

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Retired Pope Asks Forgiveness in Response to Munich Abuse Report

By Carol Glatz, Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — At the age of 94, retired Pope Benedict XVI said he knows he will soon stand before God's judgment and he prayed that he would be forgiven for his shortcomings, including in handling allegations of clerical sexual abuse.

"Even though, as I look back on my

long life, I can have great reason for fear and trembling, I am nonetheless of good cheer, for I trust firmly that the Lord is not only the just judge, but also the friend and brother who himself has already suffered for my shortcomings, and is thus also my advocate," he said.

In response Feb. 8 to a recent report on sexual abuse cases in the German Archdiocese of Munich and Freising,

Pope Benedict also confirmed that an error in the testimony written on his behalf had been an oversight and "was not intentionally willed and I hope may be excused."

"To me it proved deeply hurtful that this oversight was used to cast doubt on my truthfulness, and even to label me a liar," he said in a letter released Feb. 8 by the Vatican.

However, the retired pope, who headed the Munich Archdiocese from 1977 to 1982, emphasized his feelings of great shame and sorrow for the abuse of minors and made a request for forgiveness to all victims of sexual abuse.

"I have had great responsibilities in the Catholic Church. All the greater is my pain for the abuses and the errors

See "Report" on Page 2

Kurt and Chloe Kondrich Join Pro-Life Voices in Charleston

By Colleen Rowan

CHARLESTON—"We can't think of any other place we'd like to be today than here in West Virginia," Kurt Kondrich told the crowd at the West Virginia State Capitol Feb. 7. People from across the state were joined together that day for the annual Pro-Life Rally Day at the Capitol, sponsored by West Virginians for Life (WVFL).

Kurt was the keynote speaker of the event, rallying support of the state's Unborn Child with Down Syndrome Protection and Education Act (SB 468/HB 4337), and sharing his family's story. Kurt and his wife Margie's daughter Chloe, who also attended the rally in Charleston, was born in 2003 with Down syndrome. From the time on, Kurt said, "We began focusing on her ability, not her disability."

Kurt and Margie learned that with prenatal testing, 90 percent of Down syndrome children "are identified, targeted, and terminated before they're allowed to come on to this earth. So, we changed our life, and became advocates."

Kurt, a former Pittsburgh police officer and Chloe, who Kurt said is a gift from God, have

See "Pro-Life" on Page 3



Photo Courtesy of West Virginians for Life

Kurt Kondrich and his daughter Chloe attend the annual Pro-Life Rally Day at the West Virginia Capitol in Charleston, sponsored by West Virginians for Life. Chloe was born in 2003 with down syndrome, and since then the family have been advocates for children with Down syndrome. The father-daughter team have spoken all over the country and twice at the United Nations.

Inside: Consecration to St. Joseph Will be Held in Wheeling, Page 3

Synodal Process Showing Good Progress, Some Challenges, Vatican Says, Page 5

Report...

Cont'd from Page 1

that occurred in those different places during the time of my mandate," Pope Benedict wrote.

"Each individual case of sexual abuse is appalling and irreparable," he said. "The victims of sexual abuse have my deepest sympathy, and I feel great sorrow for each individual case."

The letter comes after a German law firm released a report in late January on how abuse cases were handled in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising.

The report, compiled at the request of the archdiocese, incriminated retired Pope Benedict, with lawyers accusing him of misconduct in four cases during his tenure in Munich. Lawyer Martin Pusch of the law firm Westpfahl Spilker Wastl said the retired pope had denied wrongdoing in all cases.

The Munich investigation followed two years of research and covered the period from 1945 to 2019, centering on who knew what about sexual abuse and when, and what action they took, if any. The report — made up of four volumes with almost 1,900 pages — identified at least 497 victims and 235 abusers.

Pope Benedict had submitted an 82-page written statement to the panel conducting the investigation, and, in it, the former pope had said he did not take part in a meeting in 1980 on the case of the repeat offender Peter H., who came to Munich from Essen.

The retired pope amended that statement after the report came out, saying he was present at the 1980 meeting, but the meeting focused only on finding housing for Peter H. while he underwent therapy; the priest's abusive history was not discussed, he said.

That statement, issued Jan. 24 on Pope Benedict's behalf by his secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, said the error of incorrectly stating the retired pope had not been at the meeting "was not done out of bad faith but was the result of an oversight in the editing of his statement."

In his Feb. 8 response, the retired pope said there

was a "small group of friends who selflessly compiled on my behalf my 82-page testimony for the Munich law firm, which I would have been unable to write by myself."

"In addition to responding to the questions posed by the law firm, this also demanded reading and analyzing almost 8,000 pages of documents in digital format. These assistants then helped me to study and analyze the almost 2,000 pages of expert opinions," he wrote, adding that those results were published as an appendix to his letter.

He said that during this "massive" amount of work in establishing his position, "an oversight occurred regarding my participation in the chancery meeting of 15 January 1980. This error, which regrettably was verified, was not intentionally willed and I hope may be excused."

This error should not "detract from the care and diligence" with which his friends helped formulate his response, he said.

And while it was "deeply hurtful" for the oversight to have been used to cast doubt on him, Pope Benedict wrote, "I have been greatly moved by the varied expressions of trust, the heartfelt testimonies and the moving letters of encouragement sent to me by so many persons."

He dedicated the rest of his two-page letter to the importance of "confession," noting that each day at the beginning of Mass "we publicly implore the living God to forgive" the sins committed through "our fault, through our most grievous fault."

"It is clear to me that the words 'most grievous' do not apply each day and to every person in the same way," he wrote. "They tell me with consolation that, however great my fault may be today, the Lord forgives me, if I sincerely allow myself to be examined by him and am really prepared to change."

He said that he has "come to understand that we ourselves are drawn into this grievous fault whenever we neglect it or fail to confront it with the necessary decisiveness and responsibility, as too often happened and continues to happen."

"Once again I can only express to all the victims

of sexual abuse my profound shame, my deep sorrow and my heartfelt request for forgiveness," he said.

Together with the pope's letter, the Vatican published an "analysis" of the Munich report's assessment that then-Cardinal Ratzinger allegedly mishandled abuse allegations on four occasions when he led the German archdiocese. The analysis was compiled by a small team of canon lawyers and other experts who had helped craft the original 82-page response during the initial phase of the investigation.

This team's response focused primarily on the case of "priest X," the serial abuser also known as Peter H. It said the Munich report's assessment did "not correspond to the truth" because the now-retired pontiff "was neither aware that priest X was an abuser, nor that he was included in pastoral activity."

According to the Munich report, then-Cardinal Ratzinger "employed this priest in pastoral activity, even though he was aware of the abuses committed by him, and thus would have covered up his sexual abuses."

However, records of the key 1980 meeting indicated that sexual abuse committed by the priest was not discussed, the team said, and the reason for accommodating priest X in Munich for therapy there "was not mentioned."

Pope Benedict did not knowingly perjure himself, as the Munich report claimed, when he initially denied being present at the 1980 meeting, the team said.

It had been a "transcription error" and Pope Benedict "did not notice" it given the time constraints, it said. The minutes of the 1980 meeting were included in statements made by then-Cardinal Ratzinger, so it would make no sense "for him to intentionally deny his presence at the meeting."

There is also no evidence behind the report's "allegation of misconduct or conspiracy in any cover-up," the team said. "As an archbishop, Cardinal Ratzinger was not involved in any cover-up of acts of abuse."

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."



Office: 1322 Eoff St.
Mailing: PO Box 230
Wheeling, WV 26003
(304) 232-0444

Fax: (304) 233-8551

Web site: www.thecatholicspiritwv.org

Diocesan Web site: www.dwc.org

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Executive Editor: Colleen Rowan, Ext. 347 crowan@dwc.org

Advertising: contact Colleen Rowan

Freelance Writers:

Martina Hart, John Sherwood,



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Consecration to St. Joseph Will be Held in Wheeling

WHEELING—A 33-day spiritual journey, a Consecration to St. Joseph will begin Feb. 15 in Wheeling. Weekly group meetings will be Tuesdays from Feb. 15 through March 15 at 10 a.m. at St. Alphonsus Parish Hall and at 6 p.m. in the diocesan chancery. The consecration day will be Saturday, March 19.

