THE CATHOLIC Spirit

A Letter from Bishop Menjívar on Safe Environment

August 6, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to affirm and reassure you that the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston complies with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, since its inception in 2002, as set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has a robust Safe Environment program, with the following requirements in place for all employees, clergy, and seminarians, and for all volunteers who work directly with or have substantial contact with minors, in accordance with the Charter:

- A zero-tolerance policy for sex abuse
- Completion of VIRTUS® Protecting Gods Children awareness training every three years
- Completion of a background check every three years
- Acknowledgement of the Diocese's Sex Abuse Policy, Code of Conduct, and Mandatory Reporting

See "Letter" on Page 3

Bishop Announces Episcopal Delegate for Matters Concerning the *Usus Antiquior*

In an effort to foster greater unity among the Catholic faithful and provide for their various spiritual needs, Most Rev. Evelio Menjívar, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, announced that Very Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, V.F., pastor of St. James Parish in Charles Town, has been appointed Episcopal Delegate for Matters Concerning the *Usus Antiquior* in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, effective August 24, 2026.

The expression *Usus Antiquior* refers to the celebration of the Eucharist according to the *Missale Romanum* promulgated by Saint John XXIII in 1962, otherwise known as the Tridentine Mass or Traditional Latin Mass.

To coincide with the announcement, Bishop Evelio will attend the Solemn High Mass at the Priory of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin

See "Delegate" on Page 3

Back to School!

Courtesy photo

Students at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg are happy to start a new school year.

Inside: Catholic Schools Participating in West Virginia's School Safety Protocol, Page 4 | Parkersburg Knights of Columbus Celebrating 125th Anniversary, Page 7

Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Evelio Menjívar has made public the following appointments:

Very Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, V.F., is appointed Episcopal Delegate for Matters Concerning the *Usus Antiquior* in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, effective August 24, 2026. This is in addition to his current assignments as pastor of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town and vicar forane of the Martinsburg Vicariate.

Very Rev. Justin M. Golna, J.C.L., J.V., is appointed Episcopal Delegate for the *Usus Antiquior* in the Wheeling Area, effective August 24, 2026. This is in addition to his current assignments as Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg.

Father Andrew Switzer is appointed Delegate for Ecumenism and Social Justice and Liaison to the Catholic Committee of Appalachia with an office at the chancery in Wheeling and temporary residence at Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling, effective August 14, 2026.

Father Joyson Puthussery Varghese is appointed Chaplain to Council 2010 of the Knights of Columbus for the Fraternal Year 2026-2027, effective immediately. This is in addition to his current assignment as Administrator of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Thomas and Our Lady of Mercy Mission in Parsons.

Ms. Donna Smith is reappointed to the Diocesan Finance Council, effective retroactively on July 1, 2026, and ending on June 30, 2029.

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."

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

2026 Print Dates:

Triumph of the Cross, Sept. 11

Month of the Rosary, Oct. 9

Advent, Nov. 20

Christmas, Dec. 18

There are 10 print editions in 2026. At left are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org.

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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://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

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Permanent Diaconate Formation Program
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Every Catholic diocese in the United States adheres to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Charter is instrumental in outlining mandates for keeping minors safe, reducing risk, and promoting prevention efforts while we worship and learn. Every Bishop in every diocese across America is required to promulgate the Safe Environment program for his diocese. This letter constitutes Bishop Evelio Menjivar's promulgation of the Safe Environment protocol for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. This letter will remain public and accessible at www.dwc.org, under Diocese, under Offices, then under Safe Environment. This Promulgation Letter is housed in the listing of documents down the left side of the page.

Letter ...

Cont'd from Page 1

Statute for the state of West Virginia

For minors, the Diocese offers yearly age-appropriate VIRTUS® Teaching Safety awareness lessons for students in grades Kindergarten through 12 in our Catholic schools and parish schools of religion.

The Diocese maintains a Victims Assistance Program and participates in data collection and onsite audit processes by the USCCB's designated audit agency. An Independent Review Board, comprised of primarily lay members, serves as an advisory body to me relative to Safe Environment and other similarly related concerns throughout the Diocese.

