Wheeling Hospital Administers COVID Vaccine to Front-Line Employees

WHEELING—Wheeling Hospital began inoculating its health care workers with the COVID vaccine Dec. 15. The shots are being administered on a tier system, and criteria includes the amount of direct patient care, the units involved, areas with high exposure risk, critical functions to the hospital and groups with risk for staffing shortages. All vaccinations are on a voluntary basis.

Approval for the Pfizer vaccine came late last week. About a week after that, the Moderna vaccine was projected to be approved, with shipments to arrive periodically afterward.

“We hope to have our staff vaccinations to be completed by mid to late January,” said Tony Martinelli, assistant vice president of the hospital.

Neither the hospital, nor its physicians, will be providing vaccines to the general public at this time. Hospital employees working in Ohio will be vaccinated through the Ohio vaccine distribution protocol.

“As always, the safety of our employees and patients is an utmost priority,” Martinelli said. “As is often repeated: the vaccine is a light at the end of the COVID tunnel, but we’re still in the tunnel. So we encourage everyone to continue wearing masks, wash their hands and practice social distancing.”

“Our staff has done a great job combatting this pandemic for the past nine months,” Martinelli said. “We were extremely excited to begin vaccine rollout in order to keep them protected.”

Wheeling Hospital’s first shipment of the vaccine was transferred from WVU Medicine Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown.
Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointments:

With permission from Bishop José Elias Rauda, O.F.M., of San Vicente, El Salvador, Father Mauricio Henriquez is appointed parochial vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg with residence at the parish rectory, effective December 4, 2020.

With the approval of Archbishop Dominic Lumon of Imphal, India, Father Shinto Mathew is appointed parochial vicar of St. John Parish in St. Marys and Christ Our Hope Mission in Harrisville with residence at the rectory in Harrisville, effective December 4, 2020.

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, click “Diocese”, then “Offices,” then “Safe Environment.”

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 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 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. 283; 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, 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, 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.

Diocese Announces Renewal of Summer Youth Camping Ministry

By Joyce Bibey

WHEELING—The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis is ready for summer 2021! Daniel Maul, director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, announced the renewal of summer youth camping ministry in the diocese.

“Under the new name of Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Camp, or ‘Camp Carlo’ for short, Catholic youth will have a tremendous opportunity to deepen their faith, experience His creation, and build lasting relationships with Catholic peers from across the state,” Maul said.

“I am also pleased to introduce the new Camping Director for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston — Riley Keaton. Keaton is a native of Spencer, West Virginia where he attends Holy Redeemer Catholic Church. He has led values-based leadership camps for the last four years — including through the summer of coronavirus — and represents his hometown in the West Virginia House of Delegates. I urge faithful families to get in touch with him, learn more about what we’re planning in Huttonsville this summer, and, ultimately, give your children an experience that will ‘make’ their summer at Camp Carlo.”

Keaton is eager to meet and greet!

“It’s an exciting time to be a young Catholic in West Virginia! The summer of 2021 — a triumphant return after the pandemic — will be an incredible time to lead young people to Christ and His Church,” Keaton said.

“The motto chosen by Pope St. Paul VI for his church life perfectly describes the goal of our camping ministry: to be ‘with Him on the mountain.’ Camp Carlo provides an exciting opportunity for young people to encounter Christ and His Church, adventure through God’s creation, and grow in their Catholic faith alongside peers from all over the state of West Virginia.”

Riley Keaton, camping director for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

There Are Many Ways to Give to the Annual Collection for Catholic Charities West Virginia

By Kate Kosydar, Catholic Charities West Virginia Parish Social Ministry Consultant

Here’s one piece of good news from this year of struggle: Catholic Charities West Virginia is still serving! Thousands of people across the state have come to us for help and hope in the midst of the pandemic. They come to us because, as Catholics, we have a long tradition of caring for our neighbors. This tradition goes back to the prophet Isaiah: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God.

During this year, many of us have felt imprisoned in our homes, or heartbroken by social distancing, or depressed by an onslaught of bad news. But our faith calls us to offer ourselves as balm for the brokenness in our world.

At Catholic Charities, we bring “glad tidings” to the most vulnerable in our communities. Through our network of programs and services supporting infants to seniors, we meet Jesus in our neighbors every day. And with your prayerful support, we can keep meeting their needs in 2021.

Our services are rooted in our Catholic Tradition. We work with volunteers and community partners to provide food and shelter, and we offer specialized assistance to help individuals and families end the cycle of poverty.