“What does it mean to consecrate yourself to St. Joseph? Well, it basically means that you acknowledge that he is your spiritual father, and you want to be like him. To show it, you entrust yourself entirely into his paternal care so that he can help you acquire his virtues and become holy. Total consecration to St. Joseph means you make a formal act of filial entrustment to your spiritual father so that he can take care of your spiritual well-being and lead you to God. The person who consecrates himself to St. Joseph wants to be as close to their spiritual father as possible, to the point of resembling him in virtue and holiness. St. Joseph, in turn, will give those consecrated to him his undivided attention, protection, and guidance,” organizers said.

Register by calling (304) 233-4121. Consecration books will be provided free of charge.



Photo Courtesy of West Virginians for Life
Bishop Mark Brennan speaks at the Pro-Life Rally Day at the West Virginia State Capitol Feb. 7.

Pro-Life...

Cont'd from Page 1
spoken across the country and twice at the United Nations. They also visited the White House as advocates.

“My daughter shows us what we need in this country—unconditional love, purity, innocence,” Kurt said. “She doesn’t have any malice.”

“The reason the devil is so intent on destroying these beautiful children is because he can’t corrupt them,” Kurt said.

In his talk, Kurt posed a grim thought of the future: “If today we have a test for Down syndrome, what if next week we have one for autism? For heart disease? Or depression? The list is endless for where prenatal testing could lead us. It’s called a silent genocide.”

Kurt went on to say, “Identifying, targeting, and terminating a human being who receives a prenatal Down syndrome diagnosis because they don’t meet a cultural mandate for unattainable perfec-



Photo Courtesy of West Virginians for Life
Rally goers walk in the prayer procession throughout the Capitol Feb. 7.

tion represents the ultimate extreme form of discrimination, prejudice, profiling, bigotry, racism, intolerance, exclusion, and hatred. It’s something that none of us will ever tolerate.”

He ended his talk by saying that he and Chloe look forward to coming back to West Virginia when Gov. Jim Justice signs the Unborn Child with Down Syndrome Protection and Education Act into law.

Petitions in support of the act were presented to the House and Senate during the rally.

Joining in the rally was Bishop Mark E. Brennan, who said in his talk, every life is a gift from God.

“Every life, that of a mother and that of her child, is precious and deserves our respect and help,” the bishop said. “We are grateful for signs that our West Virginia legislators want to strengthen our laws to reduce abortions in this state. Let us also show that we are committed to helping mothers deal with the challenges that a pregnancy can present. Mother and child should not be pitted against one another. They are not natural enemies. We can support both. I urge you to pray, fast and serve in whatever ways you can so that mothers and children in the Mountain State may live with dignity and thrive.”

Bishop Brennan’s full statement for the rally titled “Every Life, that of a Mother and that of Her Child, is Precious and Deserves our Respect and Help: A Statement on Pro-Life Issues by Bishop Brennan,” can be found on Page 5 of the Feb. 4 issue of The Catholic Spirit in print or at The Catholic Spirit’s website: thecatholicspiritwv.org.

Bishop Brennan also gave the invocation at the rally, which was held at noon inside the lower rotunda. Also speaking were National Right to Life Political Director Karen Cross and WVFL President Wanda Franz.

Attendees also heard from pro-life legislators and participated in the annual prayer procession throughout the Capitol holding small, white crosses that represented aborted babies. According to the latest figures from National Right to Life, roughly 2,400 unborn babies in the U.S. are lost to abortion each day.

Rally goers also had the opportunity to meet with their legislators and were introduced in the House/Senate Galleries when session began.

For more information about WVFL or the Unborn Child with Down Syndrome Protection and Education Act (SB 468/HB 4337), visit www.wvforlife.org.

MEET YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER:
Saint Joseph the Worker
A talk by Dr. Mark Miravalle, S.T.D.
Theology professor,
Franciscan University of Steubenville
Author of over 20 books
in Mariology and Spiritual Theology



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16
7:30 P.M.
Rosary begins at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Miravalle’s book,
*Meet Your Spiritual Father:
A Brief Introduction to St. Joseph*
will be available for purchase
and autographing after the talk.



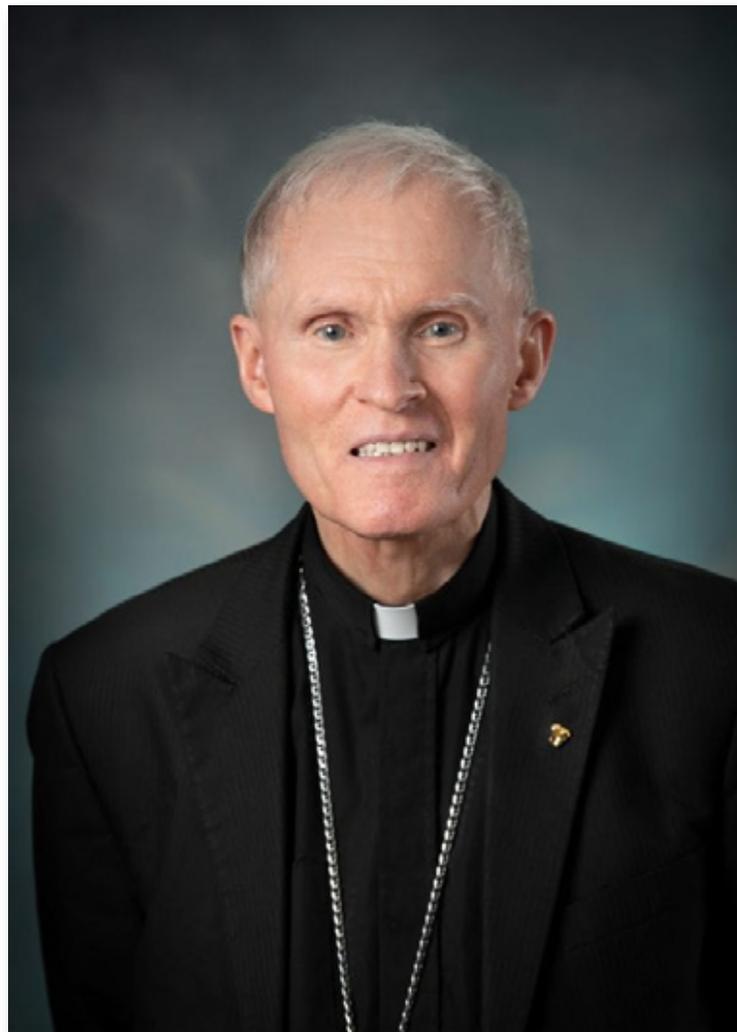
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with Fr. Chapin
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6:30 WTOV FOX 9	Wheeling-Steubenville
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11:00 WDVM 25	Hagerstown-Washington D.C.

Plus watch episodes online at - mydailyliving.com

Wishing you a Happy and Blessed 75th Birthday, Bishop Mark!



From Weirton's Catholic Community:

*Sacred Heart of Mary Parish, St. Joseph the Worker Parish,
St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, St. Joseph the Worker Day School,
Madonna High School, & Very Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., pastor; &
St. Paul Parish, St. Paul School, & Father Babu Joseph Elamturuthil, pastor*



Synodal Process Showing Good Progress, Some Challenges, Vatican Says

By Carol Glatz Catholic, News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church worldwide is showing good progress and “much joy” after the opening of the synodal process, but there also have been some “uncertainties” and challenges, said the ordinary council of the Synod of Bishops.

“There is growing awareness that the synodal conversion to which all the baptized are called is a lengthy process that will prolong itself well beyond 2023,” the council said in a press release Feb. 7.

“The desire all over the world is (that) this synodal journey, which has begun at the local level,” continues “so

that tangible signs of synodality might increasingly be manifest as constitutive of the church,” it said. The ordinary council met in person and online Jan. 26 to discuss the progress being made on the synodal process around the world and to elaborate the criteria for the “reports” to be prepared by dioceses and bishops’ conferences and submitted to the general secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, it said in a statement published Feb. 7 at synod.va.

“It seems that the novelty of the synodal process has given rise to much joy and dynamism,” it said. Nearly 98% of all bishops’ conferences and synods of Eastern Catholic churches worldwide have appointed a person or an entire team to implement the syn-

odal process and a large number of initiatives have been set up to promote consultation and discernment.

