

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## In Early Morning Darkness, Pope Pays Tribute to Immaculate Conception



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

A firefighter places a wreath on a tall Marian statue overlooking the Spanish Steps in Rome Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Pope Francis prayed at the statue before daybreak, continuing the papal tradition of visiting the Spanish Steps on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

**By Cindy Wooden Catholic, News Service**

**ROME (CNS)** — An hour before sunrise, Pope Francis set a basket of white roses at the base of a statue of the Immaculate Conception in the center of Rome, praying Mary would help all who suffer.

“While it was still night,” the Vatican press office said Dec. 8, the

pope prayed to Mary, “asking her for the miracle of a cure for the many people who are sick, for healing for people who are suffering so much because of wars and the climate crisis, and for conversion so that she would melt the stony hearts of those who build walls to keep the pain of others away.”

The pope arrived at Piazza di Spagna, near the Spanish Steps, at about 6:15 a.m., the press office said. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it was the second year in a row that the pope made an unannounced, early morning visit to the statue to avoid drawing a crowd.

Pope Francis arrived, prayed

and was gone even before a brigade of Rome firefighters had arrived to hang a wreath of flowers from the statue’s outstretched arms.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is a public holiday in Rome, and the pope’s usual late afternoon visit to the Spanish

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# Immaculate...

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Steps normally draws thousands of people.

Before returning to the Vatican, the pope also stopped at the Basilica of St. Mary Major to pray, the Vatican said.

At noon, Pope Francis led the recitation of the Angelus prayer with visitors in St. Peter's Square and spoke about Mary's humility and the miracles God accomplishes through people who rely totally on him.

The Gospel reading for the feast is St. Luke's account of the Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary and telling her she would be the mother of Jesus.

"The angel calls her 'full of grace,'" the pope noted. "If she is full of grace, it means the Madonna is void of evil: She is without sin, immaculate."

Pope Francis noted how instead of saying Mary was surprised by the

angel's greeting, she was "greatly troubled."

"Mary does not credit prerogatives to herself, she does not hold claim to anything, she accounts nothing to her own merit," the pope said. "She is not self-satisfied, she does not exalt herself. For in her humility, she knows she receives everything from God."

"Mary Immaculate does not look on herself," he said. "This is true humility: not looking on oneself but looking toward God and others."

Pope Francis prayed that Mary would help all Christians understand that if they are humble and focused on God and on serving others, God can accomplish great things through them. "May she enkindle enthusiasm in us for the ideal of sanctity which has nothing to do with holy cards and pictures but is about living humbly and joyfully what happens each day, freed from ourselves, with our eyes fixed on God and the neighbor we meet," he said.

MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN YOUR FAITH, SO THAT IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT YOU MAY BE RICH IN HOPE.

ROMANS 15:13



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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 or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

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

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

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

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

Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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



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Web site: [www.thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://www.thecatholicspiritwv.org)

Diocesan Web site: [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org)

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# WV Catholic Schools Planning Ahead for 2022-2023 School Year

## *Hope Scholarship Recipients Welcome to Apply*

By Joyce Bibey

**WEST VIRGINIA**—As 2021 ends, the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is planning for the 2022-2023 school year and West Virginia Hope Scholarship program awareness is part of the planning.

Students entering kindergarten in the school 2022-2023, and first-through eleventh-grade students currently enrolled in public school are eligible to apply for the West Virginia Hope Scholarship run by the WV Treasurer's Office and use it towards tuition and fees for any of the 24 Catholic schools in the state. This scholarship is not run, managed, or determined by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston or the Department of Catholic Schools in the diocese. The program, formerly HB 2013 was passed by the WV Legislature in 2021 and will begin in the fall of 2022.

According to the WV Treasurer's Office, under the current school aid formula, each eligible student would receive \$4,600 annually to use toward private school, alternative instruc-

tion programs, or home school. The state stipulates that money in the Hope Scholarship education savings account will be administered through a third party. The treasurer's office reports that each family awarded would have access to an account for each eligible student in their household. All purchases would be pre-approved by the state. The funds awarded can only be spent on education expenses such as tuition and fees, extracurriculars, tutoring, materials, supplies, textbooks, transportation, etc.

Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., said the Catholic schools welcome Hope Scholarship recipients to apply for a Catholic education in West Virginia. She has been in talks with WV Treasurer Riley Moore since June about the opportunity for students new to Catholic school.

Moore has noted that the amount a family receives based on the state aid formula will vary from year to year based on the WV School Aid Formula, which is different from the cost per

pupil K-12 schools spend in West Virginia. According to the US Department of Education, West Virginia public school's cost per pupil is \$11,757 (last updated Aug. 1, 2021). Students currently enrolled in Catholic schools, private schools, and home schoolers may become eligible in July 2026, according to the FAQs listed on the WV Treasurer's Office Hope Scholarship Page. For Hope Scholarship details go to: [hope-scholarshipwv.com](http://hope-scholarshipwv.com).

Catholic schools have a lot to offer families, Deschaine said.

"God is in our schools," she said. "Everything we do, choices we make, and plans we develop are prayerfully made with the best intentions of our students' success. While our students outperform their peers academically, the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental well-being of each child is just as important to academic achievement. We lead with faith."

For information on the Catholic Schools of West Virginia go to: [wvcatholicschools.org](http://wvcatholicschools.org).

## Masses Gather Confraternity of St. Nicholas Members on Memorial

**O**n Dec. 6, the Memorial of St. Nicholas, Masses were celebrated in Wheeling and Morgantown with members of the newly established Confraternity of St. Nicholas attending.

Bishop Mark E. Brennan celebrated the Mass at the cathedral and Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John University Parish in Morgantown, celebrated Mass with a procession.

Confraternity Founder and Promoter Adam Marquart was in attendance in Morgantown to encourage membership to increase the concentrated intercession to St. Nicholas for the protection of children. The members of the confraternity who, through the intercession and patronage of St. Nicholas, commit themselves to praying, fasting, and advocating for the protection of children.