Every Christmas we reach out to you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and ask you to join us in our mission of Love through the Christmas Collection at Mass. We know you might not be able to attend Mass this Christmas, and if you do, perhaps there won’t be an offertory collection. But we need your support so we can continue providing help and hope for our neighbors.

Donations directly affect the amount of assistance Catholic Charities West Virginia can provide. Please give to our programs and services so we can meet the growing needs of our communities.

You can make a donation:
- Online at www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org
- Mail a donation to 2000 Main Street, Wheeling, WV 26003
- Text the word “Christmas” to 304-245-6600
- Give through your parish’s second collection during Christmas Mass
- Let’s “announce a year of favor from the Lord!” Pray with us, that we will continue to be guided by God’s love as we work toward meaningful change. Thank you for your support!

Beth Zarate, CCWVa president and chief executive officer, said: “We are sincerely thankful for your support of our mission and work at Christmas. God is here; He knows us and our concerns; He has not abandoned us. In the midst of this pandemic, God wants our hopes and fears, and our joys. At Catholic Charities we are deeply privileged to serve struggling West Virginians with compassion and hope for the future. Your contribution will be used to serve people in our beautiful mountain state.”
Mary is Reminder of God’s Blessing, Pope Says on Guadalupe Feast

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The humble image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a reminder of the gift of God’s abundant blessings to all men and women, Pope Francis said.

By contemplating her, Christians can fully understand God’s gift “in the abundance of his son by nature and his mother by grace,” the pope said in his homily during a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“Christ, who was ‘given to us in the one who is ‘full of grace,’” the pope said. “Generosity can be — I like to think of it as — at least one ‘limitation’ that God has: the impossibility of giving himself in any way that isn’t in abundance.”

“Thinking about the mystery of Christmas, the Advent liturgy takes much of this idea of abundance from the prophet Isaiah,” the pope said. “Generosity be — I like to think of it as — at least one ‘limitation’ that God has: the impossibility of giving himself in any way that isn’t in abundance.”

Recalling Elizabeth proclaiming Mary as “blessed among all women,” the pope said that it reflects the reality of blessing. “God’s style is always to say ‘good,’ while the devil’s style is to curse others, be mean and be ‘unable to give oneself totally.’”

“God always is to say what is good. And he says it with pleasure, he says it by giving himself, he said. “He gives of himself in abundance by saying what is good, by blessing.”

Pope Francis said that the final reality — the “gift” — is reflected in the coming of Christ, who was “given to us in the one who is ‘full of grace.’”

By “contemplating the image of our mother today, we ‘steal’ from God a bit of this style that he has: generosity, abundance, blessing — never cursing — and transforming our life into a gift, a gift for all,” the pope said.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day Celebration Held in Charles Town

By Colleen Rowan

Traveling from neighboring Virginia and from as far away as Clarksburg, the faithful came to join in the Hispanic community of the Eastern Panhandle’s celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and of unborn children.

The feast day celebration, which began at 8 p.m. on Dec. 11 and ended past midnight on Dec. 12, consisted of three parts.

“It was a beautiful and a worthy celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe,” said Father Manny Gelido, associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg who also serves in Hispanic Ministry at St. James.

The celebration began in the Fatima Shrine just outside of the parish church with the praying of the rosary and a procession of the image of Guadalupe to the church. Father Gelido said the hour-long recitation of the rosary outside was accompanied by a Mariachi band and concluded with a dance of flower offering to Our Lady.

The second part of the evening was a vigil service using the O Antiphons of the Magnificat, Father Gelido said. “Seven prophetic utterances were presented by seven OT characters,” he said. “This was done in semi-darkness to portray the condition of the waiting world before the Advent of the Messiah.”

The Mariachi band and choir concluded each of the Antiphons with the song of the Magnificat in Spanish, he said, and the sound of the trumpet to awaken the people to prepare for the revelation of the Incarnate Son of God in Mary’s womb.

The third part was a solemn Mass celebrated by Father Gelido with Very Rev. Leonard Smith, V.F., pastor of St. James, concelebrating.

“As desired by the Hispanic community,” Father Gelido noted, “we had to finish past midnight going into Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady.”

As people left the church following the celebration, bags of tamales and champurado and other treats were distributed to them outside of the church.

