

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## A Lenten Reflection from Bishop Brennan

Dear fellow pilgrims in faith,

In just a few days it will be Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent which our Church has observed since the early centuries to prepare for the annual commemoration of our Lord's death and resurrection by which we have been saved. This year Lent takes place in what Pope Francis has designated as a Jubilee Year of Hope.

The virtue of hope fits perfectly in the Lenten framework, because this season calls us to turn from our sinful habits and to be renewed in our faith, goals which move us to pray and hope for God's help. With hopeful and trusting hearts, we open our ears in Lent to hear once again Jesus' call: Repent and believe the Good News.

Sin is the great barrier between us and God, for He made us to be good, not bad. But, like parents who love the children who sometimes disobey them, our heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent His Son to be the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins so that we might no longer be burdened by them. The forgiveness of our sins which Jesus Christ obtained by his sacrifice on the cross makes us eligible for the grace of a true renewal of our lives on earth and for the ultimate gift of eternal life.

There are people who think that their sins are unforgivable. They give up asking for God's forgiveness because they think He will never forgive them. Some women who have had abortions think this and men, too, who have pushed women to abort or have assisted or acquiesced in an abortion. But abortion is not an unforgivable sin, though a truly evil act it is. My years of counseling post-abortive women and men have convinced me that they can move from remorse and repentance to healing and peace. If you or a loved one is in that situation, trust that the Lord's words are true: Father, forgive them and I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.

There are other people who are content to live a morally and spiritually mediocre life,

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## Even from Hospital, Pope Gives Powerful Witness of Faith, Prelates Say



CNS photo/Lola Gomez

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, prays before an image of Mary, Mother of the Church, before leading the recitation of the rosary for Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Feb. 25.

**By Carol Glatz, OSV News**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Despite his illness, age and hospitalization, Pope Francis is still demonstrating his deep faith and exercising his role as pontiff, said a cardinal who once served as an auxiliary bishop of

Rome.

"The pope offers profound meaning to human suffering — that same suffering that he himself has always flagged as part of the 'throwaway culture,'" Cardinal Augusto

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# Lenten Liturgical Guidelines, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

**L**ent is a special season within the Church year that focuses on the two-fold theme of repentance and Baptism. We prepare ourselves to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Lent begins with the celebration of Ash Wednesday, March 5 and ends with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 17.

## IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR ALL CATHOLICS

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by everyone 18 years and older, who has not yet celebrated their 59th birthday. On a fast day, one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, enough to maintain strength, may be taken, according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but consuming liquids, including milk and juices, is allowed. Abstinence is observed by everyone 14 years of age or older. On days of abstinence, no meat is allowed. Note that when health or the ability to work is affected, the law does not apply. Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays during Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence. If a person is unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, other suitable forms of self-denial are encouraged.

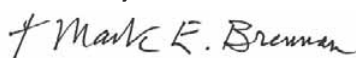
## Reflection ...

Cont'd from Page 1

instead of wanting to have the image of God in which they are made glow brightly. What a waste! Don't let Ash Wednesday be a ritual with no meaning. Resolve to look at yourself honestly and ask God's assistance to overcome your sins. A sincere confession of sins is a great help. Then, form a plan to overcome the sins that trouble you the most. The Holy Spirit will enlighten you and a priest or any wise friend might offer good advice. Aided by God's grace, you can become the good and loving person God made you to be. Let the ashes on your forehead symbolize your desire to burn away sin so that new life, like the phoenix of ancient lore, may rise from the ashes.

This is my hope for you. I pray that it is your hope for yourself. Let us journey together toward Easter, hopeful and every day stronger in faith and love.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

**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 Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or 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:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other 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 WV. EthicsPoint 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. 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; sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Training may be completed online or via live workshop. For information, go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."


## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

There are 10 print editions in 2025. Below are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on [thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org).

### 2025 Print Issues and Dates:

Month of the Holy Family, February 7; Lent, March 7; Easter, April 18; Month of Mary, Mother of God, May 23; Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 13; Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15; Triumph of the Cross, September 12; Month of the Rosary, October 3; Advent, November 21; Christmas, December 19

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# This Lent, Compare Your Life to a Migrant's, Pope Says

By **Justin McLellan,**  
Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Francis urged Christians to examine their consciences in Lent by comparing their daily lives to the hardships faced by migrants, calling it a way to grow in empathy and discover God's call to compassion.

"It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of

us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father," the pope wrote in his message for Lent 2025.

The message, signed Feb. 6, before the pope was hospitalized Feb. 14 for treatment of double pneumonia, was released by the Vatican Feb. 25.

Reflecting on the theme "Let us journey together in hope," the pope said that Lent is a time to confront both personal and collective struggles with faith and compassion.

Comparing the Lenten journey to the Israelites'

exodus from slavery in Egypt, he recalled "our brothers and sisters who in our own day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones."

"A first call to conversion thus comes from the realization that all of us are pilgrims in this life," he wrote. "Am I really on a journey, or am I standing still, not moving, either immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone?"

Pope Francis also emphasized the importance of

journeying together, saying Christians are called to walk "side by side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded."

Christians, he said, should reflect on whether they are open to others or focused only on their own needs.

The pope called on Christians to journey together in hope toward Easter, living out the central message of the Jubilee Year: "Hope does not disappoint."

Another Lenten call to conversion, he said, is to em-

brace hope and trust in God's promise of eternal life, made possible through Christ's resurrection.

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to consider whether they truly live in a way that reflects hope, trusting in God's promise of eternal life, seeking forgiveness and committing themselves to justice, fraternity and care for creation.

"Christ," he wrote, "lives and reigns in glory. Death has been transformed into triumph, and the faith and great hope of Christians rests in this: the resurrection of Christ!"

## Pope ...

Cont'd from Page 1

Paolo Lojudec of Siena, Italy, told the Italian newspaper La Stampa.

