

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Continue Jubilee Pilgrimage, Bringing Hope into the World, Vicar General Says



Very Rev. John Rice, V.G., V.F., enters the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston to open the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Dec. 29. Joining him are clergy, religious, seminarians, and the faithful in a procession with the jubilee cross (shown here) which was carried into the basilica co-cathedral where he celebrated Mass that morning. The opening of the Jubilee Year in the diocese was also celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling by Bishop Mark Brennan at the same time as the Mass celebrated by Father Rice in Charleston.

Martina Hart photo

By Colleen Rowan

(Editor's note: This issue of *The Catholic Spirit* will cover the celebration of the opening Mass of the Jubilee Year of Hope in Charleston. The Jan. 3 issue featured coverage of the opening Mass in Wheeling.)

In his celebration of Mass opening the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Very Rev. John Rice, V.G., V.F., said he was blessed and privileged to be with those gathered at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

"And I thank all of you for joining us," he said, "from wherever around our diocese you have journeyed today."

The opening was celebrated simultaneously in West Virginia on the morning of Dec. 29 by Bishop Mark Brennan at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling and by Father Rice at the basilica co-cathedral. Both celebrations included a procession of clergy, religious, and pilgrims into the churches with a jubilee cross of significance that will remain near the altars in the sanctuaries for the entire Holy Year.

Continuing his homily, Father Rice shared that he called Bishop Mark Brennan a few days

before to ask if there were any particular thoughts that he wanted to express for the opening of the Jubilee of Hope, here, in West Virginia.

"I caught him in a bad time, though," Father Rice told the congregation. "He was visiting with one of our infirmed priests."

Though that may have been the perfect thing to communicate, Father Rice added. "That, whether in words or in deeds, we offer hope to every person that we encounter," he said. "In the Holy Father's bull, announcing this jubilee, there were several categories of people that he

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Faithful Invited to Take Disciple Maker Index (DMI) Survey

WEST VIRGINIA—Our parishes in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are on a journey to grow in missionary discipleship to know, love, and serve Christ as a community.

Partnering with the Catholic Leadership Institute, the first step is assessing our parishes' greatest strengths and opportunities.

That's why the faithful are being invited in their parishes to take the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey!

Parishioners will share their perspective to help strengthen our parishes and better prepare us for the future – as we journey together striving to bring more of Christ's love into our parish community.

The DMI is designed to:

- Invite parishioners in each parish to reflect on their journey of discipleship.

- Enable parish leadership to make data-driven decisions.

- Help parishioners grow in their faith.

Information and survey links are being distributed in each parish or can be found at: <https://dwc.org/2024-dmi-survey-links/>

On Behalf of Bishop Brennan, thank you for taking part in this important evangelization project.

A blue graphic with a faint circular seal in the background. The text reads: "DISCIPLE MAKER INDEX" in large white letters, followed by "SHARE YOUR VOICE" in smaller white letters. At the bottom left is the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston logo, and at the bottom right is the website "www.dwc.org" with social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

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

2025 Print Issues and Dates:

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



To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement: numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or 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, 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:** 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, 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.

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:** 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, 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.

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Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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

Hope...

Cont'd from Page 1 mentioned and, yes, the sick were among those named."

As the celebration fell on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, Father Rice spoke of how the virtue of hope is related to families.

"Maybe you, like me, look around and say, this place is not what it used to be," he said. "I'm not only talking about the church. You can take a look around our cities. Look around our state. West Virginia is losing population faster than any other state in the union. What does that look like? Well, it looks like the graying of the population. It looks like the hopelessness consuming our communities. Looks like our children not getting married. Looks like smaller families, and schools closing."

One of the ways the faithful can bring a Jubilee of Hope, he said, is simply by encouraging young people to get married and for them to trust that God will provide for the family that he blesses them with.

"Openness to children is cooperating with God and bringing a sign of hope to the world," Father Rice said. ... "The truth is, without children we have no future. The family is the smallest social cell, the building block of society."

He shared the words of Pope John Paul II, who said: "As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live."

The domestic church, the family, is critical in building a world filled with hope, Father Rice said, because it is here that we learn the necessity of forgiving others, allowing ourselves to be forgiven when we do wrong.

Father Rice recalled a memory from his youth in which his father found him fighting with his brother.

"He got in between us and insisted that before we could beat each other up we had to take him on," Father Rice said. "When we hung our heads, he insisted, 'Now shake hands and make up.' The lesson was not lost on us. It's in the family that we learn the virtue of patience." It is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit

that sustains our hope and strengthens it as a way of life, Father Rice said. This interplay of hope and patience makes us see clearly that the Christian life is a journey calling for moments of greater intensity to encourage and sustain hope as the constant companion that guides our steps toward the goal of our encounter with the Lord.

