

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Mary's Refuge Maternity Home for Expectant Mothers in Need Opens in Martinsburg

"We're ready to welcome them."

—Kimberley Roche, executive director of Mary's Refuge

By Meg H. Partington

MARTINSBURG—With a pantry and refrigerator stocked with food, beds made, furniture arranged and a nursery awaiting curious children, the first maternity home in the Eastern Panhandle welcomed its first guest.

Mary's Refuge opened Jan. 9 after being approved for occupancy the week before and nearly 10 months after renovations began on the former convent at 111 E. Stephen St. in Martinsburg. The second guest was expected to arrive three to five days later at the home

for expectant mothers and children younger than 3 in their care.

"We're ready to welcome them," Executive Director Kimberley Roche said on Jan. 8. "I am re-energized and beyond ready."

Renovations began in earnest on March 19, 2022 — the Solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the refuge's namesake — and were done by hundreds of volunteers and contractors. The home has nine bed-

rooms, a chapel, kitchen, laundry facilities, and rooms for infant care, relaxation and house meetings.

"It is a significant milestone to finally open our doors to the vulnerable women who are pregnant in the community of Martinsburg and the areas surrounding," said the Father Thomas Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg, for which the refuge is a **See "Refuge" on Page 3**



One More Visit

Kindergartners from St. Michael Parish School in Wheeling visit the nativity in St. Michael Church on the Feast of the Epiphany. The liturgical season of Christmas concluded on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. (Courtesy Photo)

Inside: Cardinal Pell Dies at 81; He Kept the Faith Even Amid Tribulation, Pope Says, Page 8

Church's Mission is Seen in Care for the Sick, Pope Says in Message, Page 9

Obituary

Sister Rosalie (Mary Delphine) Bucci, CSJ

Sister Rosalie (Mary Delphine) Bucci, CSJ, daughter of the late Michael and Mica Girardi Bucci, died peacefully at Mount St. Joseph on January 4, 2023. She was born March 2, 1930 in Williamson, W.Va.

In addition to her parents, Sr. Rosalie was preceded in death by her brothers Rossy and Philip, her sister Louise, and Louise's husband Carl Riggs. She is survived by several nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, cousins, friends and members of her community.

Sister Rosalie attended Williamson grade and high schools. After graduation, she entered the Congregation of St. Joseph in Wheeling on September 8, 1947. Upon reception into the novitiate she received a new name in religion, Sr. Delphine. She made temporary profession of vows on March 19, 1950, and final profession of vows on March 19, 1953. She received a B. Ed. Degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa.

As a teacher, she taught primary grades in parochial schools throughout the diocese for thirty-four years including St. Francis Xavier, in Moundsville, St. Peter's Fairmont Catholic in Fairmont, St. Joseph in Huntington, Blessed Sacrament in South Charleston, Cathedral Grade School, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Alphonsus, and Corpus Christi schools in Wheeling, and Sacred Heart School in Williamson, where she also



served as principal. She was a remedial reading teacher for Ohio County Schools for one year. She then served as Directress of St. Vincent's Home for Orphans in Elm Grove for five years. In 1989, she began her pastoral ministry in health care as a healing presence to the sick at St. Francis Hospital in Charleston. She retired in 1992 and moved to Mount St. Joseph.

Sister Rosalie shared "I truly believe that one finds God in laughter, joy and happiness. I loved my religious family and I felt their love for me." One of Sister Rosalie's fondest memories was preparing her first graders in Fairmont to sing at Mass at St. Peter's. The people loved the singing and the children gave it their all. Sister Rosalie especially loved children and music.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Monday, January 9, 2023 in the Mount St. Joseph chapel. Interment was in the Sisters of St. Joseph section at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling. Both the vigil service and funeral liturgy were livestreamed via a link in Sister Rosalie's obituary at www.altmeyerfuneralhomes.com.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Congregation of St. Joseph, 137 Mount St. Joseph Road, Wheeling, WV 26003. Funeral arrangements by Altmeyer Funeral Home, 14th & Eoff St., Wheeling, WV.

