

THE CATHOLIC

## Spirit



## Holy Father Receives Sketch of Wheeling's Cathedral of St. Joseph

Last week, Tyler Greenwood, pastoral associate at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling, along with his wife Christie, and Sacristan Martin Imbroscio (pictured from left) had the tremendous joy of meeting Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican. During the visit, they presented the Holy Father with a framed sketch of our Cathedral and shared news of our upcoming centennial, assuring him of the prayers of the cathedral family. The sketch was created by an artist incarcerated at Mount Olive Correctional Complex in West Virginia, who uses his artwork as an act of restitution and hope. Though he has never seen the cathedral in person, he drew it as an expression of gratitude and a reflection on God's mercy. His work speaks powerfully to the belief that no life is beyond redemption and that goodness can still be brought into the world. See the sketch on Page 4. Vatican Media photo

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# U.S. Bishops Commemorate Black History Month: 'Let Us Be Faithful Stewards of Memory'

**(OSV News)** — Two U.S. bishops Feb. 3 urged Catholics to be “faithful stewards of memory” and “courageous witnesses to truth” during Black History Month, observed in February.

Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Austin, Texas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation, and Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr. of Washington, chairman of the USCCB's Subcommittee on African American Affairs, issued a joint statement to commemorate the month.

They noted that the 2026 observance marks 100 years of commemorating Black history in the United States. “This milestone is an opportunity for us to prayerfully reflect on the ways history has been preserved, honored, and passed on across generations,” Bishop Garcia and Bishop Campbell said.

In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, an American historian, author and journalist, initiated the first Negro History Week in February of that year. He selected the week that included the birthdays of two key figures in the history of Black Americans: President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (Feb. 20).

It expanded and became Black History Month, officially recognized by President Gerald R. Ford in February 1976, and later codified by Congress in 1986. The combined efforts marked what the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture called a century of commemorating the history, achievements and contributions of Black Americans.

The bishops pointed to “Open Wide Our Hearts,” the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter against racism, in which they said the bishops “recognized that the lived

experience of the vast majority of African Americans bears the marks of our country's original sin of racism.”

“During this year's observance of Black History Month, we encourage the faithful to consider the lessons of history, honoring our heroes of the past and learning from the mistakes of the past,” they said.

“Although we may at times encounter people or situations in our country that seek to erase ‘memory’ from our minds and books, it can never be erased from our hearts,” they continued.

“May our reflections strengthen our faith and communities. Let us be faithful stewards of memory. Let us be courageous witnesses to truth. Let us pray and work to honor the inherent dignity of every person and the sacred stories of every people.”

In a joint reflection they issued with the statement, Bishop Garcia and Bishop Campbell emphasized that racism is a sin against human dignity.

“As shepherds of the Church, entrusted with the care of souls and the proclamation of the Gospel, we care deeply for our people, their joys and sorrows, and the stories they carry. This is especially important in our efforts to witness to the dignity of every person, which requires acknowledging the times in our nation's history when racism has prevented that dignity from being realized,” they said.

“This reflection is about the sacred task of remembering,” they added. “We must recommit ourselves to the sacred task of remembering — especially the stories of those whose voices have long been unheard. Sacred Scripture and Tradition offer a way forward for helping us understand why telling our stories is central to the Gospel mandate.”

**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://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx> West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

**Sexual Abuse Awareness Training:** The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Bishops/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.”



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## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

There are 10 print editions in 2026. 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).

### 2026 Print Dates:

Lent, February 20  
The Annunciation of the Lord, March 13 (Solemnity, March 25)  
Easter, April 10 (Easter Sunday, April 5)  
Month of Mary, Mother of God, May 15  
Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 12  
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 14  
Triumph of the Cross, September 11  
Month of the Rosary, October 9  
Advent, November 20  
Christmas, December 18

# HOLY HOUR FOR PEACE

*"A moment of renewal  
for our hearts  
and for our nation."*



**4pm, Friday, February 6  
St. Alphonsus Church  
2111 Market Street, Wheeling**



DIOCESE OF  
WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston along with others across the U.S. at the request of the USCCB, will hold a Holy Hour for Peace. In the Wheeling area we will gather at 4 p.m. today, Friday, Feb. 6, at St. Alphonsus Church, Market Street, Wheeling.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston invites all to attend.

This prayerful gathering and others in local parishes, missions and chapels around our

country is in response to the call of Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who reminds us that our faith and prayers truly matter—especially in times of fear, violence, and division. United as one Catholic family, we will come together in hope and healing, entrusting our nation and communities to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and asking the Lord to make us instruments of His peace.

“May this Holy Hour be a moment of renewal for our hearts and for our nation. Entrusting our fears and hopes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us ask the Lord to make us instruments of his peace and witnesses to the inherent dignity of every person. Let us pray together, confident that God hears the cry of his people and remains close to all who seek him.”  
- Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the USCCB.