To learn more about the confraternity and become a member visit the confraternity's website: <https://dwc.org/evangelization-and-catechesis/confraternity-of-st-nicholas>.

A procession in honor of St. Nicholas is held in Morgantown Dec. 6. Mass was then celebrated at St. John University Parish with members of the Confraternity of St. Nicholas attending.

Courtesy Photo



# Catholic Social Teaching Takes Center Stage at Catholic Distance University Gala



Courtesy Photo

Catholic Distance University's (CDU) annual Academic Convocation Mass and Gala were held on Nov. 18 at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Marianne Evans Mount, president of CDU; Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington, Va., a CDU trustee; Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese of the Military Services, USA, and CDU chancellor; CDU Founders Award recipient Bishop Robert Barron, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire; and Bishop Mark E. Brennan, a CDU trustee.

Catholic Distance University honored Bishop Robert Barron with the Founders Award, its highest honor, at the Nov. 18 Gala at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. A record number of supporters, church leaders, graduates, faculty, staff, and students gathered to celebrate the university's 38th year and look toward its future amidst the backdrop of a rapidly changing nation and church in a politically divisive time. Chairman Stephen Pryor announced plans to develop a new curriculum in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) particularly geared to Hispanic students that responds to the needs of the church and society.

In his acceptance speech, Bishop Barron, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire, agreed that CDU and Word on Fire have much in common in using

technology to spread the word of God, but that more importantly, "We are propagating this intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural tradition that is for the salvation of the world."

"We've been given this treasure that's meant to illuminate the world," he said. "The Christian Gospel is not meant to be whispered amongst ourselves, it's meant to be shouted from the rooftops."

A great proponent of CST, Bishop Barron believes it is essential to the new evangelization and provides a lens through which to view the issues of our time more clearly. His talk touched on diversity, equity, and inclusivity and how they are often misunderstood today as fundamental values; they must be considered in light of the cardinal virtues—justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude, and the theological virtues of faith, hope,

and love, which perfect the cardinal virtues.

"Diversity, equity, and inclusivity are not fundamental values. They are values, but only in the measure that they participate in something higher or more fundamental," Bishop Barron said. "I learned that from the Catholic intellectual tradition. What makes them good is the measure in which they serve justice."

"What endures in heaven is love," he explained. "What makes equity good? If it's a loving expression. What makes diversity valuable? If it's an expression of love. What makes inclusivity good? If it's a modality of love."

"Our society, in the measure that it takes the current triplet, is walking down a dangerous road—what it needs is the lux mundi—the light of the world—which is articulated in the Catholic intellectual tradi-

tion," Bishop Barron said.

He passionately spoke of CST. "It's not just for us, it's for the whole world. We need to propagate it, we need to teach it. We need to announce it from the rooftops."

"We in this room know it, and that's why we're dedicated to Catholic Distance University," he said. "Let's not hide our faith away in the public forum. They want to turn religion into a private hobby. It's not a hobby. We're salt and light for the whole world."

"That's why I believe in what you're doing. That's why I'm really honored to receive this award tonight," Bishop Barron concluded.

President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount reflected on the university's beginnings and service to the church, the peripheries, and the underserved through the use of distance education and technology.

**See "Gala" on Page 5**

## SYNOD Listening Sessions

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

**Holy Family, Richwood:** First Session—Dec. 11 following Mass; Second Session—Dec. 12, following Mass

**Holy Rosary, Buckhannon:** Third Session—Jan. 11, 1 p.m.; Fourth Session—Jan. 13, 1 p.m.

**Holy Trinity, Nitro:** First Session—Jan. 8 after Mass; Second Session—Jan. 9 after Mass; Third Session—Jan. 13, 6 p.m.; Fourth Session—Jan. 15 after Mass; Fifth Session—Jan. 16 after Mass

**Sacred Heart, Bluefield:** First Session—Dec. 14, 1 p.m.; Second Session—Dec. 16, 6 p.m.

**Sacred Heart of Mary, Weirton:** First Session—Jan. 13, 1-2:30 p.m.; Second Session—Jan. 13, 6:30-8 p.m.; Third Session—Feb. 9, 1-2:30 p.m.; Fourth Session—Feb. 9, 6-8:30 p.m.

**St. Catherine of Siena, Ronceverte:** First Session: Dec. 5—12 p.m.; Second Session—Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

**St. Charles Borromeo, White Sulphur Springs:** First Session—Dec. 20, 6 p.m.

**St. Francis of Assis, St. Albans:** First Session—Jan. 9, 1 p.m.; Second Session—Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m.

**St. Francis de Sales, Beckley:** Second Session—Jan. 9, after 11 a.m. Mass; Third Session—Jan. 18 after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

**St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown:** First Session—Jan. 9 after Mass; Second Session—Feb. 19 after 5:15 p.m. Mass; Third Session—March 8 10 a.m.

**St. John, St. Marys:** First Session—Jan. 25; Second Session—Inclement weather date, Feb. 1

**St. Michael, Wheeling:** Second Session—Jan. 9, 6 p.m.; Third Session—Jan. 25, 6-8 p.m.

**St. Peter, Farmington:** First Session—March 20 following Sunday Mass

**St. Peter Claver, Huntington:** First Session—Jan. 9 after 11 a.m. Mass.

**St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs:** Second Session—Jan. 6, 5 p.m.; Third Session—Jan. 22, 10 a.m.; Fourth Session—Feb. 6, 10:30 a.m.; Fifth Session—Feb. 23, 2 p.m.

**St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling:** First Session—Feb. 6; Second Session—Feb. 16; Third Session Inclement weather date, Feb. 20.

## Gala...

Cont'd from Page 4

"Technology is a gift from God. As Catholic distance educators, technology enables us to reach the peripheries—our graduates tonight are witnesses to the reality of human presence at an online university," she reflected.

