

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## Answer Advent Call for Vigilance with Charity, Confession, Pope Suggests

By **Cindy Wooden**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — The Advent call for “vigilance” does not mean staying awake and watchful out of fear, but rather out of a longing for the coming of the Lord, Pope Francis wrote.

Sometimes people think of vigilance “as an attitude motivated by fear of impending doom, as if a meteorite were about to plunge from the sky,” he said in the text of his commentary on the Gospel reading for Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent.

Pope Francis led the recitation of the Angelus prayer from his residence, the

Domus Sanctae Marthae, but explained that his bronchitis, while improving, was still making it difficult to speak so the text of his commentary and of his appeals for peace were read by Msgr. Paolo Braida, an official of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

In the Gospel reading, Mk 13:33-37, Jesus tells the parable of the servants awaiting their master’s return.

“The servants’ vigilance is not one of fear, but of longing, of waiting to go forth to meet their Lord who is coming,” the pope’s text said. “They remain in readiness for his return because they

care for him, because they have in mind that when he returns, they will make sure he finds a welcoming and orderly home.” That kind of vigilance and expectation should mark the watchfulness of Christians as they prepare to welcome Jesus at Christmas, to welcome him at the end of time and, he said, to welcome him “as he comes to meet us in the Eucharist, in his word (and) in our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need.”

Pope Francis encouraged people to carefully prepare their hearts with prayer and with charity.

“A good program for Advent,” he suggested, would be “to encounter Jesus coming in every brother and sister who needs us and to share with them what we can: listening, time, concrete assistance.”

Advent, he said, also is a good time to “approach his forgiveness” through the sacrament of reconciliation and make more time for prayer and Bible reading. Remaining vigilant may take practice, he said, and starts by not letting oneself be distracted by “pointless things” and by trying not to complain so much.

## Knights of Columbus St. Luke Council Helps Bring Thanksgiving to Morgantown’s Homeless



Courtesy Photos

Knights of Columbus St. Luke Council members and their families prepare Thanksgiving Pack-to-Go lunches for the homeless in Morgantown.

**CHEAT LAKE** — Several members of the Knights of Columbus St. Luke Council at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Cheat Lake and their families responded to a last minute request

from Tammy Laney, director of Food for Preston, to assist with preparing Thanksgiving Pack-to-Go lunches for the homeless in Morgantown.

On the day before Thanksgiv-

ing, they met at the Community Kitchen in the basement of Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgantown to help clean, prepare and pack nearly 200 lunches for Thanksgiving distribution

to those in the community in need.

“Thank you for this amazing representation of St. Luke parishioners building our community!” parish officials said.

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**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org). **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. 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. Additional methods of reporting are available at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

### Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Dioceses/Eparchies have 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, go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

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December 8, 2023, Vol. 54, No. 49

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Published on the first Friday of each month. All issues sent to each registered Catholic household free of charge. Donations to help offset the cost of producing The Catholic Spirit are welcomed. Out-of-diocese subscriptions are \$25 annually. The Catholic Spirit intends its news reports to be fair and accurate in every regard. The opinions of correspondents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Catholic Spirit. Submission of news releases, stories and color photos welcomed and encouraged. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

# Yes, Christmas Eve is a Sunday, but There's No 'Double Dipping' for Catholics

By **Maria Wiering**

**(OSV News)** — “Pick 1,” directs a guide printed in the parish bulletin of St. Joseph Church in York, Pennsylvania. The command in the graphic is listed twice, over two columns: The first lists Mass times for the fourth Sunday of Advent, the second lists Christmas Mass times.

The takeaway: No single Mass fulfills both a Catholic's Sunday obligation and the Christmas obligation. Because they are different liturgical days — even if they overlap on the calendar — they require attendance at different Masses.

Typically, Mass celebrated at any time on Sunday — including Sunday evening — fulfills Catholics' obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Same goes for Saturday evening Masses that anticipate Sunday Mass. Likewise, an evening Mass before a holy day of obligation (such as Christmas) also typically satisfies a Catholic's requirement to attend the holy day Mass.