Since being hospitalized Feb. 14 and undergoing treatment for double pneumonia, the pope has become a witness to the same conditions many elderly and ill people face, said the cardinal, who ministered in the Diocese of Rome's poorest and roughest neighborhoods from 2015 to 2019.

It is another example of how the pope feels he is simply another member of "the people of God," while also leading the universal church, he said Feb. 26.

In fact, the pope has continued to work, nominating new bishops, issuing new rules for the governance of Vatican City State, calling the Holy Family church in Gaza, and most recently, advancing some sainthood causes, said Bishop Francesco Savino of Cassano all'Jonio, vice president of the Italian bishops' conference.

"Even during this time of suffering Pope Francis is serving the church even more," he told La Repubblica Feb. 26. "He is extremely hard-working" and offering "stupendous testimony" from a pulpit of pain.

Bishop Savino said the church and the world still need Pope Francis, "his witness, his courage, his being a reforming pope who has launched processes for change."

Cardinal Lojudec said the pope has "knocked down walls and opened new roads in the church. Perhaps only with time will we be able to fully understand the scale of his pontificate."

Every pope has had his supporters and detractors, the cardinal said, "and Pope Francis is no exception: there are those who love him and those who criticize him."

"But his commitment to peace, justice and the least has won over the hearts of many people, believers and nonbelievers," the cardinal said. "His affection for humanity is evident" and is being reciprocated with the outpouring of prayers and concern from around the world.

Being in the hospital is "a strong sign of the pope's humanity," Cardinal Lojudec said. He is the vicar of Christ, but he is also a man, "like all of us, with his frailties, weaknesses" and advancing age.

"And, precisely in this condition, he continues to give witness to his faith and his role, even with the limitations posed by illness," he said.

Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of Congregation for Saints' Causes, told Corriere della Sera newspaper Feb. 26 that he is not surprised the pope is still working, including advancing several

sainthood causes Feb. 24.

It isn't just a question of his tireless energy and mental toughness, but it is more so a sign of his spiritual strength, he said.

"The fact is that Francis powers his days with long moments of reflection and prayer. It's like fueling up before a long journey. He wakes up before dawn every morning and devotes at least two hours to personal prayer," Cardinal Semeraro said.

Bishop Savino underlined the importance of the church coming together to pray for Pope Francis.

"Prayer is our strength, it is the most beautiful way to be by Pope Francis' side," he said.

"It is beautiful to think of our hands raised toward heaven and the doctors' hands on our dear pope's body and both of these support and help him so that he can return home as soon as possible," the bishop said.

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# Tilapia Benefit Dinners Return to White Sulphur Springs for the Fridays of Lent

**WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS** — The annual tilapia dinners, consisting of a large portion of tilapia, cole slaw, scalloped potatoes, hard rolls, drink and dessert, will be served March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4 & 11 in the Community Hall of the Schoolhouse Hotel, directly behind the Emmanuel United Methodist Church on Dry Creek Road in downtown White Sulphur Springs.

Serving time will be 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and the sponsors, the Greenbrier Valley Council 8689 Knights of Columbus, will use the proceeds for various community, youth, church and council projects. Dinners may be purchased for eating in or as take outs.

“Because of the highly successful 2024 dinners, we were able to provide every elementary school in Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas, and the town of Meadow Bridge with 12 brand new winter coats (6 boys, 6 girls) as well as 12 to the Monroe County Family Resource Network, the Pocahontas County Family Resource Network, and Wellspring of Western Greenbrier which serves western Greenbrier and eastern Fayette counties,” noted Andrew Wrzoawk of Waite-

ville, grand knight of Council 8689.

He added, “We were able to give \$500 grants each to two food pantries, to two college students from our area and to two seminarians from southern WV. And this does not include all the donations to various local charities including donations to the five public high schools in the Greenbrier and Meadow River Valleys for the after prom/after graduation drug free/alcohol free parties.”

Cost of the dinners this year will be \$18 with an extra \$7 for an extra piece of tilapia or a child portion for children 6-12. Children under 6 are free.

The all volunteer culinary staff is again made up of some current and/or retired from The Greenbrier and from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and the wait staff are all volunteers from the area who support the projects of the Knights Council.

For further information, telephone the office of the Catholic Churches of the Greenbrier Valley at (304) 536-1813 or the Knights of Columbus at (304) 645-1373.

## A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

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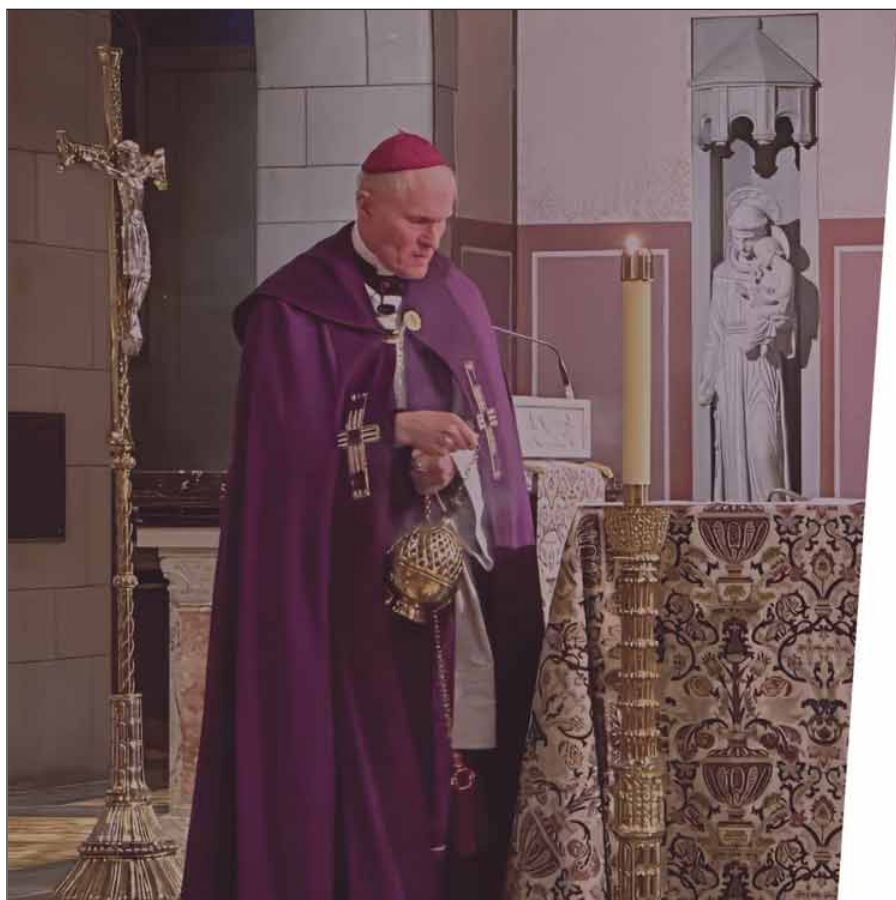
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# Black History Month Celebrated at Huntington Parish



