

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Nearly \$617,000 Raised for Parishes and Ministries on Giving Tuesday

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—On Giving Tuesday, the faithful donated almost \$617,000 to support the parishes and ministries of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. A global day of kindness and generosity, Giving Tuesday was held Dec. 1 with 891 donors responding.

“It was wonderful to see so many Catholics across the state come together to support their parishes, Catholic education, evangelization and Catholic Charities WV!” Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the diocese, said the day after the event. “Giving Tuesday is all about kindness and generosity and I felt that message spread all throughout the diocese yesterday as we watched the day unfold on the website and on social media.”

The giving event was held in place of the annual Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA), which had to be cancelled earlier this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. This month’s Giving Tuesday was the first giving event held for parishes in place of the CSA.

“We are all one community of faith,” Sforza said, “and when we come together we can do big things!” Throughout the pandemic, she said, parishes have continued to serve their communities in many creative and new ways.

Although Giving Tuesday has passed, Sforza stressed that it is not too late to participate. The website stopped taking donations Dec. 2, but donations can still be given directly to one’s parish. Those who do so, should include Giving Tuesday on the memo line of the check.

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A Different Look for Christmas Amid Pandemic



Courtesy Photo
The interior of Sacred Heart Church in Princeton is pictured at the reopening of parishes in May. Sacred Heart is one of many parishes taking reservations for Christmas Masses.

With Capacity Limitations, Some Parishes Requiring Reservations for Christmas Masses

By Colleen Rowan

The COVID-19 pandemic will affect the celebration of Advent and Christmas, Bishop Mark Brennan said in his Nov. 23 letter to the faithful, “but we will celebrate them!”

The beautiful Masses of these seasons will have a different look this year, but the faith of the people remains the same.

“Masks and hand sanitizers and physical distancing cannot stop us from expressing our faith and joy in the Lord,” the bishop wrote. “They actually allow us to gather for worship in a safe manner, considerate of those with whom we worship.”

With just a few weeks left, preparation for Christmas Masses is underway across the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston by priests and parish staff. Plans do vary. That which may be ideal for one parish, is not for another. Their ultimate goal, however, is to bring the faithful together in the celebration of the birth of our Savior as safely as they can.

Many parishes are requiring parishioners to preregister or make reservations for Christmas Masses. This is being conducted online, with sign-up sheets in churches, calling into the parish offices, and other ways.

“We have been taking registrations since we returned to Mass in May,” said Father Bill Matheny, pastor of Ascension Parish in Hurricane. “We
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Obituary — Sister Mary Di Domenico, CSJ

Sister Mary Di Domenico, CSJ, entered into eternal rest on November 22, 2020 at Wheeling Hospital. (Her death was not Covid-related.) Mary, born in Beech Bottom, WV, was the daughter of Simon and Elsie (Petrella) Di Domenico.



She entered the Wheeling Congregation of St. Joseph in 1948. She was known as Sister Mary Esther, in religion, until after the Second Vatican Council when she resumed use of her baptismal name. She made her first profession of vows on March 19, 1951 and received her educational degrees from Duquesne University.

When the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston opened its mission in Jalapa, Guatemala, she was a member of the first team assigned there by Bishop Joseph H. Hodges. She remained in Jalapa as a missionary from 1966 until 1971 and considers her ministry there as one of her greatest experiences as a Sister of St. Joseph. Sister Mary firmly believes that her time in Guatemala has given her a greater appreciation of life.

Sister Mary (Mary Esther) DiDomenico has dedicated her life to ministry and teaching in West Virginia. Sister Mary ministered among the children at St. Vincent Home for Girls in Wheeling, while also teaching at St. Vincent Home School. In addition, she taught at St. John in Benwood; St. Agnes in Charleston; St. Joseph in Huntington; St. Thomas in Thomas; Sacred Heart in Williamson; and Copus Christi in Wheeling. In 1971, Sister Mary Di began her position as principal of Fairmont Catholic Grade School. From 1984-1990 she was principal at St. Francis School in Morgantown. She returned to Fairmont as principal from 1990-2010. During her years in Fairmont, she also gave service as Director of Holy Cross Cemetery and as a Board Member at Fairmont General Hospital. Sister Mary retired in 2010 and moved to Mount St. Joseph in 2015.

Sister Mary was a dedicated volunteer at Wheeling Hospital and was honored as “Rookie of the Year” at the 2017 Volunteer Dinner. She was honored for her +1,500 hours of volunteer service in 2018. Sister Mary stated “I am so appreciative of my 70+ years as a Sister of St. Joseph. They have been filled with many blessings and great relationships on many journeys. I have also been blessed with the support of the sisters in my community and my family. What more can I ask for?” Sister Mary Di Domenico had such a deep and tender love of those she knew and served. She would want to put the safety and welfare of each one first. With the level of Covid cases rising, funeral services were to be celebrated privately.

Giving ...

Cont'd from Page 1

The success of this month’s Giving Tuesday follows the success of the giving event held for Catholic schools earlier this year called One Mission, One Day to Make a Difference in which almost \$235,000 was raised for 19 participating schools.

The diocese’s Catholic schools are planning another giving day May 4.

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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 to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

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

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or 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.

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

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Bishop Brennan's Letter for Advent



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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Monday, November 23, 2020

Dear Faithful of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese,

We are about to enter the season of Advent, a time of joyful expectation for the coming of the Lord. Early in Advent we focus on the Lord's second coming in glory before turning to the season's later phase to remember how God fulfilled His promise to Israel to send a Savior, Jesus, born in humility in Bethlehem.

After a contentious election season, during a dangerous pandemic whose end is not yet in sight, having become more conscious of ongoing patterns of racism and nativism in our country and still grappling with scandals in our beloved Church, it may seem that the promise of Christ is remote from our experience. Yet the Lord is never absent from us! He comes to us through his Word, proclaimed in church or meditated upon at home; through those in need, in whose faces we recognize Christ's; and through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in which the Lord personally enters each of us, and Penance, which purifies us to receive the Lord worthily. In these ways he keeps his word to us: *I am with you always, until the end of the age* [Matthew 28:20].

The COVID-19 pandemic will affect how we celebrate Advent and Christmas in our Diocese, but we will celebrate them! Masks and hand sanitizers and physical distancing cannot stop us from expressing our faith and joy in the Lord. They actually allow us to gather for worship in a safe manner, considerate of those with whom we worship.

Even during this pandemic, many people who do not ordinarily worship with us will join us at Christmas Masses. Let us welcome them, if not with embraces, because of the pandemic, then with "the elbow of friendship" and a hearty "Welcome!" Let us presume that they want to hear how God, through the birth of His Son, has shown His love and mercy to the world. Let them know you hope to see them again.

The truth is that we have a great message to announce to the people we live and work with. To a world submerged in the darkness of sin, error and death, God has sent a Savior. We cannot overcome these evils on our own. Only God can destroy sin, enlighten those in error and bring the dead to new life. That's the message we have: Jesus Christ is the Savior designated by God the Father to bring us light and life. Our message is rightly called Good News. It is news too good to keep to ourselves. We have to share it.

I hope you are willing to share the Good News about Jesus Christ with others. It is not beyond your ability. Let me share with you a simple Advent plan.

First, make a list, mental or on paper, of people you hope will hear the Gospel: family members, friends, coworkers, fellow students. Make the commitment to pray for them every day. In your morning prayer or at some other time, ask the Lord to open their minds and hearts to His Word.

Second, fast for these people once a week. Fasting can be from

food — most of us can afford to forego lunch or another meal without hurting our health — but fasting can also be from some favorite activity such as a television show or playing video games. We do without a good thing as a sacrifice to show the Lord we mean it when we are praying for those on our list.

Third, offer to God any hardship or suffering you are experiencing: an illness, the loss of a loved one, a job opportunity that slipped away. Rather than let it embitter you, give it to God on behalf of those for whom you are praying. You can also offer good works you engage in: a teacher might dedicate her teaching on behalf of those for whom she prays, while a doctor does the same as he sees his patients; a teenager might dedicate to this intention her effort to reach out to a fellow student no one talks to, while a father might give to the Lord his getting up from bed to check on the baby he heard crying. When we do things with the right spirit, our prayers have greater effect. *The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful before God* [James 5:16].