This year, Christmas Eve is Sunday. So, many Catholics are asking if attending Sunday evening Mass this year can “count” for both.

Canon lawyer Jenna Marie Cooper recently tackled the query in her regular “Question Corner” column for OSV News.

“Because there are two days of obligation — Sunday and Christmas — this means that there are two distinct obligations to speak of. Each separate obligation needs to be fulfilled by attending a separate Mass,” she wrote in her column, published Dec. 4. “That is, you cannot ‘double dip’ by attending a Christmas Eve Mass that happens to be on Sunday and have this one Mass fulfill two obligations.”

That may seem straightforward, but there's some nuance, Cooper explained.

“Now for the part that can get confusing: Even though you must attend two Masses to fulfill the two obligations, all this means is that you must go to Mass on that calendar day or attend a vigil Mass the evening before. The readings and prayers do not necessarily need to match the day whose obligation you are fulfilling,” she wrote. “So, you could go to a Christmas Vigil Mass on Sunday, Dec. 24, and have it count as your Sunday obligation this year; but if you intend for this to fulfill your Sunday obligation, then you must also attend another Mass on Christmas Day to fulfill your obligation for the holy day.”

“Of course, if you were to attend a vigil Mass on Saturday for Sunday, and then the Christmas Vigil Mass on Sunday (Christmas Eve) for Christmas Day, then you've got it all covered,” she said.

A Catholic also could technically attend Mass twice on Sunday, Dec. 24 — once for the Sunday obligation, and again in the evening for the

Christmas obligation.

Cooper notes that when Christmas falls on a Sunday — as it did last year, and will again in 2033 — that “Christmas essentially replaces the Sunday liturgically, which means there is only one obligation.”

Regarding the meaning and necessity of a Catholic's “Sunday obligation,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.”

It goes on to say, “The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to

participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”

St. John Paul II expounded on the meaning of Sunday (and, by extension, holy days of obligation) and Catholics' obligation to attend Mass — which is rooted in the Third Commandment to keep holy the Sabbath — in the 1988 apostolic letter “Dies Domini” (“The Lord's Day”).

He wrote, “When its significance and implications are understood in

their entirety, Sunday in a way becomes a synthesis of the Christian life and a condition for living it well. It is clear therefore why the observance of the Lord's Day is so close to the church's heart, and why in the church's discipline it remains a real obligation. Yet more than as a precept, the observance should be seen as a need rising from the depths of Christian life. ... The Eucharist is the full realization of the worship which humanity owes to God, and it cannot be compared to any other religious experience.”

(Maria Wiering is senior writer for OSV News.)

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## Diaconate Formation Program Registration Extended to March

By Colleen Rowan

**WEST VIRGINIA** — Catholic men who want to serve the church in West Virginia as deacons still have time to apply. Registration for the current Permanent Diaconate Formation Program will remain open until March.

“We wanted to leave the window open during the early period of aspirancy with the understanding that if anyone missed those classes, that I would take the time to cover the topics they missed with them privately,” said Deacon John Yaquinta, coordinator of the diocese’s Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.

The diocese currently has 12 men in various processes of application.

Deacon Yaquinta said there are many steps to getting into the program, and that filling out an application is only the first step.

“A committee of deacons review the applications, those that get the go ahead then collect letters of reference, transcripts, sacramental records, background check, write a biography and take a psychological test with an in-person interview with a psychologist,” he said. “The final step is an in-person interview with a panel of deacons. Only at this time are the applicants officially entered into the program.”

Deacon Yaquinta said that most permanent deacons are given the same set of liturgical ministries: witnessing marriages, officiating at infant baptisms, assisting the priest at Mass and occasionally preaching, assisting with and/or celebrating the funeral rites (vigil, funeral, and burial), holding Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and benediction, among other services.

“Then it comes down to the individual parish as to what other ministries the deacon can help out with, anything from teaching adult formation classes to heading up the OCIA team and anything in between,” he said.