“Many of the faithful perceive the synodal process as a crucial moment in the church’s life, as a learning process as well as an opportunity for conversion and renewal of ecclesial life. At the same time, various difficulties have also emerged,” it said.

“Fears and reticence are reported among some groups of the faithful and among the clergy. There is also a certain mistrust among the laity who doubt that their contribution will really be taken into consideration,” it said.

Among the challenges it noted were: a “reluctance” by some clergy; a need for formation, “especially in listening and discernment so that the synod is authentically a spiritual process and not reduced to a parliamentary debate”; a need for mutual listen-

ing based on prayer and Scripture; a need to improve the participation of young people; and the need to involve those distanced from the church.

The pandemic has also limited opportunities to meet in person, which is important for “mutual listening and communal discernment,” it said. “The consultation of the people of God cannot be reduced to a mere questionnaire.”

Last October, Pope Francis formally opened the process leading up to the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2023 and bishops around the world were to open the process in their dioceses soon after. The diocesan phase, which runs until August, will focus on listening to and consulting the people of God.

Documents and resources are available in a number of languages at www.synod.va and www.synodresources.org/.

‘Called to Joy of Love’ is Theme of National Marriage Week USA

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — “Called to the Joy of Love” is the theme of this year’s National Marriage Week USA Feb. 7-14. The week includes World Marriage Day, which this year is Feb. 13.

The annual observances “are an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and the family,” said a Feb. 3 news release from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The theme for this year’s celebration of National Marriage Week mirrors the title of a national pastoral framework for marriage and family life ministry approved by the U.S. bishops in June 2021.

Each day of National Marriage Week, digital content is made available through USCCB’s social media channels: Twitter (@USCCB), Facebook (www.facebook.com/usccb) and Instagram (<https://instagram.com/usccb>).

Daily content includes a series of videos featuring how various ministries are fortifying married couples in the midst of challenges such as infertility, grief for the loss of a child, and the stressors of daily life.

Livestreamed events also are available through USCCB social media channels including the recitation of the rosary for married and engaged couples and a conversation on what it means to care for a sick spouse.

The USCCB offers resources to the faithful for the promotion of marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman via three websites: ForYourMarriage.org, PorTuMatrimonio.org and MarriageUniqueForAReason.org.

Resources available to dioceses include a flyer that may be used by parishes as a bulletin insert, as well as social media graphics for download in English and Spanish at ForYourMarriage.org/celebrate-national-marriage-

week. Last November in a presentation on “Called to the Joy of Love: A Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry,” Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco told his fellow bishops that bolstering marriage and family ministry is an appropriate undertaking during this “Amoris Laetitia Family Year.”

Declared by Pope Francis in March 2021, the year concludes June 26 during the 10th Meeting of Families in Rome with the pope.

Addressing marriage and family life is vital in a time when families are under increasing threats from “sweeping ideological currents that destroy and undermine our sexual identity as man and woman and God-given vocations as father and mother, son or daughter,” said the archbishop, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

Launched in 2010, National Marriage Week USA is part of an international event aimed at mobilizing individuals, organizations and businesses in “a common purpose to strengthen marriage in communities and influence the culture,” said the USCCB release. World Marriage Day was started in 1983 by Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

The NationalMarriageWeekUSA.org website has more information about the weeklong observance and various resources.



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SYNOD Listening Sessions in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

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

Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston: Third Session—Feb. 13, 1 p.m.; Fourth Session—Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m.; Fifth Session—Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m.

Holy Redeemer, Spencer: First Session—March 20, 10 a.m.; Second Session—March 27, 10 a.m.

Immaculate Conception, New Cumberland: First Session—March 6, 9:30 a.m.; Second Session—March 11, 6 p.m.; Third Session—March 20, 9:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling: First Session—Feb. 17, 7 p.m.; Second Session—Inclement weather date, Feb. 24.

Sacred Heart, Princeton: First Session—March 20, 12:30 p.m.

St. Anthony, Charleston: Second Session; Feb. 21, 1 p.m.; Third Session—March 12, 10 a.m.; Fourth Session—April 3, 11:40 a.m.

St. Augustine, Grafton: First Session—March 27, 10 a.m.-noon

St. Elizabeth, Phillipi: First Session—April 3, 2022, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

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

St. James, Charles Town: First Session—March 5, 1 p.m.

St. Joseph, Martinsburg: First Session—Feb. 26, 2-4 p.m.; Second Session—Feb. 27, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

St. Michael, Vienna: First Session—Feb. 27, 10 a.m.; Second Session make up date, March 13, 10 a.m.

St. Patrick, Hinton: Second Session—Feb. 15, 6-8 p.m.

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

St. Peter the Fisherman, Fairmont: Second Session—Feb. 20, 11:45 a.m. and 2 p.m.; Third Session—March 6, 11:45 a.m. and 2 p.m.; Fourth Session—March 20, 11:45 a.m. and 2 p.m.

St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs: Fourth Session—Feb. 23, 2 p.m.; Fifth Session—March 1, TBA

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

St. Vincent de Paul, New Martinsville: First Session—Feb. 11, 6-8 p.m.

Reject Racism to ‘Live the Way’ Creator Intended us to Live, Cardinal Says

By **Richard Szczepanowski, Catholic News Service**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — People must “reject all forms of racism, bigotry and injustice” and recognize “we are each made by God and are deserving of respect and dignity because of just that,” Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory said Feb. 3.

Only then will mankind “live the way we were intended to live by the Creator,” he said in a Black History Month address.

“We each are called to reach beyond ourselves — that which is comfortable and familiar. As a human family, we are to be a good neighbor to one another,” Cardinal Gregory said. “This is the only way to bring about true justice for all American and global citizens.”

He spoke on “Race and the Catholic Church” for an event sponsored by the St. Thomas More Catholic Community at Yale University. The address was delivered via Zoom because of the ongoing pandemic.

“I wish we were together in-person,” he said, because “I believe conversations about race are best had in-person so we can encounter one another as sisters and brothers created in the image and likeness of the Lord, the Creator of the human family.”

Lamenting that “racism, intolerance and discrimination come in a variety of forms — both overt and covert,” Cardinal Gregory noted that when the faithful are open to racial diversity, “they see the inherent beauty of God’s creation in the mosaic of skin tones, facial expressions, cultures and ethnicities.”

He pointed out that “some of the very first Catholics (in this country) included free Black Catholics, who arrived from Protestant England on the Eastern shores of Maryland in 1634,” but yet “in the Catholic Church, we do not have a story of unity or history of mutual respect.”

“We are a church and a nation of immigrants who willingly or unwillingly fled to or were brought to these shores — some in chains and in bondage,” Cardinal Gregory said.

“Racism is sometimes seen as America’s original sin,” he continued, “and the reality of America’s original sin has denied or limited many African Americans from living out their calling to become full members of the Catholic Church as priests or religious and certainly, to fully attend or teach in higher education.”

Acknowledging “polarization both

inside the Catholic Church and in our wider society,” Cardinal Gregory said society is “experiencing a generally accepted, pervasive negative brashness.”

“There is often acceptance of openly, unapologetic racist language, hostility and consistently uncivil behavior,” he said. “Civility is no longer a treasured American virtue we agree to live by. Civility does not come naturally to any of us, but it is a quality that can be cultivated. Civility, charity and service are needed in order for us to successfully work toward common ground that benefits all.”

During Black History Month, observed in February, and every month, he said, “we must work hard to practice civility in our challenging discussions about race and every other issue that touches our families and our communities.”

“The mission of the Catholic Church is to serve all of God’s children regardless of their ethnicity, culture, immigration status, race, or religion,” he added.

Responding to questions from Yale’s St. Thomas More Catholic group and its African American ministry, Cardinal Gregory spoke of how the church can reconcile its past of racism, colonialism and slave ownership.

“We must admit our involvement and admit the sins we have shared in, maybe not personally, but we inherit the legacies that that sin has left in its wake,” he said.