There is a final step: ask the Lord to give you opportunities to speak to those for whom you have been praying. Sometimes they give you an opening: a desire to talk about a problem, a great joy they share with you. You can then speak in a simple way from your own experience about why your faith in Jesus Christ and your belonging to his people matter to you. You don't need a theological degree or the eloquence of St. Paul to do it. You are an expert on your own life, including how God has blessed you and held you up. Your willingness to speak of your faith may win an absent Catholic back or gain a soul we never had.

Some may feel that, buffeted as we have been by scandals, this is not the time to speak to anyone about our Catholic faith or reach out to those who have left us. I must disagree. St. Paul said: *Proclaim the word; be persistent, whether it is convenient or inconvenient* [II Timothy 4:2]. Athletes who don't run will never win the race. Christ's Gospel is not an appetizer. It's the main course. Indeed, it is the best food for the spiritually starved. If it sustains us, it will sustain others.

We are the Gospel people today must encounter. The Lord is counting on us to do our part. Make the commitment to pray, fast and offer your hardships and good works to God for those you hope God's grace will touch. And if anyone shows an openness to hear your testimony of faith, have the courage to share it. Keep a good Advent! May it bring you happily to the joy of Christmas!

Faithfully in Christ,

Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Plans ...

Cont'd from Page 1

keep a seating chart. It helps the greeters. Also, if a parishioner does test positive for the virus, we know who sat near that person."

The parish will require reservations for its Christmas Masses at 2, 5, and 8 p.m. Christmas Eve, and 10 a.m. Christmas Day.

Also requiring reservations is Huntington's Our Lady of Fatima Parish, which also has made changes to its normal Christmas Mass schedule with new times and an additional Mass. While seating capacity in Our Lady of Fatima Church is normally about 400, the parish is limiting attendance at each Christmas Mass to about 125 to ensure proper distancing.

"Due to the limited capacity, we are also requiring advance registration (reservations) for the Masses."

—Father Paul Yuenger, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Huntington

"Due to the limited capacity, we are also requiring advance registration (reservations) for the Masses," said Father Paul Yuenger, pastor.

The parish began taking reservations for Christmas in mid November. Father Yuenger said parishioners will be informed they may or may not be seated in their "usual" seats because of the limited capacity, to assure proper distancing, and for optimal seating arrangement for those registered and present.

Parishes that are requiring registration or reservations are trying to make it as easy as possible for their members. St. Brendan Parish in Elkins will be providing many ways to achieve this with one of their own taking the lead.

"We have a parishioner who assists us with our website and facebook page," parish officials said. "He will be setting up online sign-up sheets for all the Christmas Masses, and we will have sheets available in the parish office for those who prefer to or do not have access to the Internet."

St. Brendan's Mission of St. Patrick's in Coalton will be doing the same. St. Brendan's capacity limit is 70 people per Mass, while St. Patrick's is limited to just 30.

Father Sebastian Devasya's two parishes of Sacred Heart in Bluefield and Sacred Heart in Princeton have different plans in place. Bluefield's Sacred Heart has installed a closed-circuit television in the parish hall to accommodate overflow during the Christmas season. The parish will not require reservations for Christmas Masses, but its sister Parish of Sacred Heart in Princeton is taking reservations for Christmas Masses. This is being conducted via SurveyMonkey, e-mails or calls into the church office. The Princeton parish also has a closed-circuit television in the narthex to accommodate any overflow due to seating restrictions.

"After much discussion, our Bluefield liturgy committee opted not to implement a reservation system, but to direct any overflow into our parish hall with a closed-circuit television and appropriate social distancing accommodations," Father Devasya said. "In between Bluefield and Princeton, we have offered options for our people to choose."

"We are profoundly grateful to publicly celebrate Christmas this year!" Father Devasya said. "As we enter the Advent Season and begin our preparations, we are mindful of the needs of our people, especially



Courtesy Photo

Pictured is the nativity at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston last Christmas.

as it relates to participation in the Christmas Masses. We are diligently working to provide both safe and spiritual Christmas celebrations amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Due to the unusual circumstances," he continued, "and for the safety of our people, we will be taking extra precautions to comply with the attendance mandate and ensure we have proper social distancing."

The Mass schedule is: Bluefield, Sacred Heart Parish, Christmas Eve 2 and 5 p.m.; and Christmas Day 9 a.m. At Princeton, Sacred Heart Parish, Christmas Eve, 4 and 7 p.m.; and Christmas Day midnight and 11 a.m.

Like Sacred Heart in Bluefield, a number of other parishes in the diocese will not be requiring reservations or registration for Christmas Masses. However, capacity limitations remain in effect.

After discussions with pastoral council members and staff, Very Rev. Paul Wharton, V.F., said the consensus is that St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley will not require reservations for Christmas Masses. Father Wharton, who is pastor of the parish and vicar forane of the Beckley Vicariate, said a possible problem with taking reservations in the ongoing pandemic is that some who reserve seats may not show up without letting the parish know ahead of time.

"The recent increases in new Covid-19 cases is causing people to consider whether to go out or stay home," he said. For many, this could be a last minute decision.

With this in mind and to accommodate increased attendance at Christmas, the parish has made enhancements at the church to allow seating in an overflow area. However, capacity limitations remain. The parish also plans to bring Christmas Mass to parishioners' computer and TV screens. All of this has been made possible through a grant from a southern West Virginia charitable foundation.

"We have purchased equipment to not only livestream Mass on the Internet, but to show it in the hall beneath the church," Father Wharton said. "This allows more people to be on site and receive Communion."

Arrangements have also been made to record the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass to be broadcast once or twice on WOAY-TV Oak Hill-Beckley-Bluefield on

Christmas Day as many St. Francis de Sales parishioners do not have Internet access for the livestream.

St. Margaret Mary Parish in Parkersburg is not requiring reservations either, but has prepared for a possible increase in attendance with the addition of an early 2:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass.

Very Rev. Steven Vallelonga, V.F., pastor of St. Margaret Mary's who also serves as vicar forane of the Parkersburg Vicariate, said that with physical distancing the church's capacity is nowhere near its normal 350; and for each of the Christmas Masses, seating will be for 125 people maximum. Father Vallelonga said this includes the children's chapel, organ loft, and vestibule.

Although neighboring St. Michael Parish in Vienna is not requiring reservations for its Christmas Masses, the parish is also readying for increased attendance and has plans in place.

"We have ushers that will seat folks as they enter and have set up chairs in our parish hall for overflow," said Father John Gallagher, pastor. He emphasized that it has been noted in the parish bulletin and through announcements that once capacity is reached, the church doors will have to be closed.

The schedule at St. Michael's is 5 and 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Masses, and 10 a.m. and noon Masses Christmas Day.

Other parishes reporting their plans include Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Elk View, which is preregistering, said Father Tijo George, pastor. His other Parish of St. Anthony's in Charleston has added another Christmas Eve Mass at 10:30 p.m. St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale is taking reservations for Christmas Eve at 4:30 p.m. and Christmas Day at 10 a.m. Both Masses are limited to 80 people.

St. Joseph Parish in Huntington will have three Masses on Christmas Eve, including a 5:30 p.m. Latin Low Mass; and four Masses on Christmas Day. Call the parish for times.

"Because we are livestreaming the Masses there may be minimal decorations which have to be seen in the camera shot," said Msgr. Dean Borgmeyer, V.F., pastor and vicar forane of the Charleston Vicariate. "Music will be more subdued as well."

The faithful are encouraged to check with their home parishes for their plans for Christmas Masses.

Use of Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines is Morally Acceptable, Say Bishops

By Julie Asher, Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — While confusion has arisen in recent days in the media over “the moral permissibility” of using the COVID-19 vaccines just announced by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna, it is not “immoral to be vaccinated with them,” the chairmen of the U.S. bishops’ doctrine and pro-life committees said Nov. 23.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, addressed the issue in a memo to their brother bishops.

A copy of the memo was obtained by Catholic News Service Nov. 24.

“Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in fetal tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development or production,” the two prelates said. “They are not completely free from any connection to abortion, however, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products.

“There is thus a connection, but it is relatively remote,” they continued. “Some are asserting that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines, then it is immoral to be vaccinated with them. This is an inaccurate portrayal of Catholic moral teaching.”