Reflecting on the celebration, Father Gelido said, “I do believe that Our Lady of Guadalupe was greatly delighted to gather once again her sons and daughters to celebrate her gift of her Son to the world.”
Away with the Manger? Nativity Scene at Vatican Generates Controversy

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Especially in a year when the COVID-19 pandemic will rule out many people’s favorite Christmas traditions, they have a right to express their dislike of the decidedly untraditional Nativity scene on display in the center of St. Peter’s Square, said a priest who specializes in catechesis through art.

But it may be more edifying to try to understand it, said Msgr. Timothy Verdon, director of the office of sacred art for the Archdiocese of Florence, Italy, and director of the Florence cathedral’s museum.

First, he said, people need to recognize that dioceses ask the Vatican to feature their Nativity scenes, and the Vatican City governor’s office makes a choice from those offers many months in advance.

“Pope Francis goes out of his way to surprise people, to get them to think, to go to a deeper, more mature understanding of their faith,” Msgr. Verdon told Catholic News Service Dec. 15. So, given the pope’s willingness to embrace a challenge, when the governor’s office chose the ceramic Nativity scene from the town of Castelli, it made sense.

The controversial scene was made by students at a high school specializing in art; the pieces on display at the Vatican are among the 34 pieces students created over a 10-year period beginning in 1965. The town of Castelli, in the mountains of Italy’s Abruzzo region, had a world famous, thriving ceramics industry since the 17th century, but the art — and the town — was dying out. The school was part of an effort to revive the industry and modernize it.

The human figures in the Nativity scene are made of rings of ceramic stacked on top of each other. They are cylindrical, not curvy like a natural human form. And the presence of an astronaut and a knight carries the whole thing to another level of untraditional.

“This is not the sweet, warm nostalgia that Christmas usually generates,” Msgr. Verdon said. “But even in this intimate area of our religious lives, we have to grow in unexpected ways.”

As for adding the astronaut, the monsignor said that definitely is part of tradition. “In Naples, they add political figures, pop stars and, this year, (Diego) Maradona,” the soccer star who died in late November. “Not only shepherds and kings go to the manger, but all humanity makes that pilgrimage in one way or another.”

“But maybe especially this year when the celebration of Christmas is going to be so poor in tradition, when many people will be unable to do the beautiful, warm, tender things” they are used to associating with Christmas, they might not need such a challenging Nativity scene, he said.

And, at least judging from the social media reaction, they did not welcome it.

The vehemence of the reaction may be attributable to “a widespread idea that a lot is going on in the world that is not being explained to us — a maniacal universal plot to deprive humanity of values and traditions,” Msgr. Verdon said.

And even if one does not buy into such a conspiracy theory, “everyone is at the limit of his or her patience, so something like the creche in St. Peter’s Square becomes bigger than it should be.”

Angelo Bottone, a native of Abruzzo teaching in Dublin, was one of the few people on Twitter defending the manger.

“There is a sentimental element because it comes from my region,” he told CNS. “For example, the scene has a curved neon light behind it. “For a foreigner, that may mean nothing, but I immediately saw that that is the Gran Sasso mountain — it’s a symbol of Abruzzo — where Pope John Paul II used to go skiing.”

The colors used are the traditional colors of Castelli ceramics, he said. But “it’s also traditional in the sense that especially in the south of Italy, we always have contemporary elements in the ‘presepe,’” the Italian word for a creche.

“It’s been a very well-established tradition for centuries. The crib is not historically accurate at all; the Holy Family is surrounded by people of the time the creche was made because the sense is that Jesus is born now, in our world,” Bottone said. “So, when the teenagers from Castelli made it in 1965 and the years following, they included contemporary elements of their own day.”

Those elements included an astronaut after the moon landing in July 1969. “What they did was portray an astronaut offering the moon to Jesus,” Bottone said. “To me, it’s an expression of profound worship.”

Many of the negative reactions are simply the result of not understanding the Nativity scene, Bottone said. Others thought “this was something that Pope Francis commissioned. And obviously, the whole anti-Francis brigade went berserk.”

“It’s important for people to know that this was made by teenagers in 1965; it was not made today by some mad artists,” he said. “If people don’t like it, that’s fine. It’s a piece of art, and we have different tastes.”

Whether St. Peter’s Square was the best place to exhibit the Nativity scene is another question, he said. “But I’m not seeing any effort to go beyond the first reaction and try to express a more charitable judgment.”
Biden Policy Agenda for Central America Mirrors What Catholic Organizations Support

By Rhina Guidos, Catholic News Service

CHALATENANGO, El Salvador (CNS) — When President-elect Joe Biden takes office in January, he will embark on pursuing a policy agenda for Central America that many Catholic organizations have long supported.