“I am very, very proud of the Jesuits in the United States as they are coming to an acceptance and an understanding of their awful selling of slaves to keep Georgetown University and perhaps other Jesuit institutions afloat,” the cardinal said. “They are expressing a contrition and a desire to do what is right. Reconciliation and retribution are very difficult, but they (the Jesuits) are willing to walk that path.”

He also referred to the U.S. bishops’ 2018 pastoral letter on racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts,” and other documents the bishops have issued that address racism.

“We have to make known all the statements and the good work the bishops have done,” Cardinal Gregory said. “We haven’t done enough, but what we have done is often unknown.”

In August 2020 during a Mass at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Washington marking the anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, then-Archbishop Gregory launched “Made in



CNS screen grab/Richard Szczepanowski, Catholic Standard

Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory delivers a Zoom address Feb. 3 on “Race and the Catholic Church” during a Black History Month event sponsored by the St. Thomas More Catholic Community at Yale University. “The mission of the Catholic Church,” he said, “is to serve all of God’s children regardless of their ethnicity, culture, immigration status, race or religion.”

God’s Image: Pray and Work to End the Sin of Racism,” a new Washington archdiocesan initiative.

It includes a wide range of pastoral activities and outreach for individuals and parishes, such as prayer, listening sessions, faith formation opportunities and social justice work.

When Pope Francis appointed him as Washington’s new archbishop in April 2019 and he was installed the next month, he became the archdiocese’s first African American archbishop. When he was made a cardinal Nov. 28, 2020, he became the nation’s first Black cardinal.

In his address to the Yale group, Cardinal Gregory said parishes must welcome, acknowledge and embrace people of different ethnic backgrounds or races, otherwise it is more than “a lack of welcome” — it is “outright hostility.”

“When we are teaching about the nature of sin, we talk about sin as an action, but sometimes sin is an inaction. We tolerate by our inaction the sin of racism,” he said. “What we as Catholics need to do better is to learn how to welcome people.”

With the church currently hosting listening sessions on synodality in preparation for the October 2023 world Synod of bishops, the cardinal said now is the time “for us talk to one another and to listen to one another.”

“We have to listen to our people and invite them to speak from our hearts. Listening does not mean agree-

ing. It means opening our hearts to hear and listen to those we disagree with,” Cardinal Gregory said.

“In the Catholic Church there have always been disagreements — theological disagreements, cultural disagreements. It is not new,” he said. “But we have to open our hearts and our eyes to reconcile and unify the church in all of its fullness.”

He said welcoming persons of varied ethnicities or cultures or colors into a parish “is more than simply tolerating people.”

“Our welcome must be an aggressive and straightforward desire to say, ‘We want you here, not to become as we are, but to come as you are,’” Cardinal Gregory said. “We have to say, ‘You have a place at the Lord’s table, and we are enriched to welcome and accept you as you are.’”

He said Catholic young people can help combat racism and discrimination and work to build a better society.

Black History Month is a time to “promote peace, racial harmony, and social justice instead of fear, harm and violence,” Cardinal Gregory said.

He said his wish is that as young people learn of “the injustices and indignities suffered and overcome in our American history,” it would inspire “real hope for us all to do the necessary and sometimes challenging work of our time.”

Szczepanowski is managing editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.

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Wheeling's St. Vincent de Paul Parish School Taps Charleston Catholic Grad's Book to Inspire Community

"His dedication and commitment were inspiring. We thought, what a perfect way for our students to connect with someone so young who took on such a major task."

— SVS officials

Catholic Identity is the essence, the core of existence for any school that is rooted in the foundation of our Catholic Faith. Building a stronger relationship among the school, parish, community and state continues to be one of the ongoing goals at St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling.

"This summer we searched for something inspirational yet material that could be shared with students, faculty, staff, school and parish families as well as the community," SVS officials said.

SVS found this in Harvey Sutton, a 5-year-old boy, who hiked the Appalachian Trail. He was known on the trail as "Little Man." Harvey is one of the youngest people known to have completed the roughly 2,100-mile hike.

"His dedication and commitment were inspiring," SVS officials said. "We thought, what a perfect way for our students to connect with someone so young who took on such a major task. And...to think he did it out in the beautiful world created by our amazing God.

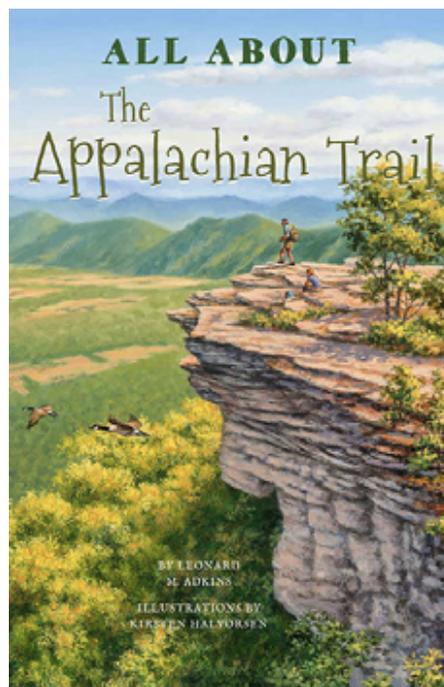
The search led SVS to a book that was written by an author who

graduated Charleston Catholic High School. It was recently released and intended for students. "All About the Appalachian Trail" by Leonard M. Adkins was recently named a Finalist in the 33rd annual Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Award category of Young Reader Nonfiction.

"Our plan was coming together nicely... pieces were falling into place," SVS officials said.

"All About the Appalachian Trail" is the very first book written for grades four through eight that provides a complete overview of the world famous hiking trail and is designed for children and their parents, teachers, and classmates to enjoy together. The book covers it all: the route, history, geology, and animals of the trail, along with chapters about hiking equipment and local history.

There's even a profile of the trail's most famous users, thru-hikers, and quotes designed to not only inspire everyone to take a hike, but to also volunteer to help maintain and protect the trail. In addition, there is a free downloadable Teacher's Guide with Com-



Courtesy Photo

Pictured is the cover of "All About the Appalachian Trail" by Leonard M. Adkins. He is a graduate of Charleston Catholic High School.



Courtesy Photo

Author Leonard M. Adkins, who is also a graduate of Charleston Catholic High School, is pictured above on a hike.

mon Core Standards, sample questions, and activities to stimulate further discussion and knowledge of the trail.

"What a find for our students, teachers, families and community leaders," SVS officials said.

Being a finalist for the award indicates that judges recognized the book was successful in achieving its purpose and meeting its intended reader's needs.

"Our plan was to purchase the book for all students at SVS and distribute a copy to each family. Classroom copies would be used to im-

plement the teacher's guide and focus on the Catholic faith traditions that we hoped our students would point out as the book was shared together at home," SVS officials said.

"Creating connections at home and at school gives hope that our students will discover a world outside of their own."

As an added bonus, SVS Social Media Manager Jay Yelenic was able to connect with Adkins and ask that he sign each of the books purchased for the St. Vincent de Paul Parish School community.



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St. Joseph, Martinsburg, Students Take Top Spots in Knights of Columbus State Poster Contest

MARTINSBURG—Posters created by three St. Joseph School students recently won a state contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

The 11-by-17-inch artworks won first place in the local “Keep Christ in Christmas” competition offered by Monsignor Lackey Council 1169 of the Knights of Columbus in Martinsburg. From there, they were judged through the Knights of Columbus West Virginia State Council, where all three again were victorious.