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann cited three Vatican documents that “treat the question of tainted vaccines”: the 2005 study by the Pontifical Academy for Life, “Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived From Aborted Human Fetuses”; paragraphs nos. 34-35 in the 2008 “Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions” (“Dignitatis Personae”) by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and the 2017 “Note on Italian Vaccine Issue,” by the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“These documents all point to the immorality of using tissue taken from an aborted child for creating cell lines,” they explained. “They also make distinctions in terms of the moral responsibility of the various actors involved, from those involved in designing and producing a vaccine to those receiving the vaccine.

“Most importantly,” they added, “they all make it clear that, at the level of the recipient, it is morally permissible to accept vaccination when there are no alternatives and there is a serious risk to health.”

In a Nov. 21 statement, the president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, Mercy Sister Mary Haddad said CHA ethicists, “in collaboration with other Catholic bioethicists,” used the guidelines re-

leased by the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005 and 2017 on the origin of vaccines and “find nothing morally prohibitive with the vaccines developed by Pfizer and BioNTech (Pfizer’s German partner) and Moderna.”

She also said CHA “believes it is essential that any approved COVID-19 vaccine be distributed in a coordinated and equitable manner,” because COVID-19 “has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, low-income communities, persons with preexisting health conditions, and racial and ethnic minorities.”

CHA encouraged Catholic health organizations “to distribute the vaccines developed by these companies.”

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann did not point to any specific media outlets claiming the moral unsuitability of the vaccines. However, after Pfizer and Moderna announced their vaccines, at least two Catholic bishops warned against using them, saying they are morally tainted.

On Nov. 11, Pfizer and BioNTech announced that results of a large ongoing study show its vaccine is 95% effective; the vaccine is already being manufactured and has been since October. Five days later, Moderna said preliminary data from its phase three trial shows its coronavirus vaccine is 94.5% effective in preventing COVID-19.

Pfizer and Moderna are applying to the U.S. Food and Drug administration for emergency approval of the vaccines, which would quickly pave the way for distribution of the vaccines. The FDA is to meet Dec. 10.

On Nov. 16, Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, tweeted the Moderna vaccine “is not morally produced. Unborn children died in abortions and their bodies were used as ‘laboratory specimens.’ I urge all who believe in the sanctity of life to reject a vaccine which has been produced immorally.”

In a Nov. 18 video posted on his diocesan website and subsequent interviews with local media, Bishop Joseph V. Brennan of Fresno, California, weighed in on the vaccines, saying: “We all want health for ourselves and for others. We want to promote that also ... but never at the expense of the life of another.”

In May, the Trump administration launched Operation Warp Speed, the moniker of its initiative to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to Americans as quickly as possible. The program has funded the manufacturing of six promising vaccine candidates, two of which

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Court Says N.Y. Pandemic Limits on Houses of Worship Restrict Religious Freedom

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a 5-4 decision issued just before midnight Nov. 25, the Supreme Court lifted the pandemic restrictions on congregation sizes at houses of worship imposed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, and two Orthodox Jewish synagogues in separate filings appealed to the nation’s high court, claiming the governor’s executive order violated their free exercise of religion and was particularly unwarranted during a time when area businesses were open. Chief Justice John Roberts dissented, along with Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

“I am gratified by the decision of the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court who have recognized the clear First Amendment violation and urgent need for relief in this case. I am proud to be leading the Diocese of Brooklyn and fighting for our sacred and constitutional right to worship,” said Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio in a Nov. 26 statement.

The bishop noted the governor’s restrictions “were an overreach that did not take into account the size of our churches or the safety protocols that have kept parishioners safe.”

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Parishes and Catholic Groups Bring Thanksgiving Dinner to Those in Need



Courtesy Photo

Pictured are some of the Knights of Columbus and members of Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield who volunteered to provide Thanksgiving dinner to residents of the West Virginia Manor in Bluefield.

By Colleen Rowan

Thanksgiving 2020 was an especially hard time for many West Virginians who are out of work or suffering in other ways because of the coronavirus pandemic. Without hesitation, parishes and Catholic groups responded.

Martinsburg's St. Joseph Parish held its annual Thanksgiving dinner, this year with carry out only for safety. Roughly 500 families were able to have a Thanksgiving meal because of the hard work and dedication of volunteers at the parish.

"The Thanksgiving Day All Are Welcome Dinner is wonderful outreach to the community of Martinsburg that has been a part of our parish for well over 20 years," said Father Thomas Gallagher, pastor. "Needless to say we were determined not to let the pandemic stop us this year. And though we were not able to have our traditional in-dining experience, I am so thankful to Tim Schenken for organizing our effort to feed over 500 families this year and to all the others who helped make it happen. With so much cooperation it showed that St. Joseph Parish continues to be dedicated to helping those in need."

Prior to the event, Schenken said it would be a test of flexibility for all involved. He also said that a large portion of the dinners were delivered to senior centers as

well as individual homes. Schenken, who served as chair of the dinner, said the event included a working line packaging the meals and runners to get the meals to a pick-up table. Foodservice was accomplished under Berkeley County Health code as well as Covid-19 protocols. A line formed in the front hall of the school marked for social distancing, and masks were required while in the building. "This was modeled on a successful spaghetti dinner run by the Knights of Columbus a few months ago," he said.

In Bluefield, the Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Parish's youth group, and family members of both groups served Thanksgiving dinner to the residents of the West Virginia Manor.

"I think it was wonderfully generous of them," said Chris Caldwell, property manager of West Virginia Manor. "They've been doing this for several years now. ... The way they put it together this year with everything going on the way it is, the way they handled it was perfect."

West Virginia Manor is located in downtown Bluefield, and its 147 residents were happy to have the dinner.

"They really enjoyed it," Caldwell said. "They don't have too much family visitation, especially right now, so to have someone come in with the meal, that was really great for them."

Vaccines ...

Cont'd from Page 5

are the ones announced by Moderna and Pfizer.

As soon as the FDA approves their vaccines for distribution, Operation Warp Speed hopes to distribute 300 million doses around the country by January. Because Moderna and Pfizer's vaccines involve two shots per person, this would be enough to immunize 150 million Americans.

Other COVID-19 vaccines on the horizon include one being developed by AstraZeneca with Oxford University.

Like Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann, John Brehany, director of institutional relations at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, said a recent interview on the "Current News" show on NET TV, the cable channel of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, that the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines were not themselves produced using cell lines derived from aborted fetal tissue.

He expressed "great respect for Bishop Strickland," calling him "a bold courageous witness to the faith," who is saying "some true things about issues that go back decades in pharmaceutical research and development," in the production of vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox and other diseases.

But in the case of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, Brehany emphasized, any connection to aborted fetus cell lines is extremely remote.

For Dr. Robert Tiballi, an infectious disease specialist in Chicago and a member of the Catholic Medical Association, this indirect use raises an ethical issue for Catholics.

"The fetal cell lines were not directly used in the Moderna vaccine, but they were indirectly used several steps away from the actual development of the vaccine," he told "Currents News" in a separate interview.

Any such cell lines were derived from tissue samples taken from fetuses aborted in the 1960s and 1970s and have been grown in laboratories all over the world since then.

In its 2005 study, the Pontifical Academy for Life said Catholics have a responsibility to push for the creation of morally just, alternative vaccines, but it also said they should not sacrifice the common good of public health because there is no substitute.

"Catholics can have confidence if there is a great need and there are no alternatives, they are not forbidden from using these new vaccines," Brehany told "Current News," but he added: "There is much the church calls us to do in seeking out alternatives and advocating for alternatives."

Catholics "need to provide the urgency and advocacy" to get pharmaceutical companies to understand there are alternatives to using fetal cell lines to develop vaccines, "so they can see the need for this," he added, echoing the Pontifical Academy for Life.

A case in point is the decision by Sanofi Pasteur to no longer use an aborted fetal cell line in producing its polio vaccines, a move recently approved by the FDA.

Sanofi is one of the companies currently developing a COVID-19 vaccine by utilizing "cell lines not connected to unethical procedures and methods." Inovio Pharmaceuticals and the John Paul II Medical Research Institute are other such companies.

Pope Creates 13 New Cardinals, Including Washington Archbishop

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

— One by one 11 senior churchmen, including two U.S. citizens — Cardinals Wilton D. Gregory of Washington and Silvano M. Tomasi, a former Vatican diplomat — knelt before Pope Francis to receive their red hats, a cardinal's ring and a scroll formally declaring their new status and assigning them a "titular" church in Rome.

But with the consistory Nov. 28 occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis actually created 13 new cardinals.