Courtesy photo

St. Peter Claver Parish in Huntington celebrated Black History Month with gatherings and events throughout February. On Feb. 23, the religious education kids shared photos and bios of notable black candidates for sainthood. The display is pictured above featuring Father Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), Venerable Henriette Delille (1813-1862), Servant of God, Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (1789-1882), Julia Greeley (1833-1918), Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA, (1937-1990), and Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853).

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**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

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**Moms in Need**

# Bishop Brennan Celebrates Red Mass in Charleston



Martina Hart photo

Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the annual Red Mass Feb. 20 at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston. Gathered are members of the bar association, members of the court, elected officials, and others who serve in the administration of justice and government. The Red Mass was first celebrated in West Virginia at the basilica co-cathedral in 1995. This was the fourth consecutive year for the celebration at the basilica co-cathedral. The Mass is promoted each year by the St. Thomas More Society of Charleston.

Daily *Living*  
with Fr. Chapin

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# Gregory: Black History Month is Call to Look Forward ‘With Hopeful Hearts, Open Minds’

By OSV News

**NEWARK, N.J. (OSV News)** — Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, the first African American cardinal, said Black History Month is always an opportunity to recognize the “pioneers” of Black heritage for their monumental accomplishments, like triumphing in the face of discrimination.

But it should not just be about reexamining the past, he stressed in a Feb. 16 homily. Instead, Black History Month is a chance to look toward the future “with hopeful hearts and open minds,” he said.

He made the comments as guest homilist for the Archdiocese of Newark’s commemorative Black History Month Mass celebrated by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

“It is a moment to commit to tomorrow and to urge those who will be our future heroes to seize the challenges that will lie ahead for them and for all of us,” Cardinal Gregory, archbishop emeritus of Washington, said before reflecting on the legacy of Carter G. Woodson, considered the founder of Black History Month.

“I pray (young people) see their own future in the likeness of the man who dared to believe that people of color have an important heritage and a future in which to hope,” he said, addressing the hundreds gathered at Newark’s cathedral basilica.

The Black History Month Mass marked the first time Cardinal Gregory participated in a liturgy at the cathedral basilica, a visit prompted by an invitation from Cardinal Tobin. (“It’s hard to say ‘no’ to Cardinal Tobin,” he joked).

In an interview prior to the Mass, Cardinal Gregory said he was excited to experience the “glorious” structure after seeing it in pictures. He also hoped to give the parishioners inside

— both Black and non-Black — a new perspective on Black History Month.

“It’s not just for the African American community — it’s for the American community,” Cardinal Gregory said. “It’s an opportunity for all of our neighbors to recognize the gifts that people of color bring with us in our heritage.”

In addition to Cardinal Gregory’s homily, the Mass featured a procession of banners depicting Black candidates for sainthood and a performance from liturgical dancer Quonda Maina Cobbs. It also included songs celebrating the Black Catholic experience and tradition, with tunes such as “To My Father’s House” and “Glory, Glory” getting attendees up clapping and dancing.

As the Mass reached its conclusion, Cardinal Gregory and Cardinal Tobin were presented with hand-carved pieces of African religious art, which were given by members of the archdiocesan African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate.

The apostolate’s associate director, Rahsaan Garlin, then left those gathered with a closing statement referencing the words of Sister Thea Bowman, who once called on Black Catholics to “show up and show out” through Jesus.

Sister Bowman was the first African American to be a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. A servant of God, she is one of six Black Catholics from the United States being considered for sainthood.

“Please continue to show up and show out through Christ Jesus, remembering who you are and whose you are,” Garlin told the congregation. “I think we’ve made Black history today.”

Garlin wanted Cardinal Gregory to speak at the Mass to inspire young people of color with his



OSV News photo/Julio Eduardo Herrera, courtesy Archdiocese of Newark  
**Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, archbishop emeritus of Washington and the first and only African American cardinal, speaks about the significance of Black History Month during his homily at the Archdiocese of Newark’s Black History Month Mass Feb. 16, 2025, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, N.J.**

success in the church. The apostolate launched an essay contest tied to the liturgy, inviting juniors and seniors of African American, African and Caribbean descent in archdiocesan high schools to share their thoughts on his visit.

When he was installed as Washington’s archbishop in May 2019, he was the first African American to shepherd the archdiocese in the nation’s capital. Just over a year later he was made a cardinal by Pope Francis, receiving his red hat during the consistory at St. Peter’s Basilica Nov. 28, 2020. In addition to these remarkable firsts, he also was the first African American bishop to be president of the Conference of Bishops (2001-2004). He headed the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois, at the time. In 2002, during his term, revelations of clergy sexual abuse and its cover-up erupted, affecting the whole U.S. church. Under his leadership, the bishops implemented the “Charter for the Protection of Chil-

dren and Young People.” He also is a former archbishop of Atlanta.

On Jan. 6, 2025, Pope Francis accepted Cardinal Gregory’s resignation; at 77 he is two years past the age at which canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the pope. Pope Francis named

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego as his successor. He will be installed March 11.