Above and beyond the Charter requirements, the Diocese fingerprints clergy and Catholic school personnel every three years, and VIRTUS® monthly awareness training bulletins are made available to all clergy, employees, and volunteers.

In addition to this protocol, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston helps to promote a culture of safety by utilizing EthicsPoint, a third-party reporting system; by maintaining and publishing a list of credibly accused; and by designating a section of our web site, www.dwc.org. to Safe Environment reporting, concerns, and information. Although not specifically related to Safe Environment, yet in the interest of further transparency, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston also publishes the results of its yearly financial audits.

As your Bishop, I approve and promulgate the Diocese's Safe Environment program and the best practices referenced herein. Please know that I also am compliant with this protocol and these best practices.

Deepest thanks to all whose cooperation in this process helps to spread the Gospel in environments that are safe, welcoming, and productive throughout this beautiful mountain state we all call home.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Evelio Menjivar

Most Reverend Evelio Menjívar
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Delegate ...

Cont'd from Page 1

Mary in Charles Town on August 30, 2026, at 10:45 a.m.

In his role, Very Rev. Grassi will ensure such celebrations are lawfully permitted according to the universal law of the Church and the dispositions of the Apostolic See.

As Episcopal Delegate, he will assist the bishop in the coordinated implementation throughout the Diocese of the applicable provisions of universal and particular law concerning the *Usus Antiquior*. Very Rev. Grassi will also assist in coordinating authorized celebrations, locations, calendars, and pastoral provisions; to maintain appropriate communication with the local Episcopal Delegates and other priests appointed for the pastoral care of the faithful.

Three other Episcopal Delegates were also named in different regions of the Diocese. Very Rev. Justin M. Golna, J.C.L., J.V., pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg, was named as Wheeling area delegate. Our Lady of Seven Dolors Mission in Triadelphia is designated as the location in the Wheeling area at which the faithful may gather for these celebrations. Celebration of the *Usus Antiquior* is authorized there on Sundays at 1:30 p.m., beginning September 20.

Rev. Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John University Parish in Morgantown, will continue to serve as the Morgantown area delegate. St. John University Parish is designated as the location at which the faithful may gather for these celebrations. Celebration of the *Usus Antiquior* is authorized there on Saturday at 9 a.m and on Sunday at 1 p.m.

Rev. Phillip R. Szabo, pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Charleston, will continue to serve as the Charleston area delegate. The location at which the faithful may gather for these celebrations is to be determined.

This is an effort on the part of Bishop Evelio to ensure that the spiritual needs of every portion of his flock are attended to by priests of our diocese.

Catholic Schools Participating in West Virginia's School Safety Protocol

Starting this fall, all 25 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are participating in the state of West Virginia's school safety protocol, according to Superintendent Jennifer Hornyak.

Principals and their designated school staff attended an initial, day-long training in early August at the Diocese's St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston as the first step toward joining West Virginia's public schools and other private and religious schools in strengthening and unifying emergency response to adverse events.

"This is something we have been discussing for many months," Hornyak said. "We are pleased to be able to participate in this program with the state of West Virginia. Our schools do an amazing job and have a lot of safety plans and protocols already in place, and this will make them unified. This unity also will help our first responders throughout West Virginia."

West Virginia's School Safety Unit falls under the auspices of the Division of Protective Services, Capitol Police, whose mission is to provide services and safety inspections for schools and to make recommendations to principals and superintendents regarding school safety. According to the Protective Services web site, officers in the School Safety Unit are authorized to respond and investigate safety matters in consultation with school leadership. They are granted state-wide jurisdiction and general law enforcement powers. The School Safety Unit protocol is mandated for all public schools in West Virginia. Non-public schools may participate upon request. The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has requested to participate.

"The Diocesan Attorneys Association is an organization comprised of legal counsel for dioceses all across the country," Hornyak explained regarding how participation came about for Catholic schools. "They offer sound guidance on reducing risk and keeping people and property safe. This past year, they recommended that dioceses all across America take steps to enhance Catholic school safety and emergency response by adopting and implementing a verified protocol. We're very blessed that in West Virginia we already have an established and verified protocol - the School Safety Unit. It's just natural and logical that we would participate in this program. Our schools have a lot of the same processes in place already, but now they will be unified and validated. It is the ideal way to fulfill the Association's recommendation."