"But perhaps the most identifying mark of this jubilee is simply how we define hope," Father Rice said, "Saint Paul tells us that we ought to be ready at any moment to give a reason for our hope. Can you do that? If I were a stranger on the street who noticed your joy, your sense of peace, and I asked you: How can you have a smile on your face when our city is ravaged by drugs and our world consumed by violence? What would you say? Or are you consumed by the wars that define global politics and the ... psychology that pushes so many people to think that the world revolves around them? According to our Holy Father, we are to share our gift of hope with each of those people."

Father Rice continued by relaying why he has hope. Very simply, he said, because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"Because of my faith in him, sin and death do not control me," Father Rice said. "That doesn't mean that I don't have problems or even that I don't sin. Trials and tribulations mark every disciple. But it does mean that those are not the center of my attention. And when I do sin, I have access to the sacrament of reconciliation to be made right with God and with my neighbor."

When he has difficult circumstances in his life, he said, he knows that he is not alone.

"I always, always have somewhere to turn," he said. "Or, rather, someone to turn to. Because hope, my dear brothers and sisters, is born of the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus on the cross and that makes today's celebration initiating this Year of Hope ever more appropriate that we be celebrating at the Basilica **See "Hope" on Page 4**



Courtesy photo

Very Rev. John Rice, V.G., V.F., enters the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston to open the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Dec. 29.

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Hope...

Cont'd from Page 3
of the Sacred Heart."

In a state where more than 50 percent of the people are unchurched, he said, there is a great need to spread the Good News.

"Many of us have witnessed the change that comes about in people when they finally grasp on to the hope that was offered to them," he said.

Recalling a time when he was a seminarian, he was helping to clean up a small town after a devastating flood. It took three days of offering to help before a small business owner finally relented and allowed his team to carry buckets of mud out of his basement. Several hours later, at the end of the day, with tears streaming down his face he thanked the volunteers, saying that because of their persistence, he now had hope for his future.

"And this is every bit as true

when we share our faith with people as it is when we offer to help in practical ways," Father Rice said. "Anyone who has worked with the OCIA has seen that transformation as candidates draw ever closer to Christ then literally glow on the night of the Easter Vigil. A gentle encouragement to loved ones who now no longer accompany you to Mass, a little affirmation when they ask the hard questions, plant the seeds. Nurture them, but most importantly pray for that person who needs conversion and does not even recognize it yet. Ask God to open their heart and lead them to love him more deeply, because it is only God who will be able to reach them. We, who bring that message of hope to them, are merely his agents bringing hope to a dark world."

Father Rice continued by saying the final aspect of this Jubilee of Hope that Pope Francis pointed out is that pilgrimage is a fundamental element of every jubilee. Father Rice apologized for the rain that

morning that cut the beautiful Litany of the Saints so short and cut into the gathered faithful's experience of being pilgrims going into the basilica co-cathedral.

"But at the same time, I am delighted that so many people from around the state have made the journey to open this jubilee in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston," he said. ... "Pilgrimage is a fundamental element of every jubilee."

He turned then to the jubilee cross that led pilgrims into the church.

"This cross will remain here for veneration for this jubilee year. May we be reminded, every time you walk into this church, of this celebration of hope," he said.

Yet, the celebration that day was just the beginning, Father Rice said. "Because now that you have journeyed into the heart of Christ, into his Sacred Heart, you are called now to continue your jubilee pilgrimage bringing hope to those

parts of the world that you touch, offering forgiveness to those who do not deserve it, advocating for mercy and assisting the poor, giving comfort to the afflicted, and welcoming the stranger," he said. "Of all the things that we can do to bring hope to people, the most enduring is to introduce them to your reason for having hope. The bottom line is this: Our hope—the reason that we can smile even when we're having a bad day—is a gift that has been given to us. It is a hope that was born of the love of the father for us, sending a savior to rescue us from the power of sin and death. My dear friends, we have hope not because of the size of our bank accounts or the number of toys we possess or the great things we've accomplished. We have hope simply because of our faith—faith that no bully, not even the devil, can have the last word. My hope is that I will share the resurrection that Jesus has promised to me and nothing on earth can take that away."



Martina Hart photo

Pilgrims attend the opening Mass of the Jubilee Year of Hope at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston Dec. 29, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

FATHER SEBASTIAN DEVASYA HOLY YEAR ITALY PILGRIMAGE

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Inwood Knights of Columbus Planning Trip to March for Life in Washington; Contact Council to Attend

INWOOD—The Knights of Columbus at St. Leo Parish in Inwood are working on plans to attend the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Friday, Jan. 24, no matter what the weather brings.