It involves a $4 billion plan to eradicate conditions that drive immigration, including spurring economic development as well as combating violence and government corruption.

While it’s doubtful that he’ll be able to push the full funding through if the U.S. Senate remains in Republican control after runoff elections in Georgia Jan. 5, the plan stands in deep contrast to the Trump administration’s current strategy in the region.

Under President Donald Trump, policy toward Central America and neighboring Mexico largely focused on economic incentives and sometimes threats against the region’s political leaders to halt would-be migrants to the U.S. or lose economic aid.

Trump pressured Mexico, under President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, to enact harsher policies for migrants passing through the country on their way north, including limiting travel documents and implementing large-scale deportations for those from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, where the bulk of migrants heading to the U.S. come from.

In December 2019, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, in an interview with the CBS news show “60 Minutes,” said he had made an agreement with the Trump administration to take in asylum-seekers from other countries, having them stay in El Salvador. Though the country was not prepared to do so ($51 million in aid from the U.S. was at stake).

Guatemala’s former president, too, made an agreement with the administration to designate it a “safe third country,” meaning that migrants who pass through Guatemala headed north must first seek asylum there instead of heading to the U.S., with a similar agreement also extended to Honduras.

All three countries, referred to as the “Northern Triangle,” however, have some of the highest incidences of violence in the world for nations not at war.

Biden, in turn, speaks of a plan that focuses less on enforcement and more on improving the economic lot of those who live in the region as a means of deterring immigration.

“Currently, the Northern Triangle faces enormous challenges from violence, transnational criminal organizations, poverty, and corrupt and ineffective public institutions,” the Biden team said in its published plan to “strengthen ties with Central America.”

“This is forcing too many families, unaccompanied children and adults, the plan said, “to make an untenable choice: leave behind everything they know and undertake a dangerous journey to seek a better life, or stay and live under the constant threat of violence, persecution, hopelessness, or even death.”

Even before current world events, the region needed all the help it could get. As if the economic realities of high unemployment, low education rates and institutional corruption didn’t already provide an uphill battle, COVID-19 closures have further lashed the region’s floundering economies, along with serious back-to-back tropical storms that have destroyed crops and infrastructure.

In a Dec. 10 letter addressed to Biden signed by Cardinal Álvaro Leonel Raúlazzini Imeri of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, and Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, grassroots organizations, faith-based organizations, and other prelates asked the new administration to change the current course.

“All three countries, referred to as the “Northern Triangle,” however, have some of the highest incidences of violence in the world for nations not at war. Biden, in turn, speaks of a plan that focuses less on enforcement and more on improving the economic lot of those who live in the region as a means of deterring immigration.”

Biden policy agenda for Central America mirrors what Catholic organizations support

— By Rhina Guidos, Catholic News Service

December 18, 2020

December 18, 2020

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Knights of Columbus Bring Winter Coats to Weirton Catholic Schools

WEIRTON—The Weirton Knights of Columbus Council #3734 recently donated two dozen coats to St. Joseph the Worker School and St. Paul School in Weirton via the Knight of Columbus Coats for Kids Program.

The program provides warmth for children in need during cold winter months. The goal of the Coats for Kids program is to ensure that no child in North America goes without a coat during the winter season. Through the dedication of councils across the United States and Canada, hundreds of thousands of new winter coats have been distributed to children since program inception. “The Weirton council is proud to participate in this worthwhile program,” council officials said.

The West Virginia Knights of Columbus has councils all over the state. They assist charities, are Pro-Life advocates, and promote the Catholic faith and patriotism throughout West Virginia. Their mission is: “To promote the original principles of (Blessed) Father Michael J. McGivney of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism throughout West Virginia, and to serve as an example of Catholic gentlemen dedicated to our Church and its principles and teachings.”

The Knights’ vision is: “To be the leaders of Catholic principles, teachings and values in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and to create a Knights of Columbus organization based on our founding principles and dedicated to God and our families that all Catholic gentlemen in the Diocese aspire to be a part.”

At this time, the Knights of Columbus are encouraging Catholic men 18 and older to join. In honor of the recent beatification of Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, free first-year membership is being offered to those who join before Dec. 31. To join, visit kofc.org/joinus and use promotion code MCGIVNEY2020.