In addition to his role in heading the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, Deacon Yaquinta also serves at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Stonewood. He stressed that having a deacon is beneficial to a parish community and to the pastor, and that deacons are serving in many capacities all over West Virginia.

“I know of one deacon in our diocese that visits different nursing homes and shut-ins every day of the week and notifies the pastor if someone wants to be anointed or receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation,” he said. “Others head up mission trips, lead OCIA teams, do adult faith formation.” He added that very few deacons receive a salary from the parish or diocese.

Deacon Yaquinta said his favorite ministry of being a deacon is identifying something that needs done in the parish, taking on that event/ministry, and then training someone else to continue it. Then, he moves on to something else at the parish that needs attention.

“In other words,” he said, “enabling lay people to fulfill their ministries of priest, prophet and king that they all receive at their baptism! Getting people involved in the parish is my gift to parish ministry.”

For questions and information on registration, contact Deacon Yaquinta by calling (304) 838-1987 or by e-mail to [jyaquinta@dwc.org](mailto:jyaquinta@dwc.org).

## West Virginia Mothers and Babies Support Program Funding Now Available

Diocese’s Social Ministry Director Encourages Catholic Organizations to Apply

By Colleen Rowan

**WEST VIRGINIA** — The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s Director of Social Ministry Kathleen Barton is encouraging Catholic organizations that help provide assistance to mothers and children in need to apply for funding through the West Virginia Mothers and Babies Support Program, administered through the state’s Bureau for Public Health. Applications for grants became available Dec. 1.

In the post-Roe world, Barton sees many organizations helping women to not only choose life over abortion, but also providing much needed help through pregnancy and beyond.

“Throughout this diocese, we are blessed with a multitude of organizations who have taken this call to heart by serving mothers and children every step of the way,” she said. “It is a double blessing to

know that these groups, organizations, and agencies can now receive reimbursement, by the state, for services that support their life-affirming efforts.”

Pregnancy help organizations are described in the West Virginia Mothers and Babies Support Act as those that seek “to provide a range of services to pregnant women. In order to receive funding, the organization does not perform, prescribe, refer for or encourage abortion, as defined above, nor do they affiliate with any organization that performs, prescribes, refers for, or encourages abortion. Pregnancy help organizations include, but are not limited to, organizations traditionally known as ‘crisis pregnancy organizations,’ maternity homes, adoption agencies, and social services agencies that provide material support and other assistance to pregnant women.”

Barton noted that this March will mark the 29th anniversary of the papal encyclical “*Evangelium vitae*” (The Gospel of Life) by St. John Paul II, reaffirming the church’s teaching on the value and inviolability of every human life.

The encyclical, she added, serves as a challenge and a call to action by St. John Paul II: “With great openness and courage, we need to question how widespread is the culture of life today among individual Christians, families, groups and communities in our Diocese. With equal clarity and determination we must identify the steps we are called to take in order to serve life in all its truth” (EV 95).

Pregnancy help organizations can apply for the West Virginia Mothers and Babies Support Program grants at <https://www.wvmothersandbabies.org/registration>.

Walking with  
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*Walking with Moms in Need is a nationwide, parish-based initiative to increase support for pregnant and parenting mothers in need. It works to ensure that any woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, or parenting in difficult circumstances, can turn to her local Catholic Church and be connected with the resources she needs. Volunteers walk with moms throughout the motherhood journey, offering them authentic Christian friendship and ongoing support.*

**Click here to learn more**

**To start this ministry in your parish, contact:**

Kathleen Barton, Director of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (304) 3233-0880, Ext. 289; [kbarton@dwc.org](mailto:kbarton@dwc.org)

# Founder of Pew Ministries to Present Restored Parish Mission at Cathedral

**WHEELING**—A Restored Parish Mission will take place at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Jan. 19 and 20, presented by John Edwards, an inspirational and nationally recognized speaker on the Catholic Faith.