This year's theme, *Life: Why We March*, reminds us of the importance of standing together to honor the sacredness of every life, and aims to inspire marchers to reflect on their own reason for marching.

The Knights are trying to gauge interest of people who want to go to the March. Please let any member of the Knights know if you are interested in attending or contact Rich Johnson, Life Director St. Leo's Knights of Columbus, at richjj42@gmail.com.

Morgantown Charter Bus Available to March for Life in Washington

MORGANTOWN—The 52nd Annual March for Life will be Friday, Jan. 24, in Washington, D.C. The Monongalia County Chapter of West Virginians for Life is chartering a bus to the event. Students and chaperones from Trinity Christian High School in Morgantown will be on board, as well. Cost is \$20 per person or \$35 for a family of three or more. Bus will leave at 7 a.m. from parking lot at JC Penney, Morgantown Mall, in Morgantown. This is a day trip. Return time is approximately 8 p.m. Reservations are mandatory at (304) 594-9845. Call first to make sure seats are still available. Payment secures your seat.

Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship for Youth Ages 9-14 to be Held at PCHS

PARKERSBURG—The Knights of Columbus Council 594 in Parkersburg will host a local competition for the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship to be held on Jan. 18 at Parkersburg Catholic High School beginning at noon in the school gymnasium. Open to all boys and girls ages 9 to 14 that attend a school in Wood County, the Free Throw Championship is sponsored annually by the Knights of Columbus. Winners progress through local, district and state/province level competitions.

Please pre-register your child by sending an email to donalddurochia@gmail.com and be sure to include the child's name, age, gender, school, and phone number. For additional information, contact Josh Price at (304) 482-4936.

Pray for Priests and the Unborn Every Tuesday in Weirton

WEIRTON—You are invited to join the Rosary Group, which meets every Tuesday evening 6-7 p.m. in St. Joseph the Worker Church in Weirton. The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet are prayed as well as a prayer for priests and the unborn, with special intentions to St. Anthony and a prayer of abandonment.

All the prayers are from a booklet designed by Father Jose Manuel Escalante. For more information, call the church office at (304) 723-2054.

St. Joseph School, Martinsburg, Alumni Invited to Share Favorite Memories

MARTINSBURG — St. Joseph School in Martinsburg will celebrate National Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 26 to Feb. 1. As part of the celebration, the school is inviting alumni to send a 20- to 30-second audio recording of them describing a favorite memory from their time at the school or how a Catholic education impacted their lives.

Alumni: Please state your name and when you attended the school in your recording. Please send the recordings as an attachment to mpartington@sjsvw.org and please write "alumni recording" in the subject line.



A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

Deep within the heart of every man is a call to live with purpose and meaning; a call to lead, to protect, to serve and to defend.

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Knights lead with faith. Knights protect our families. Knights serve those in need.

When the world says men should step aside, Knights of Columbus step up.

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Schedule for 40 Hours Devotion 1/17-1/19

Friday, Jan. 17th

6:00 PM—Exposition and Vespers with Preached Sermon

9:30 PM— Compline

Saturday, Jan. 18th

8:00 AM—Office of Readings and Lauds

8:30 AM—Votive Mass of The Most Holy Eucharist

12:00 PM—Recitation of the Angelus and the Most Holy Rosary

5:00 PM—Vespers followed by Simple Reposition

5:30 PM—Saturday Vigil Mass

9:30 PM—Chanted Compline

Sunday, Jan 19th

9:30 AM—Office of Readings and Lauds followed by Simple Reposition

10:30 AM—Solemn Mass

6:00 PM—Solemn Vespers and Benediction with Preached Sermon

20/20 Vision Series for 2025

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE APPALACHIAN PASTORAL LETTERS

"THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME" (1975)

"AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE" (1995)

"THE TELLING TAKES US HOME" (2015)

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

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

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

Cost for complete series: \$120.00 Or \$15.00 per session.

RSVP – Anna Marie Troiani: atroiani@csjoseph.org



DIOCESE OF
WHEELING-CHARLESTON
Office of Consecrated Life
Sr. Martha Gomez, RGS

Washington's New Archbishop Seeks to 'Know and Understand This Magnificent Community of Faith'

By **Richard Szczepanowski, OSV News**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Hours after Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego was announced Jan. 6 as the new archbishop of Washington, the prelate praised his new archdiocese as “truly sacramental in the rich diversity of its traditions and perspectives.”

He also pledged to “show reverence for the grace of God which is already present in your midst and in the commitment to discipleship that underlies this local church.”

“I come as your bishop seeking to know and understand this magnificent community of faith,” Cardinal McElroy said. “As your pastor, an essential element of my mission is to encounter the hearts and the souls of the disciples who form our local church.”