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# A Silent Genocide is Unfolding in Congo, Church Sources Warn

By **Fredrick Nzwili, OSV News**

**(OSV News)** — A “silent genocide” — mimicking the Rwandan one of 1994 — is occurring in eastern Congo, said some Catholic Church sources, as shock greeted the killing of 70 people in a Protestant church in the North Kivu Province.

The victims were found beheaded with machetes Feb. 15 near the Maiba village in Lubero, a district close to the border between Rwanda and Uganda, according to Fides, a news agency of the Dicastery of Evangelization. Many of those who died in the massacre were women, children and the elderly and had their hands tied behind their back.

The Orthodox Public Affairs Committee, an Orthodox agency that champions for Christian communities facing persecution, said the victims were taken from their homes days earlier.

“This heinous act, perpetrated within a sacred place of worship, is an egregious violation of human rights and a direct assault on religious freedom,” said the organization in a statement on Feb. 23.

Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist group originally from Uganda and aligned to the Islamic State group is believed to have carried out the killings.

According to the Orthodox committee, actions by the Islamist group have instilled fear and chaos in the region, forcing countless Christians to flee their homes.

“The local community is devastated, with churches, schools, and health centers shutting down due to the deteriorating security situation,” the statement said.

More than 100 rebel groups operate in the mineral-rich eastern Congo, with the ADF and the Rwanda-backed M23, or Movement 23, being some of the most deadly. The ADF is known for attacking churches, beheading Christians and kidnapping people for use as slaves or fighters.

But as the condemnation of the killings continued,

Catholic Church sources said the latest massacre further underlined a genocide that has unfolded in the country for years.

“It is silent genocide that has not been told. It reminds of what happened in Rwanda in 1994,” a Catholic priest who requested anonymity for security reasons told OSV News. “It has been occurring for the last 30 years, but the international community has been silent.”

Since 1996, the conflict in eastern Congo has killed an estimated 6 million people.

In the first Congo war, Rwanda invaded Zaire (now Congo) in pursuit of Hutu ethnic extremists who had fled there after they committed a genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. The 1994 Rwanda genocide left nearly one million members of Tutsi and moderate Hutu people dead. In the second Congo war, two years later, Rwandan and Ugandan armies fought deadly battles in Bunia and Kisangani regions, resulting in heavy civilian casualties.

Father Dennis Dashong Pam, a Missionary of Africa priest who served in eastern Congo for more than 10 years said although the killings in Congo did not fit in the actual definition, the huge number of the deaths was equivalent to a genocide.

“Villages of the Congolese have systematically been wiped out. Yes! We can say a genocide is occurring,” said Father Dashong Pam. The cleric feared a repeat of the violence in the mid-1990s, when national armies fought in the region, leading to the fall of the then-dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko’s government.

“The people of Congo would not want to see a repeat of that. Too many people died,” the priest said.

According to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, called the Genocide Convention, genocide means acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, by killing members of



OSV News photo/Victoire Mukenge, Reuters  
Congolese Red Cross members bury body bags in a mass grave at Musigoko cemetery in Bukavu, Congo, Feb. 20. The bags contained the remains of victims killed in recent clashes between M23 rebels and the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).

the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to its members, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The M23 rebels have recently surged in eastern Congo, seizing more territory and towns and leaving behind a trail of death, pain and destruction. On Jan. 27, the rebels captured Goma, the capital of North Kivu. At least 3,000 people died in the battle for the city, the humanitarian capital of the region.

The rebels captured Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, on Feb. 16. Unlike Goma, the movement met little resistance from the government forces.

Father Dashong Pam said all the fighting and violence is fueled by competition for mineral resources including tin, gold, coltan and cobalt. The last two are minerals which find wide use in electronics. Cobalt is used to make the batteries used in mobile phones and cars, and coltan is refined into tantalum, also used in the production of electronic components.

“It is all about the min-

erals. This story has to be told. It is a weapon: You terrorize the people and they run away from an area with plenty of minerals. When they are gone, you start exploiting the minerals,” said the priest.


During his visit to Congo and in South Sudan Jan. 31-Feb. 5, 2023, Pope Francis referred to the Congo violence as an overlooked genocide perpetrated by generations of exploiters, plunderers and power-hungry groups.

“Hands off the Democratic Republic of the Congo! Hands off Africa,” Pope Francis insisted Jan. 31, 2023, remarks met with applause and the stomping of feet. “Stop choking Africa: It is not a mine to be stripped or a terrain to be plundered.”

The people of Congo are more precious than any of the gems or minerals found in the earth beneath their feet, yet they have been slaughtered by warmongers and exploited by prospectors, Pope Francis said.

“This country, so immense and full of life, this diaphragm of Africa, struck by violence like a blow to the stomach, has seemed for some time to be gasping for breath,” the pope said at a meeting with Congo’s President Felix Tshisekedi, other government and political leaders, diplomats and representatives of civil society.

(Fredrick Nzwili writes for OSV News from Nairobi, Kenya. CNS Rome contributed to this report.)



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# Tens of Thousands of Israelis Line Streets for Funeral Procession for Bibas Family

By **Judith Sudilovsky, OSV News**

**JERUSALEM (OSV News)** — Tens of thousands of mourners Feb. 26 lined the streets as the funeral procession for Shiri Bibas and her two children, Ariel and Kfir, made its way nearly 40 miles from Rishon Lezion in central Israel to Tsoher Regional Cemetery in southern Israel.

The video of Shiri Bibas clutching her boys as armed Hamas terrorists surrounded her and took her hostage became one of the best known images of the struggle to free the hostages. The three, murdered by their captors, were buried in a single casket in the cemetery near their home in Nir Oz Kibbutz, where they were taken Oct. 7, 2023.

On Feb. 20, the bodies of four hostages were returned to Israel, which identified three of the bodies but said the body of Shiri Bibas was not one of them. She was not returned that day as promised by Hamas, sparking outrage throughout the country.