He is the founder of Pew Ministries, co-founder of Virtual Catholic Conference and the host of the popular podcast “Just a Guy in the Pew.”

Edwards will lead those gathered through a series of inspiring talks and discussions for the whole family. “This mission is a unique opportunity to deepen your faith, connect with others in the community, and find renewed hope and strength,” parish officials said. “This event is free and open to everyone.”

“Don’t miss out on what will be an incredible event that will leave you feeling uplifted and restored,” parish officials said.

# Eucharistic Revival Activities to be Held at Assumption Parish in Keyser

**KEYSER**—As part of the National Eucharistic Revival activities and in conjunction with the Jubilee celebration for Assumption Parish in Keyser, Father Giles LaVasseur will celebrate both Masses next weekend for the Teaching Mass Series, “Understanding and Celebrating the Eucharist.”

Next week’s focus will be on the Liturgy of the Eucharist, “What do we offer as a sign of

our real presence to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist?” The Mass will begin as usual; father will give a presentation at the start of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, followed by the rest of the Mass.

After Mass, all are invited to stay in the church for a special Christmas program presented by the CCD students, featuring a live nativity! Donut Sunday will follow in St. Mary’s Hall.

# Elkins-Area Catholics Invited to ‘Deacon Raymond’s Christmas Concert’ and an Advent Encounter Night

**ELKINS**—“Deacon Raymond’s Christmas Concert” will be held Wednesday, Dec. 13, at noon at the Randolph County Arts Center in Elkins. Deacon Raymond Godwin is one of the permanent deacons at St. Brendan Parish in Elkins and St. Patrick Mission in Coalton and the pastoral associate at St. Anne Parish in Webster Springs. He will perform holiday favorites at the Brown Bag Concert. Special guests may appear.

Later that day, an Advent Encounter Night will be held at St. Brendan’s. “Come encounter and worship our Eucharistic Lord! During this parish year of Parish Eucharistic Revival we are invited to deepen our relationship with Jesus through our parish community,” parish officials said.

Advent Encounter Night will be December 13 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. with Eucharistic Adoration, meditative Taize songs, scripture readings, and reflection.

“Come for the whole thing or just part of it,” parish officials said. “All are welcome!”



## Bishop Gathers with Follansbee Parish Community to Celebrate 60th Anniversary of St. Francis Centre

**O**n Dec. 3, Bishop Mark Brennan gathered with the St. Anthony Parish community in Follansbee for the 60th Anniversary Celebration of St. Francis Centre. He is pictured above with Father Jude Perera, TOR, pastor of the parish (right), and Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus sisters, who serve at the parish.

# Daily Living

with Fr. Chapin

## Sunday Mornings

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 6:30 WTOV FOX 9  | Wheeling-Steubenville                  |
| 6:30 WOWK CBS 13 | Huntington-Charleston                  |
| 8:00 WBOY NBC 12 | Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont             |
| 6:30 WOAY ABC 4  | Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg) |
| 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 | Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg) |
| 9:30 WVVA NBC 6  | Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg) |
| 11:00 WDVM 25    | Hagerstown-Washington D.C.             |

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# An Evening of Eucharistic Encounter

with Sr. Agnes Thérèse Davis, T.O.R.

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Confession at 6pm  
Light Social to follow

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Sr. Agnes Thérèse Davis is a member of the Franciscan Sisters, TOR, of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother. She currently assists her community in downtown Steubenville, Ohio, serving those in material poverty.



THE Cathedral of St. Joseph

# St. Joseph School Student Serves as Honorary Berkeley County Commissioner

MARTINSBURG — St. Joseph School eighth-grader Riley Kilmer of Inwood took a seat among local government officials when she served on Nov. 30 as an honorary Berkeley County commissioner. She is shown here with, from left, Commission President Jim Whitacre, and Commissioners Steve Catlett, G. Edward Gochenour and James Barnhart.