She reminded the crowd that "the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the premier accreditor of graduate theological education in North America, confirmed the truth of this gift with the historic accreditation of CDU's Graduate School of Theology, the first fully and exclusively online school in ATS."

In addition to providing online education to thousands of lay persons and religious, the university has educated the incarcerated since 1984 through paper correspondence courses and more recently through technology.

"Tonight we rejoice for the gift of the mustard seed," Dr. Mount said. "This tiny seed now brings CDU's digital education to 150 prisons across the country on a digital tablet, through a partnership with the Order of Malta. As the only provider of Catholic education on the Edovo digital tablet, inmates have accessed over 700,000 lessons in three years with an 88% completion rate. CDU is still the only provider of Catholic education to these inmates."

Other honors were also bestowed: Dr. Joseph V. Braddock, a longtime trustee who greatly contributed to CDU's growth and died in 2021, was announced as CDU's first trustee emeritus. CDU's first lay board chairman Dr. Charles R. Wasaff; former staff member Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, SND; and former board member and instructor Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND, were awarded the Papal Honor Croce pro Ecclesia et Pontifice for their outstanding service to the university and the church.

CDU Advisory Board member Professor Helen Alvaré of the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University and well-known author and speaker served as emcee.

The Academic Convocation Mass, with principal celebrant, University Chancellor Archbishop Timothy Broglio, Archbishop for the Military Services, USA, included a graduation ceremony for the classes of 2020 and 2021. With 99 graduates in total, the 18 graduates present hailed from throughout the USA and Canada.

The Mass was concelebrated by

four bishops—Bishop of Arlington Michael F. Burbidge; Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston Mark E. Brennan; Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles Robert Barron; and Bishop Emeritus of Arlington Paul S. Loverde. All but Bishop Barron serve on CDU's Board of Trustees. More than 20 priests concelebrated.

Chairman Stephen Pryor commented on the gala's record turnout and thanked Bishop Barron. "I want to talk to you about a treasure that has been called the church's best kept secret: Catholic Social Teaching," he said, "the church's wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of the modern world."

"The wisdom of CST is needed now more than ever before because it is a light, the beacon through all this darkness," he added, speaking of "deep divisions in America over our values as a nation and beliefs about building a just society."

He then announced that CDU is planning a new curriculum focused on CST open to all, but especially for Hispanic Catholics. The new curriculum will form leaders to serve the underserved.

"By 2030, Hispanic Catholics will be one out of every two Catholics in America," Pryor said. Currently, Hispanic Catholics are underrepresented in church leadership positions, representing just 3% of the priesthood and 8% or 9% of lay ecclesial ministers, he explained.

Pryor spoke of "the coming tsunami of need presented by immigration, poverty, and lack of accessibility to sound catechesis," and the implications for the church. "Hispanic education experts have told us that there is a critical need for academic credentials as part of Hispanic Catholic leadership development," he continued.

In response, CDU will develop

an affordable, online associates degree, with a concentration in Catholic Social Teaching based on CDU's existing AA program. "The formation we envision is at once theological and practitioner-oriented, equipping students to understand and confidently respond to complex social problems through a lens of faith and reason. The curriculum would include culturally attuned bilingual components to provide instruction in the language in which graduates will primarily be ministering," Pryor explained.

The program, which will couple theology and CST, will also address the need to reinvigorate parish life and engage students in corporal works of mercy by "making every Catholic parish a center of missionary activity."

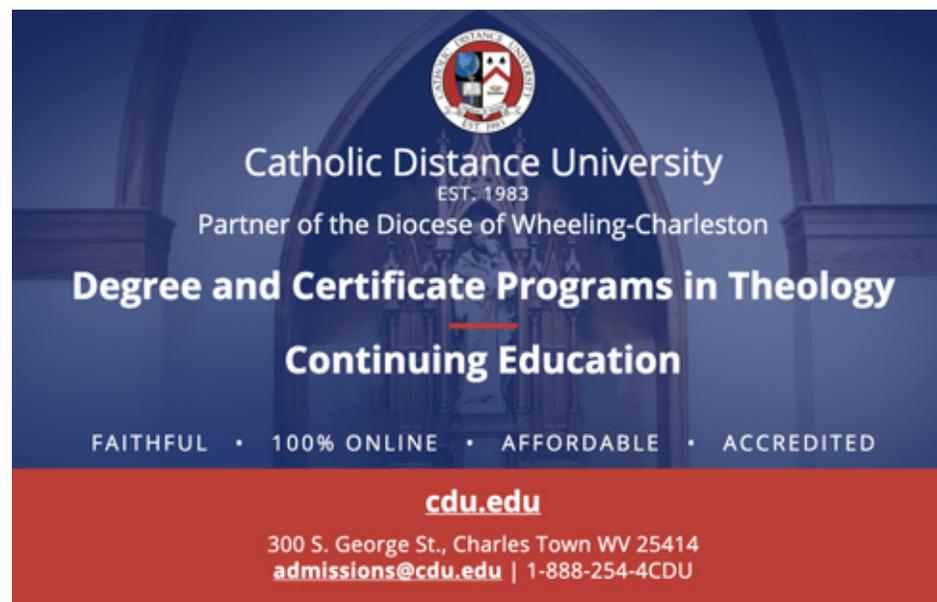
"Research indicates that ministries of charity enliven faith communities," Pryor said. "Hispanic Catholics expect them, and young people are attracted to them, but too few U.S. parishes have active ministries of charity."

CDU will also develop a graduate certificate in CST in English to equip ordained and lay parish ministers to lead ministries of charity.

Pryor added that, "To accelerate progress, CDU is exploring potential collaboration on this initiative with the University of St. Thomas in Houston, an ideal partner who possesses broad institutional capabilities and a mutual commitment to fidelity in handing on the Catholic faith."

"CDU plans to make CST a major theme in our mission to communicate the mind and heart of the church in a digital world," he said.