Pictured is the sketch of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling created by an artist incarcerated at Mount Olive Correctional Complex. Cathedral staff presented the sketch to Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican. Courtesy photo

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# Lenten Liturgical Guidelines

*Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston*

Lent 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, Feb. 18 and ends with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 2.

### 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.

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# Catholic Schools Week — Take Two!



Take two of Catholic Schools Week commenced around West Virginia as students returned to their classrooms following a week of cancellations and delays from the recent winter storm. Clockwise, from top left: Very Rev. Sebastian Devasya, V.E., administers Communion to students during Mass at Parkersburg Catholic Elementary; Elizabeth Labishak, second-grade teacher at Corpus Christi School in Wheeling, and students enjoy festivities; celebrating “Hat Day” at Huntington’s Our Lady of Fatima Parish School are (from left) Administrative Assistant and Safe Environment Coordinator Elizabeth Mayes, Father Martin Smay, First-Grade Teacher Maggie Crawford, and Principal Tracy Komorowski; and Parkersburg Catholic High School students clean St. Margaret Mary Church in Parkersburg. *Courtesy photos*



# Students Share Testimonials about Catholic School Education

**T**outing the faith built, virtues taught, rigorous academics and myriad extracurriculars offered, students recently shared testimonials with Eastern Panhandle Catholic parishioners about why they love attending Saint Joseph School in Martinsburg.

The short presentations were intended to kick off Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 25 to 31), but were given during weekend Masses the weeks before and after the actual commemorative seven-day span due to heavy snow Jan. 25 and 26. Children in grades three through 10 spoke to attendees at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town; St. Agnes Church in Shepherdstown; St. Bernadette Church in Hedgesville; and St. Leo Church in Inwood. They also addressed those who attended the St. Joseph Parish Masses at St. Joseph School while the church's sanctuary is being renovated.

Following are highlights of their speeches.

**Jessica Monroe**, alumna, now a sophomore at Martinsburg High School: "Learning is engaging and creative, and religion class was my favorite subject because it helped me grow in my faith and was the best part of my day. ... St. Joseph School offers many opportunities to build friendships through teams and activities ... These activities help students grow socially, spiritually and as leaders."

**Matthew Billmyer**, grade nine: "Everyone is encouraged to be helpful and kind to one another. ... There are many events to get involved in and often come with the gift of service to the community, which is just one way we learn about our faith."

**Madison Regalia**, grade nine: "There are a couple of things I really appreciate about St. Jo-

seph High School. One of them is the opportunity to take college classes while still in high school. As a ninth-grader, I am already taking English 101, which has helped me grow academically and better understand college-level expectations. Another thing I like is that in 11th and 12th grade, students will be able to take classes on the college campus. This gives students real college experience while earning college credit and helps make the transition to college smoother and less overwhelming."

**Alana Espenlaub**, grade eight: "This school has shaped me not only as a student in school, but as a person. I have carried the virtues I have learned from my religion teacher to the volleyball court. ... I have made so many lifelong friends from this school that I truly believe are all part of God's journey for me."

**Lorelei Oligmueller**, grade eight: "St. Joe's is a family. I know the names of every kid in the middle school and high school, and that's well over 100. Our virtues, our classes, our activities, all lead to a community that isn't by chance, it's by God."

**Georgia Samuelson**, grade eight: "We are taught to speak respectfully to each other and to do acts of kindness, such as hold the doors for each other. We treat each other as Jesus would want us to."

**Rebecca Sharp**, grade seven: "I have personally attended St. Joseph School for 10 years and some of my best memories were made here. Our students always make sure that the kindness shown to us when we first arrived is passed on to new students each year."

**Melani Haney**, grade six: "We receive a quality and well-rounded education. We read many novels, such as 'Black Beauty,' and we learn through creative projects. The teachers help us when we don't understand something. My favorite after-school activity is Genesis show choir, where we sing and dance, performing at competitions."

**Gabriel Maximus Espinoza-Bolanos**, grade six: "I have good teachers; they are calm and explain things well. The classes are small ... I can focus better because there aren't many distractions."

**Angela Sharp**, grade four, describing the Junior Legion of Mary: "We gather on Friday afternoons to pray the Rosary and talk about a reading from the Bible. Sometimes, we go to Harmony, a senior center, to sing songs and read poems to the senior citizens."

**Ainsley Freeman**, grade three: "I am learning a lot this year. Along with religion, I am learning how to multiply and divide. I am learning how to write in cursive."



Courtesy photo  
Seventh-grader Rebecca Sharp speaks Feb. 1 to those attending Mass at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg about the benefits of being a student there.



Courtesy photo  
Sixth-grader Gabriel Maximus Espinoza-Bolanos speaks Jan. 18 during the Spanish Mass at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town.



Courtesy photo  
Third-grader Ainsley Freeman speaks Feb. 1 about the benefits of attending St. Joseph School to those attending Mass at St. Leo Church in Inwood.