Pictured are Kevin Davis, Knights of Columbus Council #3734 grand knight; Recheal Fuscardo, principal of St. Joseph the Worker School in Weirton; Michele Martin, principal of St. Paul School in Weirton; and Adam Davis, a member of Council #3734.
Parish Cluster Reaching out in Community

By Colleen Rowan

Roughly 30 volunteers from the parish cluster of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in New Martinsville, Mater Dolorosa Parish in Paden City, St. Joseph Mission in Proctor, and Holy Rosary Mission in Sistersville work to distribute food delivered by Mountaineer Food Bank to those in need.

Meeting at St. Vincent’s, the volunteers work to unload and help distribute food delivered from the Mountaineer Food Bank. The food pantry at St. Vincent’s hosts the food distribution, and each month almost 1,000 people receive provisions.

The food pantry at St. Vincent’s serves the communities of Marshall, Tyler, and Wetzel counties where the churches of the cluster are located. In working to meet the needs of the community, an additional day of operation was recently added to the food pantry’s weekly schedule. And through annual efforts, more than 300 children from less fortunate families of the area were provided with gifts for Christmas this year. Because of the pandemic, the gifts were distributed outside of St. Vincent de Paul Parish Cluster.

Common Grounds Outreach in Charleston is Back

CHARLESTON—Common Grounds Outreach at St. Agnes Parish in Charleston is back open on Tuesdays and continues to operate as a drive-thru only program. Forty client families were served on Oct. 20, the first day back after being closed for two months. “The clients remain in their cars and our volunteers serve them wearing masks and gloves,” program officials said. “Volunteers’ masks remain on the inside of the facility. The facility has been professionally cleaned and we continue to operate under safe, strict COVID guidelines.”

Due to the facility remaining closed for a period of time, Common Grounds was unable to provide Thanksgiving boxes this year but will provide Christmas boxes. “These boxes will be distributed to client’s vehicles, as we have done in the past,” program officials said.

The distribution will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

“We are in need of volunteers to be outside placing boxes in cars, if anyone is willing to give even an hour of time,” officials said. “Also, we are still collecting food which can be left in the parish church office during normal office hours from noon to 2 p.m.” For more information, call (304) 720-9690 or (304) 552-5286 or (304) 343-4040. “Thank you for your continued support and generosity!” officials said.

Shepherdstown Parish Holds Zoom Event ‘Navigating the Holidays during the Pandemic’

SHEPHERDSTOWN—On the afternoon of Dec. 13, Navigating the Holidays during the Pandemic: Living with Uncertainty was offered to parishioners of St. Anges Parish in Shepherdstown. The one hour and 15 minute program was a zoom gathering where parishioners could share thoughts, experiences and coping strategies during this unprecedented Christmas season during a pandemic, parish officials said. “Our fellow parishioners who are professional counselors will join in the discussion to listen to your concerns and offer suggestions for managing stress during these difficult times,” they said in promoting the gathering.

American Red Cross Blood Drive a Success at Morgantown’s St. Francis de Sales Parish

MORGANTOWN—St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown hosted a successful American Red Cross Blood Drive Dec. 10, collecting 35 units. Parish officials called it “a very important contribution in light of the current urgent need for blood. Thanks to all the donors who offered the ‘Gift of Life.’” Also recognized were parishioners who hosted the drive: Bob Castellan, Gary and Lynn Marlin, Lloyd Postlethwait, and Cindy Shumiloff. The parish encourages those who couldn’t donate at the recent blood drive to consider donating at another area drive. Appointments can be scheduled at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

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Parishes’ Advent Giving Not Deterred by Ongoing Pandemic

By Colleen Rowan

Every year, St. Michael Parish in Vienna has an Advent Giving Tree to support the Stone Soup Kitchen in downtown Parkersburg. Throughout Advent, generous parishioners place donations under the tree to help restock the facility’s shelves for the year. In place of a sit down this year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, bag lunches were being prepared.

“The supplies are a bit different, but the mission is the same—feed the hungry,” said Father John Gallagher, pastor.

St. Michael’s is among the many parishes of the diocese that hold Advent giving projects. Whether they are called Angel Trees, Giving Trees or other names, these collections provide food, toys, clothes, warm hats and gloves for winter weather, and so much more for families and individuals in need. And just like St. Michael’s, many parishes support outreach organizations. One of them is the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling, which holds an Angel Tree for the clients of the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center.

Walk into any church in the diocese during Advent, and one is sure to find some type of Giving Tree, even in the ongoing pandemic.