In a virtual news conference at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, Cardinal McElroy addressed his new flock via the Archdiocese of Washington's YouTube channel because a major snowstorm shut down the city.

“I want to give thanks to God for the grace-filled life of this local church and to Our Holy Father, Pope Francis who today makes me a member of that church,” Cardinal McElroy said.

Early Jan. 6, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Washington's archbishop since 2019, and named the San Diego prelate as his successor. As required by church law, Cardinal Gregory had submitted his resignation to the pope when he turned 75, which was two years ago, on Dec. 7, 2022.

Cardinal McElroy will be installed as Washington's eighth archbishop on March 11 at 2 p.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The new archbishop of Washington said he has embraced Pope Francis' emphasis on synodality and its call for the faithful to “build up a church centered in the Eucharist and devoted to the Word of God and the sacraments which sustain us.”

“Synodality calls us to walk humbly as a church, acknowledging our faults and sinfulness, and seeking forgiveness,” said Cardinal McElroy, who is 70. “It seeks the participation of every disciple in the church's journey in this earthly pilgrimage, and is oriented toward the building of unity in society rooted in God's justice, which cares especially for the unborn, the poor, the marginalized and the dispossessed.”

He said that in the Archdiocese of Washington, “for the past 85 years, the Catholic community has radiated the light of Christ throughout the District of Columbia and the surrounding five counties in Maryland.”

The archdiocese is home to more than 671,000 Catholics in D.C. and Maryland's Montgomery, Prince



OSV News photo/Geoffrey Ros, Archdiocese of Washington
Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory and Cardinal Robert W. McElroy leave a Jan. 6 news conference at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington. That morning, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Cardinal Gregory, Washington's archbishop since 2019, and named Cardinal McElroy of San Diego as his successor. As required by canon law, Cardinal Gregory submitted his resignation to the pope two years ago after he turned 75 on Dec. 7, 2022.

George's, St. Mary's, Calvert and Charles counties.

Cardinal McElroy praised the archdiocese for its “rich parish communities of faith” and its “path-breaking development of lay ministries and apostolates, and the nurturing in lay leadership in the church that is genuinely participative and inclusive.”

The Washington Archdiocese, Cardinal McElroy said, boasts “ministries of the African American community, which is so foundational for the entire life of this local church, and the ministries to the multitude of peoples that seek and find God's presence in this place — from Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and South America; Europe, Asia and Africa.”

The people of his new archdiocese, the cardinal said, are “men and women who form the people of God, struggling in a world filled with turbulence, hardship and illusion, to follow the pathway of Jesus Christ ... (and are) called to be both dispensers and receivers of mercy and forgiveness.”

He noted that the Archdiocese of Washington has experienced “mountain-top moments” such as the visits of St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis and has endured “moments of failure and shame,” including reports of the sexual abuse of minors.

“In this mixture of the mountain top and failure, we are no different from the first disciples of the Lord,” Cardinal McElroy said. “It is to this community on the journey of faith that the Holy Father has called me to be bishop and pastor.”

He said that in the upcoming months, he will meet with the priests of the archdiocese because “I want to support them in the priesthood we all

share, with all of its wonders and its hardships,” and also meet with parish lay leaders “to understand their dreams, their hopes and their sadness about the church at the parish, diocesan and universal levels.”

“Through this pathway, I can become oriented to the life of the archdiocese in all of its wonder and complexity,” Cardinal McElroy said. “Forming a vision for the archdiocese for the coming years will have to be a truly collaborative effort if it is to guide us through the challenges we now face and will face in the future and help us to seize the opportunities for pastoral growth that lie within our midst.”

Speaking in Spanish, the new archbishop of Washington addressed Hispanic Catholics in the archdiocese telling them that “I want to be a good pastor and I want to constantly declare that the church is the mother to all, all, all.”

Noted for his environmental protection efforts in the Diocese of San Diego, Cardinal McElroy was asked about his care for creation plans after he is installed in this archdiocese. He said, “It is a top issue in our world — how are we going to preserve the creation God has given us.”

He said that many of those efforts were spurred by the Washington Archdiocese's *Laudato Si'* Action Plan, suggesting ways that local Catholics can bring Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on the environment to life in their homes, parishes, schools and institutions.

He said “one of the great challenges for the church and the world at this moment is the care for our home here on the Earth,” and he said it is important to foster concern for the environment among young people because “they are

the future who are going to help save our planet which is God's creative work. It is a grace given to us by God.”

When asked about how he would work with the incoming Trump administration, Cardinal McElroy called for “greater unity in the political and cultural sphere.”