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

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

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator: please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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



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Advertising: contact Colleen Rowan
Freelance Writers: Martina Hart, John Sherwood,
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Refuge...

Cont'd from Page 1

ministry. "For us as a community, I think it is especially significant because it is only through supporting our people in need that we can begin to help others become productive, joy-filled community members who take pride in their city/area."

Roche said the women staying at the refuge must be at least 18 years old; clean and sober; able to clear a background check; and have no debilitating mental-health issues. They also must come on their own accord, ready to work toward a positive and productive future.

Those who stay at Mary's Refuge will cook for themselves in the communal kitchen. The women can come and go for breakfast and lunch, but will be encouraged to eat together at dinnertime to build a sense of community, Roche said. They must clean up after themselves in every room they use and be home by the 9 p.m. curfew, unless their job requires them to return later.

In exchange, they get a place to call home, budgeting and parenting classes, help with education and employment, and connections to resources for rebuilding their lives. They also will have access to the St. Joseph's Angels boutique, which is run through the church and is about a block away.

"They come in overwhelmed. We work at their pace," Roche said.

Undertaking a major project costing hundreds of thousands of dollars also can be overwhelming and doesn't come to fruition without glitches.

"Some unexpected hitches are what come whenever you are renovating an old house," including replacing the building's electrical system and most of its plumbing, said Patrick Michel, a deacon candidate who played a leading role in the project.

Other significant hurdles were supply-chain issues and the cost of building materials skyrocketing, Father Gallagher added.

"Mary and God work on their own time," Roche said. "This takes a village and a great deal of perseverance."



"We are living our faith by giving shelter to those women in need, and perhaps even feeding and clothing them, too. Not only that, it is my hope, most especially, that these women begin to understand and know that they have a family at Mary's Refuge and at St. Joseph Parish. It is the life of the family that is the heart of life and love, and we strive to promote and protect it at all stages."

—Father Thomas Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg

There have been countless bright spots, too. "We have had many blessings during this process," Michel said. "The level of public support was — and is — wonderful. I also want to thank the City of Martinsburg and the building inspectors and fire marshals. They supported us every step of the way."

Michel said the fact that the endeavor has progressed this far is a reflection of the caring, loving community of Martinsburg and beyond. Among the many financial supporters are members of St. Joseph Parish and St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town as well as other Catholic parishes in the area.

Michel and Father Gallagher hope Mary's Refuge inspires others to support expectant mothers in need.

"Once we have Mary's Refuge secure through its infancy, it is our desire to help others to replicate maternity homes — whether it be in this area or in other areas in the state of West Virginia," Father Gallagher said. "Fortunately, we have had the support of Bishop Mark Brennan and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, who are very open and encouraging to support other maternity home projects."

"There are many empty church buildings throughout the state that could be transformed into homes that support both mothers and children in need," Michel added.

Ongoing backing of Mary's Refuge is vital to its success.

"Prayers and fiscal support are both very important," Michel said. "Volunteers are the lifeblood of this ministry. Get involved. Never in our history has it been more important to support mothers and their children."

Father Gallagher said the desire to minister to the guests at the refuge flows from the Catholic faith and worshiping God at Mass.

"We are living our faith by giving shelter to those women in need, and perhaps even feeding and clothing them, too," he said. "Not only that, it is my hope, most especially, that these women begin to understand and know that they have a family at Mary's Refuge and at St. Joseph Parish. It is the life of the family that is the heart of life and love, and we strive to promote

See "Refuge" on Page 4



Courtesy Photos

Mary's Refuge, a maternity home, welcomed its first guest Jan. 9 in the former convent at 111 E. Stephen St. in Martinsburg. The home has nine bedrooms, a chapel, kitchen, laundry facilities, and rooms for infant care, relaxation and house meetings. Shown above are the nursery and chapel.

“We have had many blessings during this process. The level of public support was — and is — wonderful.”

—Patrick Michel, a deacon candidate who played a leading role in Mary’s Refuge

Refuge...

Cont’d from Page 3

and protect it at all stages.”