Courtesy Photo



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# Archbishop Exhorts Advent Vigilance as National Shrine's Holy Door Sealed

By Julie Asher

**WASHINGTON (OSV News)** — “Waiting is one of the watchwords of the liturgical season of Advent, which we begin today,” Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services told the faithful gathered for Mass Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

“The Word of God advises us today to stay awake, to be vigilant for the Lord’s coming and to look for the Lord and use our talents and profit from the graces offered us,” the archbishop said in his homily.

Archbishop Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was the main celebrant of the Mass, which included his blessing and sealing the basilica’s entrance door as a Holy Door for the Catholic Church’s Holy Year 2025, which has as its theme “Pilgrims of Hope.”

Concelebrants of the Mass included Msgr. Walter Rossi, rector of the basilica; Msgr. Vito Buonanno, director of pilgrimages at the basilica; and four priests who are studying at The Catholic University of America, which campus is adjacent to the basilica.

In the first reading, from Isaiah, “the chosen people are filled with pain and sorrow for their sins. They have experienced the ter-

rible consequences of their infidelity, exile, (and) profanation of the temple,” the archbishop said.

He asked, “Does anyone examine his or her responsibility for the difficult situations of our time? Can Isaiah gain a hearing in our midst?”

The Word of God is “the power that motivates the chosen people,” the archbishop said, adding that it is “so often forgotten, but still capable of moving hearts, calling forth aspirations and inspiring the courage to accomplish difficult tasks.”

“It is what we hear today (and) can be our companion during these short weeks of spiritual preparation for our celebration of the Lord’s coming in our midst,” Archbishop Broglio said. “Jesus in the Gospel tells us to be vigilant at all times because we know not the day nor the hour. It is a clarion call to recognize Almighty God as the master of our lives and to try and conform to his plan,” he said.

Referencing Pope Francis’ Angelus message that same day, he said the faithful should not have “an attitude of fear” because “the Lord’s return is a moment of joy.”

Archbishop Broglio also quoted Pope Benedict XVI’s Angelus message of Nov. 30, 2008. “We all say that we do not have enough time because the pace of daily life has become frenetic for everyone,” the



OSV News Photo/Alex Cranstoun, courtesy Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception  
Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, who heads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services and is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, blesses the Holy Door after it was sealed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent.

pope said. “In this regard too, the church has ‘good news’ to bring. God gives us his time. We always have little time, especially for the Lord. We do not know how or sometimes we do not want to find it. Well, God has time for us.”

“The invitation is to prepare for the Lord’s coming — really his three comings,” the archbishop continued. “Quite naturally, we are all aware of our preparation for Christmas, the anniversary of the birth in time of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is our immediate focus as we light

the Advent wreath and as we accomplish all of the tasks associated with this holy season.”

But “the beginning of Advent has a strong notion of the second coming, whose day and hour is unknown,” Archbishop Broglio said.

In the day’s Gospel reading from Mark, Jesus alludes to the end times and his second coming on

Judgment Day, telling his disciples, “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.”

“When Jesus will say clearly that the hour has come, there can be no doubt we must be ever vigilant,” Archbishop Broglio said. “Finally, there is that personal encounter at the end of our pilgrimage that cannot be forgotten. The

**See “Door” on Page 9**

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# Door...

**Cont'd from Page 8**

notion that we must be ever prepared to meet the Lord when he summons us into his presence is not absent in these days. That thought is not meant to be frightening, but it is a call to open-eyed preparation in every day of the journey that is ours."

The archbishop told the faithful gathered "in this magnificent basilica" that the church now begins "long-range preparation for another time of grace" — the Holy Year 2025.

A holy year, or jubilee, is a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy, based on the ancient Jewish tradition of a jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. Holy years also are a time when Catholics visit designated churches and shrines, recite special prayers, go to confession and receive Communion to receive an indulgence, which is a remission of the temporal punishment due for one's sins.

A news release from the

basilica said that for the Great Jubilee 2000, St. John Paul II expanded the designation of Holy Year doors "at particularly notable sanctuaries outside of Rome." The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was the designated location for the United States in 2000, for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2016 and now for the Holy Year 2025.