“All of us as Americans should hope and pray that the government of our nation is successful in helping to enhance our society, our culture, our life and the whole of our nation,” he said. “I pray that President (Donald) Trump's administration and all those state and local legislatures and governors across the whole of the country will work together to make our nation truly better, and to talk through the major issues that we face.”

The cardinal mentioned immigration as an issue that, in terms of the Catholic Church, “might be in contrast with some of the priorities the president-elect has been talking about.”

“The Catholic Church teaches the country has a right to control its own border and our nation's desire to do that is a legitimate effort, but at the same time we are called to always have a sense of the dignity of every human person,” Cardinal McElroy said. “A wider, indiscriminate mass deportation across the country would be something that would be incompatible to Catholic doctrine, so we will have to see what emerges in this administration.”

Cardinal McElroy said Cardinal Gregory — appointed by Pope Francis in 2019 as the seventh archbishop of Washington and elevated to the College of Cardinals the following year — displayed “courage, a deeply pastoral heart and abiding faith in God and the dignity of the human person” as he “made critically important contributions at crucial moments in order to bring the Gospel of Jesus to the heart and the soul of the Catholic community here in Washington.”

“This enduring legacy will long remain a treasure for us all,” Cardinal McElroy said of Cardinal Gregory.

At the Jan. 6 conference, Cardinal Gregory said, “As I reflect upon the past nearly six years in this wonderful local church of Washington, my heart is filled predominantly with joy and gratitude for the many blessings, always appreciated but rarely deserved that God has granted me.”

He thanked the priests, auxiliary bishops and the faithful, noting that “we have loved one another, cared for one another, challenged one another to be the Catholic Church Jesus Christ calls us to be.”

Cardinal Gregory said that he plans to remain in Washington after his retirement and serve where needed.

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

Pope Condemns Economy That 'Does Not Respect Life,' Exploits Children

**By Justin McLellan, Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — While society is

increasingly focused on pushing the limits of human achievement, it must not lose sight of its duty to protect the dignity of the vulnerable, especially children exploited by the "scourge of child labor," Pope Francis said.

"Today we know how to turn our eyes toward Mars or virtual worlds, but we struggle to look into the eyes of a child who has been left on the margins and is being exploited and abused," he said at his general audience Jan. 8.

The thousands of people, including many children, who gathered to see the pope in the Vatican audience hall also were treated to a short performance by members of the Circafrica, a circus troupe with animatronic elephants, acrobats and dancers from several African nations.

In his main audience talk, Pope Francis told the crowd that "the century that generates artificial intelligence and designs multiplanetary existences has not yet come to terms with the scourge of humiliated, exploited, mortally wounded childhood."

Speaking about child labor, the pope said that "too many little ones are forced to work."

"Everywhere on earth there are children exploited by an economy that does not respect life, an economy that, in doing so, burns up our greatest reservoir of hope and love," he said. A child "who does not smile and dream cannot come to know or nurture his or her talents."

All those who recognize themselves as children of God, especially those who share the Gospel with others, he said, "cannot remain indifferent, cannot accept that little sisters and brothers, rather than being loved and protected, may have their childhood taken from them, their dreams" and become "victims of exploitation and marginalization."

Christianity's respect for children is rooted in Scripture, the pope said, noting that the word "child" is the second-most cited word in the Old Testament after the name of God, "Yahweh."

The Bible portrays both the joy children bring and the suffering they endure, he said. "Songs of joy resound, but the screams of victims also rise."

"Children are a gift from God," he said. "Un-

fortunately, this gift is not always treated with respect."

Pope Francis pointed to the Gospel account of the threat to the newborn Jesus by "the blizzard of Herod's violence, who slaughtered the children of Bethlehem: a dark drama that is repeated in other forms in history."

King Herod, after learning from the Magi about the birth of a king, ordered the massacre of all male children aged 2 and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fled to Egypt after being warned in a dream.

As a result, the Holy Family experienced "the nightmare of becoming refugees in a foreign country, as happens even today to so many people, to so many children," the pope said.

Pope Francis also noted how Jesus frequently presented children as models of faith and told his followers that those who do not convert and become like a child "will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

After his main speech, Pope Francis asked for prayers for peace in Ukraine, Nazareth, Israel and all nations at war. "War is always a defeat," he said.