Donations of money and/or gift cards to stores where clothing, shoes and coats can be purchased are welcome. Checks to Mary’s Refuge, which receives no government money, may be made out to Saint Joseph Catholic Church (with Mary’s Refuge written in the memo line), and mailed to the church at 336 S. Queen St., Martinsburg, WV 25401. Gift cards also may be mailed there.

Monetary donations also may be made at the Mary’s Refuge website (<https://31937.sites.ecatholic.com>). For more information, go to the site or call (304) 261-3664.

(Meg H. Partington is administrative assistant at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg.)



Mary’s Refuge, a maternity home, welcomed its first guest Jan. 9 in the former convent at 111 E. Stephen St. in Martinsburg. The home has nine bedrooms, a chapel, kitchen, laundry facilities, and rooms for infant care, relaxation and house meetings. Shown above, clockwise from top right, are one of the bedrooms, the laundry facilities, and the kitchen. Courtesy Photos



Help Support Mary’s Refuge

a newly established maternity home in Martinsburg for expectant mothers in need and children younger than 3 in their care. This is a ministry of St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg.

Click here to donate:
<https://31937.sites.ecatholic.com>



Walking with Moms in Need is a nationwide, pastoral effort led by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to encourage increased outreach to pregnant and parenting mothers in need.

For more information and assistance on starting Walking with Moms in need in your parish:

Kathy Barton
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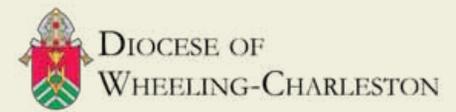
The Church's call to a new evangelization cannot be sustained without the faithful being intentional in their meeting Christ in prayer and making room for quality time with one's spouse. Thus, I am delighted to welcome the second annual *Together in Holiness* conference to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. I urge every married and engaged couple to attend this conference, so together they can contemplate the word of God through the presentations, encounter Jesus Christ in the sacraments, and enjoy fellowship with other couples.

Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan

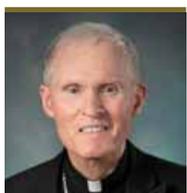
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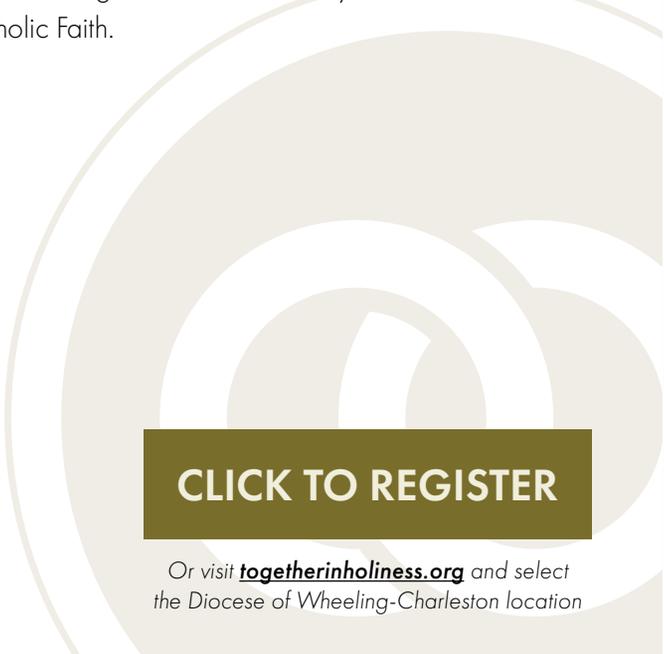
Early Bird registration fees only available through January 9

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For more information, contact Conference Coordinator at TH@forlifeandfamily.org or 832-779-1070.



CLICK TO REGISTER

Or visit togetherinholiness.org and select the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston location

Infant of Prague Novena at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Wheeling, Begins Jan. 30

WHEELING—The Infant of Prague Novena at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Wheeling begins Jan. 30 at 7 p.m. The novena will continue on the following eight consecutive Mondays at the same time.

All are invited to attend. Each year, faithful from all over the area gather for the novena which includes Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, a homily given by a guest priest, and prayers to the Infant of Prague.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Wheeling, Will Host World Marriage Day Celebration

WHEELING—The Annual World Marriage Day Celebration at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling is set for Saturday, Feb. 11.