"Let me assure you that these extraordinary times of grace offer us unique opportunities," Archbishop Broglio said.

"Each jubilee year has been a clear call to experience the power of God and to profit from the divine grace held out to us. The upcoming jubilee will be no exception," he said.

"Pilgrims of Hope," the 2025 theme, "clearly points out both that we are on a journey and not pessimistic travelers," he said. "You and I are charged to bring a message of hope to a world that desperately needs that gift."

He pointed to the Israel-Hamas war in the Holy Land, "where Israel wants

security and the Palestinians a place to call home," Russia's war against Ukraine and ongoing crises in Syria and Haiti.

"There are many more places and peoples who desire to experience that hope," Archbishop Broglio said. "Even in our land of promise, we struggle to recognize the dignity of every person and the mission to fill up the legitimate needs of all. We long for a society where people respect and listen to one another."

"May this long-range

planning for the holy year inspire our efforts so that 2025 will truly be a year of hope," he said. "We symbolically close a door this

afternoon to anticipate its opening and the graces that will be offered to us."

(Julie Asher is senior editor for OSV News.)

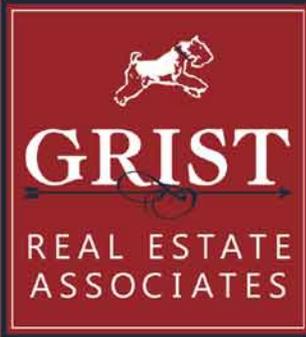
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# Sacraments, Strategy Help Catholics Stay Sober Amid Holidays, Say Experts

By **Gina Christian**

**(OSV News)** — The Christmas season can be challenging for those in addiction recovery, but sacramental grace and practical strategies can keep those seeking sobriety on track, pastoral experts told OSV News.

“It’s a very, very stressful (time) for many people who struggle with addictions, because there are parties for work, there’s a lot of peer pressure and there’s a lot of family pressure — especially if the family is in denial that the person is struggling or that someone else in the family is in active addiction,” said Edmundite Father Thomas F. X. Hoar, president of St. Edmund’s Retreat, a Catholic retreat community with several recovery ministries located on Enders Island, Connecticut.

Alcohol consumption typically rises during the Christmas holidays, with some surveys indicating that U.S. adults may even double their drinking during the period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, excessive alcohol use — defined as binge drinking (four to five drinks or more per occasion), heavy drinking (eight to 15 or more drinks per week) and alcohol use by pregnant women and those under age 21 — is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., claiming some 140,000 individuals annually and slashing an average 26 years of life expectancy per person.

With U.S. adults consuming a total of 35 billion drinks per year, the CDC estimates that one in six U.S. adults binge drink, 25% doing so at least weekly. Chronic health effects of alcohol abuse range from high blood pressure, heart and liver disease, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and cancer to increased risk of injuries, violence and opioid overdoses, as users frequently mix alcohol and drugs.

In addition, the CDC notes that the nation remains in the grip of an opioid epidemic, with close to 107,000 overdose deaths counted as of June.

For Catholics in addiction recovery, following the principles of 12-step recovery groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous is vital during the Christmas and New Year’s holiday season, experts told OSV News.

Equally important — and in fact part of the 12-step approach — is turning directly to God for help amid the threat holiday indulgence poses to sobriety.

“Double up on your prayer life,” said Father Hoar. “The second step (of the 12 steps) says that ‘we came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.’ I think a lot of times people in recovery skip over that.”

Sacramental grace is essential to lasting sobriety, said Father Douglas McKay, founder of the Philadelphia-based Our House Ministries, a Catholic recovery ministry, a papal “missionary of mercy” and rector of the Malvern Retreat House in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

“I’m always trying to get people to go to adoration, to confession, to Communion — even to become a daily communicant, especially during these trying times, these tempting times,” he said.