The Israel National Institute of Forensic Medicine confirmed the identity of the body of 83-year-old peace activist and great-grandfather Oded Lifshitz shortly after it was brought to the institute, and later confirmed the identity of Ariel and Kfir Bibas, who were 4 and 9 months old, respectively, when taken captive along with their mother. The fourth body returned with theirs was that of an unidentified woman.

Shiri's body was eventually returned Feb. 21, with the Bibas family confirming Feb. 22 that it was the body of the boys' mother.

The Lifshitz and Bibas families were among more than a quarter of Nir Oz Kibbutz's 400 members who were either kidnapped or murdered on Oct. 7. Lifshitz's wife, Yocheved, was released shortly after her kidnapping in October 2023 along with another elderly hostage.

Yarden Bibas, Shiri's husband and the father of the boys, was taken separately and was released on Feb. 1 as part of a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas that began in January.

The release of the four bodies Feb. 20 followed a macabre ceremony where armed Hamas militants paraded the coffins amid music playing. The coffins were draped in black and decorated with photographs of the dead along

with stickers of Hamas propaganda and were shown underneath a large sign depicting the Israeli prime minister as a vampire.

"Yesterday was shocking for everybody," said Father Alberto Pari, secretary of the Custody of the Holy Land and responsible for interfaith relations.

"I don't understand what message Hamas wants to give to the world. If it gained a bit of pity from the world after the images of strong destruction in Gaza, ... now with these images they are really changing completely their reputation and impression of the whole world," the Franciscan friar said.

For the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Hamas' ceremony was "abhorrent."

"The parading of bodies in the manner seen this morning is abhorrent and cruel, and flies in the face of international law," Volker Turk's office said Feb. 20. "We urge that all returns are conducted in privacy, and with respect and care."

According to the Israeli press, over 60 of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas are still in Gaza, with roughly half of those confirmed dead by the Israeli Defense Forces. Israel agreed to release some 2,000 detained Palestinians, including convicted terrorists, in the course of the ceasefire agreement.

Before the first phase of the agreement was due to end in a few days, Israeli and Hamas officials reached an agreement Feb. 25 to exchange the bodies of four dead Israeli hostages for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, as reported by CBS.

Hamas claims that the Bibas' and Lifshitz were killed in Israeli aerial attacks, but according to Israel forensic testing, they were killed by their Hamas captors. The forensics also showed that "Ariel and Kfir Bibas were murdered by terrorists in cold blood ... with bare hands. Afterwards, they committed horrific acts to cover up these atrocities," IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said Feb. 21.

"There are two options: (the return of the wrong body) was not intentional or it could be a cruel game to create terror and uncertainty. ... We are dealing with terrorists, this is the issue," said Father Pari.

"Now we see them (in TV im-



OSV News photo/Shir Torem, Reuters

A woman holds a baby up to touch a poster of Shiri Bibas, 32, and her two children, Kfir, 9 months old, and Ariel, 4, as Israelis gather at a public square dedicated to hostages in Tel Aviv, Israel, Feb. 26 on the day of a funeral procession for the Bibas family. They were kidnapped from their home in Nir Oz Kibbutz during Hamas' deadly Oct. 7, 2023, attack and then killed in Gaza by their captors.

ages) in a very tidy way in uniform — but they are terrorists. We cannot forget that what happened on Oct. 7 was done by these same people," he said.

"I don't think anybody was expecting the macabre theater that was shown yesterday because there was a strong appeal not to make a show of the return of the dead bodies ... and everyone was expecting Hamas will deliver (the bodies) in a discreet way," Father Pari said.

He added that it is difficult to answer those who question why God seemingly allows so many children to suffer and die, as it has been this way in all wars.

After World War II, "we were hoping for better humanity," the Franciscan said.

"Humanity needs a lot of compassion, feelings of mutual understanding and love. These are words that are not consoling or give a lot of hope. But believers who believe in the Resurrection will know (those who died) are in a better place. Maybe God wants to avoid endless suffering for them. This is not justifying war, it just gives a different perspective," Father Pari said.

Members of Israel's security services saluted the police-escorted convoy with the coffins as it crossed into Israel after the transfer from the Red Cross to the IDF and dozens of Israelis stood with na-

tional flags at intersections along the way as it made its way into Israel.

In the evening thousands of Israelis gathered in what's now called Hostage Square in Tel Aviv and recited traditional mourning prayers in a somber ceremony.