Cardinals Jose F. Advincula of Capiz, Philippines, and Cornelius Sim, apostolic vicar of Brunei, did not attend the consistory because of COVID-19 travel restrictions; however, they are officially cardinals and will receive their birettas and rings at a later date, the Vatican said.

In his homily at the prayer service, Pope Francis told the new cardinals that "the scarlet of a cardinal's robes, which is the color of blood, can, for a worldly spirit, become the color of a secular 'eminence,'" the traditional title of respect for a cardinal.

If that happens, he said, "you will no longer be a pastor close to your people. You will think of yourself only as 'His Eminence.' If you feel that, you are off the path."

For the cardinals, the pope said, the red must symbolize a wholehearted following of Jesus, who willingly gave his life on the cross to save humanity.

The Gospel reading at the service, Mark 10:32-45, included the account of James and John asking Jesus for special honors. "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left," they said. But Jesus reproaches them.

"We, too, pope and cardinals, must always see ourselves reflected in this word of truth," Pope Francis said. "It is a sharpened sword; it cuts, it proves painful, but it also heals, liberates and converts us."



CNS Photo/Fabio Frustaci, Reuters pool
New Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington wears a protective mask as he attends a consistory led by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 28.

According to canon law, cardinals are created when their names are made public "in the presence of the College of Cardinals." While many Rome-based cardinals attended the consistory, more members of the college were "present" online.

The pandemic also meant the gathering was unusually small; each cardinal was accompanied by a priest-secretary and could invite a handful of guests, so there were only about 100 people in the congregation at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's Basilica.

Also missing were the "courtesy visits," a reception lasting several hours in the early evening when the general public was invited into the Vatican to greet the new cardinals.

In addition to some Rome-based cardinals, the congregation at the consistory included the pastors or rectors of the 13 Rome churches to which the new cardinals were associated. Cardinals are given a "titular" church in Rome, formally making them members of the Rome diocesan clergy, which is what the church's first cardinals were.

In fact, the formula for the creation of cardinals, recited in Latin by Pope Francis, says, "It chiefly concerns the church of Rome, but it also affects the entire ecclesial community: We will call certain of our brethren to enter the College of

Cardinals, so that they may be united to the Chair of Peter by a closer bond to our apostolic ministry."

Cardinal Gregory's titular church is Immaculate Conception parish on the ancient Via Flaminia in the Grottarossa neighborhood of northern Rome. The church was built in 1935 and became a titular church for cardinals in 1985.

Cardinal Tomasi's titular church is the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Prison, a 12th-century church with a 16th-century facade built on the site of an earlier church that was constructed over the ruins of an ancient temple.

Mexican Cardinal Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel, retired bishop of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Mexico, told Vatican News Nov. 27 that the new cardinals are called to reconfirm their commitment to making Christ the center of their lives and "to collaborate with the pope in his ministry as bishop of Rome, and so we are assigned a parish in this city, as a sign of communion between that community and the one who presides over this local church, which is the pope."

Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, was the first mentioned by the pope Oct. 25 when he announced he was creating new cardinals. As such, it fell to Cardinal Grech to address the pope on behalf of the new cardinals.

"Convoked in consistory at such a serious time for all humanity because of the pandemic, we want to turn our thoughts to all our brothers and sisters enduring hardship," the cardinal said. He prayed that people would react to the pandemic as an "opportunity to rethink our lifestyles, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, especially, the meaning of our lives."

Cardinal Grech also led the others in the recitation of the Creed and of an oath of fidelity and obedience to Christ and his church and to Pope Francis and his successors.

The new cardinals came from eight countries: Italy, Malta, the United States, Brunei, the Philippines, Mexico, Rwanda and Chile.

Cardinal Gregory, like the other new cardinals coming from outside Europe, was tested for COVID-19 before flying to Rome and again upon arrival. Even after testing negative, he and the others were required to quarantine for 10 days and were tested again immediately before the consistory. Cardinal Gregory stayed at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lives, and his meals were left outside his door.

In an interview with Catholic News Service, the cardinal said he hopes Pope Francis will find him to be "supportive, encouraging and trustworthy" in his role as a cardinal, but his primary ministry is still to be the archbishop of Washington.

Of course, he said, he regrets that "my two sisters are not here, and the many people I know and love from Chicago and Belleville (Illinois) and Atlanta and

Washington," who were watching the livestream instead.

One of Cardinal Tomasi's guests was the pastor of his boyhood parish, San Rocco in Casoni di Mussolente, a town of fewer than 8,000 people in northern Italy. In the past 80 years, the cardinal told CNS, the parish has produced more than 100 priests and religious sisters, "and now also a cardinal. I hope it will help to continue the flourishing of vocations from the parish."

With the consistory the College of Cardinals now has 229 members, 128 of whom are under the age of 80 and eligible to enter a conclave to elect a new pope. Pope Francis has given the red hat to 57% of electors.

With Cardinals Gregory and Tomasi, who was born in Italy but is a U.S. citizen, the number of U.S. cardinals rose to 16; nine of them are cardinal electors.

Entering the college Nov. 28 were Cardinals:

- Grech, 63.
- Marcello Semeraro, an Italian who is prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, 72.
- Antoine Kambanda of Kigali, Rwanda, 62.
- Gregory, 72.
- Advincula, 68.
- Celestino Aros Braco of Santiago, Chile, 75.
- Sim, 69.
- Paolo Lojudice of Siena, Italy, 56.
- Mauro Gambetti, custos of the Sacred Convent of Assisi in Assisi, 55.
- Arizmendi, 80.
- Tomasi, 80.
- Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the papal household, 86.
- Enrico Feroci, 80, former director of Rome's Caritas.

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Wheeling, Franciscan Universities Partner with Catholic Schools for Remote Tutoring

By Joyce Bibey

WEST VIRGINIA—The COVID-19 pandemic has been both unwanted and challenging, but the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will tell you it has also brought a great appreciation of things we all took for granted, and innovative education strategies that are welcomed additions to their strengths.

Student devices, technology upgrades, extensive teacher trainings, and online curriculum and assessments have all been enhanced over the past eight months. However, another piece added to the department of Catholic schools' toolbox to help secure individual student academic success is remote tutoring.

"We have partnered with Franciscan University and Wheeling University for a tutoring program that would be available to all Catholic schools in West Virginia," said Theresa DiPiero, director of curriculum and instruction.

Talks between the three began in June and principals were able to sign up for individualized tutoring for the fall. Soon to be teachers at the two universities were then assigned to certain students, schools, and curriculum. The program continued through November 20th.

"We hope to continue the program in the spring, when the universities are back in session," DiPiero said. "However, as with everything we have gone through this year, we know we have to be flexible and adapt our programming to fit the situation."

"This partnership is very important as we all work together to prepare our future teachers to instruct in dual learning environments," Susan Poyo, Ed. D., director of education at Franciscan University of

Steubenville, said. "I think it may be safe to say that prior to the pandemic, the idea of an online learning environment being an actual classroom was a bit obscure. Yet, here we are as teacher educators realizing that if we are to truly prepare educators to instruct students, they will need to be prepared for dual learning environments. The Oxford dictionary explains the word Dual to mean consisting of two parts, elements or aspects. The two elements or aspects we now see as a reality is face to face and online, which includes synchronous and asynchronous instruction. And they are definitely two parts or elements because you cannot take what you do in one learning environment and try to simply replicate in the other."

"Because of COVID-19 safety precautions in our buildings we were not able to have anyone outside of the building staff and students in our schools," Associate Superintendent for Accreditation and Technology Jennifer Hornyak said. "This brought about a lot of roadblocks we had to figure out how to get around and do so quickly and effectively. Having the ability to bring in qualified, well prepared, and impressive students from both Wheeling University and Franciscan University on a virtual platform was the ideal fit. It's that thinking outside the box that benefits our students, our teachers, and these university students who would not be able to have this hands-on teaching experience otherwise."

Because our schools were fortunate enough to attend school five days a week for most of the fall, tutoring was able to take place at our schools with the student's remote tutor either before school, during flex periods or after school, Hornyak said.

yak said.

All three partners in the program are from faith filled institutions, which brings about a strong obligation to see and find the good in all circumstances.

Even in a pandemic, good things can arise.