"To echo Pope Francis," Pryor added, "what better way to present the heart of the Church than by inspiring a new movement to go to the peripheries in the service of love?"



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# Corpus Christi Students Celebrate the Real Meaning of Christmas

“Christmas is a time of joy for children of all ages. From baking cookies to making Christmas lists. From singing holiday songs to trimming the tree. Most of us are very blessed to not only be surrounded by family and friends, but also live in a warm house with everything we could possibly need,” said officials from Corpus Christi School in Wheeling. “Sometimes, we can all get carried away in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and lose track of what it is truly about – the birth of our Savior.”

At Corpus Christi School, this season is a time of preparing for the arrival of Jesus, school officials said, focusing on hope, peace, joy, and love. Students at the school decided that for their monthly service project in December, they would adopt a child off the Parish Wish Tree. The wish tree provides assistance to make Christmas morning a little more special for area children and grandchildren.

The service project is a favorite for the Corpus Christi families. It reminds the students just how blessed they are and allows them to spend some special time with their parents as they check items off another child’s Christmas list. Families sent in shirts, pants, pajamas, coats, hats, gloves, boots, shoes, art sets, Legos, and other toys to ensure this child would have a memorable morning. The smiles were abundant as gifts were delivered to the office one by one. The magic of the season and the joy in serving others was evident in each student’s eyes, school officials said, and quoted Pope Francis, “Christ leads us to go out from ourselves more and more, to give ourselves and to serve others.”

“There is no doubt that the true meaning of Christmas and the importance of helping has made this season even more meaningful for both the students of Corpus Christi and their families,” school officials said.



Courtesy Photo  
Students at Corpus Christi School in Wheeling display gifts for the child they sponsored from the wish tree for Corpus Christi Parish.

## St. Nicholas Portrayed in Fairmont

This year it was Steve Perrotti’s 10th year as St. Nicholas at his Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Fairmont. Over a decade ago, he was filled with a desire to share the stories of the life and miracles of St. Nicholas. He wanted people, especially the children, to know the man behind the infamous “Santa Claus”. And so, he started studying his history and miracles and began growing his beard. Finding the more original attire was a little challenging but eventually he located a suit that felt was appropriate.

The role he plays as St. Nicholas is one of a storyteller. He does not let children come and sit on his lap and tell him what they want for Christmas. Rather he tells stories about the life of St. Nicholas from his miraculous birth, throughout his



Courtesy Photo  
Steve Perrotti portrays St. Nicholas at his Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Fairmont

life, and after his death.

Within the story presen-

tations he generally fo-

cusses on a theme that re-

flects Christian teachings.

So, for about 30 minutes he

uses his talents of expression to share the life of St. Nicholas with his audience and spread the word of Jesus Christ.

For 10 years he has told the stories of St. Nicholas at various Sunday Faith Formation programs, Catholic schools, Christian preschools, and nursing homes in the North Central West Virginia area. However, in 2020 the Covid pandemic did not permit him to spread the good news. Instead, he created his first YouTube videos at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8HYD\\_BWB24&t=233s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8HYD_BWB24&t=233s) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5rklvwERE>.

This year once again he has shared with Immaculate Conception Parish. He is also sharing the St. Nicholas stories with a few Sunday schools nearby and through YouTube.



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**Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan**

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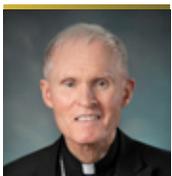
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Or visit [togetherinholiness.org](http://togetherinholiness.org) and select the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston location

# Martinsburg Catholic Daughters Making Holidays a Little Brighter for Nursing Home Residents

**MARTINSBURG**—Members of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Martinsburg assembled gift bags for those in local nursing homes.

Each gift bag had six to seven items each, some maybe more.

“We donated 92 ladies and 35 men bags, 47 blankets with 33 being hand-made to Stone Rise Nursing Home. Signed Christmas cards were also given, to be handed out at different times by the facility staff,” said Lisa Ceravalo of Court Martinsburg who is also state regent. “The activities director, Megan, thanked us greatly for the gifts commenting “the residents love the blankets,”

Items left over making up 16 additional ladies gift bags were donated to the residents at Countryside Nursing Home. Staff expressed how much they appreciated the Catholic Daughters thoughtfulness, Ceravalo said. “Hopefully this is a tradition we can continue to share a little Christmas spirit!” she said.

Most of the handmade blankets came from the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Serving Stitches group which meet weekly at a local business to work on projects that include blankets for this project, and residents of the local Veterans Center. They also, make baby hats for the local hospital and rescue mission.



Courtesy Photo

Catholic Daughters of the Amricas Court Martinsburg members deliver gift bags for residents of local nursing homes.

## All Invited to the St. Agnes Advent Festival in Shepherdstown

**SHEPHERDSTOWN**—Food, fun, and festivities await attendees of the St. Agnes Advent Festival at St. Agnes Parish in Shepherdstown Dec. 12. The festival begins after the 5 p.m. Mass (5:45 p.m.- 7 p.m.) and will be held in front of the church and in the narthex. The parish invites everyone to attend.

“It’s been a long time since we’ve had the opportunity to gather socially. It’s time to welcome new members, renew old friendships, make new ones, and most of all, strengthen our community,” parish officials said. “We will have tables and chairs indoors and outdoors, campfire style warmth and light (bring lanterns etc. if you have them to add magic to the evening).”

There will be COVID-safe refreshments as well as some Christmas music, and, a short opening prayer.

“This is an opportunity for those who cannot serve on a regular basis to make a difference. Just show up!” parish officials said. “We’ll help provide the Christmas spirit!”

## All Saints Parish Reaches out to Neighbors in Need



Courtesy Photo

All Saints Parish in Bridgeport prepared Thanksgiving baskets for those in need and collected warm clothing for the homeless. The food and clothing were blessed at Mass on various Sundays in November. The food baskets were given to families who have children that attend a local school that has 60 percent poverty. The warm clothing was presented to the Clarksburg Mission. Pictured above are members of the parish with some of the provisions.