According to Officer Donald Brown, who conducted training for the principals, the School Safety Unit protocol primarily entails emergency planning and response for what public safety officials call "all hazards." These hazards may include, but are not limited to, severe weather events and natural disasters; medical emergencies; fires; chemical spills; bomb threats; and active shooters. Response plans are uniform in nature; yet, they allow for tailoring to each individual school. Each participating school in West Virginia is provided with a Crisis Prevention and Response Plan Template that contains emergency and staff points of contact, resources, and actual plans developed by principals and their planning teams for various hazards. Principals must submit their plans to the School Safety Unit every year no later than August 1. According to Officer Brown, the template is considered a "living" document and can be updated at any time throughout the year by a principal if needed.

The school safety protocol also requires principals to designate teams for planning and response should an adverse event occur.

"Write the plan and then practice the plan," Officer Brown told the principals and their teams during the training. "The plan is a living document. You can make changes to it. Do after action following drills. See what you did well or where there was a weakness in the plan. Review the plan every year before you submit it (to the School Safety Unit). Make changes in accordance. Review these plans with your local law enforcement as they will be your first responders."

Officer Brown explained that the program is designed to make principals and their planning teams think, prepare, and be preventive. "Look at all the safety factors in the school. What could potentially hit our school? What are the probabilities of something happening? What are the priorities to focus on?" He said the principals and their teams should be meeting and communicating regularly throughout the year regarding safety.

Another important benefit of the program entails officers from the School Safety Unit actually assessing each school building/campus and making recommendations on how to reasonably improve physical safety. Each school will have an assigned officer who checks in periodically and performs safety assessments.

Officer Brown explained that participation in the School Safety Unit protocol will bring opportunities for training and resources, mostly at no cost, for Catholic schools throughout West Virginia.

Participation of Catholic schools in the program also will benefit local first-responders, according to both Brown and Hornyak. "This program is mandated for public schools," Hornyak said. "Our voluntary participation in this program will bring uniformity in prevention and response for our local police, firefighters, and EMS. That's going to make their jobs easier during challenging times. Our school safety plans and processes will now mirror each other throughout the entire state of West Virginia. Our first responders will not be guessing or trying to figure out our plans. They will help us build our plans. They will regularly evaluate our plans with us. They will have our plans on file, and our plans will be formulated in ways that complement how our first-responders train. This will help save precious time and precious lives in the event of an emergency," she said.

Brown agreed. "I highly recommend this program to every school," he said.

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Bishop Menjívar has set up his official accounts on social media. GIVE HIM A FOLLOW! Click links below.

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Parkersburg Knights of Columbus Celebrating 125th Anniversary

Courtesy photo

Parkersburg Knights of Columbus Council 594 is celebrating its 125th anniversary. With knights following Mass at St. Francis Xavier in Parkersburg on Aug. 22, are Bishop Evelio Menjívar (center); Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan (right); and Very Rev. John Rice, V.G., V.F.

Take Action Against the Abortion Pill

From now through the end of October, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities is inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer and action to STOP the spread of abortion pills.

Please take action to send a message to pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies that are involved here: https://www.votervoice.net/NCHLA/Campaigns/139193/Respond

Thank you for your prayers and actions to protect innocent children and their vulnerable mothers from the evil of abortion. St. Joseph, Defender of Life, pray for us!

Please share this invitation with others!

Learn more about the abortion pill, this nationwide invitation to prayer, and how you can share the message with your parish by visiting respectlife.org/abortion-pills.

A Prayer to St. Joseph, Defender of Life

Dearest St. Joseph, at the word of an angel, you lovingly took Mary into your home.

As God's humble servant, you guided the Holy Family on the road to Bethlehem, welcomed Jesus as your own son in the shelter of a manger, and fled far from your homeland for the safety of both Mother and Child.

We praise God that as their faithful protector, you never hesitated to sacrifice for those entrusted to you. May your example inspire us also to welcome, cherish, and safeguard God's most precious gift of life.

Help us to faithfully commit ourselves to the service and defense of human life — especially where it is vulnerable or threatened.