Courtesy photo  
Fourth-grader Angela Sharp tells those attending Mass on Feb. 1 at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg why she loves being a student there.

# Be a Voice for the Voiceless at Pro-Life Rally Day at the Legislature in Charleston

**CHARLESTON**—West Virginians for Life (WVFL) will hold the annual Pro-Life Rally Day at the Legislature Feb. 12 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the State Capitol Lower Rotunda.

The day will be filled with fellowship, music, exciting speakers, and a special prayer walk through the Capitol on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. Crosses carried in the Prayer Walk will represent 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.

WVFL needs a strong show of support for proposed legislation that will:

- improve healthcare provider access to education on Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) & require emergency room training on dangers of the abortion pill and how to identify complications when mom doesn't disclose she's taken the abortion pill.

- expand access to APR through the Support for Mothers and Babies Program by making APR reimbursable through public funds.

- clarify that foreign/out-of-state senders of abortion pills are violating existing state law.

- advocate to increase pregnancy care center funding from \$3 million to \$5 million.

The day begins with registration from 9 - 10 a.m.

Meetings that you prearrange with legislators can take place between 9 and 10:30 a.m.

Participants will be introduced in the House/Senate Galleries when session begins at 11 a.m. Take in the proceedings in either the Senate or House chamber.

Noon Rally is the highlight with remarks from Bishop Mark Brennan, Secretary of State Kris Warner, pro-life senators and delegates along with WVFL President Lacey Evans and Political Liaison Karen Cross.

Special music and the Prayer Walk while carrying crosses make the day especially meaningful, rally organizers said. The event should end by no later than 2 p.m.

For more information, visit <https://www.wvforlife.org/event/pro-life-rally-day-2026/>

## National Marriage Week to be Celebrated Feb. 7-14

The observances of National Marriage Week and World Marriage Day (Feb. 8) are an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and the family. The theme for this year is "Man and Woman He Created Them: Together with Purpose."

Below is a link to a National Marriage Week 2026 Parish Resource document that can be utilized.

[https://www.usccb.org/resources/NMW\\_2026\\_Parish\\_Resource1.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/NMW_2026_Parish_Resource1.pdf)

This resource shares things you can do as a parish, for couples, families, and selected resources and recommended websites.



# Scholarship Helps Lewis County Catholic Students Attending College

**WESTON**—Applications are now being accepted for the Mullady Scholarship Award. This fund was started by Edwin and Mary Mullady to help Catholic students of Lewis County go to an accredited college. Applicants must be Catholic, currently enrolled in college or graduate school (no high school students), and residents of Lewis County.

Applications can be picked up in the vestibule of St. Patrick Church in Weston, the parish office, or can be emailed upon request.

The application deadline is Feb. 28.

Completed applications should be returned to St. Patrick Church, 210 Center Ave., Weston, WV 26452.

Funds will be distributed in March.

# Join Father Alfred Obiudu on a 12-Day Pilgrimage to France and Italy

Father Alfred Obiudu, pastor of St. Leo Parish in Inwood, is organizing a 12-day pilgrimage to France & Italy Oct. 5 - 16. For those interested in the pilgrimage, Father Obiudu will be having the first planning meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at St. Leo Parish Conference Room from 5-6:30 p.m.

If you are interested but unable to join the meeting in-person, you can join via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2354307963?pwd=UWt5RmtINVFrjZaUmRwUVIDK0dsQT09&omn=89119915288>.

The pilgrimage is open to everyone

(Catholic and non-Catholic) interested in exploring and praying in the cities of France and Italy with Father Obiudu.

To register for the pilgrimage, you can contact the tour company directly at Nativity Pilgrimage (832-406-7050); use the link for the pilgrimage website (<https://nativitypilgrimage.com/trip-5738>) or click on the QR CODE on the poster and it will take you directly to the webpage to register for the pilgrimage. To obtain the poster or for any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to get in touch with Father Obiudu at (304) 229-8945 or by email at [fralfred@stleo.com](mailto:fralfred@stleo.com)



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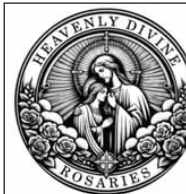
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# Pope Warns Little Progress Has Been Made to Protect Children Worldwide

By Josephine Peterson, Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — The world continues to fall short of protecting and caring for its children, leaving them with few opportunities to succeed and at greater risk of suffering abuse, Pope Leo XIV said in a speech Feb. 5.

In his address to the steering committee of the project “From Crisis to Care: Catholic Action for Children,” Pope Leo praised the Catholic organizations for their work with children, and he shared concerns about the lack of progress globally.

“Regrettably, I see that the situation of children today has not improved during the past year, and it is also of deep concern to learn of the lack of progress in protecting children from danger,” he said in the Apostolic Palace’s Clementine Hall at the Vatican.

Pope Leo expressed further worry over international priorities.