Courtesy Photo
Pictured at right is the Advent Giving Tree at St. Michael Parish in Vienna.
Catholic Charities Community Center Opens in Charleston

By Katie Hinerman Klug, Catholic Charities West Virginia Marketing Communications Specialist

Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) recently opened its new Catholic Charities Community Center on Quarrier Street in Charleston.

“We’re excited our new location is in the midst of the community we serve,” said Bill Hagy, CCWVa Western Regional director.

The center is a part of the campus of the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

“We are so grateful to be working with Father Higgs and his parish family,” said Beth Zarate, CCWVa president and chief executive officer.

“Our common goal to serve the most vulnerable is enhanced by the great teamwork, problem solving, communications and genuine belief in love in action,” Zarate said. “We are all motivated to bring our best in serving the poor.”

The Catholic Charities Community Center in Charleston houses programs including Basic Needs Assistance, Case Management, HomeCare, Disaster Services and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Outreach.

“Our Western Region of Catholic Charities continues to drive Catholic involvement throughout all areas served; in so doing, we not only ask for God’s blessing for the people we serve, but also to strengthen the staff and volunteers who reach out to them every day in His spirit of charity,” said Hagy. “Bishop Brennan formalized the dedication of our new Charleston site with a special apostolic blessing for each of us, our facility and all those we serve,” said Hagy. “We are immensely blessed to have him here to take note of our efforts as well as our challenges for the future.”

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit 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.
Advent Week 4:

Come Lord Jesus! From the Annunciation to Christmas

By Jem Sullivan, Catholic News Service

Our Advent preparations culminate in a rich tapestry of biblical readings in this Fourth Week of Advent. The Gospels attune our hearts and minds to receive the greatest gift of God — the incarnation of his son Jesus who enters human history as a poor, humble child.

And even as Advent fades quickly in a flurry of last-minute seasonal activities, we slow our hurried pace to hear God speak into our lives. Pondering the Gospel scene of the Annunciation prepares us to welcome the newborn Jesus through the eyes of the graced woman who prepared most intimately for our Lord’s birth, his mother Mary.

An exquisite altarpiece of the Annunciation by Jan van Eyck, a gifted Netherlandish painter, is a resplendent painted scene of that graced moment when the word of God became flesh in Mary’s womb. This 15th-century oil painting is a beautiful visual companion as we journey from Advent to Christmas.

Van Eyck is among the first artists to visualize the Annunciation in a church interior rather than a domestic or courtyard setting. His remarkable eye for detail and superb use of brilliant color creates a radiant scene, unparalleled in beauty, that draws us into the Annunciation as recounted in the first chapter of Luke’s Gospel.

On the left we see the dazzling face of the archangel Gabriel, framed in delicate curls of golden hair flowing beneath a jeweled crown. Dressed in a regal robe of deep red and glittering gold studded with intricately painted jewels and pearls on its border and clasps, Gabriel is framed by brightly colored wings.

In one hand the divine messenger holds a glass staff while the other hand is raised in a gesture of prayer, showing how we are to hear and respond to God’s word with our “yes” to God. The lilies in the foreground evoke the pure heart of Mary and light of God being offered to a world enveloped in the isolating darkness of sin. Mary’s natural fear is overcome with supernatural grace. Through her “yes” the Word of God made flesh brings salvation to the human race.

At the Annunciation, Mary teaches us Advent hope. From Mary we learn how to hear the word of God in openness, expectation and trust. As her fear melted into joyful faith, Mary shows us how to replace our fears with confident trust in God’s promised presence.

Color, light and form fixes our gaze on Jesus, whose birth is here announced. We do not see Christ physically present in van Eyck’s magnificent image, but we “see” him with Advent “eyes of faith,” announced by Gabriel and humbly received in the mind, heart and body of Mary.

To contemplate the Annunciation at the close of Advent is to stand in awe before the approaching mystery of the Incarnation, the centerpiece of Christian faith. For as St. Thomas Aquinas notes, when Mary said “yes” she did so “in the name of all human nature.” In Mary’s Annunciation “yes,” may we find our daily “yes,” to the trustworthy promises of God.

(Jem Sullivan, educator and author, contributes a Scripture column to Catholic News Service and is the author of “Believe, Celebrate, Live, Pray: A Weekly Walk with the Catechism.”)
What Happened to Cardinal Pell Can Happen to Any Australian, Author Warns

By David Ryan, Catholic News Service

SYDNEY (CNS) — Australia has entered a new phase that could see any Australian consigned to imprisonment without any evidence for crimes they have not committed, warned the author of a new book on the trial and imprisonment of Cardinal George Pell.