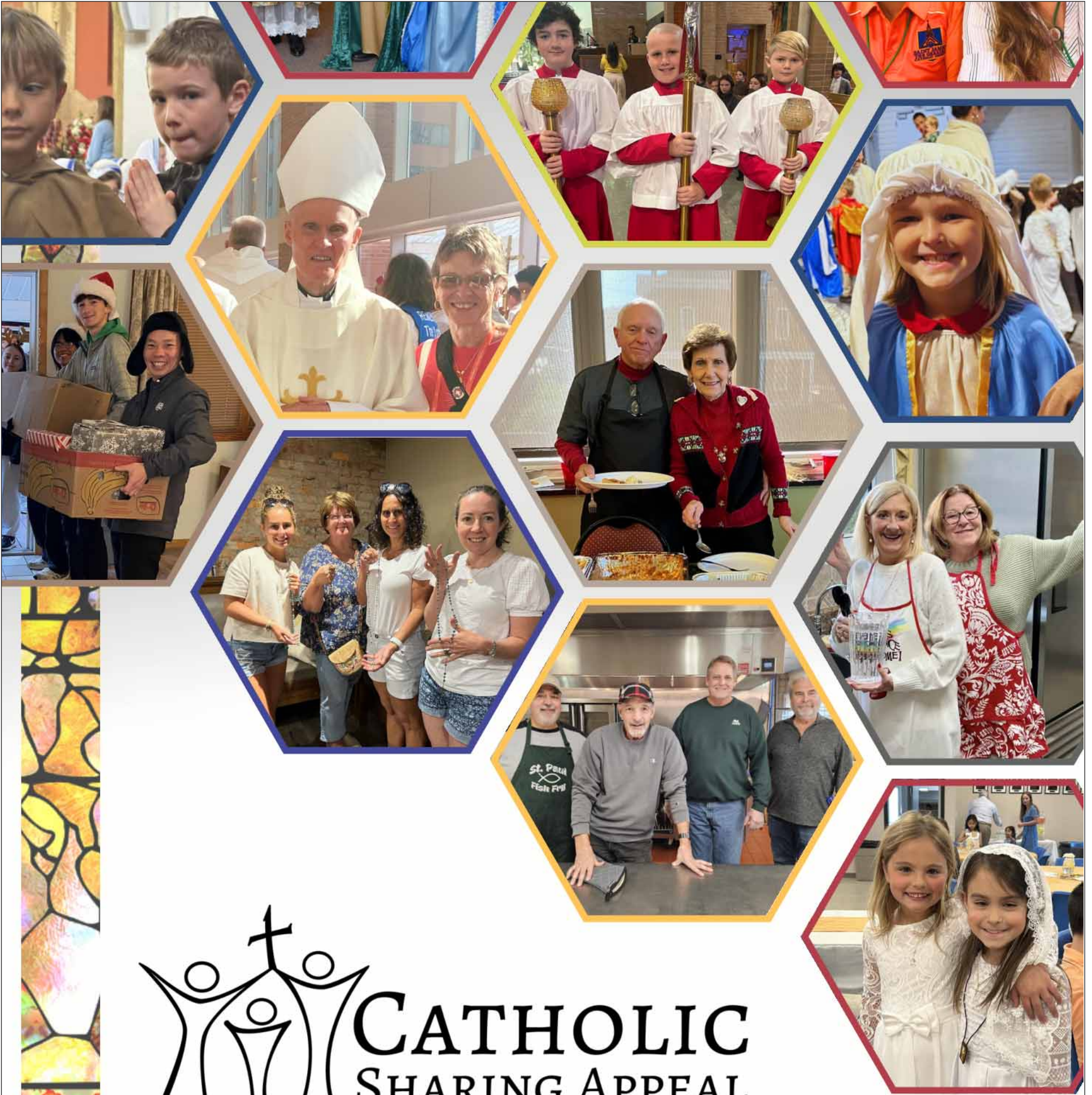
"The hearts of an entire nation lie in tatters," Israeli President Isaac Herzog said, apologizing to the families for not bringing their loved ones home alive.

Meanwhile, on Feb. 14 the patriarchs and heads of churches in Jerusalem spoke strongly against the "grave threat" of mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza as "an injustice that strikes at the very heart of human dignity" after President Donald Trump's Feb. 5 proposal that the United States "take over" the Gaza Strip and permanently resettle its Palestinian residents.

"The people of Gaza, families who have lived for generations in the land of their ancestors, must not be forced into exile, stripped of whatever is left of their homes, their heritage, and their right to remain in the land that forms the essence of their identity," the patriarchs wrote.

"As Christians, we cannot be indifferent to such suffering, for the Gospel commands us to uphold the dignity of every human being."

(Judith Sudilovsky writes for OSV News from Jerusalem.)



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# Wheeling University's Workshops Offer Skills to Succeed Academically and Professionally

**WHEELING**—Wheeling University is offering weekly workshops to help students stay on track academically, as well as prepare them for the 'real world.'

Amber Cool, coordinator of Career Services, said the workshops are designed to support students during their time at Wheeling University. The weekly programs will cover ways to help students grow academically and build stronger life skills.

Offered through the Student Success Center, the workshops are designed to keep students engaged in their four-year academic track, while offering them programming to assist with what awaits after college, said Cool.

"Each Wednesday session focuses on practical strategies and insights to help our students succeed in their academic and professional journeys," Cool said. "Whether a student is preparing for a job search, navigating college challenges, or looking to build stronger life skills, these work-

shops will provide valuable tools and resources to help them succeed."

The Student Success Center, she added, has the resources to help Wheeling University students grow in three key areas: academics, career development, and life skills.

In addition to the workshops, Cool is assisting students individually as well.

"The workshops offer the students a broader view of strategies to succeed. The individual sessions give students more detailed, personalized information to help build better skills to navigate college life, as well as prepare them for what comes after college. Also, I can assist students with finding internships, strengthening their resumes, and preparing them for a job interview," she explained.

Wheeling University President Dianna Vargo, Ed.D., said, "The weekly workshops provide our students lifelong skills that will benefit them today and their future en-



Courtesy photo

Amber Cool (top left), coordinator of Career Services, talks with students about developing a resume' during a weekly workshop. Each Wednesday, she offers programs to help Wheeling University student success in the classroom and in real life.

deavors."

Cool said future workshops will cover topics on career exploration,

LinkedIn, social media and careers, professional communications, and business etiquette.



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20/20 Vision Series for 2025

## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE APPALACHIAN PASTORAL LETTERS

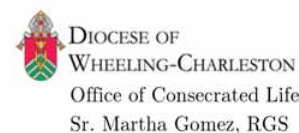
- "THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME" (1975)
- "AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE" (1995)
- "THE TELLING TAKES US HOME" (2015)

Note: Each session will begin at 7 pm and will be presented via Zoom.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| January 27   | OUR HOME, OUR HISTORY – Bishop Mark Brennan         |
| February 24  | THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART I – Tom Breiding      |
| March 31     | THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART II                    |
| April 28     | THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART III                   |
| May 19       | AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART I – Beth Collins   |
| June 23      | AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART III                |
| July 28      | AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART III                |
| August 25    | THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART I – Rodica Stoicoiu |
| September 22 | THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART II                  |
| October 27   | THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART III                 |
| November 24  | AN EVENING OF APPALACHIAN MUSIC – Tom Breiding      |
| December 15  | WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? – Bishop Mark Brennan     |

(Series originated by Ms. Shirley Carter, B.A., M.A.A.T.)