“One must question whether global commitments for sustainable development have been cast aside when we see in our global human family that so many children still live in extreme poverty, suffer abuse and are forcibly displaced, not to mention that they lack proper education and are isolated or separated from their families,” the pope said.

As of August 2025, only 35% of the United Nations’ sustainability goals were on track or making moderate progress, according to the most recent UN report on Sustainable Development Goals. These targets were created a decade ago by more than 190 countries as a promise to work toward ending poverty, protecting the planet and addressing inequalities by 2030.

Of the 17 targets, the report said that nearly half were progressing too slowly and another 18% were actually regressing. Last March, the U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration formally rejected the goals for the United States, saying that they infringed on the country’s sovereignty.

Global poverty has remained at a near standstill, with continual extreme poverty affecting one in ten people worldwide, according to a

**See “Children” on Page 12**

# Scripture is Intended to Speak to Believers ‘in Every Age,’ Pope Says

By Josephine Peterson, Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Leo XIV said Scripture is meant to speak directly to believers in today’s world, emphasizing that the Bible is the word of God expressed through human authors during his weekly general audience.

“In every age, the Church is called to re-propose the Word of God in a language capable of being embodied in history and reaching hearts,” he said Feb. 4.

He warned that when Scripture “loses touch with reality, with human hopes and sufferings,” or is proclaimed in language that is “incomprehensible, uncommunicative or anachronistic,” it becomes “ineffective.”

Continuing his catechesis series on Vatican II, the pope said the Bible is not a relic of

the past but a living dialogue meant to lead people to know and love God. God chose to communicate through his people, demonstrating his mercy and desire to be close to humanity, the pope said.

Citing the Second Vatican Council’s document “*Dei Verbum*,” the pope said, “the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when he took to himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men.”

It is important to note, he said, that while God is the principal author of Scripture, human beings were also “true authors,” not simply passive “scribes” sharing God’s words, the pope said, “God never mortifies human beings and their potential!”

He also warned against

reading Scripture as though it had no divine origin and were only a relic of the past.

“While Scripture is a text rooted in historical truth, it also contains a limitless spiritual depth that speaks to people of all times and places, communicating above all God’s love and his desire to save us,” the pope said.

Pope Leo said that God, “in his goodness, ensures our lives do not lack the essential nourishment of his word, and let us pray that our words, and even more so our lives, do not obscure the love of God that is narrated in them.”

In an appeal he made at the end of the audience, the pope said a prayer for the people of Ukraine, who have endured frequent bombing recently, further impacting their access to power. He also acknowledged that a new

**See “Scripture” on Page 12**

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## Children ...

**Cont'd from Page 11**

United Nations report last year. The World Bank's most recent Poverty and Shared Prosperity report agreed, projecting 2020-2030 to be "a lost decade," due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly half of the world's population — 44% — survives on less than \$6.85 a day, an income considered basic in upper-middle-income countries, the World Bank report said. At this rate of progress, ending extreme poverty would take decades — and lifting people above this income level would take more than a century.

As for global education efforts, UNESCO's annual Global Educa-

tion Monitoring Report last year found that the number of children who are still not in school — 251 million — has barely changed since 2015. Three out of four children in developing countries cannot read and understand simple text by the age of 10.

The pope recognized that Catholic organizations often serve children through specialized missions, but warned that focusing too narrowly on one area may leave other needs unmet, urging greater collaboration to ensure holistic care.

"I urge you, however, to find ways to work together in greater harmony so that children receive care that is well balanced, taking into consideration their physical, psychological and spiritual wel-

fare," he said.

He recognized his predecessor's work last year, convening the first International Summit on Children's Rights, where experts and leaders from various nations explored opportunities for safeguarding children globally. Pope Leo asked the committee to address concerns raised at the summit and

to support "those who have no voice."

"Keep that in mind when the temptation to be discouraged arises because of failed initiatives, seeming lack of interest from others or the sense that the situation is not improving," he said. "Let the good you know you are doing carry you forward."

## Scripture ...

**Cont'd from Page 11**

START treaty between the United States and Russia was expected to be signed Feb. 5, which would curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Sharing his hope that the treaty be renewed, Pope Leo said in Italian, "I call on you to not let this instrument collapse without trying to guarantee a concrete and effective follow-up. The current situation requires us to do everything possible to break free from a new race of arms that further threatens peace between nations."