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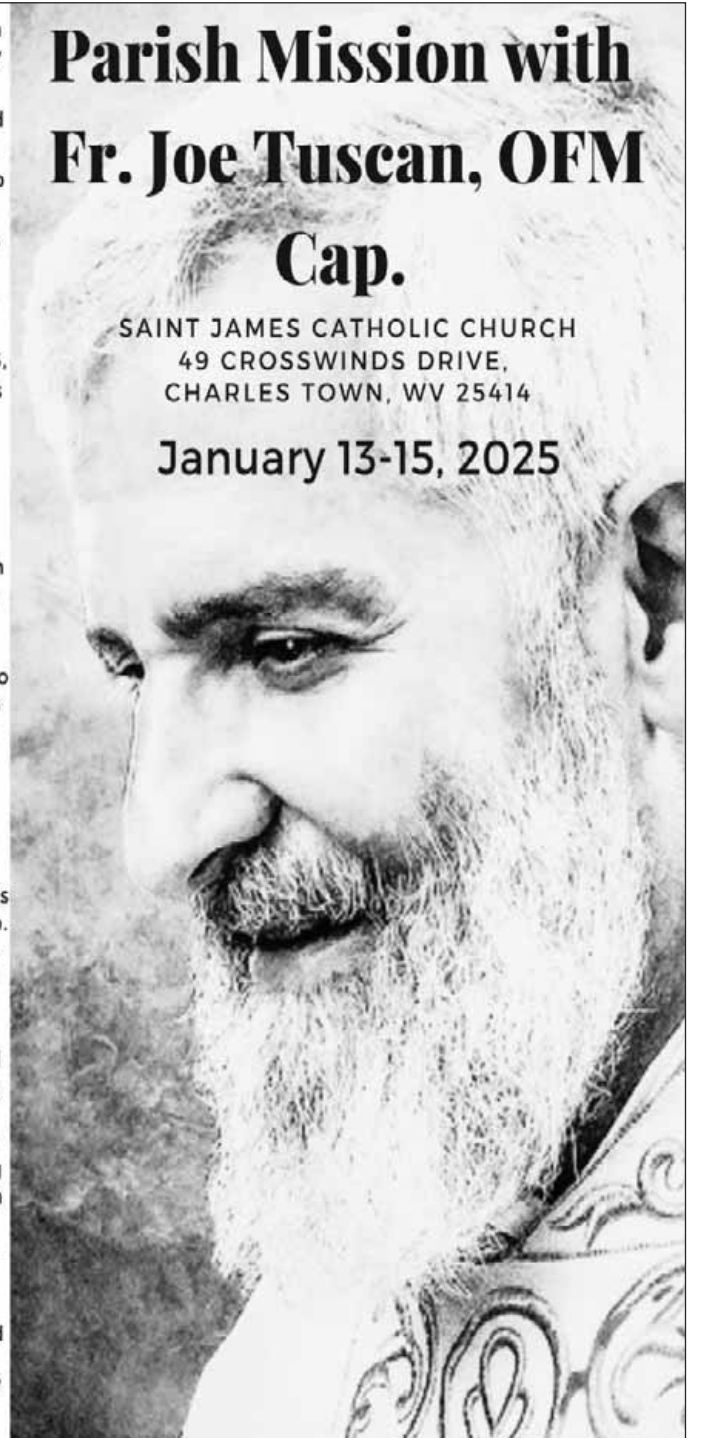
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Fr. Joseph was born in Columbus, OH, in 1967 and was raised in Canton, OH. He earned his Bachelor's degree in 1989 from Borromeo College Seminary. In 1990, he professed his first vows as a Capuchin Franciscan friar. Making his Perpetual vows in 1993, he went on to earn his Master's degree in theology in 1995 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1997. His first assignment after ordination was in Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific where he served for four years. Returning to the US in 2001, he has ministered in various capacities as a parochial vicar and pastor, as well as a military and hospital chaplain; he also served in our Province's Custody of Puerto Rico. Our brother currently serves as the national director of the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers and in full-time preaching ministry for the Capuchin Province of St. Augustine, offering retreats and reflection days for parishes, Religious and Priests. Fr. Joseph can be viewed on several YouTube channels and has appeared on Catholic Radio and TV outlet

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Clarksburg's Immaculate Conception Parish Welcomes Back Beloved Missionaries



Courtesy photo
Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg welcomed back Susan Jacquelyn Clemente Santos “Jacky” and Emily Raquel Gonzales Arellano. “It’s wonderful to have them to help with our Hispanic Ministry, but to have them join us in faith,” parish officials posted to Facebook. Pictured from left are lizabeth Garcia Posada and Thais Rojas Trinidad, missionaries for St. Mary Parish in Morgantown; Msgr. Paul Hudock; and Arellano and Santos from Immaculate Conception.



Nativity Scenes from around Our Diocese

As the liturgical Season of Christmas concludes this Sunday (Jan. 12), the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, please enjoy a few scenes of the Nativity at parishes around our diocese. Shown above is the Nativity scene at Sacred Heart Mission in Powhatan (Jim Copolo photo). At right, is the Nativity scene at All Saints Parish in Bridgeport (Stephen Pishner photo).



