



Changing Words in Sacraments Can Make Them Invalid, Dicastery Warns

By **Cindy Wooden**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said it continues to receive reports of Catholics, including priests, finding out all the sacraments they have received are invalid because they were baptized years earlier with a formula that was not approved.

When a priest or other minister changes the words, gestures or material prescribed for the celebration of the sacraments, he can “rob” the faithful of what they deserve and make the sacrament invalid, the dicastery said in a note published Feb. 3.

The note, “Gestis Verbisque” (“Gestures and Words”), passed unanimously by members of the dicastery during their plenary assembly Jan. 25 and was approved by Pope Francis Jan. 31, said the document, which was signed by Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, and Msgr. Armando Matteo, secretary of the dicastery’s doctrinal section.

Presenting the document, Cardinal Fernández wrote that in 2022 the cardinals and bishops who are members of the dicastery already had “expressed their concern for the multiplication of situations in which they were forced to acknowledge the invalidity of sacraments celebrated.”

As an example, the cardinal cited baptism ceremonies where, instead of saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,”

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Bishop Brennan Celebrates Red Mass at Basilica Co-Cathedral

By **Martina Hart**

CHARLESTON — Bishop Mark Brennan celebrated the annual Red Mass for members of the legal profession at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston on Jan. 23.

“It’s a Mass of the Holy Spirit, the flames of the Holy Spirit (symbolized by the celebrants’ red vestments) coming upon the infant new Christians with a spirit of courage and understanding to spread

the faith,” Bishop Brennan explained. “So, this Mass will be very particularly for those of you in public service, that that spirit of courage and wisdom may be bestowed on you. Your work is **See “Red Mass” on Page 4**



Fairmont Catholic Students Learn about Vocations

Joyce Bibey Photo

Sister Martha Gomez, RGS, delegate for Consecrated Life for the diocese, visits with students at Fairmont Catholic Grade School during Catholic Schools Week. She and Father Phillip Szabo, parochial vicar of St. John University Parish in Morgantown, talked to students about Christian vocations.

Obituary—Debra J. Sine

Debra J. Sine, beloved daughter, sister, fiancé, cousin, and friend, passed away on February 3, 2024, in Wheeling, WV, at the age of 62.

Born on October 5, 1961, in Wheeling, WV, Debbie lived a life filled with love, laughter, and a passion for making those around her feel special. She was a dedicated Accountant for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, WV, where her meticulous attention to detail and unwavering commitment to her work earned her the respect and admiration of her colleagues.

Debbie had a heart full of compassion and an affectionate spirit. She had a deep love for dogs, and her special fur babies, Nikolas and Chanick, held a special place in her heart.

In her leisure time, Debbie found joy in riding ATVs/Four-Wheelers and hosting garage parties with her cherished family and friends. These gatherings were always filled with laughter, good food, and unforgettable memories. Debbie's collection of Snoopy dogs also brought her much joy and served as a reminder of her playful and lighthearted nature.

Debbie will be deeply missed by her loving fiancé of many years, Kelly Ernest of Valley Grove, WV, and her sister, Cheryl (Gary) Pompeo of Wheeling, WV. She was a beloved mother figure to Ashley (Jesse) Watson and Brittany Ernest



(Justin Rickman), and an adoring grandmother figure to Chance & Bailey Blake, and Logan Rickman. Close personal friends Charles (Casey) Yoho and children, Charles & David Yoho, were also an important part of Debbie's life. Numerous special friends, who shared countless cherished moments with Debbie, will hold her memory close to their hearts.

Visitation will take place on Friday, Feb. 9, starting at 9 a.m. until the time of the Funeral Service at 10 a.m., at Alt-meyer Funeral Home – Wheeling Chapel, 1400 Eoff Street. Debbie will be laid to rest at Halcyon Hills Memorial Gardens following the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorial contributions be made to the Ohio County Animal Shelter, located at 7011 National Road, Triadelphia, WV 26059, or online by clicking here. This gesture will honor Debbie's immense love for animals and continue her legacy of compassion towards those in need.

Debbie's life was a testament to the power of love, laughter, and cherishing precious moments with loved ones. Her warm smile, kind heart, and unwavering friendship will forever be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing her. May her spirit live on in our hearts, guiding us to find joy in every day and to cherish the bonds of friendship and family.

ceived the sacraments from him prior to 2020.

"Modifying the form of a sacrament or its matter is always a gravely illicit act and deserves exemplary punishment, precisely because such arbitrary acts are capable of producing serious harm to the faithful People of God," the cardinal wrote.

While the document did not specify a punishment, it explained the importance of using the prescribed words, exact matter — such as water, wine or oil — and gestures like anointing, laying on of hands and the sign of the cross.

"While in other areas of the Church's pastoral action there is ample room for creativity," the cardinal wrote in the foreword, "such inventiveness in the area of the celebration of the sacraments becomes a 'manipulative will' and cannot be invoked."

"Because of their rootedness in Scripture and Tradition, the matter and form never depend nor can they depend on the desire of the individual or of the particular community," the document said.

"Instituted by Christ, the sacraments are actions that realize, by means of sensible signs, the living experience of the mystery of salvation, making possible the participation of human beings in the divine life," the document said. "They are the 'master-

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Dioceses/Eparchies have a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer, directly or indirectly, with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

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.report-bishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, 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.