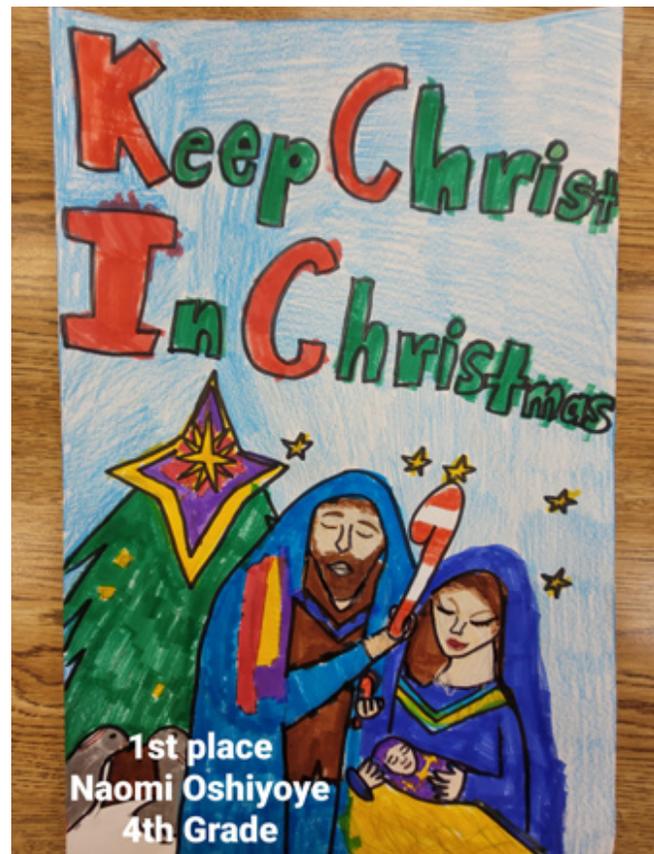
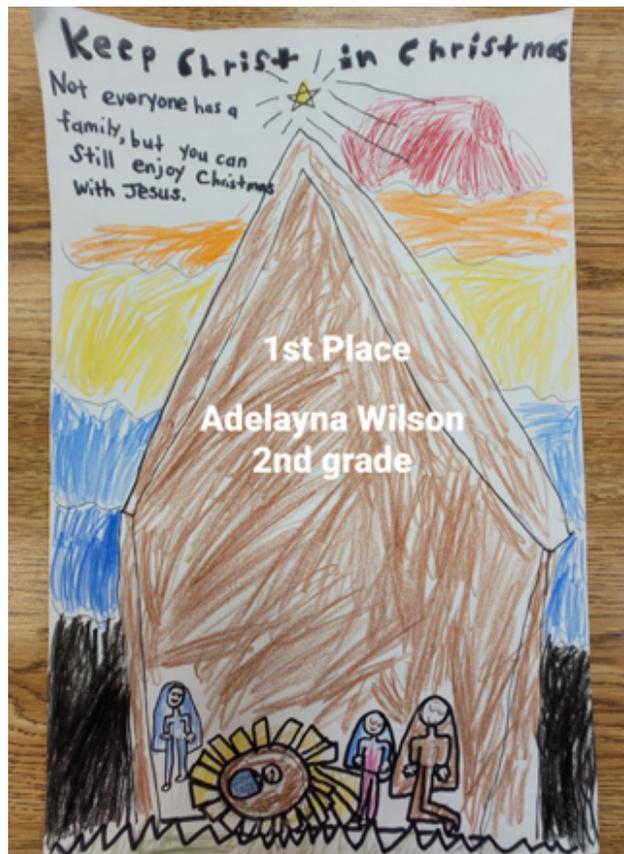
The winner among the 5- to 7-year-olds was second-grader Adelayna Wilson; among those ages 8 to 10, fourth-grader Naomi Oshiyoye took first place; and eighth-grader Angela Aparicio’s poster was deemed the best of those submitted by students ages 11 to 14.

All three earned a \$50 prize from the state council.

The posters are now going to be put in a pool of contestants from across the nation to vie for top honors from the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus. National winners are expected to be announced in March.



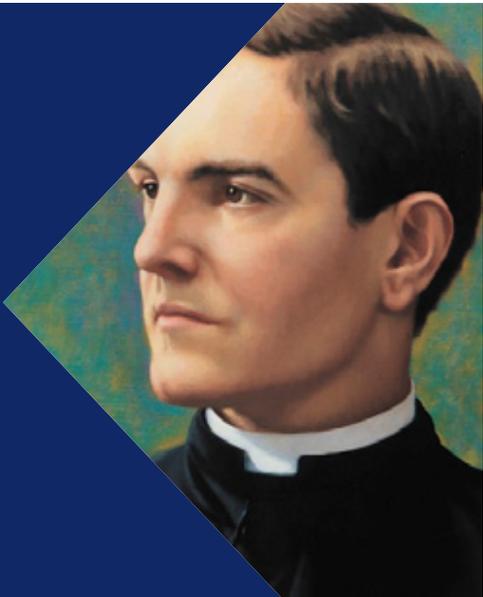
Knights of Columbus poster winners: St. Joseph School students ages 5 to 14 participated in the “Keep Christ in Christmas” poster contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. These students placed first in their age groups at the local and state levels and their works are now moving on to be judged at the national level. At top right are: Jonathan A. Noyalas, a member of Monsignor Lackey Council 1169 of the Knights of Columbus in Martinsburg, Angela Aparicio, Naomi Oshiyoye, and Adelayna Wilson (pictured from left). At right and below are the students’ first-place posters. Courtesy Photos



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Office of Evangelization and Catechesis Partnering with NET Ministries

WEST VIRGINIA—The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis is partnering with NET Ministries to provide retreat ministry.

NET Catalyst is an opportunity for the same team of missionaries to come back to a parish or vicariate to serve on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Parishes interested in being a part of this diocesan initiative and would like NET Ministries to provide retreat ministry at the parish or vicariate, please let the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis know.

This initiative is being paid for by the funds that the Office receives from the Catholic Sharing Appeal.

According to the organization: "What makes NET ministries so successful is our

peer to peer approach to evangelization. The witness of young, zealous missionaries, filled with the joy of the gospel, invite young people to participate in the 'abundant life' (John 10:10) that Jesus offers."

Retreats are effective at providing an opportunity for young people to encounter Jesus and offer their lives to him; however, discipleship requires regular formation, accountability, and witness by other disciples. Having a monthly net team on site can begin to help strengthen and enliven the work of all in forming students as disciples of Jesus.

A monthly NET team can: begin to disciple youth through regular interaction with the same NET team members; function as a spiritual catalyst in the youth culture of a

community; be a regular witness to youth that a life lived for Jesus is not mundane or oppressive; reinforce what youth learn in religion class by their living witness of discipleship; begin to help students bridge the gap between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus; reach parents and other family members through witness in host homes; walk with youth as they grow through continual conversion; and foster an openness to prayer.

For more information about NET, the partnership with the diocese, and opportunities for parishes, contact Daniel Maul, director of the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston at (304) 233-0880, ext. 376, or by e-mail to dmaul@dwc.org

Novena of Hour for Life with Eucharistic Adoration in Parkersburg

PARKERSBURG—A Novena of Hour for Life with Eucharistic Adoration will be held on Wednesdays, Feb. 16; March 9,16,23; and April 6,13, from 6-7 p.m. with a Mass following at 7 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier Church

in Parkersburg.

"We pray for respect for the dignity of human life, forgiveness, and healing of those wounded by abortion, and the gift of life," parish officials said.

All are welcome.

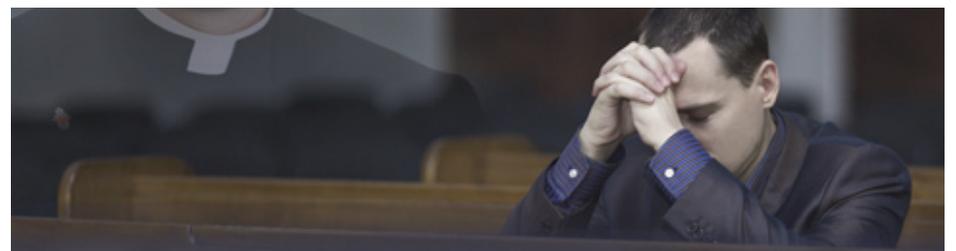
Wellness Events Announced by IC Parish Nurses in Clarksburg

CLARKSBURG—The IC Parish Nurses of Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg invite those having difficulty with sadness and/or anxiety now that the holidays have ended to an Emotional Wellness Support Group, AKA Grace Group, on Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. Contact Veronica Gallo at (304) 762-930 for more information.

The group also announced the Lung Cancer Screening Mobile Van will be at the church April 1. Watch the Immaculate Conception Parish bulletin for information for regis-

tration. Unfortunately, Bonnie's Bus will not be coming on the same day. Watch the Immaculate Conception Parish bulletin for the new date.

