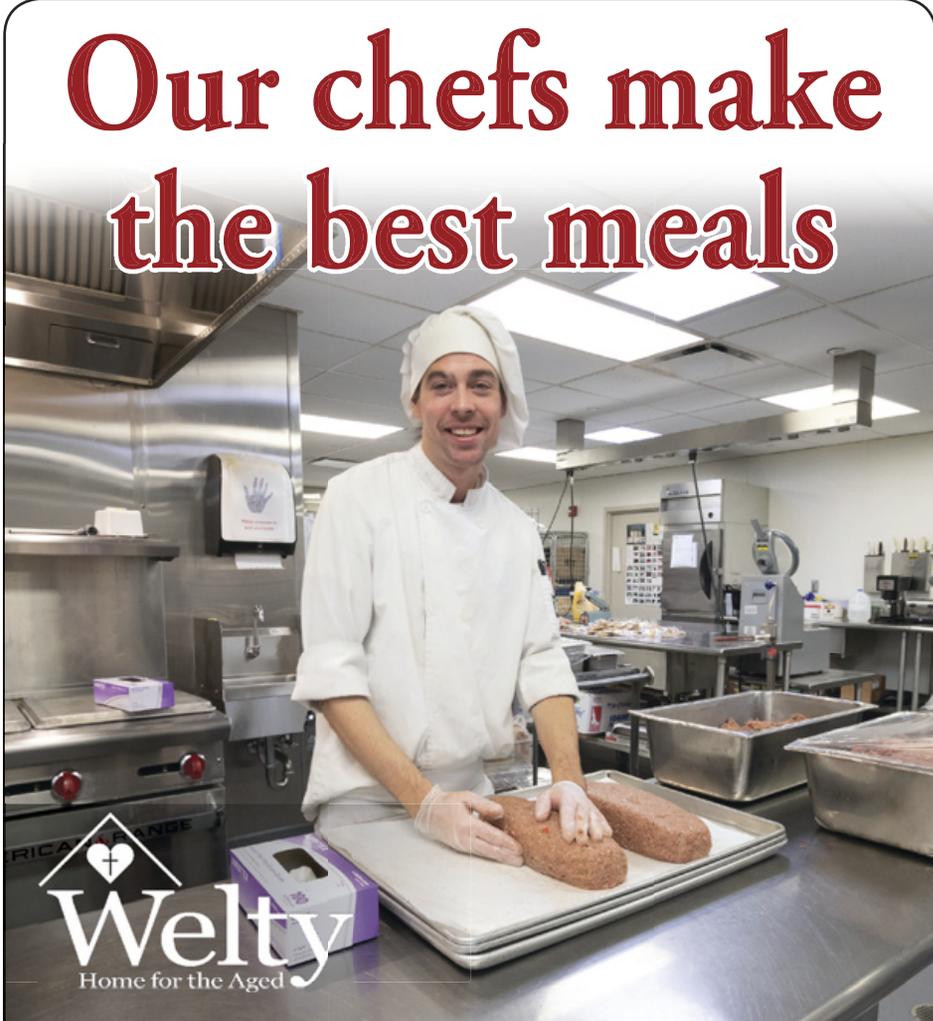


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# Una carta del obispo Brennan sobre la decisión de la Congregación de Obispos sobre la modificación del plan del obispo Bransfield

Jueves 20 de Agosto de 2020

Deseo anunciar a la gente fiel de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston que la Congregación para los Obispos en Roma ha tomado una decisión sobre cómo el ex obispo de Wheeling-Charleston Michael J. Bransfield debe cumplir con el requisito del Papa Francisco de que el Obispo "haga enmiendas personales por parte del daño que causó" mientras servía en esta Diócesis. Esta decisión se produce después de un amplio aporte de mí, como representante del pueblo católico de la Diócesis, y teniendo en cuenta los factores que gobiernan tanto el derecho civil como el canónico.

Primero, se le ha dicho al obispo Bransfield que se disculpe públicamente ante la gente de la diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston por el escándalo que creó. También se le insta a que se disculpe en privado con ciertas personas que informaron abuso y acoso. Hemos recibido su carta de disculpa a la Diócesis, que se está haciendo pública en nuestro sitio web diocesano, y sabemos que algunas personas han recibido una carta del Obispo.