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

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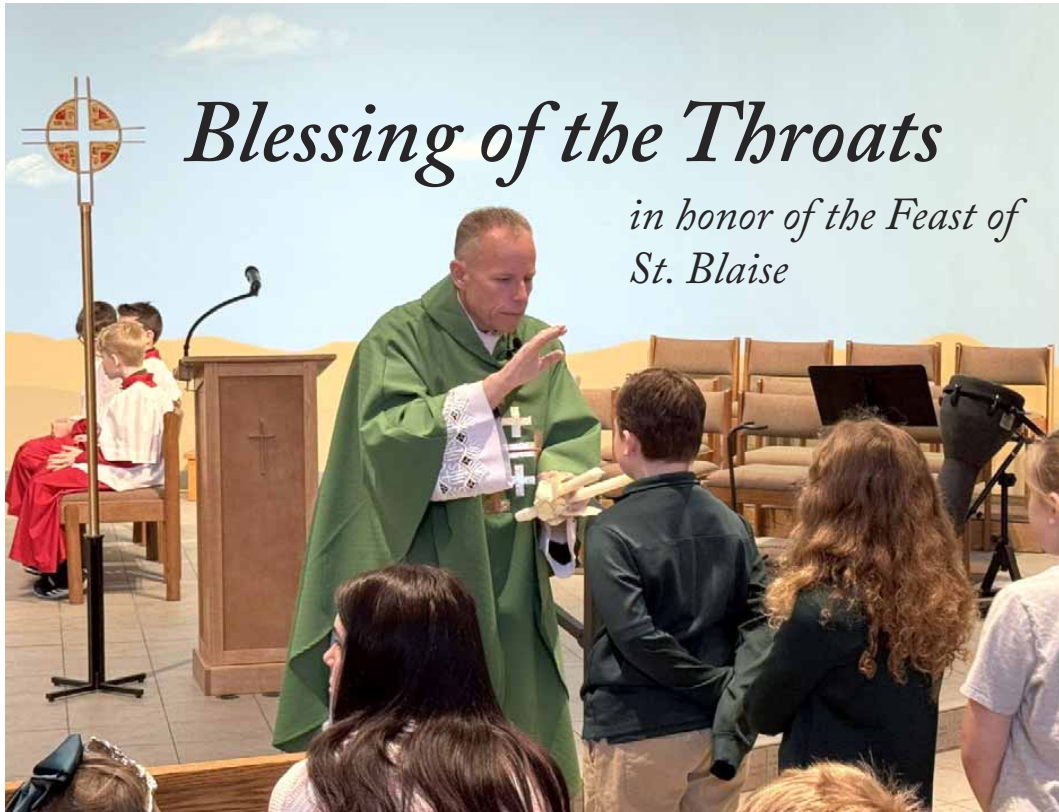
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# Blessing of the Throats

*in honor of the Feast of St. Blaise*

Courtesy photo  
 In honor of the Feast of St. Blaise at St. Paul Church in Weirton, Father John Soplinski, diocesan director of Vocations, blesses the throats of students from Weirton's St. Paul School. St. Blaise was a physician known for his martyrdom and miraculous healing, especially with throat ailments.

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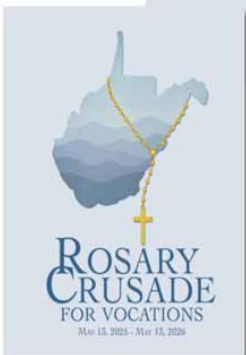
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Week 1: July 5th – 11th  
 Week 2: July 12th – 18th  
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# New Book Aims to Help Women Find Fruitfulness Amid Struggles with Infertility

By **Katie Yoder**

**(OSV News)** — Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead wanted to write the book she wished she had as a young woman struggling with infertility.

“Most infertility books ended in pregnancy that I was reading,” Snead, the author of “Infertile but Fruitful: Finding Fulfillment When You Can’t Conceive,” told OSV News. “That’s not always the story you need to hear.”

Now, she said, she wants women to know “it’s okay when the end of the story isn’t a pregnancy.” She wants them to know that they are not alone — and that they are still called to fruitfulness.

Snead, a writer, speaker and Catholic mother of four through adoption, is sending this message by sharing her own struggle with infertility in “Infertile but Fruitful.” In her new book from Sophia Institute Press, Snead greets readers with an approachable, sincere tone as she details the sorrows and the joys experienced by her and her husband, O. Carter Snead, a professor of law and concurrent professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame.

Along the way, she draws from her story to discuss fertility treatment options, Church teaching on sexuality and marriage, emotional and spiritual challenges, and adoption as a vocation. Each chapter in the nearly 150-page book concludes with a section listing practical advice and encouragement.

The book by Snead, a fellow for The Catholic Association and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show *Conversations with Consequences*, comes at a time when infertility is common. Around one in five U.S. married women ages 15 to 49 with no prior births struggle with infertility or are unable to get pregnant after one year of trying, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“You’re enough. God loves you so much,” Snead said she wants women struggling with infertility to know. “The day you said, ‘I do,’ you became a family with your husband.”

“Turn your eyes towards Christ, ask the saints for interventions, allow people to pray for you,” she added. “Understand that you’re made for love and for fruitfulness — and that’s not limited to your ability to conceive biological children.”