Keith Windschuttle, a former Australian Broadcasting Corp. board member who is also the editor of Quadrant magazine, warned that “within the ideological imperatives that prevail today, any one of us could become a George Pell.”

“It was as if Kafka’s ‘The Trial’ had moved from the Czech Republic and relocated to Melbourne,” Windschuttle said at the launch of his book, “The Persecution of George Pell,” in Sydney Dec. 10.

“Any one of us could now be accused by strangers of reprehensible behavior and then find the weight of the nation’s structures of law, government and public opinion piled on top of us,” he warned.

The 408-page book catalogues and explores a surreal pattern of inconsistencies and intrigues in the Cardinal Pell case, which saw a leading global church figure accused of sexual abuse and, despite no evidence being presented, ultimately jailed.

Cardinal Pell “was lucky to be saved at the last minute by his only remaining hope, the judges of the Australian High Court,” he said. “They retained enough independence and integrity to see the truth of the case as it was.”

However, he warned, “there are no guarantees that future members of the High Court will act as credibly as those who acquitted Pell.”

Windschuttle described the process, which included Victorian Police advertising to seek accusations against the cardinal, and the progress of his trial, conviction and failed appeal as a reflection of decaying integrity in the lower echelons of legal structures in the Australian state of Victoria.

“The whole case was based on a fundamental overturning of traditions of law,” he said. “There wasn’t a presumption of innocence — there was a presumption of guilt.”

“(Cardinal) Pell had to provide enough evidence to prove he was innocent.”

Meanwhile, the legal process was arguably interfered with in a “trial by media” phenomenon, with journalists believing their opinions to be above the proper processes of criminal justice, the author said.

He said even after the High Court’s unanimously declared Cardinal Pell innocent, journalists have continued to act as if its decision was of minimal importance or in error.

“The author was especially critical of Australia’s national taxpayer-funded broadcaster.

“These ABC journalists write as if they got it right and it’s the High Court who are wrong — as if they are superior to the High Court,” he said.

“But if you read (its decision), the High Court decision is utterly shattering of the whole case, shaming the lawyers who went along with it.”

The former ABC board member criticized the current state of journalism in the nation.

“I am of the conclusion that the ABC is unformidable,” he said, “but no foreseeable government would have the courage to initiate accountability in this area.” He said the case was symptomatic of a far wider problem in Australian life.

“(Harmful) ideological forces now dominate our education systems, especially universities, and they have also infected our news media, our police and even our defense forces.”

Anyone who falls out of favor with the public zeitgeist could potentially have no recourse to a fair legal process which is due to all Australians, he warned.

“As the Pell case proves beyond doubt, these forces have also woven threads into our legal systems and have changed both the law itself and the assumptions of many people within the legal system,” he said.

“The Persecution of Cardinal Pell” is available from the Quadrant website at www.quadrant.org.au.

Netflix to Release Series Illustrating Pope’s Call for Alliance of Young, Old

By Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) — Netflix has announced that in 2021 it will release a documentary series based on “Sharing the Wisdom of Time,” a book in which Pope Francis called for creating “an alliance between the young and old people” by sharing their stories.

The book, published by Loyola Press in 2018, featured an introduction by Pope Francis, the stories of 30 older people and reflections by a handful of younger people on “What I learned from an elder.”

In the docu-series, Netflix announced Dec. 16 — the day before Pope Francis’ 84th birthday — men and women over 70 from around the world, featured in the book, will share their life stories and experiences with filmmakers under 30 from the same country.

“The series will feature Pope Francis in an exclusive interview, offering a unique point of view that will serve as the common thread throughout the four-episode series,” reported Variety.

The elders chosen for the documentary come from different ethnic groups and religious traditions, according to the Netflix press release, but their stories demonstrate how in every part of the world and in every culture people are concerned with the same issues: “love, struggle, work and dreams.”

The Italian screenwriter, director and producer Simona Ercolani made the series, which will be available on Netflix worldwide, the release said.
La celebración de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe atrae a fieles a Charles Town

Por Colleen Rowan

Viajando desde la vecina Virginia y desde lugares tan lejanos como Clarksburg, los fieles vinieron a unirse a la comunidad hispana de la celebración del Panhandle Oriental de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, patrona de las Américas y de los niños por nacer.

La celebración de la fiesta, que comenzó a las 8 p.m. el 11 de diciembre, terminó pasada la medianoche del 12 de diciembre, constaba de tres partes.