Words ...

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the minister will say, "I baptize you in the name of the Creator..." or "In the name of dad and mom, we baptize you."

In 2020, the then-doctrinal congregation issued a note saying baptisms celebrated with the formula, "We baptize you ..." also were invalid, setting off a large-scale effort in several dioceses, including in the United States, to trace people who were invalidly baptized.

The sacraments they subsequently received, including first Communion, confirmation and even ordination also were invalid since only a baptized Catholic can validly receive the other sacraments.

Cardinal Fernández said the situation is particularly painful for priests who not only find out their ordinations were invalid, but so were all the sacraments they subsequently celebrated for others.

A priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit, who had been baptized with the wrong formula 30 years earlier, started over when the 2020 document was issued. He was baptized, confirmed, received the Eucharist, was ordained to the diaconate and to the priesthood in the space of 10 days. The archdiocese set up a webpage for people who thought they had re-


pieces of God' in the New and Eternal Covenant, forces that come forth from the body of Christ, actions of the Spirit working in his body which is the Church."

"This is why the Church in the Liturgy celebrates with faithful love and veneration the sacraments that Christ himself has entrusted to her so that she may preserve them as a precious inheritance and source of her life and her mission," the document said.

A priest celebrates the sacraments not only "in persona Christi" — in the person of Christ — but also in "no-

mine Ecclesiae" — in the name of the church, it said, which is why he must follow exactly the church's approved liturgical texts, which indicate when and where local adaptations or variations are permitted.

The doctrinal note said that it applies to the entire church, although it asked the Eastern Catholic churches to draft their own versions of the document, using their particular theological language "where it differs from that used in the text," and to submit it for approval to the dicastery before publication.



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Don't Miss out on Free Tickets to the National Eucharistic Congress!

Tickets are Available to All Members of Parishes and Missions in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

By Colleen Rowan

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston still has free tickets for the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17-21.

Bernadette McMasters Kime, director of the Office of Worship and Sacraments for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, encour-

aged the Catholic faithful of West Virginia to take advantage of this opportunity to claim the free ticket that is part of the diocesan travel package, so they can join Catholics from around the country gathering as one this summer to deepen devotion to the Eucharist.

"We are blessed!" Kime

said in an e-mail to all parishes Feb.8. "Isn't it great we are in a diocese that has gifted us free tickets — thanks to the forward compassion and forward thinking of bishop and our Catholic Sharing Appeal."

Joining Kime in encouraging the faithful to get their free tickets was Joyce Bibey, manager of Writing and Social Media for the diocese's Office of Communications and Marketing. They shared in the e-mail that through the diocese's collaboration with Corporate Travel, pilgrims will be able to secure

bus transportation and hotel accommodations at a reasonable price at this widely popular nationwide event.

"You don't want to miss this amazing opportunity," they said.

The historic gathering in Indianapolis will be the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years, according to www.eucharisticcongress.org. Bishop Mark Brennan and many clergy and religious will join faithful of the diocese at the congress.

"This is a pivotal moment in both American history and the legacy of the

Catholic Church," the National Eucharistic Congress website states. "We are expecting tens of thousands of pilgrims—but space is limited. Jesus Christ will be there. Will you?"

The National Eucharistic Congress is part of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Eucharistic Revival launched on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 2022.

The deadline to register is March 15. Scan the QR code in the ad at left or click here. More information is also available at this website.

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A message from Bishop Mark Brennan on the National Eucharistic Congress

"It is going to be invigorating to see the faithful of WV at the National Eucharistic Congress representing their local parishes. I'm happy we are partnering with Corporate Travel, a Catholic company that specializes in Catholic pilgrimages, to ease the travel logistics burden for us."
 -Bishop Brennan

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NATIONAL Eucharistic Congress



Martina Hart Photo

At the Red Mass at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston, Bishop Mark Brennan and Deacon Dennis Nesser, J.C.L., receive the gifts from Michael Kawash and Mark Sadd (right). Looking on are altar servers Julian Haas (left) and Harry Salutillo.

Votive Mass Gathers Lawyers, Judges and Elected Officials; Promoted by St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Society

Red Mass ...

Cont'd from Page 1
important for this community, and we want you to be able to do it well, to do God's holy will."

Invited had been lawyers, judges, and elected government officials, regardless of their religious affiliation.

In his homily, Bishop Brennan referred to St. Paul's first letter to Timothy to stress the importance of praying for "all in authority," those who serve in public office in some form.

"In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus affirms both the legitimate role of government and the preeminent sovereignty of God," he said, emphasizing that the correct relationship between Church and State "ought to be one of respect for each one's proper role and cooperation in areas where that may be beneficial to society."

"What is essential is that government and Church respect one another and that neither encroaches on the legitimate role of the other," Bishop Brennan continued. He listed the West Virginia Hope Scholarship Program as a form of

that cooperation because it allows parents to choose how their children are educated.

"The Catholic Church, in turn, helps the state by caring for the sick in its hospitals, feeding the poor through its pantries, responding to natural disasters through its Catholic Charities relief teams, and giving spiritual strength to many of the state's citizens so that they can function as parents, as workers, as volunteers," he said. He cautioned, however, that neither should encroach upon the legitimate role of the other.