# St. Joseph School Student Wins Essay Contest

Eighth-grader Arabella Cole of St. Joseph School in Martinsburg recently won state-wide recognition in a Catholic citizenship essay contest sponsored by Knights of Columbus Monsignor Lackey Council 1169. School principal Patrick Blanc along with Steve Edwards and Jonathan Noyalas from the Knights council, judged the essay to be the best of all the entries in the schoolwide contest.

Cole wrote about how hard it can be to put faith into practice when she cannot have a face-to-face conversation with God.

"I find it difficult to hear when God is talking to me," she wrote. "It feels like a one-sided conversation, with me talking and God not answering. Without answers, I struggle with finding where He fits into my life."

The Martinsburg teen seeks nonverbal responses from the Lord. "I was once talking to my dad in the car about faith and religion, then in the sky, one of the clouds formed a shape like a cross. Experiencing that helps me see where God truly does fit into my Life," she wrote.

Cole's essay was not only judged best at



Courtesy Photo

**Eighth-grader Arabella Cole of St. Joseph School in Martinsburg accepts her award for a Catholic citizenship essay contest sponsored by Knights of Columbus Monsignor Lackey Council 1169.**

the local level, but she won for the entire state of West Virginia and will be judged at the national level later on. Her prize for winning the local contest was a \$25 gift card

which was presented to her in memory of Noyalas' father, Robert Noyalas Sr., who died in the summer of 2018 from cancer at age 67.

## Knights Councils Working Together

Our Lady of Peace Council 12195 and Carroll Council 504 recently delivered 172 new winter coats to Youth Services System in Wheeling. These coats are designed for extreme weather and are wind and waterproof and came in men, women, and children's sizes. Each council had purchased coats through the Knights State Council BOGO Coats For Kids promotion, which several councils across West Virginia participated in. Shown with a few of the colorful coats that will help keep local residents warm this winter are District Deputy Ray Blust, Grand Knight Ray Thalman, Grand Knight Mike Bush and Council 504's Membership Director Art Bertol. Courtesy Photo



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## Wheeling University Receives State Funding to Continue Marshall Co. Schools Collaboration

**WHEELING** – The state of West Virginia has awarded Wheeling University more than \$41,000 to extend its partnership with the Marshall County School District to enhance math education and continue a teacher training collaboration that was launched last year.

A year ago, the University received a \$12,000 Professional Development Grant to offer co-teaching and collaborative workshops for teachers in Marshall County and Wheeling education majors. The grant also supported the Math4Life initiative to improve student mathematics performance at the middle and high school levels around the state.

Dr. Sherri Theaker, professor of Education and director of Wheeling’s Education Program, said the \$41,400 grant will allow the two educational entities to enhance the existing relationship to improve math instruction to middle and high school students. Additionally, the funding will provide Wheeling education majors valuable classroom teaching experience and afford Marshall County Math teachers professional development opportunities.

“Collaborating with the Marshall County School District over the past two years not only has provided professional development opportunities for the teachers within the district, but has given our teacher candidates the opportunity to become involved in current and relevant classroom math curriculum,” said Dr. Theaker.

As part of residency program, John Korte, a Wheeling University junior Education major, will spend a total of 120 hours this year observing middle

See “Funding” on Page 11

## Reading Buddies Make an Impact at SS. Peter & Paul Catholic School, Oak Hill



Courtesy Photo

On the Nov. 17 meeting of the Patch Club after-school reading program at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic School in Oak Hill, fifth- and sixth-graders made an impact by serving as reading buddies to students in the lower grades. “It was a busy 30 minutes, but the kids were amazing! Ms. Lanham is so proud of them!” school officials said. Above, a little one enjoys time with her reading buddy.

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## Funding...

**Cont'd from Page 10**  
and high school classes. As a senior, he will student-teach in the middle or high school. He said observing classes this year has been a great experience.

"Being inside the classroom has made a big impact on my educational experience at Wheeling. This opportunity has solidified my decision to be an Education major and a teacher. I have a great mentors in Marshall County guiding me through all of the nuances of teaching. I am so grateful for Wheeling University's partnership with Marshall County Schools, because it has allowed me to gain valuable classroom teaching skills and work with a group of true professionals," Korte explained.

The collaboration with the University, is a great opportunity for the Wheeling education majors to gain experience inside a classroom and affords the district the ability to track its students' progress, said Holly Woods, Marshall County Schools K-12 mathematics facilitator.

"The collaboration with Wheeling University provides many opportunities for pre-service teachers, classroom teachers and administrators to discuss student progress, assessment, needs and plan differentiated instruction. The experience of working in professional learning community (PLC) creates a team within the school to address the needs of all students and provides teachers with support. Experiencing a PLC is something that many pre-service teachers often are not familiar with, and shows how the relationships are vital in creating a learning environment," Woods explained.

Theaker added, "The Wheeling University teacher candidates also have become immersed in professional development activities allowing them to work side by side with veteran teachers in the field as they keep current on their content knowledge and pedagogy."

In addition to funding professional development for preservice

teachers and teachers in Marshall County, a portion of this year's grant allowed for the purchase of 100 iPads that the Moundsville Middle School students can use for in class math instruction and to work in small group settings on math content.

Dr. Dianna Vargo, director of Graduate Education and an instructor in the Math Department, said, "Wheeling University has aligned its mathematics education curriculum with West Virginia Department of Education policy to include a year-long clinical experience based on the co-teaching model. Additionally, teacher candidates complete a total of 120 classroom observation hours working under the mentorship of a mathematics teacher during their junior year."

Vargo added, "Current national statistics show that 46 percent of school districts in the United States have reported a shortage of math educators. Wheeling University is producing education professionals to help address the shortage of math teachers that school districts are experiencing."

While Wheeling University student teachers are receiving specialized classroom teaching experience, Dr. Theaker said, the Marshall County students and teachers are benefiting from the partnership by introducing innovative math education techniques into the curriculum.