The Parish Nurse Ministry will meet Feb. 14 at 6 p.m. in the Parish Center. Members invite all health care professionals who would like to help with this ministry to attend. The February monthly meeting for the bereavement group will be held Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. at the Parish Center. Call Theresa White at (304)-669-6063 with questions.



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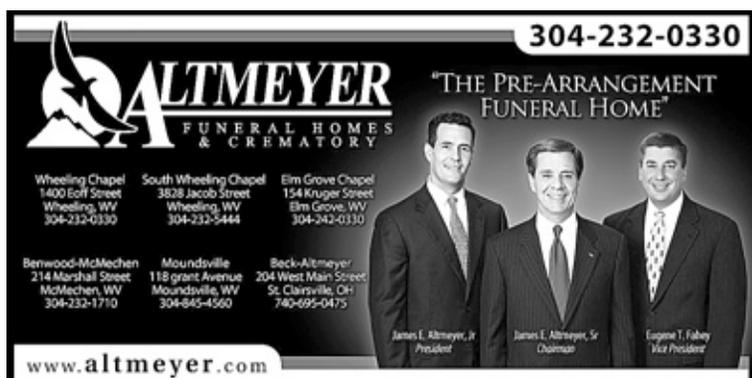
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“I CHOSE YOU FROM THE WORLD, TO GO AND BEAR FRUIT THAT WILL LAST,” SAYS THE LORD. -JOHN 15:16



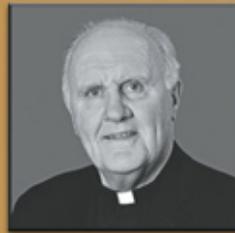
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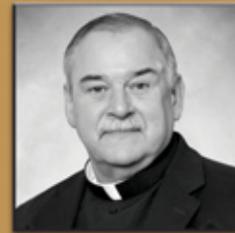
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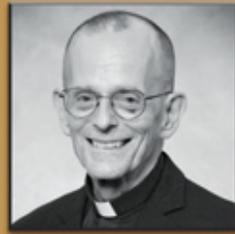
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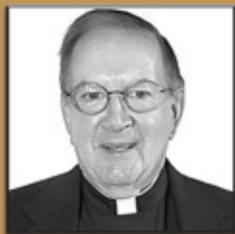
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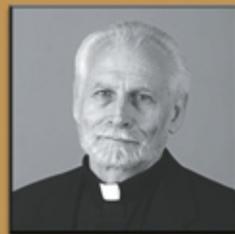
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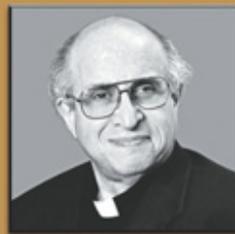
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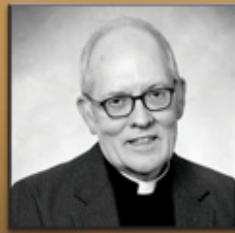
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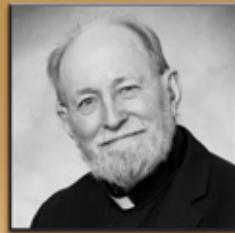
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Pastor Challenges Community to Spread the Light of Christ throughout the World



John Sherwood Photo

Members of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town gather outside of their church to celebrate the Presentation of the Lord. Very Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, V.F., pastor of the parish, blessed candles for liturgical use. Families brought candles from home to ward off the dangers of the year. Father Grassi challenged the community to spread the Light of Christ throughout the world.

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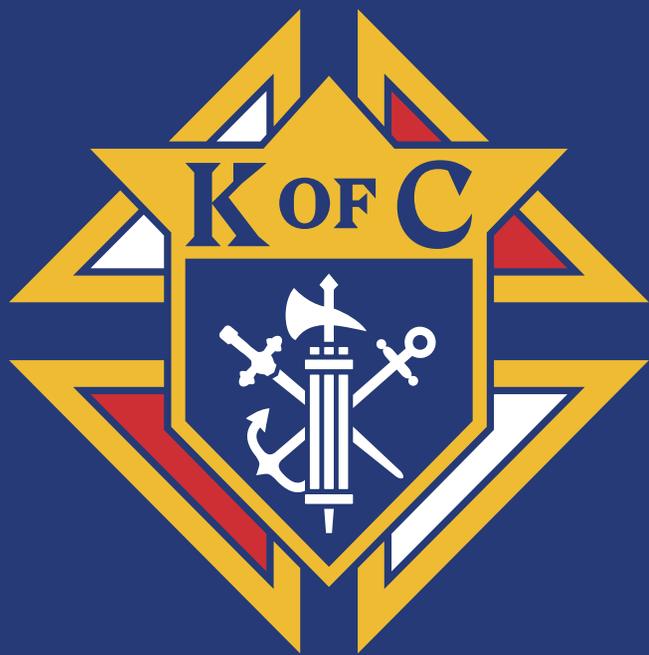
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Confirmation Schedule

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

- March 23: Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling, 6 p.m.
- April 2: Annunciation of Our Lord, Fort Ashby, 4:30 p.m.
- April 23: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, 5:15 p.m.
- April 26: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling, 6 p.m.
- April 27: St. John the Evangelist, Wellsburg, 5:30 p.m.
- April 28: Corpus Christi, Wheeling, 6 p.m.
- April 30: St. Alphonsus, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.
- May 1: Combined Confirmation: Sacred Heart, Chester, and Immaculate Conception, New Cumberland, 11 a.m. at Sacred Heart, Chester
- May 3: St. Michael, Vienna, 6 p.m.
- May 5: Combined Confirmation: Holy Trinity, Nitro, and St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft
- May 7: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.
- May 9: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.
- May 12: St. Jude, Glen Dale, 6:30 p.m.
- May 18: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 6:30 p.m.
- May 19: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 6 p.m.
- May 20: St. Leo, Inwood, 6:30 p.m.
- May 21: St. James, Charles Town, 10 a.m.
- May 22: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 3 p.m.
- May 28: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg, 4:30 p.m.
- May 29: St. Margaret Mary, Parkersburg, 2 p.m.
- May 31: St. Anthony, Follansbee, 6 p.m.
- June 4: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley, 5 p.m.
- June 25: St. Brendan, Elkins, 5 p.m.



Blessing of Throats

Courtesy Photo

At Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg, Sister Maria Sheri Rukwishuro, SJI, blesses a parishioner's throat for the feast of St. Blaise.

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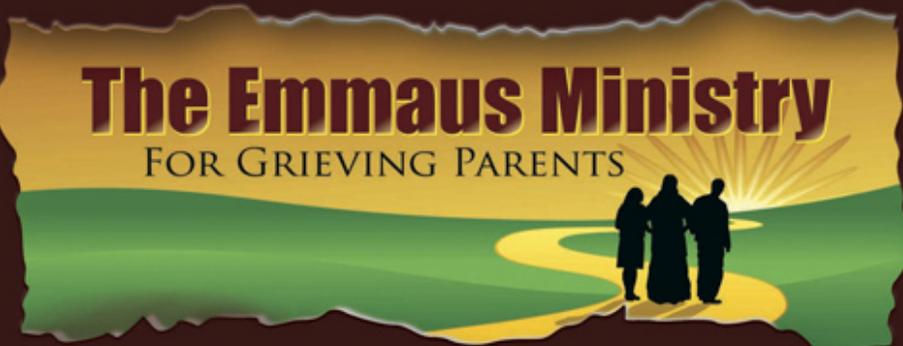
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"Both of us being essential workers has kept us busy through the entire lockdown, and our day-care and your financial aid made that possible."

"This service is a blessing."

These anonymous quotes come from parents and guardians who rely on Catholic Charities West Virginia Child Care Resource Center (CCRC). This program, funded by the state, helps people break the cycle of poverty by easing the financial burden of child care while

they work or go to school.

"We are so grateful for people around the state who support Catholic Charities and who ultimately make this work possible," said Brittany Lucci, director of the CCRC. "You don't realize how much stress parents are under until you see their shoulders sag in relief when you tell them you can help them afford child care."

But CCRC services touch lives beyond the parents. Child care providers can also receive training and support to meet the needs of children in their care.

"Brooke" turned to CCRC for extra support when she was asked to care for "Logan" in her at-home

child care. Logan is 14 months old and suffers from Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).