"If the religious liberty clause in our U.S. Constitution can protect an atheist prisoner from forced participation in a religiously

based program, it should also protect the physician whose moral or religious conscience would be violated by a rule that the government seeks to impose," he said.

"If the Church is primarily concerned with the spiritual welfare of human beings and their salvation from sin and death, and if the state is primarily concerned with justice and peace in the civil order, still, those areas of concern penetrate one another in the real human beings who constitute our society. That is why cooperation between church and state makes sense," he said.

Bishop Brennan added that it is not only important what we do but how we do it, with compassion and

kindness, striving to respect the dignity of our opponents, in particular during elections. He also gave the example of a federal judge who at the end of a murder trial remarked that both families were suffering, one the death of a son or brother, the other the long imprisonment of a son or brother. This touched a human chord in his compassion for both families who in turn recognized their common suffering by embracing one another and crying together.

"There are things in your legal, judicial, legislative and executive service that go beyond the simple letter of the law," Bishop Brennan concluded. "Seek justice but keep the full human dignity of those you serve in mind.

... God will help you to serve honorably. He will give you courage and wisdom, and you will be able to do much good for the people of this great state."

Concelebrating the Mass were Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, V.F., rector of the Basilica and retired Father John Finnell. Rev. Mr. Dennis Nesser, J.C.L., served as deacon. Following the Mass, a light reception was held in the Basilica Gathering Space.

"I am grateful for Bishop Brennan's continued commitment to the celebration of the Red Mass in Charleston and to all those from the diocese, the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, and the St. Thomas More Society for Catholic lawyers who helped to organize, promote and participate in the Mass," said Matthew Bowles, a member of the St. Thomas More Society of Charleston. Bowles also serves as executive director of the Catholic Conference of West Virginia which strives to give witness to spiritual values and Catholic teaching in public affairs and to shape public policy.

"Turnout and enthusiasm for the Red Mass are growing every year," Bowles added. "It is my hope that we can continue to pray together for the Holy Spirit to help us to practice our faith in our professional lives and for all lawyers, judges and government officials to seek the common good in theirs."

The Red Mass traces its roots back to the 13th century when it was celebrated in many European countries as well as the Sacred Roman Rota, the tribunal of the Holy See, to officially open the term of the respective courts. The first Red Mass in West Virginia was celebrated at the Co-Cathedral in Charleston in 1995.

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Evening Eucharistic Encounter

with Deacon Paul Lim

Monday, February 26, 2024

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 12:00pm | Mass |
| 1:00pm | Rosary |
| 3:00pm | Chaplet of Divine Mercy |
| 3:30-5:30 | Confessions |
| 6:00pm | Presentation with Deacon Lim
<i>(Reception to follow)</i> |



Deacon Paul Lim is a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He currently serves as Vice-President of Mission Integration at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital.



LENTEN LISTENING SESSIONS 2024

Feb. 21 at the Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston

Feb. 22 at St. Leo Church, Inwood

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Educators, Students of Nation's First Black Catholic School Honor foundress Mother Lange

By George P. Matysek Jr.

BALTIMORE (OSV News) — The one-and-only known photograph ever taken of Mother Mary Lange held a place of prominence during a special Jan. 30 Mass celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori at St. Frances Academy in East Baltimore.

Resting at the foot of an altar set up inside the school's gymnasium, the more than 140-year-old black-and-white image seemed to stare stoically at a congregation of more than 300 that had gathered to celebrate Mother Lange's recent advancement along the path to canonization.

Pope Francis declared the foundress of St. Frances Academy "venerable" June 22, 2023 — recognizing Mother Lange's heroic virtues. Mother Lange is one of six Black Catholics in the U.S. who are candidates for sainthood, four of whom have been declared "venerable."

Archbishop Lori, who called St. Frances Academy "holy ground" during his homily, elicited applause when he said the recognition of Mother Lange as venerable is "something of great importance, not only for this school and not only for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, but for the Catholic Church throughout the United States."

St. Frances Academy was founded in 1828 as the first Catholic school in the country to educate Black students. Mother Lange co-founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence one year later as the world's first sustained women's religious congregation for Blacks. She twice served as the order's superior general.

"We honor the courage of her conviction," Archbishop Lori said. "We honor the depth of her faith. In her life and in her witness, we know and see what God can do when we allow God to come into our hearts — when we follow his calling and embrace his plan for us."

The archbishop highlighted Mother Lange's trust in divine providence. He encouraged young people to recognize God at work in their lives today and to follow in Mother Lange's footsteps in becoming agents of change for tomorrow.

The archbishop acknowledged that there are

many seemingly insurmountable challenges facing today's generation — poverty, loneliness, isolation, ongoing divisions in society and the "terrible sin of racism" among them. Yet he insisted that God is calling people to lead lives of heroic virtue, lives that can change the world.

"Looking around at all of you today, I am full of tremendous hope because I think about all that God has yet to do in your lives," he said.

Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, the 20th superior general of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, urged those attending the liturgy to commit themselves to carrying out Mother Lange's admonition to "do all you can for the glory and honor of God."

"Like her, we can be a voice for the voiceless, a light in the darkness, a beacon of hope still there for those who have no hope," Sister Rita Michelle said. "And there are plenty of folks around us like that — offering ourselves, as she did, (in) selfless service to the people of God."