“Fue una celebración hermosa y digna de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”, dijo el padre Manny Gelido, pastor asociado de la parroquia St. Joseph en Martinsburg, quien también sirve en el ministerio hispano en St. James.

La celebración comenzó en el Santuario de Fátima a las afueras de la iglesia parroquial con el rezo del rosario y una procesión de la imagen de Guadalupe a la iglesia. El padre Gelido dijo que el rezo del rosario de una hora afuera fue acompañado por una banda de mariachis y concluyó con un baile de ofrendas de flores a Nuestra Señora.

La segunda parte de la velada fue un servicio de vigilia utilizando las Antifonas O del Magníficat, dijo el padre Gelido.

“Siete personajes del AT presentaron siete declaraciones proféticas”, dijo. “Esto se hizo en la penumbra para retratar la condición del mundo que esperaba antes del advenimiento del Mesías”.

La banda de mariachis y el coro concluyeron cada una de las Antifonas con el canto del Magníficat en español, dijo, y el sonido de la trompeta para despertar al pueblo a prepararse para la revelación del Hijo de Dios Encarnado en el viernes de María.

La tercera parte fue una misa solemne celebrada por el Padre Gelido con el Reverendísimo Leonard Smith, V.F., párroco de St. James, concelbrando.

“Como lo deseaba la comunidad hispana”, señaló el padre Gelido, “tuvimos que terminar pasada la medianoche para el 12 de diciembre, la fiesta de Nuestra Señora”.

Cuando las personas salieron de la iglesia después de la celebración, se les distribuyeron bolsas de tamales y champurrado y otras delicias fuera de la iglesia.

Reflexionando sobre la celebración, el Padre Gelido dijo: “Creo que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe estuvo muy encantada de reunir una vez más a sus hijos e hijas para celebrar el regalo de su Hijo al mundo”.

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 uti-liizar www.reportbishophouse.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier abuso en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha comete-tido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite www.reportbishop-house.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo.
Employment Opportunities

Program Director Youth Summer Camps
The Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is looking for an enthusiastic, faith-filled individual to assist in the planning and operation of its youth summer camps, located at Huttonsville, West Virginia. This position is seasonal beginning January 1 through August 31, 2021.

This person will serve as Program Director of the Youth Summer Camps. The individual will have a responsibility for assisting in all aspects of programming and administration of the camps. Responsibilities also include hiring, supervision and training of staff and the administration and safe implementations of activities.

Persons should have a college degree with some experience in parish youth ministry. Individual must be a practicing Catholic with an active faith life.

Interested persons should respond with resume and letter of interest to: Daniel A. Maul, Director of Evangelization and Catechesis, 1311 Byron Street, Wheeling, WV 26003 or by e-mail to dmaul@dwc.org

Interim Service Coordinator WV Birth to Three RAU 1
WV Birth to Three RAU 1, Catholic Charities has a full-time Intake/Interim Services Coordinator position open in the Morgantown office.

The full-time ISC will work with families of children with developmental delays or who may be at risk for developmental delays. The ISC will follow-up on child referrals; conduct family interviews to gather child and family information; assist families with initial linkages they may need; assist with eligibility determination and/or IFSP development; coordinate transition procedures as needed for the child and their family.

Qualifications include a Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited university in Human Services Field such as social work, early education, special education, elementary education, nursing, psychology, counselling, sociology, speech and language pathology or equivalent field of study; valid driver’s license and dependable transportation; ability to work in a team environment. Strong case management, organizational skills and knowledge of child development preferred.

Please submit a resume, cover letter, and three references by Monday, January 4, 2021 to: Wendy Miller at wmiller@ccwva.org

Substitute Teachers
Our Lady of Fatima Parish School in Huntington is looking for energetic and motivated substitute teachers to work with students at all levels, from preschool to eighth grade. Official experience and or state teaching license is good, but we also welcome parents and those with informal experience.

All applicants must complete Protecting God’s Children training and a background check. In this position he or she will work in the absence of our regular teachers, aiding students in their daily tasks and ensuring the understanding of the subject matter being covered. If you are a friendly and competent professional interested in education, then we are interested in you. Apply to Our Lady of Fatima Principal Micah O’Connor at moconnor@olofatima.org.
Our Emergency/Trauma Department is staffed by board-certified emergency physicians from WVU Medicine.

Don’t ignore signs of strokes, heart attacks and other emergency conditions.

We’ll protect you, and take good care of you.

Advertise with The Catholic Spirit

Contact Colleen Rowan at crowan@dwc.org