"The opportunity to partner with DWC Schools has allowed my students to experience the technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) necessary for online instruction," Poyo said. "Tutoring is a perfect way for preservice teachers to gain valuable experience building relationships with PK-12 students, assessing student needs, designing instruction and managing students in an online learning environment. Offering teacher candidates opportunities to integrate the knowledge they are gaining in teacher prep programs with field experiences in virtual contexts through collaboration with school

partnerships is what is needed. It provides authentic learning context for assignments, for 'connecting the dots' and promotes deep learning. We are so pleased that DWC Schools has partnered with us as our service to them is a learning experience for everyone...completely a win-win for everyone involved."

This fall more than 60 students in Catholic schools in Wheeling, Weirton, Parkersburg, Fairmont, Huntington, and Charleston were able to benefit from the remote tutoring program.

Students were tutored in math and reading at the K-8 grade level, with students from the high schools being tutored in specific subjects like microeconomics and organic chemistry among others. In all 33 university students provided the extra help, 16 of those from Franciscan and 17 from Wheeling University.

Gabriel Project in Need of Fall and Winter Baby Clothes at all Locations in the State

WEST VIRGINIA—All locations of the Gabriel Project of West Virginia are in need of immediate donations of gently-used winter infant and toddler clothes due to increasing requests.

Organization officials made the announcement on the Gabriel Project's social media. Needed are all infant and toddler sizes for boys or girls and all types of clothing are needed—sleepers, shirts, pants, sweaters, outerwear, etc.

In a post on Facebook, organization officials asked the faithful to "please share our clothing needs with your family, friends and colleagues. And to donate to the location nearest you." For more information, call (304) 205-5865 or e-mail: info@gabrielwv.org.



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Appeal Assists Elderly Sisters, Brothers, Priests in Religious Orders

WEST VIRGINIA—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 12-13. The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) coordinates this annual appeal and distributes the proceeds to assist eligible U.S. religious communities with their retirement needs. Nearly 30,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests benefit.

Last year, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston donated \$87,280.05 to the collection. "The generosity

of U.S. Catholics enables us to continue our ministry for aging women and men religious," said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the NRRO's executive director. "We are overwhelmed with gratitude."

In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious collection to help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious congregations. Each congregation is responsible for the care and support of

its members. Financial distributions from the collection are sent to a congregation's central house and may be applied toward immediate expenses—such as medications or nursing care—or invested for future eldercare needs.

Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests served for little to no pay. Today, many religious communities lack sufficient retirement savings. Of 531 communities providing data to the NRRO, only 29 are adequately

funded for retirement. Rising health-care costs and a growing number of senior members compound the challenge to meet retirement expenses.

The 2019 collection raised \$26.2 million, and in June, the NRRO disbursed \$25 million in financial assistance to 341 religious communities. Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for resources and services that help communities improve eldercare delivery and plan for long-term retirement needs. For

example, a new online webinar offers professional guidance on adapting care protocols to address issues arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

"During these trying times, we know the best way to support senior religious is to continue helping their communities address retirement and eldercare challenges," said Sister Still. "Our grateful prayer is with all whose love and generosity sustain this mission."

Visit retiredreligious.org to learn more.

Office of Consecrated Life Welcomes New Director, Former Director Retires in Her 60th Jubilee Year

By Joyce Bibey

As we welcome December, we welcome Sister Martha Teresa Gomez to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Office of Consecrated Life. Sister Martha replaces Sister Ellen Dunn, who just celebrated her 60th anniversary as a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, taking her first vows in 1960.

Sister Gomez is of the congregation of Sisters of the Good Shepherd. She was born and raised in Mexico. Her faith in God and dedication to serve others like Christ was instilled in her as a young child. She is one of seven daughters and one son to Julia and the late Juan Gomez.

At a young age, she knew she wanted to be a religious sister and help others.

"I joined the congregation in 1973 in El Paso, Texas, but not only did I have to learn about and reflect on religious life, I had to learn English," she said. So far, her faith journey has enabled her to serve in Texas, California, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Spain. She has a liberal arts degree from Wheeling University and is also a licensed nurse aide and certified early childhood development professional.

"I have taken on so many jobs," she said with a chuckle. "As a religious sister you go and do what is needed. It's all been very rewarding."

From 2010-2019, Sister Gomez took on missionary work in Spain at the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.

"Oh, it was so special," she said. "I worked for the welfare of the sisters in my congregation, but I also got to learn so much about their individual ministries and volunteer along with them."

One ministry in particular captured her heart. Maybe it was because she was from a large family, or her maternal instincts were strong, but Sister Gomez found herself spending a lot of time and giving much energy to a children's homeless shelter.

"It is a much different world outside of (the U.S.)," she said. "We would help newborn

babies, whose mothers could not take care of them or just didn't want them. We would help children up to the age of 18, either helping them find a (foster) family or adoption. As the children would get older the government would help with programs to make them independent. We saw all kinds of situations – a lot of poverty, drugs, and sad situations.

"We shared a lot of tears," she said. "Some sad, but so many tears of joy. It was great when the natural parents would get their situations better and come back for their child. You fall in love with the ministry."

Family is important to Sister Gomez. In February she was able to return to Mexico to visit her mother and siblings there. What was to be a four week stay turned into a seven month visit due to the global pandemic.

"It was a blessing really," she said. "I was able to give my family a break and take care of our 93-year-old mother and our sister with downs syndrome. It was a full-time job but so faith filling and rewarding despite the challenges of the pandemic."

Being a support for the religious sisters and brothers in West Virginia is how she sees her new role.

"It is important I help them on their faith journey and their ministries," she said. "I am looking forward to working with our bishop to see what our needs are here. I am looking forward to being a new voice, helping him help the diocese."

Her first goal is to reach out to all the religious in the state at least by phone or online and is eager to travel throughout all six vicariates to meet with them face to face.

Sister Dunn was leader of the Consecrated Life office for 13 years. In that time, she developed a great connection with all 20 religious congregations represented in the diocese.

"Sister Ellen has been tireless in her efforts to support the various religious, who minister in our diocese," said Mike Nau, interim director of human resources for the diocese, in his an-



Courtesy Photo
Sister Martha Teresa Gomez, right, is pictured with her mother and niece in Mexico.

nouncement to staff of her retirement. "She has certainly earned the respect and admiration of those who have been touched by her kindness and affection she has for those who call Wheeling-Charleston their church."



Addressing Food Deserts in West Virginia



Courtesy Photo
CCWVa Regional Food Pantry Coordinator Jeremy Lessner loads a pre-packed box of food into a client's vehicle.

Courtesy Photo
 Pictured is the Mobile Outreach & Wellness Works Food Pantry van. Catholic Charities West Virginia currently distributes 10,000 – 12,000 pounds of food monthly through its Mobile Outreach. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency has seen a 25 percent increase in the number of households served.

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

Building on the foundation of feeding the hungry, food programs have always been a core piece of Catholic Charities West Virginia's (CCWVa) work to fulfill its mission.

In recent years, the closures of grocery stores throughout Appalachia have led to limited access to fresh produce and other healthy whole foods for many West Virginians. These 'food deserts' are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as "low-income census tracts where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store."

CCWVa's unique approach to addressing this issue is through a Mobile Food Pantry – a van loaded with pantry foods that travels to remote areas to distribute food to individuals and families who qualify as low-income.

CCWVa's Mobile Outreach travels to the West Virginia counties of Cal-

houn, Doddridge, Ritchie, Roane and Wirt. Within this specific area, poverty rates range between 15.0% and 20.9%. CCWVa clients in these areas have reported that they travel 40 miles or more across mountainous roads to reach a supermarket.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, procedures have been adapted to keep staff, volunteers and clients safe. Food pantry boxes are pre-packed and loaded into clients' cars.

Tonya, a client from Wirt County, said: "The COVID-19 virus led to a terrible time for my family. My husband lost his job as the company suspended operations. Money was extremely tight and the shelves were empty. We had very little food and very few resources to get more. I was in a panic.

Thankfully, the (Catholic Charities Mobile Outreach) coordinator called me to check on me and my family, and also to let me know that the food pantry would be giving away food on its regularly scheduled day. He also let me know where more food and re-

sources were available. On the pantry day there was enough food available to feed my family for a week.

While other pantries were shut down or delayed, Catholic Charities continued to serve us as always. I will be eternally grateful."

In addition to food distribution, the CCWVa Mobile Outreach also offers a variety of enrichment activities, including health insurance enrollment, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment, and cooking

demonstrations.