En segundo lugar, el Obispo Bransfield debe reembolsar a la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston la cantidad de \$ 441,000 por beneficios no autorizados recibidos de recursos diocesanos. El Obispo le ha pagado a la Diócesis esa cantidad. Estos fondos se sumarán a los ya reservados por la venta de su antigua residencia para asistencia a víctimas de abusos. El Obispo ya ha cumplido con la demanda de la Diócesis de que compre, al valor justo de mercado, el vehículo diocesano que ha estado usando en su jubilación.

En tercer lugar, el obispo Bransfield recibirá \$ 2,250 por mes como estipendio de jubilación, ajustado por inflación, la cantidad recomendada por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos para los obispos jubilados. Sin embargo, no se proporcionarán otros beneficios, como los de secretaria o viajes. Esto está de acuerdo con la discreción que tengo, como Obispo diocesano actual, de acuerdo con las mismas pautas de la USCCB, para reducir o eliminar los beneficios adicionales para un predecesor que no se jubiló en buena posición. Por lo

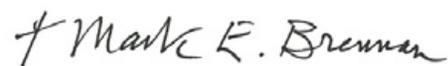
tanto, el estipendio del obispo Bransfield será aproximadamente un tercio del paquete completo de \$ 6,200 que normalmente se otorga a un obispo jubilado. Seguirá estando cubierto por el plan de seguro médico para sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, que pagará su modesta prima de seguro de atención a largo plazo.

Agradezco al Papa Francisco y a la Congregación para los Obispos por aceptar en gran parte el esquema del plan de enmienda que presenté al obispo Bransfield en noviembre de 2019. Ese plan combinó una insistencia en la justicia restaurativa con un gesto de misericordia, que es como Dios trata con todos nosotros. Espero que la gente de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston vea en la decisión de la Congregación para los Obispos una resolución justa y razonable de este asunto indecoroso.

Estoy inmensamente agradecido a los fieles de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston por su paciencia durante el año pasado. Esta ha sido una prueba para todos nosotros. Ahora, espero, podamos avanzar y no permitir que el pasado nos distraiga de la urgente obra de fe que es tan vital para el bienestar de tantos en todo este estado que necesitan el ministerio de la Iglesia. La fe en Dios puede ayudarnos a sanar las heridas que hemos sufrido y darnos fuerzas para seguir adelante con la verdadera misión de la Iglesia: llevar a Jesucristo a las personas a las que vino a salvar y obrar en ellas su maravilloso poder de renovación.

Con mi más sincero afecto y mis oraciones por ti, estoy

Sinceramente en Cristo,



Reverendísimo Mark E. Brennan  
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

## Calendario de confirmación

San Sebastián, Kingwood; Misión San Zita, Masontown; San Eduardo el Confesor, Misión, en San Sebastián  
Viernes 21 de agosto: 6:00 p.m.

San Peter Welch y Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan, en Sacred Heart Misión  
Sábado 22 de agosto: 5:30 p.m.

San Francisco de Sales, Beckley  
Domingo 23 de agosto: 11:00 a.m.

Corpus Christi, Warwood  
Sábado 29 de agosto: 10:00 a.m. y 1:00 p.m.

# Una carta del obispo Brennan sobre el apertura de escuelas católicas

17 de agosto de 2020

A los padres y familias de nuestras escuelas católicas:

Mientras miramos con cauteloso optimismo hacia la apertura del semestre de otoño en nuestras escuelas católicas en la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, quiero tomar un momento para agradecer personalmente a los directores, pastores, profesores y personal de cada una de nuestras escuelas primarias católicas y Instituto. Su trabajo para completar el semestre de primavera de este año fue nada menos que heroico, y su planificación diligente para este otoño ha brindado una oportunidad para que sus hijos e hijas asistan a las escuelas cinco días a la semana. Cada escuela ha presentado un "plan de reapertura" con los respectivos funcionarios de salud de sus condados, y nos enorgullece decir que hemos recibido la aprobación de cada uno de ellos para reanudar la educación católica "en persona". Si surgen ciertas circunstancias y necesitamos involucrar a los estudiantes a través del aprendizaje a distancia, también estamos preparados para eso, pero con el objetivo de regresar al aula tan pronto como las circunstancias lo permitan.