Obtain for us the grace to do the will of God in all things.

Amen.

PROLIFE Across AMERICA Proclaims Message in Bluefield

Colleen Rowan photo

This billboard on US 19 N in Bluefield reminds all of the sanctity of life from the moment of conception. PROLIFE Across AMERICA, which sponsored the billboard, is dedicated to changing hearts and saving babies' lives. Learn more by clicking this link https://prolifeacrossamerica.org/about/

Weirton Parishes Offering Spiritual Programs for Women

WEIRTON — All ladies of St. Joseph and Sacred Heart of Mary parishes in Weirton are invited to participate in the next "Walking With Purpose Bible Study, Discovering Our Dignity," a 22-week study of women in the Old and New Testaments.

The program will begin on Wednesday, Sept. 2, and offer two session times: 10-11:30 a.m. and 6-7:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Mary. Contact Sharon Duda for details and how to order the study book at (304) 670-0710.

The parishes will also offer the 2026 Women's Half-Day Retreat on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. at Madonna High School Cafeteria. There will also be a 7 a.m. rosary at St. Joseph Church (optional); 7:30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church (optional).

Check In/Icebreaker Activities and Light Breakfast will be at 8 a.m. Lunch will be 11a.m. - 12 p.m. A speaker will begin at 12:15 p.m. Adoration/Confession will be 12:45 - 1:30 p.m.

The registration fee is $20. RSVP by Oct. 16 by calling (304) 723-2054.

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Wheeling University Begins 2026-27 Academic Year with an Increase in Enrollment

WHEELING — Wheeling University begins the 2026-27 academic year with increases in enrollment at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels.

"Wheeling University is excited to welcome our new students to campus this weekend," said Denise Mirasola, Ed.D., vice president for Enrollment and Student Affairs. "We look forward to helping them throughout their academic journey."

On Friday, Aug. 21, a New Student Convocation was held. During the convocation ceremony, faculty and administration formally accepted the new class into the Wheeling University learning community.

On Saturday, Aug. 22, all new students participated in the university's annual Make a Difference Day. Students engaged in service projects around the campus and at various non-profit organizations around the city of Wheeling.

Courtesy photo

Members of the Wheeling University welcome crew greet students on move-in day.

"Make a Difference Day introduces our new students to the university's mission of life, leadership, and service with and among others. This annual tradition helps our students understand the impact serving others can make in the lives of those in our community," added Dr. Dianna Vargo, WU president.

On Tuesday, Aug. 18, the faculty and staff also participated in a day of service in the community. "Our faculty and staff embody the spirit of the mission of Wheel-ing University," Vargo added.

When students began classes on Monday, Aug. 24, they noticed two renovated classrooms inside of Acker Science Center thanks to donations from alumni and friends.

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Mission Moments

Catholic Charities WEST VIRGINIA

A Space For Encouragement

At the Neighborhood Center, a simple idea turned into something meaningful for everyone involved. During a recent Positive Affirmation Day, Franciscan interns Katie S. and Anna N. invited neighbors to take time to reflect on their own worth and the value they see in others.

At first, some participants were unsure about joining in. It can be difficult to put thoughts and feelings into words, especially in a group setting. But as the morning continued, the atmosphere began to shift. After sharing a meal during the Center's regular breakfast service, the interns spoke about self-worth and the importance of recognizing personal growth. Their words opened the door for deeper reflection.

Slowly, people began to engage. With markers, paper, and creativity, neighbors expressed themselves in their own ways. By the end of the event, about 15 posters had been created, each one offering a glimpse into someone's story, hope, or encouragement.

At the Neighborhood Center, a simple idea turned into a reality. There was a sense of connection in the room. Participants shared their work, supported one another, and enjoyed a few simple extras like snacks, small gift bags, and a door prize drawing. What stood out most was not the artwork itself, but the willingness to be seen and to affirm one another.

To honor that creativity, two of the posters will be displayed on the Center's new Art Wall. This space will continue to grow as a place where neighbors can share their voices through art, poetry, and personal messages.

Moments like these remind us that encouragement can take many forms. Sometimes it begins with a quiet invitation and grows into something that brings people together.