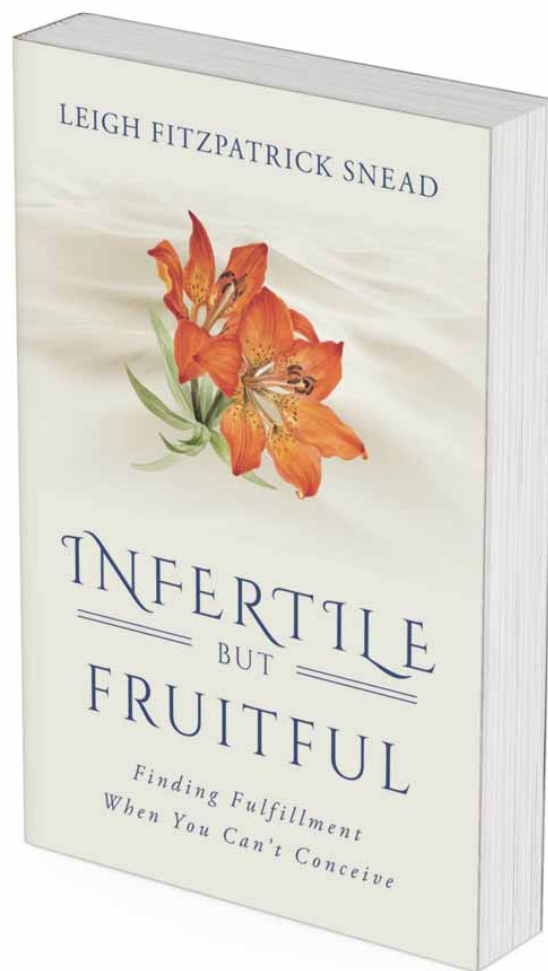
Snead saw a need for her book after writing an open letter to couples struggling with infertility published by the *National Catholic Register* in 2023. She remembered being surprised by the response: The widely-shared piece sparked a flurry of messages and conversations.

When her mentor encouraged her to write a

book and someone offered to publish it, Snead realized the timing was right.

“I was ready personally ... being able to say, ‘I’m never going to be pregnant,’” she said, adding that she was approaching 50 when she began her book.

In addition to writing for younger women,



OSV News photo/Sophia Institute Press  
This is the cover of “Infertile but Fruitful: Finding Fulfillment When You Can’t Conceive,” by Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead.

Snead said she wrote for women her age who have lived through the struggle of infertility. Going beyond that, she wanted it to serve as a resource for the loved ones of women struggling with infertility and the priests who minister to them.

While her book focuses on her own story, Snead stressed that there is more than one way to live through infertility.

“There’s a real need to talk about couples who get married and they’re Catholic and they’re infertile, but they don’t adopt,” said Snead, who also serves on the board of Springs in the Desert, a Catholic infertility ministry. “They’re not called to it for whatever reason.”

In her book, Snead tells the stories of different couples who struggle or have struggled with infertility and how each couple embraced fruitfulness in their own way.

“This is about infertility and that you’re not less than or less whole because of this one thing,” Snead said of her book. “Your marriage is able to be fruitful. Your life, you dedicate it to God, you pick up your cross, you carry it. There’s lots of fruits that are born out of that.”

Snead begins her book by dedicating it to her four sons and her husband. “I wouldn’t change a thing,” she writes.

“There was this whole world of people, and I found my husband and then my four kids,” she told OSV News. “None of that was guaranteed.”

She wants her children never to think that she settled or they are a second choice, she said. “No, I just want them.”

In her book, Leigh Snead writes that her goal is to encourage dialogue. Women, she said, should be able to talk about their infertility the way other women talk about their pregnancies and births.

“Because we’re not used to talking about it, because there’s so much secrecy and shame that women feel around it, it’s a lot of suffering in silence,” she said.

For her part, Snead revealed what she learned about Jesus Christ’s cross through her own cross of infertility.

“The tests, maybe the injections, the constant self-monitoring for signs that new life may be growing inside you all serve to remind you that you are an embodied being,” Snead said in a follow-up email to OSV News. “When God became man, He suffered as a man. And we know that in that suffering is the good news of our salvation.”

“When I sought comfort from Christ and brought my suffering to his feet, he drew me closer and I felt his love,” she added. “It humbled me, and led me to forget about any ideas I might have of control and give it all over to Him.”

A link to “Infertile but Fruitful” can be found here: <https://sophia institute.com/product/infertile-but-fruitful/>

(Katie Yoder is an OSV News correspondent. She writes from Maryland.)

## Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, February 21: St. Margaret Mary, Parkersburg, 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 11: St. Agnes, Charleston, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 12: Our Lady of the Hills, Elkview, 8:30 a.m.

Monday, April 13: Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 14: St. John University, Morgantown, 5:15 p.m.

Saturday, April 18: St. James, Charles Town, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 19: Assumption, Keyser, 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 22: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 23: Corpus Christi, Wheeling, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 25: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Stonewood; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 26: St. Brendan, Elkins; 11:00 a.m.