To learn more about the ways CCWVa is working to address poverty in West Virginia, visit catholiccharitieswv.org.

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God's love, Catholic Charities collabo-

rates with community partners, parishes and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.

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Hancock County Man Knows God Redirected His Steps to Better Path



Joyce Bibey Photo

Jason Miller is pictured with middle school students at St. Paul School in Weirton, where he is religious education coordinator and middle school religion teacher.



Joyce Bibey Photo

Jason Miller prays before Mass.

By Joyce Bibey

“There’s an old saying, ‘If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans,’” Jason Miller said. “That’s pretty much what’s happened to me, as God said back, ‘You know that’s not your plan.’”

Miller has lived in Weirton all his life. He is the eldest of Harold and Christine Miller’s three children. As a child he attended St. Joseph the Worker Parish. He graduated from Madonna High School and soon after went to work in the steel industry. In fact, Miller owned his own steel company, but when the industry hit one too many roadblocks, he ended up stepping away and heading back to the classroom.

“My plan then was to get my undergraduate in history, then a master’s degree so I could be a college professor,” he said. “Pretty clear and simple.”

Well, he did get his undergraduate from Franciscan University, but that’s when his plans started to change course.

“I was sitting down one day watching Mother Angelica on EWTN, she was going on and on about Holy Apostles College in Connecticut,” he said. “I became so interested. I called the school, left a message, and they called me back. Before you know it, I had built a relationship with the school and became a student there. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. I earned my master’s in theology.”

After marrying his wife Lynn, the couple became members of St. Paul Parish. They are the proud parents of three

daughters, Hannah, a senior at WVU; Deaven, a sophomore at Madonna High School; and Alexis, a fifth grader at St. Paul School.

He is the religious education coordinator for St. Paul School and teaches middle school religion classes. Miller is also one of 28 men in the 2020-2024 permanent diaconate class for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Once completed he will assist the bishop and priests for ministries of charity and liturgical celebrations—distributing Holy Communion at Mass, baptizing, teach, counsel, witnessing marriages, presiding funeral rites, proclaiming and preaching the Gospel.

“I am so ready,” he said. “I thought about it more than 10 years ago, before the last class began, but for no good reason the timing wasn’t right. I’m so happy to be accepted into this class.”

Taking on the role of teacher and student at the same time is a win-win for St. Paul’s.

“Jason Miller embodies faith in West Virginia,” principal Michele Martin said. “(Since he has been in the diaconate program) he does our school homilies. We love that. He can make them so personal and relatable to all age levels.”

He is especially a great role model for the school’s pre-teens and their faith journey, Martin said. “The students enjoy his class and his sense of humor. He’s one of a kind,” she said.

His effectiveness is not only talked about admirably among students, parents, and parishioners, but it’s also doc-

umented.

Miller has increased the school’s national religion education assessment (ACRE) scores from the 65th percentile to the 80th percentile – which is well above national averages.

St. Paul School Advancement Director Kim Edmiston has a wealth of glowing words to describe Miller – approachable, knowledgeable, understanding, down to earth, relatable, funny, engaging, comforting, and on and on. To sum it up she said, “He is so loved and such a blessing to the school and parish.”

She said Miller has a clear vision for his students, the parish, and his own family – to bring them closer to God.

Miller is legally blind. At age six he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic disorder that gradually worsens vision, specifically at night and depth perception, but can result in complete loss of sight. He is now blind in one eye, and the other is limited. He gets around with the help of his cane and an endless army of students who eagerly volunteer to lead him by the arm.

For Miller though it’s not a disability, it’s an added ability to be a better listener, and an opportunity to emphasize real life teaching moments.

“We all have our challenges, especially kids today,” he said.

But what are we doing if we don’t learn from them, and not be too proud to lean on others to help us, he questioned.

“We talk in my class,” he said. “We talk about their hang ups, their prob-

lems, their opinions, and they are all valued. I clarify to them that we don’t have one-sided arguments, or debates; but conversations.

“I’m not here to pound on desks and say, ‘You must believe, and if you don’t, you’re wrong!’ We talk, we share, and teach. I present our faith, our Catholic beliefs, our Catholic doctrine, and then talk about why we believe all of that. The questions these students come up with are challenging.”

He said that’s actually what makes him stronger in faith and a better person.

His colleagues say the word “can’t” is not in Miller’s vocabulary.

“I wouldn’t go that far,” he said and then emphasized, “I try.”

He said trying to make a difference in the classroom or in his parish starts within the heart of the difference maker.

See “Path” on Page 12

#FaithInWV

Do you know an exceptional Catholic in West Virginia, someone or a group who are shining examples of #Faith InWV? Email Joyce Bibey your feature idea to jbibey@dwc.org. Visit FaithInWV.org and every issue of *The Catholic Spirit* to read more inspiring stories.

Catholic Crossword Puzzle

Puzzle solution on Page 13

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ACROSS

- 1 Evil king
- 5 Honest incense?
- 10 Drilling grp.
- 14 Note
- 15 Hindu principle of life
- 16 "This ___ sudden!"
- 17 Drags
- 18 Seventh century pope
- 19 Tide
- 20 Agreement
- 22 Barbarity
- 24 Lounges
- 26 "Confiteor ___"
- 27 Diocese or bishop starter
- 29 Our Lady of Prompt ___
- 34 One of the seven deadly sins
- 38 "... ___ saw Elba"
- 40 Papal crown
- 41 Certain code
- 42 Mends
- 44 Orderly
- 45 Old Testament hymn
- 47 Method
- 48 Grandson of Adam
- 49 Catholic apologist and mathematician
- 51 Dulls
- 53 ___ Plains
- 55 Travel cost
- 60 Gilbert and Sullivan work
- 65 "Beats me"
- 66 ___ de camp
- 67 One of the prophets
- 69 Female rabbits
- 70 Bigger than big
- 71 "Are you calling me ___?"
- 72 Scottish Gaelic
- 73 Some cars
- 74 Southpaw
- 75 Faith is like a mustard ___

DOWN

- 1 Catholic fitness guru, Charles
- 2 In Mt 12:25, Jesus said this divided could not stand
- 3 Anxiety

- 4 Attack on all sides
- 5 Hesitated
- 6 Hwy.
- 7 Shepherd-turned-prophet
- 8 River nymph
- 9 Chef's tools
- 10 Sign of papal office
- 11 67A, in the Douay
- 12 Nicholas II was the last
- 13 Reproduction
- 21 PBS funder
- 23 Nice month
- 25 "Go away"
- 28 Evil king
- 30 Refer to a biblical passage
- 31 Slayer of Abel
- 32 Book containing calendar of Masses
- 33 Beams
- 34 Scandinavian
- 35 Bear up there
- 36 Galilee, and others
- 37 Baby powder
- 39 Francis Xavier preached here
- 43 School for the clergy
- 46 God is the Supreme Being who ___ all things and keeps them in existence
- 50 Deadly
- 52 Full house sign
- 54 Vestment made of a narrow strip of cloth
- 56 Vatican news service
- 57 Worship
- 58 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"
- 59 Relaxed
- 60 Diocese of Honolulu island
- 61 There were 3 popes with this name in the 20th century
- 62 Verge
- 63 Grass
- 64 "Whatever!"
- 68 "Take, ___; this is my body." (Mt 26:26)

Path ...

Cont'd from Page 11

"I try to take a moment every morning or every evening to thank God and reflect on the day ahead or the day I've had," Miller said. "I turn that into time of prayer, and even when I may not have the words of my own, I can say the rosary."

While he isn't teaching advanced history courses at a university or having to stay on top of steel production and sales, Miller is exactly, where God planned for him to be.

"He's simply dynamic," Edmiston said. "He can turn a day-to-day interaction into little snippets about our faith. That's who he is. He will bring people back to the faith and our younger generation back to church. I'm sure that is God's plan. It's easy to see."

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Pishner Releases Video for ‘O Holy Night’ Performed at the Cathedral

By Colleen Rowan

In a special recording and video for Christmas, composer Stephen Pishner and his wife Belinda performed “O Holy Night” at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. The song is available on YouTube now, and the video will be posted Dec. 13.

Stephen, who is director of Music and Liturgy at All Saints Parish in Bridgeport, chose the cathedral for a number of reasons.