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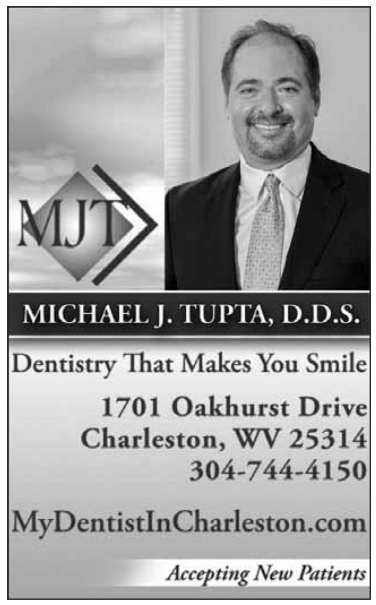

More Than 270 Faith Leaders Urge Trump Administration to Extend TPS for El Salvador

By Kate Scanlon

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Hundreds of faith leaders and organizations urged the Trump administration to extend Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for El Salvador before it expires in September.

A TPS designation grants the U.S. government the power to shield eligible migrants from deportation if they are from countries experiencing dangerous conditions such as war, disaster, or other unrest. El Salvador's TPS designation is scheduled to expire Sept. 9, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The removal of that legal status would impact about 170,000 Salvadoran nationals in the U.S., according to the Congressional Research Service.

In an Aug. 21 letter to President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, more than 270 faith leaders and organizations — including several U.S. bishops and many Catholic groups including the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, also known as CLINIC — argued that Mullins should extend El Salvador's TPS designation to prevent disruption to U.S. communities where Salvadoran migrants have established ties and prevent family separation due to remaining dangerous conditions in that country.

"We believe that sending hundreds of thousands of Salvadoran TPS holders back into an unstable and unfamiliar country that does not have the capability to support its own nationals is a danger to those individuals and a decision that would have severe negative consequences for years to come," the letter said. "A thoughtful review of the current conditions in El Salvador, consideration of their contributions as TPS holders to the United States and the administration's obligation to respect the statutory framework which governs TPS, supports an extension of El Salvador's TPS designation."

In their letter, the signatories added that although they "all come from various faith backgrounds, we have a shared purpose in respecting human life, upholding the inherent dignity of every individual person, maintaining the family unit, and protecting those who are unable to safely return to their home country due to conflict, natural disasters, or some other extraordinary condition."

Among the many Catholic signatories on the letter were Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Atlanta, Atlanta's auxiliary bishops and Bishop Stephen D. Parkes of Savannah. The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Ignatian Solidarity Network, and CLINIC were also among the many Catholic groups signing the letter, as were religious orders such as the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

In a statement, Elnora Bassey, a policy attorney at CLINIC, argued, "Sending Salvadoran TPS holders back into unsafe conditions at a time where deportees in El Salvador are being detained without adequate representation, kidnapped, or potentially face some other harm, is cruel and can have a long-lasting harmful impact on those forced to return."

"At a time where immigrants are being targeted and lawful protections are becoming less available to those who need it, the administration has an opportunity to make a choice that demonstrates its ability to protect vulnerable populations and that we are a nation that demonstrates compassion for all people regardless of status," Bassey said.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to end TPS designation for Haitian and Syrian nationals. Catholic leaders have also urged protection for nationals from those countries who would be subject to dangerous conditions in their countries of origin.

Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington. Follow her on X @kgscanlon.

A copy of the faith leaders' letter on TPS can be found here: https://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/federal-administrative-advocacy/request-extend-temporary-protected-status-el-salvador

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Pope Prays for Dead, Missing Following Catastrophic Mudslides, Floods in Nepal

OSV News photo/Navesh Chitrakar, Reuters

Police officers carry an elderly survivor to a safer place at Trishuli in Nepal's Nuwakot district Aug. 27 following devastating floods. Massive flash floods in a border area of Nepal and China killed at least 160 people and left hundreds of tourists, workers and others missing after suddenly sweeping through communities and halting travel in some areas Aug. 26. Experts said a glacial collapse caused the disaster in the warming Himalayan region.