Employment Opportunities

St. John XXIII Pastoral Center Job Opening – Cook

The Cook at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, as a member of Diocesan Services, is committed to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ and offering hospitality to our guests. The Cook is responsible for the preparation, service, clean-up and storage of all meals, snacks and food service for special functions. Assures the kitchen/dining room/dish room areas are clean and in good order at the end of a shift or function. Oversees and assists kitchen aides in the preparation, service and storage of food and cleanliness of the kitchen/dining area. Works early mornings, days, evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays as needed. Prefer a minimum of one year experience in food service.

For more information, contact the Director, Gerri Wright at (304) 342-0507.

St. John XXIII Pastoral Center Job Opening – Guest Services Coordinator

The Guest Services Coordinator at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, as a member of Diocesan Services, is committed to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ and offering hospitality to our guests.

The Guest Services Coordinator is responsible for working with guests to plan and book lodging and events. Some of the required qualifications include multi-tasker, problem solver & self-starter, detail oriented, excellent written & verbal skills, computer knowledge, team player and welcoming & respectful to all faith & secular guests. Additionally, the position entails the ability to perform the physical requirements of kitchen aide & housekeeper.

Works evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays as needed. Works in kitchen & housekeeping when needed.

For more information and to schedule an interview, contact the Director, Gerri Wright at (304) 342-0507 or gwright@dwc.org

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7:30 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)
11:00 WDVM 25	Hagerstown-Washington D.C.

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Instrucción del Rito de la Comunión

2 de enero de 2025

El 18 de enero de 2003, nuestro exobispo Bernard Schmitt implementó algunas normas para la celebración de la Misa, entre ellas, la postura correcta de los fieles después del Cordero de Dios. Por medio del permiso otorgado por los obispos diocesanos y bajo la Instrucción General del Misal Romano (IGMR), # 43, se decretó que la postura después de recitar el Cordero de Dios debe ser de pie.

Como señaló el obispo Schmitt, "La cuestión de la postura nos recuerda que la naturaleza de la Misa es un acto donde todo el pueblo se reúne como uno solo. Las acciones y la postura de los fieles deben ser un signo visible de su unidad en la fe y el espíritu". Además, menciona "Que hay momentos en que todos están llamados a hacer lo mismo" – la dimensión comunitaria de la expresión litúrgica – "y también hay momentos en que las expresiones personales están permitidas".

La postura para todos los fieles debe de ser de pie durante el Rito de la Comunión, desde el Padrenuestro hasta la Procesión de la Comunión, ya que refleja la naturaleza comunitaria de nuestro culto y nuestra fe de la presencia del Señor en la Eucaristía. Después de recibir la Sagrada Comunión, los fieles pueden expresar su adoración y amor por el Señor, cuyo cuerpo y sangre han recibido, de la manera que prefieran: arrodillados, sentados o de pie.

Algunas personas me han pedido que restablezca la práctica de arrodillarse durante el Cordero de Dios. Esta es la práctica común en las

diócesis cercanas a la nuestra. He conversado el asunto con el Consejo Presbiteral (sacerdotes elegidos por sus compañeros) y el Consejo Pastoral Diocesano (en su mayoría miembros del laicado) y los resultados fueron algo mixtos y no se llegó a un acuerdo claro y mutuo.

Si consideras el Rito de la Comunión, la postura desde el inicio del Padrenuestro, procediendo por el signo de la paz y las palabras "Señor, no soy digno", hasta el momento en que los fieles se forman para la procesión de la comunión, es estar de pie. De hecho, la postura normativa para recibir la Sagrada Comunión en los Estados Unidos es estar de pie, aunque a nadie se le negará la Eucaristía si elige arrodillarse (IGMR # 160). Arrodillarse después del Cordero de Dios, aunque sea tradicional, en realidad rompe la postura continua del Rito de la Comunión, aunque sea brevemente.

Tomando en cuenta el razonamiento del obispo Schmitt, la postura más común en el Rito de la Comunión, es cuando todos los fieles permanecen de pie y el hecho de que los católicos de Virginia Occidental han estado de pie después del Cordero de Dios durante los últimos veintiún años, decidí continuar con el mismo decreto emitido por el obispo Schmitt. Esta es la postura que nuestros católicos más jóvenes siempre han conocido y también refleja en práctica la libertad mesurada que el Rito Latino de la Iglesia permite en algunos aspectos durante la práctica litúrgica.