"After discussing his NAS diagnosis, they [CCRC] helped me find training for NAS babies so I could learn how to better care for him," said Brooke. "They also provided some age-appropriate infant toys and a much-needed sturdy Sit-U-Up support to help him to sit upright."

Logan is getting stronger and thriving both in his foster home and in Brooke's care, due in large part to the help they received from CCRC. Brooke says, "It brings tears to my eyes when I think about how many people have collaborated for

this one little baby boy."

While the state funds this program through the Child Development Block Grant, Catholic Charities West Virginia administers the program. To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia and the Child Care Resource Center, please visit www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org.

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God's love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes, and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.

'Pasta-bilities' Fundraiser for CCWVa to be Held in Charleston

CHARLESTON—Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) will host "Pasta-bilities" on Sunday, Feb. 27, at the St. Anthony Parish Center in Charleston from noon to 5 p.m.

Funds raised through the event will support the vital programs and services provided by CCWVa's Western Region.

Due to COVID restrictions, this will be a carry out lunch/dinner. Tickets are \$15. This is a major fundraiser to support the local Charleston area. How can one help? Buy a ticket. Be a sponsor with a minimum donation of \$250. Donate items needed for the event: tomato paste, tomato juice, pasta penne and zip closure sandwich bags.

"If you cannot get out to shop, you can donate cash or a check and we will shop for you. Any amount is greatly appreciated," organizers said.

Orders may be placed at www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org/Pastabilities2022

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SUNDAY, MARCH 27TH

- 8am - Mass with Fr. Leo
- 10:30am - Mass with Fr. Leo
- 12pm - live cooking demonstration in the parish center with Fr. Leo
- \$15 per person/call the parish office (304)277-2911 or visit the website platinggrace.org/corpuschristi2022 to make your reservations
- 6pm - Talk: How To Become A Saint
- 7:15pm - Communal Penance Service

MONDAY, MARCH 28TH

- 6pm - Talk: Mary and Spiritual Combat
- 6:50pm - Meditation & Eucharistic Exposition

Fr. Leo Patalinghug is a priest member of a community consecrated life, Voluntas Dei (The Will of God). He is also an award winning chef, radio and TV host. Please join Fr. Leo for 2 days of interactive spirited presentations that will inspire you to savor your faith and nourish your soul. Bring your family on a journey to experience the Gospel message in a new way that can transform your life!

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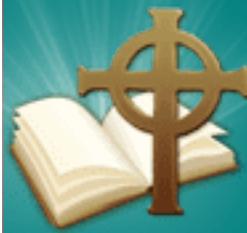
Part-Time Music Director Needed

St. Leo Parish in Inwood, West Virginia, is seeking a part-time Music Director for our parish. Candidate must be available for regular parish weekend Masses (Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9 a.m.), solemnities, and other special liturgical celebrations, which include but are not limited to Confirmation, First Holy Communion, Weddings, Funerals, Christmas, Triduum, Easter, etc. Weekday hours are flexible. Responsibilities: serving as principal organist; selecting music repertoire for liturgies and collaborating with the Pastor, the Deacon and the Liturgy Committee in selecting music for the liturgical seasons; leading regular practice sessions with the choir and cantors; and working with the choir and cantors to promote a singing assembly.

Requirements: Applicant must be a proficient piano and organ player; playing the organ is not technically required but would be a plus. Applicant expected to be able to lead the choir in choral conducting as well as sing solo (when needed); possess knowledge of a variety of Catholic liturgical music (classical, traditional and contemporary) and be willing to incorporate all these musical genres in liturgy.

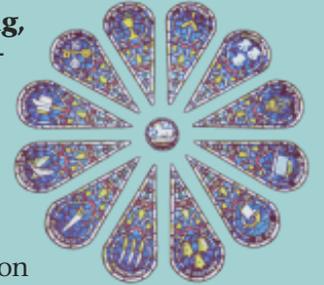
Resume submissions with references should be directed to Lisa Feeley, Secretary, St. Leo Catholic Church, P.O. Box 93, Inwood, WV 25428. You may also email your resume to secretary@stleo.com.

Any questions, please call the parish office at (304) 229-8945.



Principals Needed at Three Catholic Schools

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Wheeling, West Virginia is seeking a Principal for St. Vincent de Paul Grade Catholic School, preschool through 8 grades. Candidates for principal must be willing to assume responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school as well as assist in developing long range goals for school advancement.



We seek a leader with strong communication skills, capable of developing and maintaining an excellent academic program. The candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with Church precepts and act as an example and motivator toward our mission to instruct students in the Catholic faith. The ideal candidate must have an earned Master's Degree in Educational Leadership or Administration or begin the process of completing degree requirements; or hold a valid Educational Leadership certification from the state of West Virginia or be eligible for such certification. The candidate will have a minimum of five years of successful educational experience with a preference for administrative experience.

Salary will be competitive and negotiable, depending on qualifications and years of experience. This position begins on July 1 for the 2022-23 school year. Applications must be submitted by February 28, 2022.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Martinsburg, West Virginia, is seeking a principal for St. Joseph School, which has students in preschool through eighth grades. The candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with Church precepts, and act as an example and motivator toward the fulfillment of the Catholic philosophy of the school.



The ideal candidate must have an earned Master's Degree in Educational Leadership or Administration, or begin the process of completing degree requirements; or hold a valid Educational Leadership certification from the state of West Virginia or be eligible for such certification. The candidate will have a minimum of five years of successful educational experience, with preference given to one with administrative experience.

A résumé with three references may be emailed with all attachments in PDF to Fr. Thomas Gallagher (tgallagher@dwc.org) by Friday, March 11, 2022.

St. Francis of Assisi Church, St. Albans, West Virginia, is seeking a principal for St. Francis of Assisi School, preschool through 5th grade. Candidates for principal must be willing to assume responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school as well as assist in developing long range goals for school advancement. We seek a leader with strong communication skills, capable of developing and maintaining an excellent academic program. The candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with Church precepts and act as an example and motivator toward our mission to instruct students in the Catholic faith. The ideal candidate must have an earned Master's Degree in Educational Leadership or Administration or begin the process of completing degree requirements; or hold a valid Educational Leadership certificate from the state of West Virginia or be eligible for such certification.



Salary will be competitive and negotiable, depending on qualification and years of experience. This position begins on July 1 for the 2022-23 school year. Applications must be submitted by February 25, 2022.

A résumé with three references may be emailed with all attachments in PDF to Kelly Oxley at koxley@sfsww.com or mailed to St. Francis of Assisi School, Attn: Ms. Kelly Oxley, 525 Holley St, St. Albans, WV 25177

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Papa jubilado pide perdón tras informe de abuso de Munich

Por Carol Glatz, Junno Arocho Esteve, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)

-- A la edad de 94 años, el papa retirado Benedicto XVI dijo que sabe que pronto enfrentará el juicio de Dios y oró para que se le perdonen sus defectos, incluso en el manejo de las denuncias de abuso sexual clerical.

"Aunque, cuando miro hacia atrás en mi larga vida, puedo tener muchas razones para temer y temblar, no obstante, estoy de buen ánimo, porque confío firmemente en que el Señor no es solo el juez justo, sino también el amigo y el hermano quien ya ha sufrido por mis defectos, y por lo tanto también es mi abogado", dijo.

En respuesta el 8 de febrero a un informe reciente sobre casos de abuso sexual en la archidiócesis alemana de Munich y Freising, el papa Benedicto también confirmó que un error en el testimonio escrito en su nombre había sido un descuido y "no fue intencional y espero que pueda ser disculpado".

"Para mí resultó profundamente doloroso que este descuido se usara para poner en duda mi veracidad e incluso para etiquetarme de mentiroso", dijo en una carta publicada el 8 de febrero por el Vaticano.

Sin embargo, el papa jubilado, que estuvo al frente de la archidiócesis de Munich de 1977 a 1982, enfatizó sus sentimientos de gran vergüenza y dolor por el abuso de menores y pidió perdón a todas las víctimas de abuso sexual.

"He tenido grandes responsabilidades en la Iglesia Católica. Tanto mayor es mi dolor por los abusos y los errores que ocurrieron en esos diferentes lugares durante el tiempo de mi mandato", escribió el papa Benedicto.