By Junno Arocho Esteves

(OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV expressed his sadness by the devastation wrought by a glacial collapse in the Nepal-China border, causing a deadly wave of floods and mudslides that killed 168 people with hundreds more feared dead.

In a telegram sent on the pope's behalf Aug. 27, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, expressed the pontiff's condolences upon learning "of the loss of life and devastation caused by the flash floods in Nepal."

"Commending the souls of the deceased to the clemency of the Almighty, His Holiness sends heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved, together with the assurance of his spiritual closeness to those affected by this tragedy," Cardinal Parolin wrote.

"Likewise offering prayers for the emergency personnel engaged in the ongoing rescue efforts, he invokes upon all divine assistance and protection," he added.

According to The Associated Press, the U.S. Geological Survey initially reported an earthquake 41 miles north of Kathmandu Aug. 26. However, further analysis revealed that the seismic event was caused by a 5.2 magnitude glacial collapse.

The disaster was a grim confirmation of warnings given earlier this year regarding the effects of climate change on nearby glaciers.

In March, researchers from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) released a report revealing that glaciers across the Himalayas were melting at an accelerating rate and warned that concrete action was needed to avoid further disasters to communities in the area.

"This isn't a distant problem; it's a crisis unfolding in real-time, with new disasters every summer and monsoon," said Pema Gyamtsho, the director general of ICIMOD. "The fact that ice loss rates have doubled this century should shock us all into action."

In an interview with the Vatican's missionary news agency, Fides, published Aug. 27, Father Silas Krishna Bogati, the apostolic administrator of Nepal, called the catastrophic event as "the worst disaster in the country's history."

"It was terrible. A flood coming from the mountains, and directed violently towards the valley, overwhelmed everything: people, homes, bridges, structures. Villages, markets, and roads were swept away. It is a serious wound for the nation," Father Bogati told Fides.

Father Bogati told Fides he was "shocked" and offered prayers for the dead, the missing, and "those suffering because of this catastrophe."

"We have about 25 Catholic families in the disaster area; they appear to be safe, but we are very worried about them," he said. "We entrust them to God, we pray for their safety, and we will do everything we can to help them."

The apostolic administrator of Nepal also said that a priest of the vicariate, Father James Britto, was stranded after "he had gone to celebrate Mass on the other side of the river and was stranded." According to Father Bogati, the bridge the priest had crossed was swept away by the floods.

As of Aug. 27, more than 1,300 people are missing in Nepal and Tibet, more than a hundred of whom were visiting Mount Kailash, a pilgrimage site sacred to several Eastern religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, AP reported.

"There are Nepalese, but also foreigners and tourists who were in these areas on an excursion: it is a pilgrimage route to Mansarovar, a sacred Hindu site that is also a trail for hikers and trekkers," Father Bogati explained.

The priest told Fides this was "the second time a disaster of this kind has occurred in that area, but this time it is of enormous proportions."

He also said the local Church's Caritas office was launching an appeal "to partners around the world" for assistance.

"We will do our part," Father Bogati said.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the U.S. Catholic Church's international aid agency, said it was closely monitoring the situation in Nepal and announced it was "coordinating with Caritas Nepal and local partners to assess urgent needs and determine how best to support affected communities."

(Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News.)

The Secret Lives of Butterflies

Speaker Heather Tokas, the founder of West Virginia Monarch Butterfly Day (Sept.12th) is an award-winning international speaker and entrepreneur. She is the first and only butterfly farmer in West Virginia. Born in Wheeling, graduate of Bethany College in social work, Heather is also the founder of metaStone: a healing group located in Wellsburg, WV.

September 8, 2026
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p. m.

St. Joseph Retreat Center
Wheeling, WV

Cost:
$15

Did you know butterflies have personalities? Yes! Even the caterpillars do quirky things.

Butterflies are no exception when it comes to having preferences and particular interests.

Heather Tokas will present a slide show of interesting photos encompassing the entire life cycle of butterflies while talking about her experiential wisdom gained over the last 50 years.

If you have photos of caterpillars, butterflies, or moths that you need identified, bring them and Heather will most likely be able to do that for you.

Butterfly life cycle kits will be available for sale so you may enjoy a personal experience at home.