The liturgy, held during Catholic Schools Week, was attended by St. Frances students and faculty, representatives of a variety of women's and men's religious communities and area educators.

Moments after the last notes of a spirited rendition of "Oh Happy Day" echoed inside the gym, several St. Frances students said they look to Mother Lange as a role model.

"She's the entire reason this school exists," said Laila Fisher, an 18-year-old senior. "The fact that she's making this next chapter toward sainthood is a great accomplishment for the school and for everyone who goes here — so other people can learn who she is and what she built."

Nicholas Myles, an 18-year-old junior, said students ask for Mother Lange's intercession every school day during special prayers.

"Nobody would be here without what she did," he told the Catholic Review, the Baltimore Archdiocese's news outlet. "It took a lot of courage, especially during the time of slavery, for her to take that leap of faith in order to help Black kids get an education."

Deacon B. Curtis Turner, head of school at St.



OSV News Photo/George P. Matysek Jr., Catholic Review
Sister Trinita Baeza, an Oblate Sister of Providence, leads the general intercessions during a Mass celebrated Jan. 30 at St. Frances Academy in East Baltimore in honor of Mother Mary Lange, foundress of the school and co-foundress of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Mother Lange, one of six Black Catholics who are candidates for sainthood, was declared "venerable" by Pope Francis June 22, 2023, recognizing her heroic virtues.

Frances Academy, said he is humbled to have the same job once held by Mother Mary Lange.

"She was the first head of school and I believe I'm number 15," he said. "Whenever I feel like I'm having a bad day or can't get through something, she whispers into my ear about how much tougher it was for her. She literally had the Confederate Army 40 miles away at one point. She's my inspiration to this day."

St. Frances Academy planned to return the precious photograph of Mother Lange, likely taken in the early 1880s at the end of her long life, to the very room in the school where she died. It is kept on permanent display there.

Deacon Turner said the school community considers it a kind of relic.

"No question about it," he said.

(George P. Matysek Jr. is managing editor of the Catholic Review, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.)



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No Greater Honor

By Father Brian J. Crenwelge, director of vocations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

The Second Reading from the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time spoke about the dignity of the celibate life (1 Corinthians 7:32-35). The Church is wise to have that as a reading at Mass because celibacy is so misunderstood in today's oversexualized culture, particularly priestly celibacy.

I think many Catholics believe all priests should get married. Yet, I think that is because they do not fully understand celibacy—they simply focus on what it sacrifices. Celibacy is definitely a sacrifice. It's a sacrifice for priests to not have a wife. It's a sacrifice to not have a family of our own. Yet, that being said, it is a gift as well—a gift that Christ offers to those He chooses.

You might not know this, but priestly celibacy is actually apostolic—it has been present since the time of the Apostles. Before He ascended into heaven, Christ sent His disciples on a universal mission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:18-19) This mission was most serious—it involve a dedication/consecration of their whole lives. In other words, this mission would entail a marital continence from that point forward.

Now, sometimes it's mentioned that St. Peter had a wife because the Gospels mention his mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39). So how could he be celibate then? Well, we actually have a lot of writings from the early Church. The written evidence of tradition is unanimous that St. Peter did not remarry after the death of his wife. His priestly call had changed his life. The Church Fathers (the major writers/saints from the early Church), when speaking about this topic, wrote that he was continent when Christ sent him to preach the Gospel. In fact, all of the Apostles were continent/celibate when they began their apostolic mission after the Ascension. This had originated in their Ordination on Holy Thursday night. They chose to follow Christ in a radical way. This is not just some pious theory—it's referenced numerous times in the early years of the Church.

Unencumbered now by family obligations, the Apostles would carry out Christ's commands. As we heard in the second reading from the Fourth Sunday, St. Paul describes why celibacy would be important for them: "The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to

please his wife, and his interests are divided" (1 Cor. 7:32-34). Our Lord Himself spoke about celibacy and even encouraged it as well: "There are eunuchs [celibates] who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to accept it [being a eunuch] should accept it." (Mt. 19:12)

Priestly celibacy makes sense on a practical note: Celibacy is a critical component of the missionary spirit. Let's think about it—it's hard to imagine the great St. Isaac Jogues, after his horrific torture, reenlisting for service in North America as a family man. Or Blessed Stanley Rother being willing to return to Guatemala to be martyred if he had a family at home. Or St. Maximilian Kolbe being willing to sacrifice his life for a man he did not know simply because the man had children and a wife.

The gift of celibacy further enhances priestly freedom to challenge individuals to live chastity in their lives; it allows a priest to be free at all hours to drop everything and serve that which is demanding him; it allows him to be "separate" so as to be someone who people can trust with their secrets. People don't want to bother a family man at his home. Yet a celibate priest is meant to be bothered. He is free to serve in an unencumbering way. Further, it allows a priest to get to know his flock better. I spend a lot of time and have meals with parishioners several times a week. This would be unfair to my family to be gone that much if I was married.