Friday, May 1: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 2: SS Peter & Paul, Oak Hill, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 3: St. Catherine of Siena, Ronceverte, 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 9: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 10: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 7:00 p.m.

Monday, May 11: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 13: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 16: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 17: St. Jude, Glen Dale, 9:00 a.m.

Friday, May 22: Epiphany of the Lord, Moorefield, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 23: St. Leo, Inwood, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 24: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 24: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 6: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart,  
Charleston, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 14: St. Matthew/Sacred Heart Mission, Point Pleasant,  
11:15 a.m.

Saturday, June 20: St. Sebastian, Kingwood, 6:00 p.m.

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

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# Mission Moments



## A Family's Recovery After the Storm

When Hurricane Helene swept through their West Virginia community, one family never expected the storm's impact to last more than a year.

Strong winds sent a neighbor's tree crashing through their roof, leaving their home exposed and unsafe. In an instant, a place of comfort became a source of stress and uncertainty.

The family of six includes a couple, their three children, and a grandmother with mobility challenges. In the days that followed, the damage became clear: roof and structural issues, leaks throughout the home, clogged drains, and interior damage that worsened with every rainfall. A 14-day power outage only added to the hardship.

Without electricity, the family lost all the food in their refrigerator and freezer and relied on restaurant meals while managing unexpected expenses and lost income. Mold began to spread inside the home, so they cleaned constantly to protect their family's health. They repaired plumbing, cleared debris, and replaced their daughter's damaged bedroom furniture — all while knowing the biggest problem remained. The roof continued to leak.



Each rainfall brought new damage and rising costs. The neighbor did not accept responsibility for the fallen tree. A misunderstanding of the FEMA process left the family without assistance, and their homeowner's insurance denied the claim after determining the damage fell below their deductible. Over time, they felt exhausted and discouraged, unsure how they would ever afford the repairs.

That's when Catholic Charities West Virginia Disaster Services stepped in.

Through disaster case management and \$11,000 in support from a generous Catholic Charities USA grant, the family was finally able to replace their roof, stop the ongoing damage, and begin moving forward — more than a year after the storm.

The mother shared how much the support meant to her family. "You just don't know how much this means," she said.

Today, the family is continuing to rebuild with a renewed sense of stability and hope. Their story is a reminder that recovery doesn't always happen quickly — and that compassionate support can make all the difference long after a storm has passed.

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# Full-Time Middle-High School Spanish Teacher for the 2026-27 School Year Needed

Saint Joseph School (SJS) and High School (SJHS) educate in the spirit of the Gospel, inspiring Catholic values, academic excellence, global awareness and service to those in need. We are an equal-opportunity employer committed to excellence through diversity. The ideal candidate is one who embraces the mission, who is looking for a place to share the faith, be respected and supported, and grow professionally.

SJS is seeking a great communicator with bilingual proficiency to join our professional learning community in August 2026. This individual must have excellent interpersonal skills and will provide Spanish language instruction to our middle and high school students. The Spanish teacher should have solid classroom management skills, be responsible for developing learning activities and hands-on material, tending to individual student needs and communicating regularly with parents. Reports to: Principal

## Essential Responsibilities:

Planning daily lessons and activities to meet language standards; adopting a data-driven attitude toward measuring learner progress; Attending to individual student needs; demonstrating an awareness of different student backgrounds and cultures; communicating regularly with parents; providing extra support to students who need it; monitoring student growth to identify strengths and areas for improvement; using learner data to constantly refine curriculum; and providing regular feedback to students.

## Requirements:

Bachelor's degree or master's (preferred) in education or relevant field; state teaching license in the relevant field or qualified to obtain it; knowledge of teaching best practices; empathy and great interpersonal skills; excellent written and verbal communication; proficiency with basic computer software such as Word and Excel; experience working with children and adolescents (Previous experience as a middle-high school teacher is advantageous); good classroom management skills; and good teamwork abilities.

Please email a letter of introduction and résumé to Principal Maria Byrd at [mbyrd@sjsvw.org](mailto:mbyrd@sjsvw.org).



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**Time:** Cocktail Hour - 5 pm;  
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**Location:** The White Palace  
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[ccwva.org/event/gala](http://ccwva.org/event/gala)

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Proceeds from this Gala directly support our mission in 17 counties in northern West Virginia, including our Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center on 18th Street in Wheeling, and other programs and services for children, seniors and families.

# Papa León: Las Escrituras están destinadas a hablar a los creyentes 'en cada época'

Por Josephine Peterson, Catholic News Service

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)** — El Papa León XIV afirmó que las Escrituras están destinadas a hablar directamente a los creyentes del mundo actual, y destacó durante su audiencia general que la Biblia es la palabra de Dios expresada a través de autores humanos.

"En cada época la Iglesia está llamada a proponer de nuevo la Palabra de Dios con un lenguaje capaz de encarnarse en la historia y de alcanzar los corazones", dijo el Papa el 4 de febrero.