In addition to the intensive math instruction, Moundsville Middle School students will receive a copy of the book "The Math Pact." The book will be incorporated into the middle school's math curriculum, and provides the educators a coherent approach to teaching and learning mathematics.

The grant also affords for the Marshall County math faculty and the Wheeling teacher candidates to complete eight, one-hour workshops pertaining to teacher leadership with a focus on differentiated instruction and co-teaching, Dr. Theaker noted. Additionally, the after school workshops will sup-

port the teachers and teacher candidates in using student data to determine interventions for the middle school students in need of extra help.

Moundsville Middle School Head Principal Shey McGuire said, "We are excited to utilize block scheduling to provide critical interventions for our students this year. It is imperative that we share our knowledge with the teachers of the future, so they are more equipped to handle everything life brings their way."

Woody Yoder, Marshall County Schools assistant superintendent/curriculum director, added,

"The ability to collaborate with Wheeling University provides opportunities for our teachers to examine ways in which we can better serve our students. In this case math teachers, each teaching more than 100 students on a given day, are working on ways to team

up to better serve students who have deficit and/or enrichment needs. Having student teachers and observers working as a part of that teaming is a win for everyone."

The final piece of the program will be for seventh grade students and teachers to participate in e-Missions through Wheeling University's Challenger Learning Center (CLC). Challenger's e-Missions are distance learning simulations that connect the students with a flight director at the CLC where the students use their math and science skills to solve a number of crises during the mission.

In preparation of the e-Missions, the middle school teachers will incorporate instructional information that not only prepares the students for the simulation, but bolsters their understanding and proficiency of math.



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# Pope Closes Year of St. Joseph with Marginalized Young Adults

By Carol Glatz Catholic, News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis closed the Year of St. Joseph with a private visit to a community in Rome that helps people experiencing marginalization, crisis or substance abuse.

"Do not be afraid of reality, of the truth, of our misery," he told volunteers and the people they assist at the Good Samaritan home Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. "Don't be afraid because Jesus likes reality as it is, undisguised; the Lord does not like

people who cover their soul, their heart with makeup."

The Good Samaritan fraternity or home is part of the worldwide "Comunità Cenacolo," which was founded in 1983 by Italian Sister Elvira Petrozzi to offer "God's tenderness to the cry of desperation of so many young people who were lost, deceived and disappointed," and had been seeking "the true meaning of life in the false light of the world," according to the community's mission statement.

Dozens of guests and members of the community welcomed the pope,

who listened to the experiences several of them shared and watched a segment of a film on the life St. Joseph, which was produced by young people living at two fraternities in Medjugorje.

Among those welcoming the pope were the two children of Andrea and Antonia Giorgetti, who both recovered from drug dependencies and now run the Good Samaritan fraternity, reflecting the fact that a number of young people who find help at the fraternities go on to assist others.

The pope encouraged all the residents to "have the courage to tell

others, 'there is a better way.'"

Pope Francis also visited and blessed the fraternity's new chapel, built by residents out of discarded wooden beams, travertine marble and other materials reclaimed from dumpsters and landfills.

Building something new and wonderful out of things that have been thrown away "is a concrete example of what we do here," Father Stefano Aragno told Vatican News Dec. 8.

The pope led the prayer dedicated to St. Joseph to conclude the special year with those present.

## Our Lady of Fatima Statue Near National Shrine in Washington Vandalized

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Days ahead of a major Marian feast day in the Catholic Church, a marble statue of Our Lady of Fatima near the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington was vandalized, with Mary's hands and nose cut off, her face scratched and the cross on her crown broken off.

On Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a spokesman at the national shrine told Catholic News Service that around 10:45 p.m. Dec. 5, the perpetrator got to the statue by climbing a locked fence that surrounds a rosary walk and garden that includes the statue. Video footage showed a masked person doing the damage, which was discovered the next morning. Police were investigating the vandalism.

"Though we are deeply pained by this incident, we pray for the perpetrator through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of Our Lady of Fatima," Msgr. Walter Rossi, rector of the national shrine, said in a statement.

The Fatima statue and the garden around it were completed in 2017, the 100th anniversary of Mary's appearances to three shepherd children in a field near Fatima, Portugal, with her message that eucharistic prayer, recitation of the rosary and penance would save souls and bring peace to the world.

## Knights' Documentary on St. Joseph Now Available to View Online for Free

By Catholic News Service

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS) — The Knights of Columbus made its latest documentary, "St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father," available to view for free at kofc.org beginning Dec. 8 to coincide with the end of the "Year of St. Joseph."

"St. Joseph teaches us that we really find ourselves when we live for others," said Patrick Kelly, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus.

"He models for each one of us the importance of prayer, obedience and courage in our lives. The Knights of Columbus is very pleased to offer this inspiring documentary for all to watch and to discover in St. Joseph

a powerful example and intercessor," he said in a Dec. 7 statement.

Produced to increase devotion to the foster father of Jesus, protector of the Holy Family and patron of the Catholic Church, the film premiered on ABC affiliates across the United States this fall.

After its six-week broadcast run, the Knights announced the film would be made available for viewing online. It features reenactments, interviews with scholars "and inspiring witness stories" that provide an opportunity to learn about Joseph from a historical perspective and show "how devotion to him can be life-changing," the Knights said in a news release.