OSV News Photo/Juan Carlos Ulate, Reuters  
A patient of “Hogar Betel,” a shelter for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and alcoholics, is pictured in a file photo reading the Bible at a shelter in Pococi de Limon, Costa Rica. The center helps more than a thousand people addicted to drugs and alcohol each year, of whom 10% have been rehabilitated into society on their first attempt and a further 10% on their second attempt after relapse.

The Eucharist is the greatest source of strength for sobriety, he said.

“The Blessed Sacrament — that’s where all the blessings are flowing,” said Father McKay. “We can’t do anything without the Lord. He’s the vine and I’m the branch. And apart from him, I can do absolutely nothing. But in him, I can conquer all my temptations.”

Advent is “also a wonderful time to make a retreat” asking for the grace to pursue recovery, he said.

Our House Ministries executive director Ken Johnston listed several practical strategies those in recovery can take to ensure sobriety amid the holidays.

“Make sure you know where 12-step meetings are every day in case you need one,” he said, with both Father McKay and Father Hoar stressing the need to rely on 12-step sponsors, who support individuals in their recovery, when tempted.

Have a specific plan as well for navigating family and business holiday gatherings, which can trigger relapses into addiction, all three experts said.

“It’s pretty hard to stay away from the parties, but I would suggest that they make an appearance and not stay through those long hours of partying,” said Father McKay.

Johnston recommended that those in recovery “always have an escape plan,” so that they “have a way to leave” if needed.

“Bring your own car or, if with a friend or spouse, make sure they know you may need to leave unexpectedly,” he said.

In addition, “make sure you know what is contained in the food you eat, whether it is liq-

uor in candies or marijuana in brownies,” he cautioned, adding that edible forms of marijuana and other intoxicants “are a big thing these days.”

Watch over your drink, he said, and “be very careful if you set it down. Not only could someone slip something in it, but alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can have the same appearance and you don’t want to accidentally ingest a mixed drink.”

Family members, though well-meaning, should avoid bringing up scenes from past Christmases, reminding loved ones in recovery of addiction behaviors that occurred at previous gatherings, said Father McKay.

“Sometimes they’ll say, ‘Now, remember what happened when you were using drugs or alcohol and what you did to your family and your kids,’” said Father McKay. “Well, that’s the last thing (those in recovery) need to hear. ... Right away the guilt and shame come back, and they want to numb themselves again.”

In some cases, simply avoiding parties with alcohol — or hosting non-alcoholic gatherings directly — may be the best option, said Father Hoar.

Above all, focusing on the reason for the season is key, said experts.

“It’s also a time for us to really come to that deeper intimacy with Christ,” said Father Hoar. “The King of Kings comes in humility. For someone in addiction, you know, there’s a struggle with shame and guilt, but Christ came to bring light to the message of His coming, and to bring a new sense of hope.”

(Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News.)



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# Wheeling University's MBA Program Receives National Recognition

**WHEELING** — University HQ, a leading, national ranking service, chose Wheeling University's MBA program as one of the best in West Virginia this year.

In its 2023 Best MBA Programs in West Virginia, University HQ ranked Wheeling the fifth best in the state. The faculty to student ratio for the program is 11 to 1 and the university had the second highest average starting salary among graduates — \$76,336, with only WVU's graduates earning a higher starting salary.

Wheeling University President Ginny R. Favede said, "Our MBA program is designed to meet the needs of working adults who wish to earn an advanced degree, while continuing to work. Our dedicated faculty are accessible and the online format offers students an online educational community that offers support, as well as a collaborative learning environment. We are grateful to University HQ for recognizing our MBA program and the outstanding education it provides students."

Wheeling's MBA program, established in 1978, is one of the oldest in the region. It offers students concentrations in Management, Healthcare Management, with coursework delivered in an online format. Courses are offered in 7-week sessions so students can complete the program in two years. Those students taking a full time

schedule of 12 credits can complete an MBA in one year.