Les pido a ustedes, los fieles católicos, los sacerdotes y diáconos que sirven en esta Diócesis, que reciban con sincera obediencia mi afirma-

ción de que esta decisión proviene de un buen Obispo. También les pido a que vean con un panorama más amplio, que la postura después del Cordero de Dios no es tan importante como lo es la presencia de Cristo en la Eucaristía, y nuestro entusiasmo de llevar su Evangelio a los demás, así como la caridad y justicia que debemos otorgar a nuestro prójimo, con todo esto logramos que la Eucaristía nos fortalezca.

Jesús una vez nos advirtió sobre la frase "colar el mosquito y tragarse el camelo" (Mateo 23:24). Nosotros escuchamos realmente al Señor cuando nos preocupamos más por las cosas que realmente valen la pena que cuando nos preocupamos por las que no lo son. También, como dice uno de nuestros dichos: "No hagas una montaña con un grano de arena". Tenemos cosas mucho más importantes que hacer que debatir los méritos de estar de pie o de rodillas detrás del Cordero de Dios. Nosotros estamos llamados a servir al Cordero quien fue sacrificado por nosotros para quitar nuestros pecados y quien resucitó de entre los muertos para darnos una nueva vida. En esto debemos de enfocar nuestros pensamientos, energía, tiempo y talentos.

Al comenzar un nuevo año, estoy orando por ustedes. Les pido de favor, que ustedes también me tengan es sus oraciones. Que Dios los bendiga.

Sinceramente en Cristo,

Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan

Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

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; 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.

LA Palisades Fire Destroys Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Damages School

By Pablo Kay, OSV News
LOS ANGELES (OSV News) — A church in Pacific Palisades appeared to be destroyed and more than 60 Catholic schools were closed as several major fires in the Los Angeles area burned overnight into Jan. 8.

Images shared with Angelus, the news outlet of the LA Archdiocese, showed only the frame of the Corpus Christi Catholic Church structure remaining as of the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 8. There were also unverified reports of damage to Corpus Christi's parish school.

In addition, at least 65 Catholic schools were closed that morning as a result of several fires burning in the LA area, including the Eaton Fire near Altadena and the Hurst Fire in the northern San Fernando Valley.

Catholic school superintendent Paul Escala told Angelus that his department was weighing several factors when deciding which schools should close due to the fires, including proximity to fire, poor air quality and wind damage, staffing challenges and nearby power outages.

"We did not call for a systemwide closure because the area of our district is enormous," encompassing three counties, Escala said.

In some communities where the impact of the fires was less, "the safest place for kids to be during this kind of emergency is school," explained Escala.

"School provides the kind



A firefighter works near homes during a weather-driven windstorm in Altadena, Calif., Jan. 8, that fueled ferocious wildfires.

OSV News photo/David Swanson, Reuters

of routine and consistency in care that children need during moments of crisis and trauma," he said.

Escala's department has asked schools that remained in session Wednesday to avoid outdoor activities in areas with poor air quality and to consider canceling after-school programs.

The church that was destroyed, Corpus Christi, is located in the heart of Pacific Palisades, an affluent neighborhood between Santa Monica and Malibu on the west side of Los Angeles. It was built in the 1950s and has long been home to several Hollywood celebrities, sports stars and other fa-

mous Angelenos.

As the fire spread westward toward Malibu, at least 5,000 acres had burned and an estimated 1,000 structures — most of them homes — had been destroyed in the Palisades Fire, according to a morning news conference Jan. 8 with LA city and county officials.

While no deaths from the Palisades Fire have been reported, there were "a high number of significant injuries to residents who did not evacuate" the fire zone.

It was reported that two people had been killed and an estimated 100 structures destroyed by the Eaton Fire, which had burned more than 2,200 acres. One parish and school, St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Altadena, was in the Eaton Fire's mandatory evacu-

ation zone and under close watch by fire officials.

The Hurst Fire, burning around Sylmar in the northern San Fernando Valley, burned more than 500 acres since starting late the night of Jan. 7.

The fires in the area spread quickly due to Southern California's extremely dry "Santa Ana winds," which led to increased fire danger after several months of virtually no rain in the LA area.

"Please keep praying for all those suffering in the wildfires sweeping through Southern California," Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez posted on social media. "My heart goes out to our neighbors who have lost their homes and livelihoods. Let's pray for them and let's pray for our firefighters and first responders.

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May God keep all of our brothers and sisters safe and bring an end to these fires."

By mid-afternoon Jan. 8, LA County Fire Chief Anthony C. Marrone said at a news conference that all the fires remained at zero percent containment. He said 29 separate fire departments in LA County are battling the fires. He expressed gratitude "for our first responders, our boots on the ground," who "will remain on the frontline until we reach full containment, and we ask that you keep all of Los Angeles County in your thoughts and prayers."

(Pablo Kay is the editor-in-chief of Angelus, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.)

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