Advirtió que cuando la Escritura "pierde contacto con la realidad, con las esperanzas y los sufrimientos de los hombres", o se proclaman en un lenguaje "incomprensible, poco comunicativo o anacrónico", se vuelve "ineficaz".

Continuando con su serie de catequesis sobre el Concilio Vaticano II, el Papa dijo que la Biblia no es una reliquia del pasado, sino un diálogo vivo destinado a llevar a las personas a conocer y amar a Dios. Dios eligió comunicarse a través de su pueblo, demostrando su misericordia y su

deseo de estar cerca de la humanidad, dijo el Papa.

Citando el documento "Dei Verbum" del Concilio Vaticano II, el Papa León dijo: "Las palabras de Dios expresadas con lenguas humanas se han hecho semejantes al habla humana, como en otro tiempo el Verbo del Padre Eterno, tomada la carne de la debilidad humana, se hizo semejante a los hombres".

Es importante señalar, dijo, que, aunque Dios es el autor principal de las Escrituras, los seres humanos también fueron "verdaderos autores", no simplemente escribas pasivos que comparían las palabras de Dios, dijo el Papa: "¡Dios no mortifica nunca al ser humano y sus potencialidades!".

También advirtió contra la lectura de las Escrituras como si no tuvieran origen divino y fueran solo una reliquia del pasado.

"Si bien la Escritura es un texto arraigado en la verdad histórica, también contiene una profundidad espiritual ilimitada que habla a las personas de todos los tiempos y lugares, comunicando sobre todo el amor de Dios y su deseo de

salvarnos", dijo el Papa al leer su resumen en inglés.

El Papa León dijo que Dios, "en su bondad, no permite que en nuestras vidas falte el alimento esencial de su Palabra y oremos para que nuestras palabras, y más aún nuestras vidas, no oscurezcan el amor de Dios que en ellas se narra".

Al terminar su audiencia, el Santo Padre rezó por el pueblo de Ucrania, que ha sufrido frecuentes bombardeos recientemente, lo que ha afectado aún más su acceso a la energía eléctrica. También reconoció que se esperaba que el 5 de febrero se firmara un nuevo tratado START entre Estados Unidos y Rusia, que frenaría la proliferación de armas nucleares.

Compartiendo su esperanza de que se renueve el tratado, el Papa León dijo en italiano: "Les pido que no dejen que este instrumento se derrumbe sin intentar garantizar un seguimiento concreto y eficaz. La situación actual nos exige hacer todo lo posible para liberarnos de una nueva carrera armamentística que amenaza aún más la paz entre las naciones".

## Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores:

La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estados Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web [www.repostbishopabuse.org](http://www.repostbishopabuse.org). Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Se-

guro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrece la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, 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. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está 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 a menores: 304-293-6400.



Now is a good time for parishes and schools to plan ahead and order materials for **Lent '26 "Operation Rice Bowl."** This now fifty year old program is a major way for American Catholics to be part of the worldwide work of Catholic Relief Services, our bishops' sponsored international relief agency.

Rooted in the history of the Eucharistic Congress, **CRS Rice Bowl** invites Catholics and faith communities in the United States to encounter God and our global family throughout Lent by practicing the **pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 120 different countries each year. Twenty-five percent of donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in the local diocese, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised more than \$350 million. With drastic federal cuts in international humanitarian aid our support of CRS is even more critical.

**Free materials for Lent '26 "Operation Rice Bowl" can now be ordered at:**  
<https://www.crsricebowl.org/order-crs-rice-bowl-materials>

**These materials include:**

1. The now iconic "mite boxes" to collect saving from fasting,
2. Prayer materials for each day of Lent,
3. Stories and photos about communities being served by our support of CRS and even recipes based on meals of those people.
4. Videos and printed materials suitable for use during announcements at Sunday mass and other gatherings.
5. Materials for various levels of student and university participation.

**For more information about Catholic Relief Services: search CRS.org**

Diocesan contact **Chad Carter**, Chancellor, at 304-233-0880  
 or

**Fr. Larry W. Dorsch**, CRS Global Fellow,  
 For guest homilist or program speaker: Phone 304-281-6503

## Prison Ministry Needs Your Help

Prison Ministry is in need of a priest, deacon, or trained Catholic volunteer willing to serve the incarcerated men and women at **North Central Regional Jail in Greenwood, WV.**

Prison ministry has received several calls requesting support for the facility. Before his retirement, Deacon Rue Thompson faithfully traveled to NCRJ weekly to offer prayer, encouragement, and sacramental support to inmates. His ministry made a meaningful impact, and the need continues.

If you know of anyone who may be interested, or if there is someone already serving, please reach out to Kay Sanders at 304-621-4514 or [msanders@dwc.org](mailto:msanders@dwc.org).

**Thank you for your continued commitment to those in need.**

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