“I thought the cathedral might be a nice setting, since it’s the Mother Church for our diocese, to film this music video,” he said. “I have often seen Christmas concerts in cathedrals (on television) around the world, done with people like Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli, and I thought, ‘why can’t WE do something like that here in the diocese?’ So I embarked upon an uncharted creative journey to get this song released in video form.”

The video includes many images and scenes throughout the cathedral, Stephen said, noting the vivid color that simply just comes from the artwork, the lighting, and structure of the cathedral itself. He chose “O Holy Night” because it is a well-known Christmas song.

“I have arranged it in a key that people could generally sing along with it, if they wanted to,” he said. “This is the same arrangement that I did for All Saints Parish in Bridgeport, a while back and I wanted to get it out virtually online, for people to hear and enjoy and maybe even lift their spirits as this pandemic seems to be worsening.

“This Christmas is going to be hard, in some ways, for many people and I think music can be a form of healing for people,” he said, “I am not sure if people will go Christmas caroling this year, but at least this one simple song, can become one of many things that people can connect with this year, as Christmas draws near.”

Especially this year, he said, the gift of music for the season will play an even stronger role in the journey through a challenging time.

“I think this song puts people in touch with Christmas immediately and has a powerful feel to it, especially

the chorus of the song,” he said. “This carol puts the focus on a simple night or a time, when God quietly takes flesh and dwells among us. There is a lot of energy in this song and in this specific arrangement, especially. Combine that with a cathedral setting, many candles and an image of the Holy Family, and your reflection and inspiration can begin to flourish, even while in the midst of the pain, sorrow and death that comes with a pandemic.”

The song is one piece, he said, in a collection of other songs he will be putting together for a Christmas album for 2021.

“I have two ready and one on the runway, you could say,” Stephen shared. “Due to my schedule and the pandemic, I decided to focus on one song and make it into a Christmas music video. I will work next year on preparing a full Christmas album. You could say this is a Christmas appetizer for the heart.”

The video project came together with the the help of a few friends, Stephen said. The group quickly managed to set up a visually reflective setting. He thanked Jamie, Liam and Monica Peck who filmed and helped produce the project.

“All of this seemed to be a good fit, a no-brainer, a ‘hand in glove’ moment,” Stephen said. “I asked my wife, Belinda, to join me in this artistic endeavor and so, you’ll hear and see her in this video.”

He further expressed his gratitude to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Bishop Mark Brennan and the Cathedral of St. Joseph for permission to film there; and to diocesan Director of Music Matthew Berher, and Chancellor Chad Carter and his son Joey Carter for their help.

To hear the song, visit YouTube and put Stephen Pishner and O Holy Night in the search bar. The video will be posted Dec. 13.

“My hope is that people will enjoy it, share it and find it helpful as we prepare to celebrate Christmas,” Stephen said. Other works by Stephen, including a song called “This Child” another one for Christmas, can also be found on YouTube and other digital music platforms.



Joey Carter Photo

Stephen and Belinda Pishner are pictured at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling, where their video for “O Holy Night” was filmed. The song is available on YouTube now, and the video will be posted Dec. 13.

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Crossword Puzzle Solution

Puzzle on Page 12

A	H	A	B		F	R	A	N	K		R	O	T	C
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L	U	G	S		L	E	O	I			N	E	A	P
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Carta del obispo Brennan para el Adviento

Estimados fieles de la diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston,

Estamos a punto de entrar en la temporada de Adviento, un tiempo de gozosa expectativa por la venida del Señor. Al principio del Adviento, nos enfocamos en la segunda venida del Señor en gloria antes de pasar a la última fase de la temporada para recordar cómo Dios cumplió Su promesa a Israel de enviar un Salvador, Jesús, nacido en humildad en Belén.

Después de una temporada de elecciones polémicas, durante una pandemia peligrosa cuyo final aún no está a la vista, habiendo tomado más conciencia de los patrones continuos de racismo y nativismo en nuestro país y aún lidiando con escándalos en nuestra amada Iglesia, puede parecer que la promesa de Cristo está alejado de nuestra experiencia. ¡Sin embargo, el Señor nunca está ausente de nosotros! Viene a nosotros a través de su Palabra, proclamada en la iglesia o meditada en casa; a través de los necesitados, en cuyos rostros reconocemos el de Cristo; ya través de los sacramentos, especialmente la Eucaristía, en la que el Señor entra personalmente en cada uno de nosotros, y la Penitencia, que nos purifica para recibir dignamente al Señor. De esta manera nos mantiene su palabra: Yo estaré con ustedes siempre, hasta el fin de los tiempos [Mateo 28:20].

La pandemia de COVID-19 afectará la forma en que celebramos el Adviento y la Navidad en nuestra Diócesis, ¡pero los celebraremos! Las máscaras, los desinfectantes de manos y el distanciamiento físico no pueden evitar que expresemos nuestra fe y gozo en el Señor. De hecho, nos permiten reunirnos para adorar de una manera segura, considerando a aquellos con quienes adoramos.

Incluso durante esta pandemia, muchas personas que normalmente no adoran con nosotros se unirán a nosotros en las misas de Navidad. Démosles la bienvenida, si no con abrazos, a causa de la pandemia, luego con “el codo de la amistad” y un cordial “¡Bienvenidos!”. Supongamos que quieren escuchar cómo Dios, a través del nacimiento de Su Hijo, ha mostrado Su amor y misericordia al mundo. Hágales saber que espera volver a verlos.

La verdad es que tenemos un gran mensaje que anunciar a las personas con las que vivimos y trabajamos. A un mundo sumergido en las tinieblas del pecado, el error y la muerte, Dios ha enviado un Salvador. No podemos vencer estos males por nuestra cuenta. Solo Dios puede destruir el pecado, iluminar a los que están en error y traer a los muertos a una nueva vida. Ese es el mensaje que tenemos: Jesucristo es el Salvador designado por Dios el Padre para traernos luz y vida. Nuestro mensaje se llama con razón Buenas noticias. Es una noticia demasiado buena para guardarla para nosotros. Tenemos que compartirla.

Espero que esté dispuesto a compartir las Buenas Nuevas de Jesucristo con los demás. No está más allá de su capacidad. Permítanme compartirles un sencillo plan de Adviento.

Primero, haga una lista, mental o en papel, de las personas que espera que escuchen el Evangelio: familiares, amigos, compañeros de trabajo, compañeros de estudios. Comprométete a orar por ellos todos los días. En su oración matutina o en cualquier otro momento, pídale al Señor que abra sus mentes y corazones a Su Palabra.

En segundo lugar, ayune para estas personas una vez a la semana. El ayuno

puede provenir de la comida (la mayoría de nosotros podemos permitirnos el lujo de renunciar al almuerzo u otra comida sin dañar nuestra salud), pero el ayuno también puede provenir de alguna actividad favorita, como un programa de televisión o jugar videojuegos. Prescindimos de algo bueno como sacrificio para mostrarle al Señor que lo decimos en serio cuando oramos por aquellos en nuestra lista.

En tercer lugar, ofrezca a Dios cualquier dificultad o sufrimiento que esté experimentando: una enfermedad, la pérdida de un ser querido, una oportunidad de trabajo que se le escapó. En lugar de dejar que te amargue, dáselo a Dios en nombre de aquellos por quienes estás orando. También puede ofrecer buenas obras en las que se involucre: una maestra podría dedicar su enseñanza en nombre de aquellos por quienes ora, mientras que un médico hace lo mismo cuando ve a sus pacientes; una adolescente puede dedicar a esta intención su esfuerzo por acercarse a un compañero de estudios con el que nadie habla, mientras que un padre puede darle al Señor que se levante de la cama para ver cómo está el bebé que escuchó llorar. Cuando hacemos las cosas con el espíritu correcto, nuestras oraciones tienen mayor efecto. La oración ferviente de una persona justa es muy poderosa ante Dios [Santiago 5:16].

Hay un paso final: pídale al Señor que le dé la oportunidad de hablar con aquellos por quienes ha estado orando. A veces te dan una apertura: un deseo de hablar sobre un problema, una gran alegría que comparten contigo. Luego, puede hablar de una manera sencilla desde su propia experiencia acerca de por qué le importa su fe en Jesucristo y su pertenencia a su pueblo. No necesitas un título teológico o la elocuencia de San Pablo para hacerlo. Eres un experto en tu propia vida, incluso en cómo Dios te ha bendecido y te ha sostenido. Su disposición a hablar de su fe puede recuperar a un católico ausente o ganar un alma que nunca tuvimos.