"Cada caso individual de abuso sexual es espantoso e irreparable", dijo. "Las víctimas de abuso sexual tienen mi más sentido pésame y siento un gran dolor por cada caso individual".

La carta llega después de que un bufete de abogados alemán publicara un informe a fines de enero sobre cómo se manejaron los casos de abuso en la Arquidiócesis de Munich y Freising.

El informe, pedido por la arquidiócesis, incriminó al papa retirado Benedicto XVI y los abogados lo acusaron de mala conducta en cuatro casos durante su mandato en Munich. El abogado Martin Pusch del bufete de abogados Westpfahl Spilker Wastl dijo que el papa jubilado había negado haber actuado mal en todos los casos.

La investigación de Munich duró dos años y abarcó el período de 1945 a 2019, enfocándose en quién sabía y qué sabía sobre el abuso sexual y cuándo, y qué medidas tomaron, si las tomaron. El informe, de cuatro volúmenes con casi 1,900 páginas, identificó al menos a 497 víctimas y 235 abusadores.

El papa Benedicto había presentado una declaración escrita de 82 páginas a los que realizaban la investigación y, en ella, el ex papa había dicho que no participó en una reunión en 1980 sobre el caso del sacerdote Peter H., quien ha sido acusado de abusar repetidamente y llegó a Múnich desde Essen.

El papa jubilado modificó esa declaración después de que salió el informe, diciendo que estuvo presente en la reunión de 1980, pero que la reunión se centró solo en encontrar vivienda para Peter H. mientras se sometía a terapia; la historia de abuso del sacerdote no fue discutida, dijo.

Esa declaración, emitida el 24 de enero en nombre del papa Benedicto por su secretario, el arzobispo Georg Ganswein, dijo que el error de afirmar incorrectamente que el papa retirado no había estado en la reunión "no se hizo de mala fe, sino que fue el resultado de un descuido en la redacción de su declaración".

En su respuesta del 8 de febrero, el papa retirado dijo que había un "pequeño grupo de amigos que colectaron desinteresadamente en mi nombre mi testimonio de 82 páginas para el bufete de abogados de Munich, que no habría podido escribir solo".

"Además de responder a las preguntas planteadas por la firma de abogados, esto también exigió leer y analizar casi 8,000 páginas de documentos en formato digital. Estos asistentes luego me

ayudaron a estudiar y analizar las casi 2,000 páginas de opiniones de expertos", escribió, agregando que dichos resultados fueron publicados como anexo a su carta.

Dijo que durante este trabajo "masivo" para establecer su cargo, "se produjo un descuido en mi participación en la reunión de cancillería del 15 de enero de 1980. Este error, que lamentablemente se verificó, no fue intencional, dijo, y pidió perdón.

Este error no debe "disminuir el cuidado y la diligencia" con la que sus amigos ayudaron a formular su respuesta, dijo.

Y si bien fue "profundamente doloroso" que se haya utilizado el descuido para ponerlo en duda, el papa Benedicto escribió: "Me han conmovido mucho las diversas expresiones de confianza, los testimonios sinceros y las conmovedoras cartas de aliento que me han enviado tantas personas".

Dedicó el resto de su carta de dos páginas a la importancia de la "confesión", señalando que cada día al comienzo de la Misa "imploramos públicamente al Dios vivo que perdone" los pecados cometidos por "nuestra culpa, por nuestra 'grandísima' culpa".

"Pero cada día me pregunta si hoy no debería hablar también de una grandísima culpa. Y me dice de forma consoladora que por muy grande que sea mi culpa hoy, el Señor me perdona, si con sinceridad me dejo escrutar por él y estoy verdaderamente dispuesto a cambiar a mí mismo".

Dijo que "he visto en los ojos las consecuencias de una grandísima culpa y he aprendido a comprender que nosotros mismos nos vemos arrastrados a esta grandísima culpa cuando la descuidamos o cuando no la afrontamos con la necesaria decisión y responsabilidad, como con demasiada frecuencia ha ocurrido y ocurre".

"Una vez más solo puedo expresar a todas las víctimas de abuso sexual mi profunda vergüenza, mi profundo dolor y mi sentido pedido de perdón", dijo.

Junto con la carta del papa, el Vati-

cano publicó un "análisis" de la evaluación del informe de Munich de que el entonces cardenal Ratzinger supuestamente manejó mal las acusaciones de abuso en cuatro ocasiones cuando dirigía la arquidiócesis alemana. El análisis fue colectado por un pequeño equipo de abogados canónicos y otros expertos que habían ayudado a elaborar la respuesta original de 82 páginas durante la fase inicial de la investigación.

La respuesta de este equipo se enfocó principalmente en el caso del "sacerdote X", el abusador repetitivo también conocido como Peter H. Dijo que la evaluación del informe de Munich "no correspondía a la verdad" porque el pontífice ahora retirado "no sabía que el sacerdote X era abusador, ni que estuviera incluido en la actividad pastoral".

Según el informe de Munich, el entonces cardenal Ratzinger "empleó a este sacerdote en la actividad pastoral, a pesar de que estaba al tanto de los abusos cometidos por él, y así habría encubierto sus abusos sexuales".

Sin embargo, los registros de la reunión clave de 1980 indicaron que no se discutió el abuso sexual cometido por el sacerdote, dijo el equipo, y "no se mencionó" la razón por la cual el sacerdote X fue alojado en Munich para recibir terapia allí.

El papa Benedicto no cometió perjurio a sabiendas, como afirma el informe de Munich, cuando inicialmente negó estar presente en la reunión de 1980, dijo el equipo.

Fue un "error de redacción" y el papa Benedicto "no se dio cuenta" dadas las limitaciones de tiempo, dijo. El acta de la reunión de 1980 se incluyó en las declaraciones del entonces cardenal Ratzinger, por lo que no tendría sentido "que negara intencionalmente su presencia en la reunión".

Tampoco hay evidencia detrás de la "acusación de mala conducta o conspiración en cualquier encubrimiento" del informe, dijo el equipo. "Como arzobispo, el cardenal Ratzinger no estuvo involucrado en ningún encubrimiento de actos de abuso".

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 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.

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 dioce-

sanas: La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al 304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:

llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

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

Lung Cancer Screening Program Receives ACR Designation

WHEELING—WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital has been designated an ACR (American College of Radiology) Lung Cancer Screening Center. The accreditation was made by the ACR’s Committee on CT Accreditation.

The new lung cancer screening program was started in 2021 by the WVU Cancer Institute at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital. The program is based on annual chest CT scans and identifies lung cancer at an earlier stage, which has proven to improve patient outcomes. The WVU Cancer Institute also is accredited by the ACR as a designated Lung Cancer Screening Center.

Chief Radiologist Mark Benson, M.D., said, “The accreditation is the result of a dedicated and skilled CT scan team placing patient quality, safety, and care as the highest priorities. We are proud to offer low-dose CT exams to patients identified as high-risk

for lung cancer.”

Robert Herron, III, D.O., thoracic surgeon at the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute at Wheeling Hospital, and Jondavid Pollock, M.D., Ph.D., chair of Radiation Oncology at the WVU Cancer Institute at Wheeling Hospital, lead the program.

To be eligible for the lung cancer screening, participants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Between 50-80 years old
- 20 pack/year smoking history (1 pack per day for 20 years)
- Current smoker or have quit smoking in the past 15 years
- No symptoms of lung cancer
- Patients who currently smoke will be offered smoking cessation options.

A multidisciplinary team at the WVU Cancer Institute at Wheeling Hospital is available to offer the testing to appropriate individuals with a comprehensive discussion of all aspects of screening for lung

cancer and treatment, should that be necessary. Members of the team include radiologists, nurse navigators, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pulmonologists, and chest surgeons. Those interested in the screening should consult with their healthcare provider.

“Lung cancer remains a common disease in our area and typically presents at an advanced stage

with less-than-adequate outcomes,” Pollock said. “Screening for lung cancer with a low-dose CT scan before symptom development has been proven to reduce the likelihood of advanced disease and, as a result, improve patient outcomes.”

The clinic is held in Herron's office, Tower 1 Suite 104. Appointments are required. Call (304) 243-8669.

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