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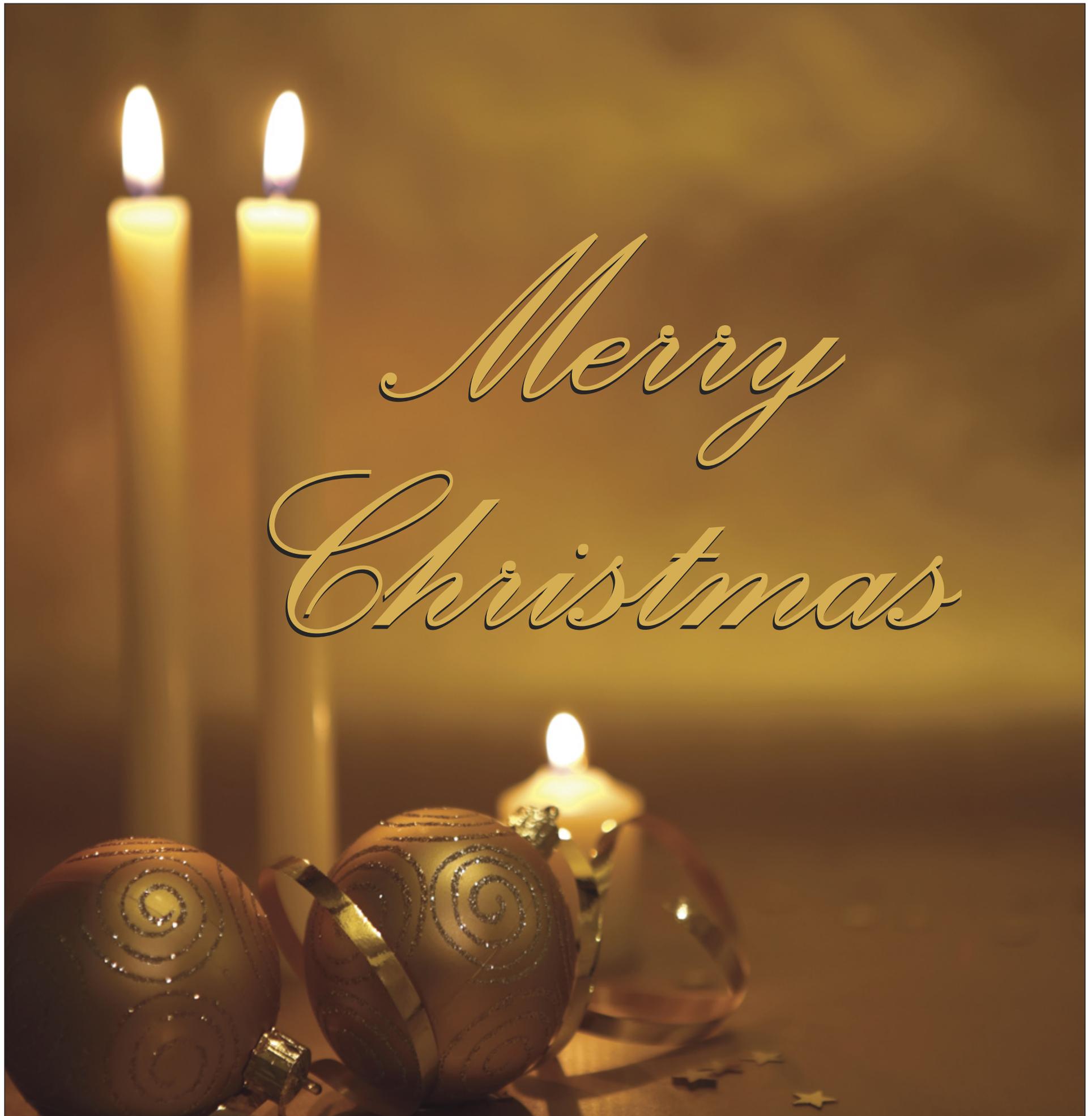
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# Helping Babies and Toddlers with Developmental Delays Thrive

Piper is an amazing little girl. At nearly two years old, she was tested for — and eventually diagnosed with — Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Her mother, Darian, remembers getting started with Catholic Charities West Virginia’s Birth to Three program (BTT) while they were waiting for Piper’s results.

Piper received speech, developmental, and occupational therapies. “Due to the long wait for her ASD evaluation, we were extremely excited to have Birth to Three come and start working with her in the meantime,” Darian stated. “These three women, along with the program in general, have been life-changing to us!”

“Now, my girl makes uninterrupted eye contact, she responds to ‘Piper’ and ‘Sis,’ she listens to simple commands, she says new words every week, she uses simple sign language, and most importantly, she interacts with other children!” Darian elaborated.

During the holiday season, our staff and an army of volunteers put on a truly impactful event for BTT families. Santa’s Silent Night is specially designed to include children with sensory issues in holiday traditions. Here’s what Piper’s mother loved about the event:

“I remember opening the [invitation] and immediately feeling so thankful. It hadn’t even crossed my mind about how difficult a mall trip to visit Santa would be. When we walked into Santa’s Silent Night, it was low-lit, quiet, and peaceful. I instantly burst into tears! I have never seen such a thoughtfully put-together event. We had the BEST time!”

West Virginia Birth to Three is a system of services and supports for children ages birth to three who have a delay in their development or may be at risk of developmental delay. Qualifying families receive professional services at no cost, regardless of income. To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia and this program, 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.



Courtesy Photo  
“Birth to Three has very literally changed our entire lives. My daughter has a better quality of life because of it. We are thankful every day for this amazing program!” —Darian

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# En la madrugada, el papa rinde homenaje a la Inmaculada Concepción

**Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

**ROMA (CNS)**—Una hora antes del amanecer, el papa Francisco colocó una canasta de rosas blancas en la base de una estatua de la Inmaculada Concepción en el centro de Roma, rezando para que María ayudara a todos los que sufren.

"Mientras aún era de noche", dijo la oficina de prensa del Vaticano el 8 de diciembre, el papa se detuvo en oración ante la estatua de María pidiendo por "la curación de los muchos enfermos; sanación, para los pueblos que sufren severamente las guerras y la crisis climática; y de conversión, para que derriera el corazón de piedra de los que construyen muros para protegerse del dolor ajeno".

El papa llegó a la Plaza de España, cerca de las escaleras, alrede-

dor de las 6:15 a.m., dijo la oficina de prensa. Debido a la pandemia de COVID-19, fue el segundo año consecutivo que el papa realizó una visita sin previo aviso a la estatua a primera hora de la mañana para evitar atraer una multitud.