Algunos pueden sentir que, golpeados como hemos sido por los escándalos, este no es el momento de hablar con nadie sobre nuestra fe católica o acercarse a aquellos que nos han dejado. Debo estar en desacuerdo. San Pablo dijo: Proclama la palabra; sea persistente, ya sea conveniente o inconveniente [II Timoteo 4: 2]. Los atletas que no corran nunca ganarán la carrera. El evangelio de Cristo no es un aperitivo. Es el plato principal. De hecho, es el mejor alimento para los espiritualmente hambrientos. Si nos sostiene, sostendrá a otros.

Somos el Evangelio que las personas de hoy deben encontrar. El Señor cuenta con que hagamos nuestra parte. Comprométase a orar, ayunar y ofrecer sus dificultades y buenas obras a Dios por aquellos a quienes espera que la gracia de Dios toque. Y si alguien se muestra abierto a escuchar su testimonio de fe, tenga el valor de compartirlo. ¡Que tengas un buen Adviento! ¡Que te lleve felizmente a la alegría de la Navidad!

Fieles en Cristo,



+ Mark E. Brennan
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños: La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar www.reportbishop-abuse.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.reportbishop-abuse.org.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números variarán según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar 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 eclesásticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: 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, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, 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.

Employment Opportunity

Managing Attorney/Director of Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services Morgantown, West Virginia

Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) is seeking a full-time Managing Attorney/Director of Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services for its Migration and Refugee Office located in Morgantown, West Virginia. The Managing Attorney/Director is responsible for all the functions of the department, oversees the staff, and implements strategies to increase productivity and revenue. The Director also conducts quality assurance of the work being completed by the department, and is responsible for sending department updates and reports to Finance and the Executive Team.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Develops an annual work plan to support the program, and prepares and submits annual program budget in consultation with finance team.
- Assumes leadership responsibility for program revenue, to include fees collected, fundraising events, grants and cultivating new donors.
- Networks with West Virginia University, community leaders, and agency directors in order to develop services consistent with the mission of CCWVa.
- Creates policies and procedures for volunteers, interns and fellows to support best practices for a strong legal training program.
- Provides legal advice and representation in accord with the best practices of the profession.
- Interviews individuals seeking legal assistance and advises the client as to possible options through proper interpretation of current laws.
- Provides ongoing legal representation to the client commencing with the initial intake interview, drafting of documents, correspondence and client applications/petitions.
- Maintains caseload of detained and non-detained clients in removal proceedings eligible for immigration remedies such as SIJS, asylum, CAT or withholding of removal, cancellation of removal, UVAWA, or family-based petitions.
- Assists in conducting legal assessment and review of complex cases to determine eligibility for immigration benefits.
- Completes needed applications, declarations, briefs, and compiles supporting documentation for client files. Makes certain that paperwork is processed accurately and in a timely manner, in accordance with policies and procedures of the Migration and Refugee Services office.
- Assists in the representation of clients before Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) in bond hearings, master calendar, and merits hearings.
- Ensures the timely submission of all external and internal program reports.

Required job qualifications: Law Degree (J.D.) required. Admission to the practice of law in any state and/or Washington, DC required. Completion of Continuing Legal Education required, in addition to any and all licensing requirements for the jurisdiction where the attorney is licensed to practice. A year of experience practicing immigration law preferred. Minimum of three (3) years' experience in leadership role. Bilingual (English and Spanish or French) preferred; public speaking skills in English and Spanish or French preferred. Excellent interpersonal, team, and communication skills. Strong organizing skills and attention to details, especially with regard to immigration laws, guidelines, and policies. Ability to work effectively with diverse populations. Prior experience working across cultures, preferably with working with trauma survivors. Tolerance and sensitivity necessary in dealing with people with hardships. Must have a valid driver's license and be able to drive and travel to court hearings.

Please email resume, cover letter, and three professional references by December 10, 2020, to: bethzarate@ccwva.org. Application materials can also be mailed to: Beth Zarate, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Charities West Virginia, 2000 Main Street, Suite #310, Wheeling, WV 26003.

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8:30	WTOV METV	Wheeling, Steubenville
9:30	WVFX FOX 10	Clarksburg, Fairmont, Morgantown
10:00	DirecTV 367	World Harvest Television

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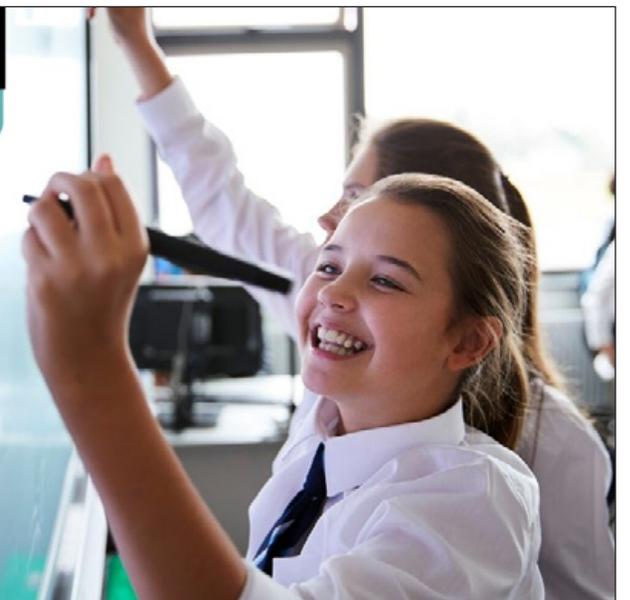


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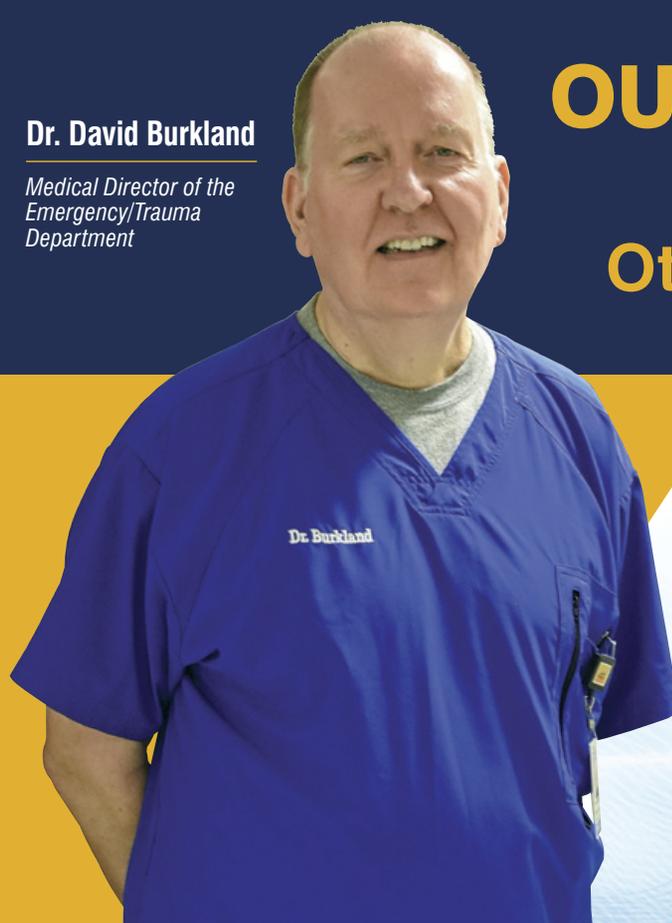
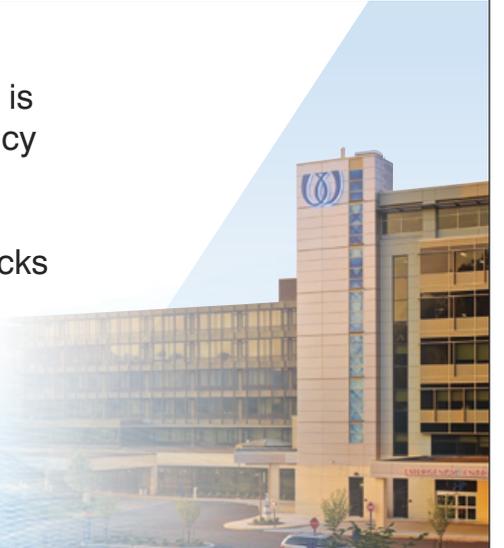
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