University HQ said ranking colleges in each state and by program is designed to help students when deciding which institution offers the best academic programs to meet their needs. "Our goal is to present a fact-based picture of the colleges we rank ... Figures like admission rates can help students with reasonable expectations for admission, and retention rates can help them envision how their fellow students value the education they receive. Graduating salary figures can also help manage expectations, but those numbers are often difficult to collect and might not be terribly reliable," the ranking service explained.

Ultimately, University HQ strives to present an objective and unbiased view of colleges so that students

can set reasonable expectations, discover outstanding schools, and embark on a path toward their best lives.

To learn more about the Wheeling University MBA program, email [gradadmiss@wheeling.edu](mailto:gradadmiss@wheeling.edu).

Wheeling proudly remains the only campus-based Catholic institution of higher education in West Virginia. According to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), Wheeling University is one of only 12 diocesan-sponsored universities in the United States. In addition to Wheeling, those other institutions include; Carroll College, Catholic Distance University, Donnelly College, Gannon University, Loras College, Mount St. Mary's, Seton Hill University, St. Ambrose

University, St. Thomas University, Thomas More University, University of Dallas, and the University of St. Thomas (M.N.).

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# El Papa sugiere mantener el corazón vigilante en Adviento por medio de la caridad y la confesión

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)** — La llamada a la "vigilancia" en Adviento no significa permanecer despiertos y vigilantes por miedo, sino más bien por el anhelo de la venida del Señor, escribió el Papa Francisco.

A veces la gente piensa en la virtud de la vigilancia "como una actitud motivada por el miedo a un castigo inminente, como si un meteorito estuviera a punto de caer del cielo", dijo en el texto de su reflexión a la lectura del Evangelio del 3 de diciembre, el primer domingo de Adviento. "¡Pero, ciertamente, éste no es el sentido de la vigilancia cristiana!"

El Papa Francisco dirigió el rezo del Ángelus desde su residencia, Domus Sanctae Marthae, pero explicó que su bronquitis, aunque está mejorando, todavía le dificulta hablar, por lo que el texto de su comentario y de sus llamamientos a la paz fueron leídos por monseñor Paolo Braida, funcionario de la Secretaría de Estado vaticana.

En la lectura del Evangelio, Mc 13,33-37, Jesús cuenta la parábola de los siervos que esperan el regreso

de su señor.

"La vigilancia de los siervos no se basa en el temor, sino en el anhelo, en la espera de ir al encuentro del amo que viene", dice el texto del Papa. "Se preparan para su regreso porque lo quieren mucho, porque esperan que, cuando llegue, encuentre una casa acogedora y ordenada".

Ese tipo de vigilancia y expectativa debería marcar la vigilancia de los cristianos mientras se preparan para acoger a Jesús en Navidad, para acogerlo al final de los tiempos y, añadió, para acogerlo "cuando venga a nuestro encuentro en la Eucaristía, en su Palabra, en nuestros hermanos y hermanas, especialmente en los más necesitados".

El Papa Francisco animó a todos a preparar cuidadosamente el corazón con la oración y con la caridad.

"Un hermoso programa para el Adviento", sugirió, sería "encontrar a Jesús que viene en cada hermano y hermana que nos necesita, y compartir con ellos lo que podamos: escucha, tiempo, ayuda concreta".

El Adviento, dijo, también es un buen momento para "acercándonos a su perdón" a través del sacra-



Foto CNS/Vatican Media

El Papa Francisco sonríe mientras se prepara para que un ayudante lea su texto preparado durante el rezo de la oración del Ángelus el 3 de diciembre de 2023. El Papa Francisco, que sigue recuperándose de una bronquitis, dirigió el Ángelus desde su residencia vaticana, la Domus Sanctae Marthae.

mento de la reconciliación y dedicar más tiempo a la oración y a la lectura de la Biblia.

Permanecer vigilantes puede

requerir práctica, dijo, y empieza por no dejarse distraer por "cosas inútiles" e intentar no quejarse tanto.

**Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:** La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

**Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro 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 eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

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