Hay rumores, historias e insinuaciones en torno a las políticas estatales y locales con respecto a la "reapertura" en nuestra sociedad, y hay opiniones aún más fuertes entre los padres y las familias sobre el regreso a la escuela. Si bien nuestro personal diocesano y local no son epidemiólogos ganadores del premio Nobel, lo único que sabemos con certeza es que tenemos que planificar nuestro trabajo y tenemos que trabajar nuestro plan. Para mantener un espacio de distancia físico adecuado y disminuir el flujo de estudiantes dentro de cada edificio, existen varias alternativas que son específicas del edificio para su (s) escuela (s). Por favor, aprenda ahora qué es la "nueva normalidad" en la escuela y refuerce con sus hijos los pasos positivos que estamos tomando. Su escuela le proporcionará esta información. Desde nuevos arreglos de escritorio hasta nuevos patrones de tráfico en los pasillos, desde diferentes protocolos de recreo y almuerzo hasta posiblemente tener muchos asientos vacíos en eventos deportivos, todos debemos adaptarnos a la nueva normalidad a medida que evoluciona, simplemente para permanecer en la escuela. Para enseñar a los niños, los padres deben liderar el camino, y hay al menos cuatro formas en las que les pido que hagan esto:

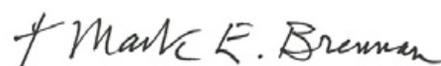
Primero, ore por nuestros empleados escolares, sus pastores y nuestras familias escolares. Necesitamos que el Espíritu Santo esté presente en nuestras vidas, particularmente durante estos tiempos difíciles. En segundo lugar, les pido que confíen en el proceso y trabajen con sus directores y maestros en las modificaciones que están haciendo. ¡Su cooperación es fundamental para

nuestro éxito continuo! En tercer lugar, le pido que sea un embajador positivo de su escuela en la comunidad. Ya sea un comentario de apoyo en las redes sociales, agradecer públicamente a sus maestros o hablar favorablemente a familias de escuelas no católicas sobre sus experiencias con la educación católica, todos podemos ser faros de esperanza. Por último, les imploro que sean flexibles y pacientes. Como yo, esta es probablemente su primera pandemia, y estamos investigando y experimentando las mejores formas de proceder para que nuestros hijos puedan ir a la escuela. Hasta ahora, en Virginia Occidental, hemos aprendido a comprar en el supermercado de manera diferente, hemos encontrado una manera de adorar en la misa de manera diferente, y podemos soportar los golpes y hacer que nuestros hijos regresen a la escuela también. ¡Las comunidades escolares católicas son un rebaño resistente!

Por lo tanto, revise los planes y detalles de su escuela con respecto al regreso de nuestros estudiantes a la escuela católica. Además de las precauciones que estamos tomando, y con el fin de minimizar la propagación de COVID-19, sus directores y pastores han tomado muchas decisiones impopulares y yo las apoyo. Entre estos, les pido que cooperen y animen a su hijo o hija a ayudar a prevenir la posible transmisión y propagación de la enfermedad mediante el uso de una mascarilla, desinfección de manos y distanciamiento físico. Estas son reglas, no sugerencias. Los sigo y les pido a usted y a sus hijos que también los sigan. También les pido que también se abstengan de tomar vacaciones o viajes largos en las dos semanas previas al inicio del semestre de otoño.

Por favor, sepan que reconozco que este es un desafío para todos. Estoy seguro de que superaremos la pandemia juntos, pero necesito su ayuda para hacerlo. Gracias por desempeñar un papel tan importante en la vida de nuestras escuelas católicas, y gracias nuevamente por su apoyo constante e inquebrantable a sus hijos. Su amor y dedicación hacen de este un mundo más brillante.

Sinceramente suyo en Cristo,



Reverendísimo Mark E. Brennan  
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

**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](http://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](http://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 anónimamente 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 eclesásticas 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: Hna. Ellen Dunn, O.P., ext. 264; Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. 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](http://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 Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

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](http://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 está protegida.

**Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp> Policía del Estado de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Delitos contra los Niños, Crímenes de Internet contra los Niños



### *Confirmation at the Basilica Co-Cathedral*

Ron Rushworth Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan is pictured with young people for confirmation at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston. Also pictured, from back left, are Father Binu Emmanuel, CST, associate rector; and Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, Assoc. V.F., rector. Below is the confirmation schedule.

## CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE

St. Sebastian, Kingwood; St. Zita Mission, Masontown; St. Edward the Confessor, Mission, at St. Sebastian

Friday, Aug. 21: 6:00 p.m.

St. Peter Welch and Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan, at Sacred Heart Mission

Saturday, Aug. 22: 5:30 p.m.

St. Francis de Sales, Beckley

Sunday, Aug. 23: 11:00 a.m.