Cost for complete series: \$120.00 Or \$15.00 per session.  
RSVP – Anna Marie Troiani: [atroiani@csjoseph.org](mailto:atroiani@csjoseph.org)



# Para los que abrazan el amor de Cristo, la muerte no es el final, escribe el Papa Francisco

Por Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)** — Para quienes reconocen a Cristo como salvador, la muerte no es un final ni una forma de destrucción o aniquilación, escribió el Papa Francisco en la catequesis que había preparado para su audiencia general. Es una especie de "hermana" que introduce a los fieles difuntos en la vida verdadera.

Al igual que el miércoles anterior, la audiencia general del Papa del 26 de febrero fue cancelada porque el Papa seguía hospitalizado y no se había delegado en nadie para dirigir la reunión en su lugar. Pero el Vaticano hizo público el texto preparado por el Papa a mediodía, hora local.

Matteo Bruni, director de la oficina de prensa del Vaticano, dijo a los periodistas que el Papa preparó la catequesis "con semanas de antelación", adelantándose a las especulaciones de que la reflexión del Papa sobre el Cántico de Simeón, que se utiliza como una oración en el momento de la muerte, estaba de alguna manera relacionada con la condición actual del Papa o la hospitalización.

El Papa Francisco está hospitalizado desde el 14 de febrero y el 18 de febrero se le diagnosticó una neumonía doble.

Durante el Año Santo 2025, los discursos de la audiencia general se han centrado en "Jesucristo, nuestra esperanza", comenzando con una mirada a los relatos bíblicos de la infancia y

niñez de Jesús.

Tras reflexionar sobre los Reyes Magos como "peregrinos de la esperanza" la semana anterior, la catequesis del Papa del 26 de febrero se centró en la presentación de Jesús en el templo y en cómo Simeón y Ana fueron también "peregrinos de la esperanza" que reconocieron la presencia de Dios y la acogieron con alegría.

El Papa escribió en su catequesis que el Espíritu Santo "respira" en el templo y "habla al corazón de un anciano: Simeón ... que alimenta el deseo de que se cumplan las promesas hechas por Dios a Israel por medio de los profetas".

Simeón percibe "la presencia del Ungido del Señor" y del "Príncipe de la paz" en el templo cuando ve al niño Jesús, escribió el Papa. Simeón "abrazo a ese niño que, pequeño e indefenso, descansa entre sus brazos; pero es él, en realidad, quien encuentra el consuelo y la plenitud de su existencia abrazándolo".

Simeón expresa este consuelo "en un cántico lleno de conmovedora gratitud, que en la Iglesia se ha convertido en la oración al final del día", señaló.

El Papa citó el cántico, que comienza: "Ahora, Señor, puedes dejar que tu siervo se vaya en paz, según tu palabra, porque mis ojos han visto tu salvación", lo que significa que Simeón está listo para morir en paz ahora que ha visto al Mesías.

"Simeón canta la alegría de los que lo han

visto", escribió el Papa, y también es capaz de compartir ese encuentro con los demás.

"Es testigo del don de la fe, que recibe y comunica a los demás; es testigo de la esperanza que no defrauda; es testigo del amor de Dios, que llena de alegría y de paz el corazón del ser humano", escribió.

"Lleno de este consuelo espiritual, el anciano Simeón ve la muerte no como el final, sino como la realización, como la plenitud; la espera como una 'hermana' que no destruye, sino que introduce en la vida verdadera que ya ha pregonado y en la que cree", escribió el Papa Francisco.

La viuda Ana, una mujer de más de ochenta años, también ve "la salvación hecha carne en el niño Jesús" en el templo, celebra su presencia y difunde generosamente "la palabra profética", escribió.

"El canto de la redención de dos ancianos difunde así el anuncio del Jubileo a todo el pueblo y al mundo. En el Templo de Jerusalén se reaviva la esperanza en los corazones porque en él ha hecho su entrada Cristo, nuestra esperanza", escribió.

El Papa pidió a los cristianos que imiten a Simeón y Ana que son "peregrinos de la esperanza, que tienen ojos límpidos capaces de ver más allá de las apariencias, que saben 'olfatear' la presencia de Dios en la pequeñez, que saben acoger con alegría la visita de Dios y volver a encender la esperanza en el corazón de los hermanos y hermanas".

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

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesásticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o 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.

## Employment Opportunities

### Principal, Parkersburg Catholic High School

Parkersburg Catholic High School, located in Parkersburg, West Virginia is seeking a 6-12th Grade Principal.

We are searching for a dynamic, mission-driven, forward thinking high school principal for Parkersburg Catholic High School.

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 would 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 three years of successful educational experience with a preference for administrative experience.

A resume with three references may be emailed with all attachments to Father Rice: [jrice@dwc.org](mailto:jrice@dwc.org)

### Principal, St. Joseph High School, Martinsburg

Saint Joseph High School in Martinsburg, W.Va., is seeking a principal. We are searching for a dynamic, mission-driven, forward-thinking principal who will work with our team to create a new Catholic high school for students in grades nine to 12 that will open for the 2025-26 academic year.

We are an equal-opportunity employer committed to excellence through diversity. The position will offer a salary of \$60,000 to \$68,000.

Candidates must be practicing Catholics in good standing with church precepts and act as examples and motivators toward the fulfillment of the Catholic philosophy of the school. The ideal candidate will have a master's degree in educational leadership or administration; begin the process of completing that degree requirement; or hold a valid educational leadership certificate from the state of West Virginia or be eligible for such certification.

Candidates also must have a minimum of three years of successful educational experience; administrative experience is preferred.

A résumé, cover letter and three letters of reference may be emailed to Deacon Patrick Michel, Ed.D., at [deaconpat@stjosephwv.org](mailto:deaconpat@stjosephwv.org).