Reserve your spot today!
Contact Anna Marie Troiani at 304-907-0171
or email at: atroiani@csjoseph.org

St. Joseph
RETREAT CENTER

Una carta del obispo Menjívar sobre “Entorno Seguro”

Agosto 6 de 2026

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Les escribo para confirmarles y asegurarles que la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston cumple con la Carta para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes, desde su creación en 2002, tal y como lo establece la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB).

La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston cuenta con un sólido programa de “Entorno Seguro”, con los siguientes requisitos vigentes para todos los empleados, clérigos y seminaristas, así como para todos los voluntarios que trabajen directamente con menores o tengan un contacto significativo con ellos, de conformidad con la Carta:

- Una política de tolerancia cero ante los abusos sexuales
- Realización del curso de concientización VIRTUS® “Protegiendo a los hijos de Dios” cada tres años
- Realización de una verificación de antecedentes cada tres años
- Aceptación de la Política sobre abuso sexual de la Diócesis, el Código de Conducta y el Estatuto de notificación obligatoria del estado de Virginia Occidental

Para los menores, la Diócesis ofrece anualmente sesiones de concientización “VIRTUS® Teaching Safety”, adaptadas a cada edad, para alumnos desde preescolar hasta el 12.º grado en nuestras escuelas católicas y en las escuelas

parroquiales de religión.

La Diócesis cuenta con un Programa de Asistencia a las Víctimas y participa en los procesos de recopilación de datos y de auditoría in situ que lleva a cabo la agencia auditora designada por la USCCB. Una Junta de Revisión Independiente, compuesta principalmente por miembros laicos, actúa como organismo consultivo para mí en lo relativo al programa “Entorno Seguro” y otros asuntos similares en toda la Diócesis.

Más allá de los requisitos de la Carta, la Diócesis toma las huellas dactilares del clero y del personal de las escuelas católicas cada tres años, y se ponen a disposición de todo el clero, los empleados y los voluntarios, los boletines mensuales de VIRTUS® sobre la formación en la concientización.

Además de este protocolo, la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston contribuye a promover una cultura de seguridad mediante el uso de “EthicsPoint”, un sistema de denuncia gestionado por terceros; mediante el mantenimiento y la publicación de una lista de personas acusadas de forma creíble; y mediante la designación de una sección de nuestro sitio web, www.dwc.org, dedicada a las denuncias, inquietudes e información sobre el programa “Entorno Seguro”. Aunque no esté específicamente relacionado con el programa “Entorno Seguro”, pero en aras de una mayor transparencia, la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston también publica los resultados de sus auditorías financieras anuales.

Como su obispo, apruebo y promulgo el programa de “Entorno Seguro” de la Diócesis y las mejores prácticas a las que se hace referencia en el presente documento. Tengan por seguro que yo también cumplo con este protocolo y estas mejores prácticas.