Since apostolic times, the Church has protected and cultivated the gift of priestly celibacy. Men who are to be ordained priests promise celibacy in freedom. Nobody forces us to become celibate. We have felt a call from God to be so. A radical call to live as Christ lived. It's not a normal call—it's a supernatural one. Christ asks us to give Him our entire heart. For as St. Paul referenced in the Mass reading, celibacy gives a priest more time for prayer. For example, many priests do a daily holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament each day. I do not know any married man who is able to do that each day consistently. It's just not practical with the natural (and good) demands of family life. Celibacy even allows a priest to offend his entire congregation with the Gospel truth without endangering a wife and children. We can preach the truth and not be afraid that our families will be affected. Imagine if Blessed Stanley Rother had a family with him in the congregation when he was preaching against the corruption of the Guatemalan government! His family would naturally become a target. This idea is seen remarkably even in secular media—in the Spider-Man comics/movies, Peter Parker realizes that in his superhero role, having a re-


lationship would only endanger that other person. This is the same in the Batman comics/movies. It's a theme the main characters have to wrestle with. Even Hollywood gets it!


Now, many of you know that priestly celibacy is mainly found in the Roman Rite of the Church. The Eastern-rite Catholic churches permit the ordination of already married men. The Roman Church at times even dispenses men from celibacy for certain reasons. The Eastern rites still only have celibate bishops because bishops, through their consecration, have the fullness of the priesthood. This means they are the successors to the Apostles' priesthood and authority. The fullness of the priesthood demands a celibate life—because it is a complete configuration to Christ. Without prejudice to the married clergy, celibacy remains the apostolic norm and the universal preference in both the East and the West.

Sadly, there are some priests today who have a reductionist view of celibacy or who did not accept it as they ought to have at their ordination. That kind of priest merely promises "not to marry." They do not understand the beauty of what the celibate vocation signifies. It is a consecration

to our Lord to live as He lived; to be as He was; to love as He loved. It's a complete configuration to Christ. Consecration of one's whole life—including one's intimate life—to our Lord is a dedication that is so underappreciated these days. It points to how we will live in heaven. Freely-accepted celibacy says that sexual intimacy, though good in and of itself, is not the end all/be all of life, as Hollywood and the pornography industries seem to teach. Sadly, if a priest is not a man of prayer, celibacy will naturally become difficult for him because he will forget from whom he gets his strength and identity. There have been many poor examples of priests and bishops not living their promise of celibacy in recent years.

All these reasons (and more) above describe why we should not be afraid to defend priestly celibacy in our oversexualized culture and encourage young men to say yes to it if Christ is asking them. Yet I think the strongest and simplest argument for celibacy is that a priest is an alter Christus—another Christ. Christ gives His priests the grace to be like Him in all things. And for me, there is no greater honor than to walk in His footsteps as an alter Christus.


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Donald R. Kirsch Steps Down after 45 Years as Welty Corporation and Good Shepherd Nursing Home Executive

WHEELING — Donald R. Kirsch was hired as business manager of Good Shepherd Nursing Home in 1979, when Jimmy Carter was president, fewer than 10 percent of Americans had ever used a personal computer, and the nursing home had been in existence less than a decade.

When he retires next month, he leaves an organization that regularly earns top five-star ratings from the federal government, placing Good Shepherd in the top 10 percent of nursing homes nationwide. He is always quick to deflect credit, pointing to the staff of 320 full and part time staff who care for the Good Shepherd residents.

"I am blessed to have been part of a group of like-minded individuals whose sole purpose was the creation of a lasting legacy to the vision and generosity of Clara Welty and her sister Bertha," he said. The Welty sisters donated their fortune to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to care for elderly people.

"Together, from humble beginnings, we created the largest eldercare corporation registered exclusively in the State of West Virginia. To have been part of such an endeavor represents a rare opportunity, and one that I will cherish for the rest of my life," Kirsch said.

He is also grateful to Good Shepherd residents and their families. "I have cherished my time with our residents and their family members," he said. "The provision of eldercare is built on a foundation of trust. With all our efforts, we are nothing without those individuals and their family members who requested our help in their time of need. I wish to thank our residents and their family members, past and present, who trusted us to care for them."

Kirsch also thanked the many individuals who shared their time and talent to make Clara Welty's vision a reality. "In particular, I wish to thank the trustees of the Clara Welty Trust, whose investment and business acumen is beyond parallel; the devoted and skilled members of our Board of Directors; the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston; the five bishops I worked with, each of whom left an indelible mark on our corporation; and the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd and Pallottine Sisters for creating a religious presence within our facilities, along with spending hours upon hours in prayer for our success."

He singled out two individuals for special mention. "Of the myriad of people who helped me along the way, Richard G. Herndon and Dr. John W. Braddock offered me

the opportunity of a lifetime in my early 20s. As members of the Welty Board, they were generous in their advice and frugal in their criticism. From them, I received an education that no amount of money can buy."

He said Herndon and Braddock were self-made men with tremendous business acumen. "But, most importantly, they treated others with respect, dignity, and compassion," he said. "Although I received numerous job offers over the years, I could never leave the men who were willing to take a chance on me at such a young age. As a result, I have spent my entire career proving to them that I was worthy of the faith, trust, and confidence that they had placed in me," he said. "I owe these men everything. I miss them terribly." He said he is also grateful for the tremendous contributions of his family, wife Barbara, children, Jason, Justin and Morgan, sister Carol Terry and his parents Robert and Joan Kirsch. "I could not have done it without them," he said.