### Director of Music Ministries, Charleston

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart located in Charleston, West Virginia is looking for a pastoral musician. Responsibilities include overseeing the selection of music for liturgies, substituting for our organist, directing the choir, cantoring when necessary, preparing worship aids and expanding our current music program. Candidates should have a BA degree or higher in a music field, or other field, if musically trained, excellent organ/keyboards/choral conducting skills and vocal technique and be familiar with music notation software. A practicing Catholic is preferred but not required; candidates must be of the Christian faith with willingness to learn

about and genuinely support others in their Catholic faith. Conversant with a variety of liturgical styles including contemporary, classical, and traditional. Must demonstrate a commitment to use a blended approach to liturgical music that encourages the assembly to sing. Working hours are flexible and include weekends and some evenings. Complete job description available upon request. Please send résumés to: Bernadette McMasters Kime, Office of Worship and Sacraments, PO. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 or email [bkime@dwc.org](mailto:bkime@dwc.org)

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# Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

## CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Spring 2025

### Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

**Saturday, March 8:** St. Agnes, Charleston; 5:00 p.m.

**Friday, April 4:** St. Augustine, Grafton; 6:00 p.m.

**Monday, April 28:** St. John University, Morgantown; 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 30:** Sacred Heart, Chester; 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 4:** Our Lady of Fatima, Huntington, and St. Stephen, Ona, at Our Lady of Fatima; 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 6:** St. Joseph, Huntington; 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 7:** St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown; 5:15 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11:** Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling; 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, May 11:** St. Mary, Star City; 4:00 p.m.

**Monday, May 12:** St. Michael, Wheeling; 5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 14:** St. Michael, Vienna; 7:00 p.m.

**Friday, May 16:** St. Joseph, Martinsburg; 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday, May 17:** St. James, Charles Town; 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, May 17:** St. Leo, Inwood; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, May 18:** St. Bernadette, Hedgesville; 11:00 a.m.

**Sunday, May 18:** St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs; 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 21:** St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton; 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, May 22:** St. Thomas Aquinas, Thomas; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, May 25:** St. Paul, Weirton; 2:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 28:** St. Patrick, Weston; 5:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 31:** Annunciation of Our Lord, Fort Ashby; 4:30 p.m.

**Sunday, June 1:** St. Luke the Evangelist, Cheat Lake; 2:00 p.m.

**Saturday, June 7:** St. Francis of Assisi, St. Albans; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, June 8:** St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 11:00 a.m.



**DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON**



Lenten  
Mission

**“For the Love of God”**

Presented by

**Chris Padgett**

**March 9 - 12, 2025**



**9th - 11th: Refreshments at 6 PM**

**Event at 6:30 PM**

**12th: Lenten Penance Service  
at 6:30 PM**

**Ascension Catholic Church  
905 Hickory Mill Rd  
Hurricane, WV 25526**

**SHIELDS UP!**

**Lord,** *Preparing Your Family for the Battle*  
**Prepare My Hands for Battle**  
 (Psalm 144:1 NAB)



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER FOR FREE!

**ATTENDEES WILL RECEIVE A FREE BROWN SCAPULAR EXORCISED BY PREEMINENT EXORCIST FR. CHAD RIPPERGER W/ SCAPULAR ENROLLMENT ON THE SECOND NIGHT OF THE TALK!**

**TALKS**  
**NIGHT 1: SHIELDS UP! HANDS UP! THIS IS HOW YOU PROTECT YOUR FAMILY!**  
**NIGHT 2: SATAN FEARS EUCHARISTIC ADORATION AND ADORERS!**  
**NIGHT 3: MEN HOLD YOUR SHIELDS UP!**

**SAT, SUN, MON**  
**MARCH 22-24, 2025**  
 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM: FIERY TALK + Q & A  
 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM: MEET & GREET, BOOK SALES, AND REFRESHMENTS!

**ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
 229 CALIFORNIA AVE., WEIRTON, WV

**WITH THE SAME PASSION AND COMMITMENT THAT MADE HIM A THREE-TIME WORLD POLICE OLYMPICS BOXING CHAMPION, A FORMER U.S.A. MIDDLEWEIGHT KICKBOXING CHAMPION AND A RETIRED VETERAN OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, JESSE SHARES CATHOLIC TEACHING WITH AN EXCITING STYLE THAT IS GUARANTEED TO STRENGTHEN, EDIFY AND FORTIFY YOU WITH A DEEPER LOVE FOR GOD!**

**Jesse Romero, M.A.**

# Quo Vadis Retreat

## Middle School Discernment Retreat

Boys in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are invited!

11 am on June 30 through 1pm on July 3  
 Priest Field Pastoral Center  
 Kearneysville, WV

Campers will enjoy outdoor activities including:  
**Prayer • Kayaking • Discernment  
 Camp Fire • Games**

Opportunities for Charitable and Spiritual Works of Mercy

The camp is staffed by laypeople, priests and seminarians from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

**RETREAT IS FREE!!!**

To Register, scan the QR code or visit [WVPriests.org](http://WVPriests.org)




# ESTABLISHED LEADER IN STRUCTURAL HEART CARE

**THE MOST ADVANCED TREATMENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA**

Learn more at: [MyWVUHeart.com](http://MyWVUHeart.com)  
**Appointments: 304-243-8362**

The nation-leading cardiologists and surgeons of the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program at Wheeling specialize in problems with the heart's valves, walls, or chambers.

We have a multidisciplinary team of experts, including interventional cardiologists, **cardiac and vascular surgeons, dedicated nursing staff, and other specialists**, to ensure our patients receive the most comprehensive care available for common and complex structural heart conditions.

The WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program is the only program in West Virginia that offers eight specialized, structural heart procedures and is one of the few programs in the United States (and the only one in West Virginia) offering cerebral embolic protection during transcatheter aortic valve replacement (Protected TAVR) and transcatheter mitral valve replacement.

Our expert team uses the latest catheter-based techniques to treat all forms of structural heart disease, including aortic, mitral, and tricuspid valve diseases and conditions and congenital defects.

**OUR TEAM**



David Michael Campsey MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Deepak Hooda MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Sushant Sharma MD  
Cardiology