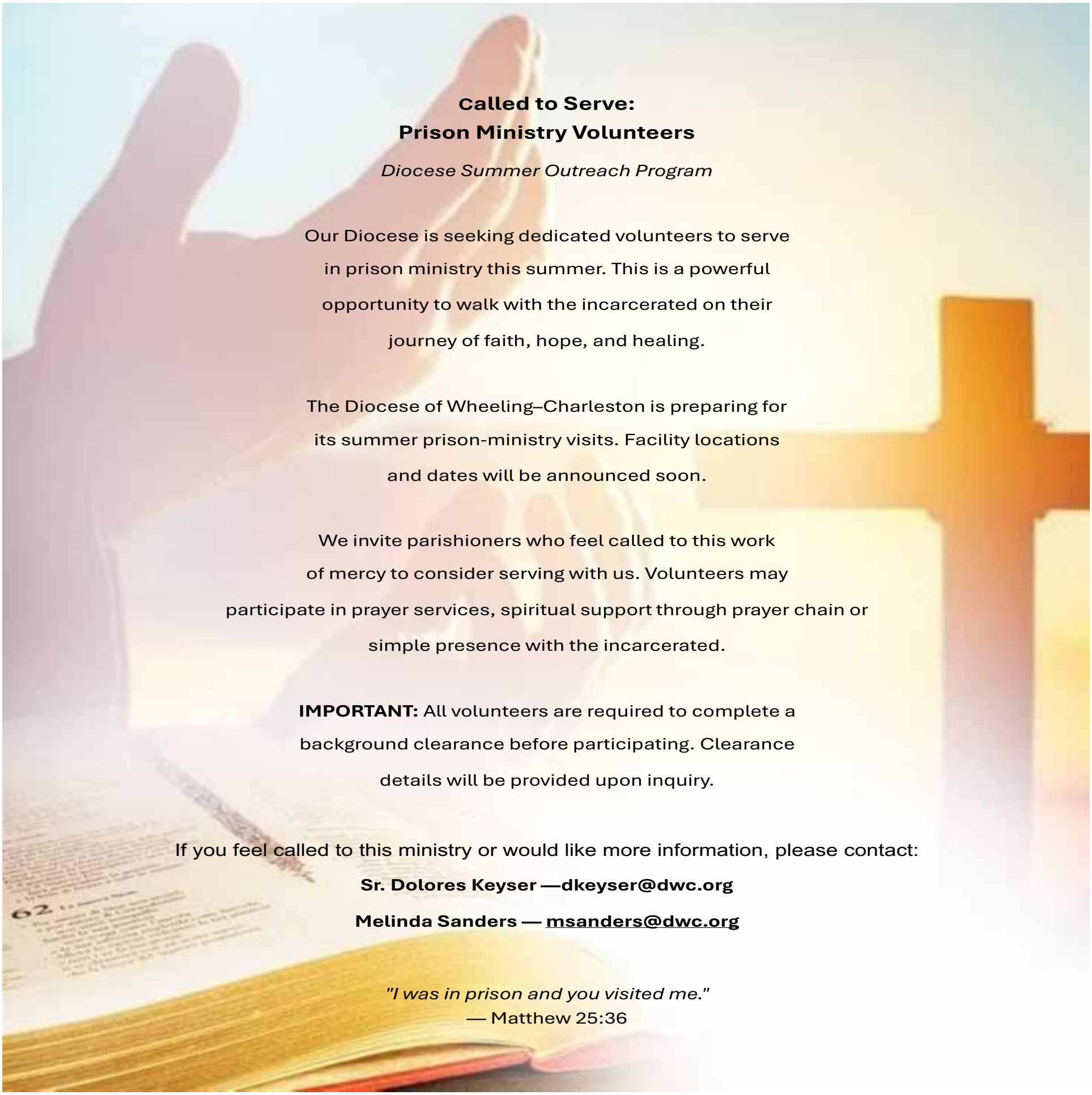
Mi más sincero agradecimiento a todos aquellos cuya colaboración en este proceso contribuye a difundir el Evangelio en entornos que son seguros, acogedores y productivos a lo largo y ancho de este hermoso estado montañoso al que todos consideramos nuestro hogar.

Sinceramente en Cristo,

+Evelio Menjivar

Monseñor Evelio Menjívar
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores: La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estado Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web www.repostbishopabuse.org. Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiásticas correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web www.dwc.org, favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas”, en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diocesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web www.dwc.org, en “Rendición de cuentas”, luego “Informar mala conducta” o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está protegida. **Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de crímenes contra a menores: 304-293-6400.



Called to Serve:
Prison Ministry Volunteers

Diocese Summer Outreach Program

Our Diocese is seeking dedicated volunteers to serve in prison ministry this summer. This is a powerful opportunity to walk with the incarcerated on their journey of faith, hope, and healing.

The Diocese of Wheeling–Charleston is preparing for its summer prison-ministry visits. Facility locations and dates will be announced soon.

We invite parishioners who feel called to this work of mercy to consider serving with us. Volunteers may participate in prayer services, spiritual support through prayer chain or simple presence with the incarcerated.

IMPORTANT: All volunteers are required to complete a background clearance before participating. Clearance details will be provided upon inquiry.

If you feel called to this ministry or would like more information, please contact:

Sr. Dolores Keyser —dkeyser@dwc.org

Melinda Sanders — msanders@dwc.org

"I was in prison and you visited me."
— Matthew 25:36

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