Kirsch was hired as Business Manager of Good Shepherd Nursing Home in 1979, two days before his 22nd birthday. Two years later, Bishop Joseph H. Hodges promoted him to administrator of Good Shepherd, making him the youngest nursing home administrator in the state at age 24. Later in his career, Kirsch was promoted to the position of Manager of the Welty Corporation, encompassing the Welty Home, The Clara and Bertha Welty Apartments, The Welty TownHomes, and The Braddock Apartments.

In a final meeting with the Welty Corporation staff, he thanked them for the care, concern, love, and affection that they show for the residents under their care. "This has resulted in a culture that is second to none," he said. "My thanks to your family members, spouses, and children for the sacrifices that they have made on your behalf because your profession is not measured in a 9-to-5 day."

Together, the staff, board, and Kirsch completed \$43 million worth of construction projects that increased the number of residents that the Welty Corporation serves by 60 percent. The organization added a short-term rehabilitation



Donald R. Kirsch

unit, and created an outpatient therapy unit to deliver physical, speech, and occupational therapy to residents and outpatients.

"Together, we earned national workplace safety awards from OSHA, making us the first eldercare corporation in West Virginia to do so," he said, adding that staff

fought COVID together and saved lives in the process.

He told staff that any single accomplishment he mentioned would be a major accomplishment for any eldercare corporation. "Yet you have achieved all of these accomplishments, and you did so with style, grace, and professionalism, along with a quiet humility that endears you to many."

Kirsch thanked staff for the faith and confidence that they showed him, and for allowing him to represent them in the commu-

nity. "Thank you for reaching into your pocket to purchase items for residents who did not have the funds to make the purchase themselves. Thank you for returning at the end of your day to remain with a gravely ill resident, making sure that they did not pass away alone," he said. "And thank you for providing me with wonderful memories that will sustain me for the remainder of my life."

Kirsch is confident that his replacement, who has trained as part of his staff for years, will continue to uphold the high standards that have made Good Shepherd the area's Best Nursing Home, according to the Wheeling newspapers' "Best of the Valley Readers' Choice Awards."

The Good Shepherd Board of Directors hired Morgan Murphy as the new administrator. The new administrator is a Wheeling native who is a graduate of Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a specialty in health services for long-term care at West Liberty University and a master's degree in health

See "Kirsch" on Page 10

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Kirsch ...

Cont'd from Page 9


care administration from Ohio University. She also happens to be the daughter of Donald and Barbara Kirsch.

Murphy has been a familiar face at Good Shepherd since she was a child. She often accompanied her father as he visited with residents and families and remembers being part of a group of piano students who performed music recitals for residents, especially during the holidays. In her teenage years she helped with resident activities and worked evenings and summers as a receptionist.

Before joining the staff as regulatory and compliance director, Murphy completed a yearlong administrator-in-training program at Good Shepherd, then was named manager of skilled rehabilitation and long-term care facility at East Ohio Regional Hospital. She later served as a physician integration specialist at the Ohio Valley Health Services & Education Corporation.

Kirsch said he and his Good Shepherd colleagues have spent Murphy's entire adult life preparing her for this type of opportunity. "Morgan is the right person with the right skill set to carry the legacy of Clara Welty forward into the next generation," he said. "All corporations should be so fortunate."

Good Shepherd Nursing Home is part of a continuum of senior living options offered by the non-profit Welty Corporation to deliver the features that discerning seniors need and want. For information call (304) 242-1093 or visit www.weltyhome.org.