El papa Francisco llegó, rezó y se fue incluso antes de que llegara una brigada de bomberos de Roma para colgar una corona de flores en los brazos extendidos de la estatua.

La fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción es un día de fiesta en Roma, y la visita habitual del papa a última hora de la tarde a la Plaza de España normalmente atrae a miles de personas.

Antes de regresar al Vaticano, el papa también se detuvo en la Basílica de Santa María la Mayor para orar, dijo el Vaticano.

Al mediodía, el papa Francisco dirigió el rezo del Ángelus con los

visitantes en la Plaza de San Pedro y habló sobre la humildad de María y los milagros que Dios realiza a través de personas que confían totalmente en él.

La lectura del Evangelio para la fiesta es el relato de san Lucas del ángel Gabriel que se apareció a María y le dijo que ella sería la madre de Jesús.

"El ángel la llama 'llena de gracia'", señaló el papa. "Si está llena de gracia, significa que la Virgen está libre de maldad: no tiene pecado, es inmaculada".

El papa Francisco señaló que en vez de decir que María estaba sorprendida por el saludo del ángel, estaba "muy preocupada".

"María no se atribuye prerrogativas a sí misma, no tiene derecho a nada, no se atribuye nada a su propio mérito", dijo el papa. "No está satisfecha de sí misma, no se exalta

a sí misma. Porque en su humildad, sabe que recibe todo de Dios".

"María Inmaculada no se mira a sí misma", dijo. "Esta es la verdadera humildad: no mirarse a uno mismo, sino mirar a Dios y a los demás".

El papa Francisco rezó para que María ayudara a todos los cristianos a comprender que si son humildes y están enfocados en Dios y en servir a los demás, Dios puede lograr grandes cosas a través de ellos.

"Que ella encienda en nosotros el entusiasmo por el ideal de santidad que no tiene nada que ver con las tarjetas y los dibujos sagrados, sino que se trata de vivir con humildad y alegría lo que sucede cada día, liberados de nosotros mismos, con la mirada fija en Dios y en el prójimo que encontramos," él dijo.

## Gran Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se Celebrará en Martinsburg

La parroquia de San José en Martinsburg invita a todos a su Gran Fiesta a la Virgen de Guadalupe el 12 de Diciembre del 2021.

El 12 de Diciembre nos reuniremos en "Lackey Hall" de la Iglesia de San José a cantarle "Las Mañanitas a la Virgen, comenzando a las 5:00 de la mañana seguido a las 6:00 con la Misa en su honor. Después de la Misa nos trasladamos en procesión hacia la Escuela San José y se seguirá celebrando en el salón de la cafetería con platos mexicanos, bailes y mucho más.

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**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 varían según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inminente, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anonimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; 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, diacono, 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 esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.



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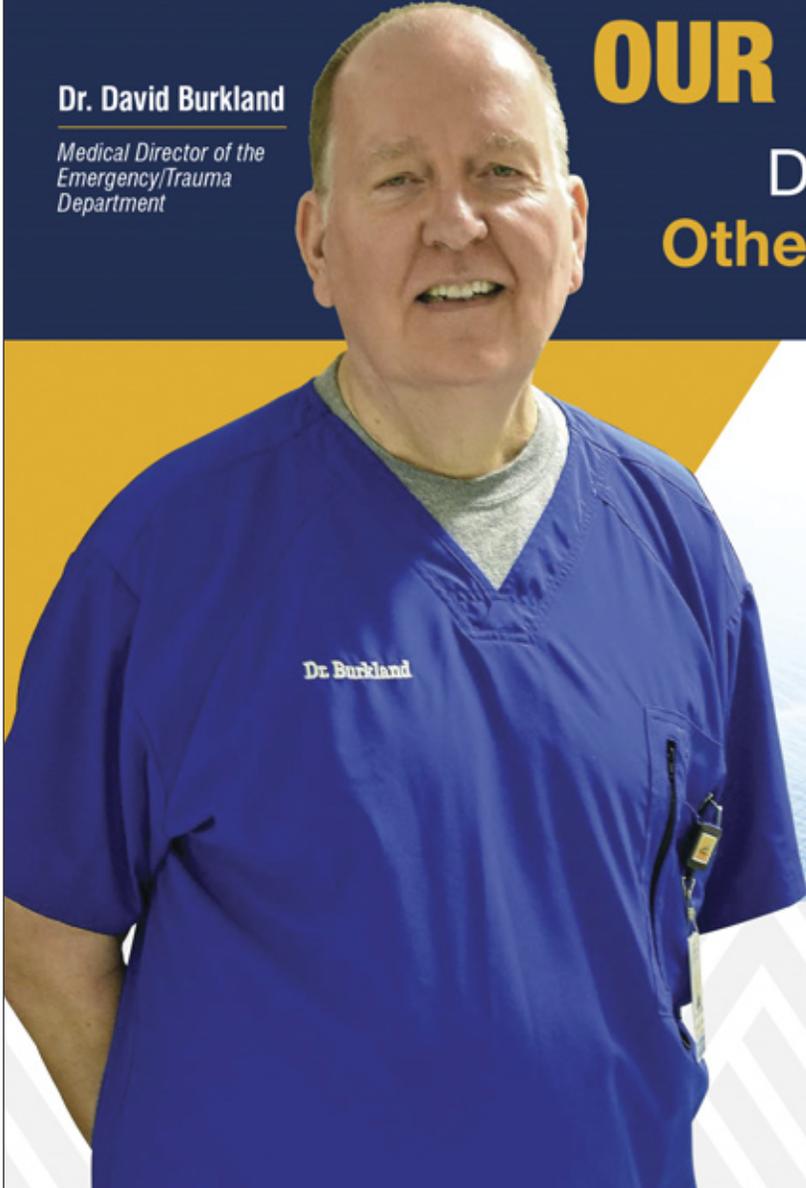
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