Corpus Christi, Warwood

Saturday, Aug. 29: 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

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Mission Moment

## Helping Camden Hug

**By Jade Jeffers, Catholic Charities West Virginia Birth to Three Parent Partner**

A Testimonial by a Parent in our Birth to Three Program:

My son, Camden, was born in April of 2013 at just over 35 weeks gestation. I was over the moon excited to meet the little life that had I had been nurturing for just shy of nine months. He was considered premature and was smaller than all of the other babies in the nursery, but he did well despite his earlier than expected entrance into the world and we went home just two days after he was born.

After 12 blissful weeks of maternity leave, I returned to work full time and Cam began to attend daycare with his big sister. As his second birthday drew near, the staff and I began to notice that Cam was no longer meeting the developmental milestones for his age. The director of the facility was familiar with the Birth to Three program because her own son had received services, and she didn't hesitate to recommend the program to me and begin the referral process. Despite knowing that Cam was falling behind his peers, it was nonetheless hard to hear it confirmed by another person.

A week later, I met with our Interim Service Coordinator, who was unfailingly patient

and kind to me as we talked about Cam. She walked me through all of the details of the program and we chose practitioners based on what qualities that I felt were important and the kind of personality that Cam would work best with. The practitioners completed his evaluations and we met again to discuss my goals for Cam and write our plan to receive services.

On paper, Cam had a 25% delay in fine motor skills, a significant (greater than 40%) delay in expressive language, and he was communicating at the level of a 9-12 month old at the age of 22 months old. At home, Cam was struggling to use the left side of his body and his hand was almost always tightly clenched in a fist. He spoke less than ten words. He was unable to feed himself, to communicate his needs and wants, and was becoming increasingly frustrated because he couldn't play like his big sister. Meltdowns happened frequently because he so badly wanted to do all of the things that she did, and he was stuck in a body that wouldn't allow him to.

Cam began receiving physical, occupational, developmental and speech therapy both at daycare and at home through Birth to Three. His therapists quickly figured out the best ways to engage Cam and help him focus, and he



progressed quickly towards the goals that we had set for him. By the time that Cam turned three and it was time to transition out of the Birth to Three program, his physical delays had been resolved and we received assistance in writing his IEP for speech therapy through the school system.

To me, Birth to Three isn't just a program. It's the reason that Cam is able to squeeze me

tight with both arms when I tuck him in to bed, to eat ice cream with a spoon, to put together the Lego sets that he loves so much, and to tell me that he loves me (and ask me to buy more popsicles at the grocery store). Without this program, I don't know where we would be today, but I do know that our lives are better for the love and services that we received.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).

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

# Dominican Sisters of Peace Welcome Discerners Online for September Discernment Retreat

**COLUMBUS, Ohio**—Virtual happy hour. Virtual school, Virtual Mass. Virtual discernment retreat. All are ways that we have found to adapt in the age of COVID-19.

According to Sister Bea Tiboldi, Vocations Outreach minister, “Dominicans have always found new ways to preach the Gospel and to bring new vocations to the Church. We are blessed with the technology to continue to do so safely, even in the face of a global pandemic. We invite women who are considering their call to religious life to join us!”

The upcoming Discernment Retreat will give single Catholic women between the ages of 18 and 45 an opportunity to meet and talk with sisters and women in formation, as well as other women who are discerning their own call to religious life.

“This is a great opportunity to meet others who are discerning God’s call in their lives. The discernment retreat is an excellent way to learn about religious life and to meet the Dominican Sisters of Peace by joining them for prayer and conversation. Participants will have time for quiet personal prayer and reflection, and there will be presentations on the discernment process and about the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Also, each retreat participant will be accompa-

nied by a sister for one-to-one spiritual guidance and help in discerning her vocation in life.”

Sister Bea shared, “Since we moved our events online, those who have participated have been grateful for opportunities to continue discerning their call to religious life. Online or in person, we hope that we can keep providing ways for women to gather and pray, learn, discuss, and be supported as they seek God’s plan for their lives.”

To view the retreat flyer, please visit [OPPeace.org](http://OPPeace.org) or contact Sister Bea Tiboldi OP, Vocations Outreach minister, at (614) 400-1255 or [btiboldi@oppeace.org](mailto:btiboldi@oppeace.org).

Dominican Sisters of Peace, members of the Order of Preachers, are vowed Catholic women who strive to spread the Gospel of Christ and advance the Kingdom of God through lives of service and peace-making. The Dominican Sisters of Peace are present in 22 states, Nigeria, and Peru. The Sisters serve God’s people in many ways, including education, health care, spirituality, pastoral care, prison ministry, the arts, and care of creation. There are more than 400 sisters and more than 750 lay associates affiliated with the congregation.



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