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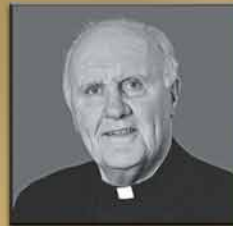
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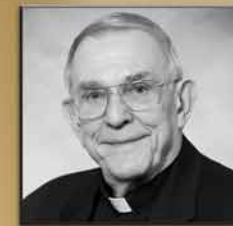
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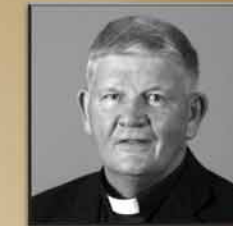
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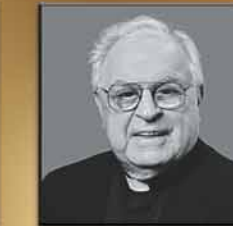
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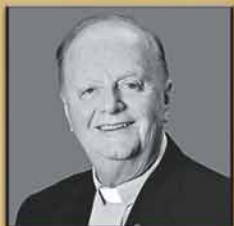
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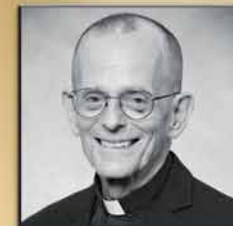
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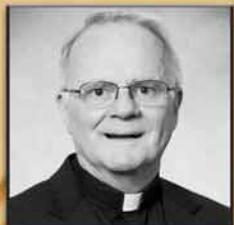
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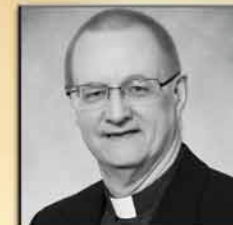
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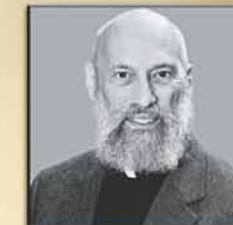
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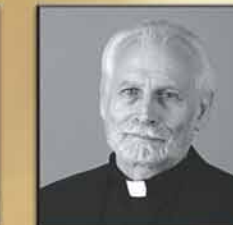
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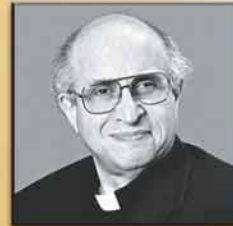
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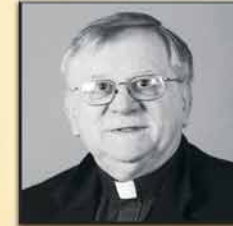
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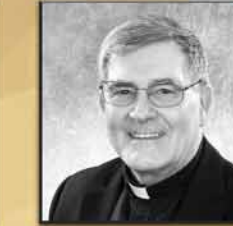
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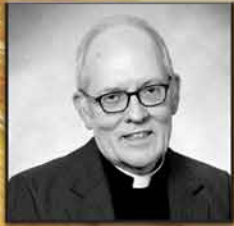
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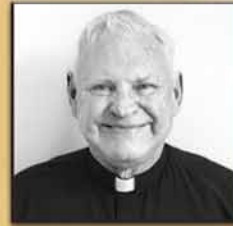
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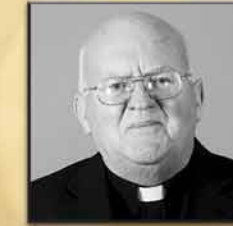
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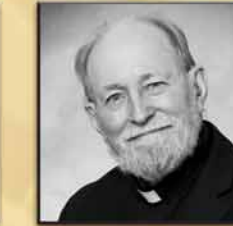
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El cambio de palabras en los sacramentos puede hacerlos inválidos, advierte dicasterio

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El Dicasterio para la Doctrina de la Fe dijo que sigue recibiendo informes de católicos, incluidos sacerdotes, que descubren que todos los sacramentos que han recibido son inválidos porque fueron bautizados años antes con una fórmula que no fue aprobada.

Cuando un sacerdote u otro ministro cambia las palabras, los gestos o el material prescrito para la celebración de los sacramentos, puede "robar" a los fieles lo que merecen y hacer que el sacramento sea inválido, dijo el dicasterio en una nota publicada el 3 de febrero.

La nota, "Gestis Verbisque" ("Gestos y Palabras"), fue aprobada por unanimidad por los miembros del dicasterio durante su asamblea plenaria del 25 de enero y fue aprobada por el Papa Francisco el 31 de enero, dice el documento, que fue firmado por el cardenal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefecto del dicasterio, y monseñor Armando Matteo, secretario de la sección doctrinal del dicasterio.

Al presentar el documento, el cardenal Fernández escribió que en 2022 los cardenales y obispos miembros del dicasterio ya habían "manifestado su preocupación por la multiplicación de situaciones en las que se había constatado la invalidez de los sacramentos celebra-

dos".

Como ejemplo, el cardenal citó las ceremonias de bautismo en las que, en lugar de decir: "Yo te bautizo en el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo", el ministro modificaba la fórmula diciendo: "Yo te bautizo en el nombre del Creador..." o "En el nombre del papá y de la mamá, nosotros te bautizamos".

En 2020, la congregación entonces doctrinal emitió una nota diciendo que los bautismos celebrados con la fórmula "Te bautizamos..." también eran inválidos, lo que desencadenó un esfuerzo a gran escala en varias diócesis, incluso en Estados Unidos, para localizar a las personas que habían sido bautizadas de forma inválida.

Los sacramentos que recibieron posteriormente, incluida la Primera Comunión, la Confirmación e incluso la ordenación sacerdotal, tampoco eran válidos, ya que sólo un católico bautizado puede recibir válidamente los demás sacramentos.

El cardenal Fernández dijo que la situación es particularmente dolorosa para los sacerdotes que no sólo descubren que sus ordenaciones fueron inválidas, sino que también lo fueron todos los sacramentos que celebraron posteriormente.

Un sacerdote de la Arquidiócesis de Detroit, que había sido bauti-

zado con la fórmula equivocada 30 años antes, volvió a empezar cuando se publicó el documento de 2020. Fue bautizado, confirmado, recibió la Eucaristía, fue ordenado diácono y sacerdote en el espacio de 10 días. La arquidiócesis creó una página web para las personas que pensaban que habían recibido los sacramentos de él antes de 2020.

"Cualquier modificación a la fórmula de un sacramento o su materia es siempre un acto gravemente ilícito y merece un castigo ejemplar, precisamente porque tales actos arbitrarios son capaces de producir graves daños al Pueblo fiel de Dios", escribió el cardenal.

Aunque el documento no especifica un castigo, explica la importancia de utilizar las palabras prescritas, la materia exacta — como agua, vino o aceite — y gestos como la unción, la imposición de manos y la señal de la cruz.

"Mientras que en otros ámbitos de la acción pastoral de la Iglesia hay un amplio espacio para la creatividad", escribió el cardenal en el prólogo, "tal inventiva en el ámbito de la celebración de los sacramentos se convierte en una 'voluntad manipuladora' y no puede ser invocada".

"Por su arraigo en la Escritura y en la Tradición, la materia y la forma nunca dependen ni pueden depender del deseo del individuo o de la comunidad particular", decía

el documento.

"Instituidos por Cristo, los sacramentos son acciones que realizan, mediante signos sensibles, la experiencia viva del misterio de la salvación, haciendo posible la participación del ser humano en la vida divina", dice el documento. "Son las 'obras maestras de Dios' en la Nueva y Eterna Alianza, fuerzas que brotan del cuerpo de Cristo, acciones del Espíritu que actúa en su cuerpo que es la Iglesia".

"Por eso la Iglesia en la Liturgia celebra con fiel amor y veneración los sacramentos que Cristo mismo le ha confiado para que los conserve como herencia preciosa y fuente de su vida y de su misión", decía el documento.

Un sacerdote celebra los sacramentos no sólo "in persona Christi" — en la persona de Cristo — sino también "in nomine Ecclesiae" — en nombre de la Iglesia —, decía, razón por la cual debe seguir exactamente los textos litúrgicos aprobados por la Iglesia, que indican cuándo y dónde se permiten adaptaciones o variaciones locales.

La nota doctrinal dice que se aplica a toda la Iglesia, aunque pide a las iglesias católicas orientales que redacten sus propias versiones del documento, utilizando su lenguaje teológico particular "cuando difiera del utilizado en el texto", y que lo sometan a la aprobación del dicasterio antes de su publicación.

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

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números 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; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, 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, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

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Chancery Employees Raise Funds and Provisions for Animal Shelter



Colleen Rowan Photo

Diocesan employees at the chancery in Wheeling raised money and provisions for the Ohio County Animal Shelter through a dress down day Jan. 26. Accepting the donations on Jan. 30 are Nelson Croft, manager of the shelter, and Deuce, who is available for adoption. Employees raised \$80 to cover his adoption fee. Holding Deuce is Debbie Turziano, director of Human Resources for the diocese. Also from Human Resources are Debra Sine and Mary Paczewski (standing from left) and Julie Link, office manager for the diocese's Department of Catholic Schools (at right). Sine sadly passed away a few days after this photo was taken.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Spring 2024 Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Sunday, March 17: St. Margaret Mary, Parkersburg; 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown; 5:15 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10: Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling; 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 11: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton; 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 14: SS Peter and Paul, Oak Hill; 10:30 a.m.

Monday, April 15: Corpus Christi, Wheeling; 6:00 p.m.

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

Sunday, April 21: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Stonewood; 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, April 28: St. Jude, Glen Dale; 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 5: St. Brendan, Elkins; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 11: St. John the Evangelist, Wellsburg; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 11: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 12: Immaculate Conception, New Cumberland; 8:30 a.m.

Monday, May 13: St. Michael, Wheeling; 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 19: St. Agnes, Charleston; 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 22: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg; 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 25: St. James, Charles Town; 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 25: St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 26: St. Joseph, Martinsburg; 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 1: St. Francis Xavier, Moundsville; 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 8: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston; 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 9: Sacred Heart, Princeton; 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 15: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 16: St. John the Evangelist, Summersville; 9:00 a.m.

Women's Discernment Retreat

June 21-23, 2024 St. Joseph Retreat Center, Wheeling, WV



The Office of Consecrated Life presents a discernment retreat for single Catholic women ages 18 and over. In a world that lacks moments of silence and reflection it can be easy for us to ignore our callings. Join us and take this time to get to know yourself, your heart, and how Christ is working in your life.

- ✦ Retreat is free.
- ✦ Be with other discerning women.
- ✦ Register now - space is limited!



To Register/More Info:



Sister Martha Gomez, RGS,
mgomez@dwc.org




Office of Consecrated Life
(304)233-0880 ext. 264

Thank You, Officer Lehman!


On Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week, the PK Jr. classes at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg were visited by Officer Lehman of the Martinsburg Police Department. He talked to the children about how he and his fellow officers help protect the community. Thank you, Officer Lehman!

Courtesy Photo





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A YEAR WITH THE SAINTS

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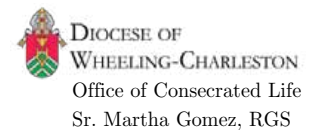
Note: Each session will begin at 7 pm and will be presented via Zoom.

January 29	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – Sr. Mary Clark, SC
February 26	St. Brigid of Kildare – Sr. Karen Kirby, CSJ
March 18	St. Joseph – Sr. Kathleen Durkin, CSJ
April 29	St. Mary Euphrasia – Sr. Martha Gomez, R.G.S.
May 20	Blessed Virgin Mary – TBD
June 24	Marcellin Champagnat – Brother John Byrd, FMS
July 29	St. Ignatius of Loyola – Lou Volpe
August 26	St. Dominic – Sr. Ellen Dunn, OP
September 30	St. Lorenzo Ruiz – Fr. Carlos Melocoton
October 28	Jesuit Martyrs – TBD
November 18	Servant of God Dorothy Day – Kate Marshall
December 16	St. Stephan – Deacon John Yaquinta

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

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RSVP – Anna Marie Troiani: atroiani@csjoseph.org



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