Organizers describe the gathering as "...an evening of celebrating your love for your spouse and the blessing of your marriage together in the Sacrament of Marriage."

The celebration will begin at the 5 p.m. Mass; followed by a wine and cheese social, special dinner, and a brief witness of one couple as to the blessings of the Sacrament of Marriage in their lives in the Marist Centre. The evening will conclude with coffee and wedding cake served to the group. Faithful are invited to bring their wedding photos and albums to be displayed for everyone to enjoy.

For reservations or additional information, please call Dennis or Brenda Beiter at (304) 238-4904, or John or Dorothy Dudzik at (304) 243-1104.

Join Father Leonard Smith for a 10-Day Holy Land Pilgrimage

It's not too late to sign up for a 10-Day Holy Land Pilgrimage from April 19-28 led by Father Leonard Smith. "This will be my fifth pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Educational Opportunities Catholic Tours, and I cannot recommend it enough!" said Father Smith, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish and School in Beckley. "Nothing makes the Bible come alive like a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which the Christians of the region refer to as the 'Fifth Gospel.' Just as the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus from their own unique perspective, so too the land itself bears unique witness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Additionally, this year's pilgrimage will take place during the Easter Season, which will be a first for me. It will be a beautiful time to journey to the Holy Land and relive the events of Jesus' life and ministry, culminating in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection."

For more information, use the this link to download a brochure: <https://www.eocatholic.com/tours/h123041923s52102#eotours>. Those interested can also call Educational Opportunities Catholic Tours, or can reach out to Father Smith by email to fatherleonard@sfccwv.org or by phone at St. Francis de Sales Rectory at (304) 256-3594.



20/20 Vision Series

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

The Vision 20/20 series for 2023 will focus on the Eucharist. Pope Francis has called for a worldwide Eucharistic Revival. Journey with us this year from Jan. 23-Dec. 11, as we journey with the Holy Father and his invitation to focus our vision on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist - the Source and Summit of the Church.

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

Jan 23	The Transformative Power of the Eucharist - Bishop Mark Brennan
Feb 27	Let us be Bread - Beth Longo, CSJ Associate
March 27	The Eucharist as a noun - Bernadette McMasters Kime
April 24	Eucharist in the early church - Fr. John Di Bacco
May 22	Lord I am not worthy - Alex Nagem
June 26	The Eucharist as a verb - Deacon Paul Lim
July 31	Eucharist IS thanksgiving - Kate Marshall
August 28	Bread broken and shared - Sr. Jeanne Cmolik, CSJ
Sept. 25	Eucharistic Reflections through song - Chad Carter
Oct 30	The Road to Emmaus: Were Not Our Hearts Burning? - Fr. Walt Jagela
Nov 27	Bread for the journey - Rodica Stoicoiu, Ph.D.
Dec 11	Do this in remembrance of Me - Deacon Doug Breiding

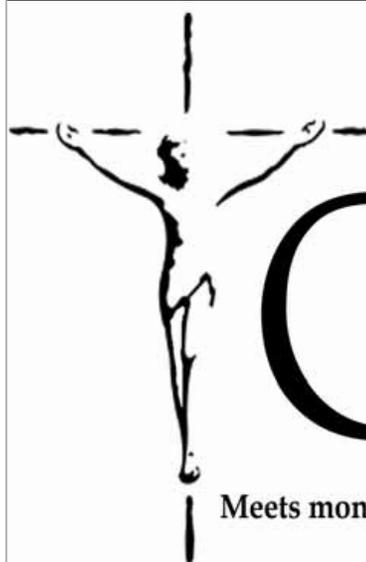
(Series originated by Ms. Shirley Carter, B.A., M.A.A.T.)

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Mountaineer Catholic Students Grow in Faith at SEEK Conference

By Colleen Rowan

For 21-year-old Autumn Fitzsimmons of Rock Cave, W.Va., the 2023 SEEK Conference was all about growing closer to God and encountering him in new ways.

"I was able to focus on him and gain a better understanding of him through the strong and impactful speakers, as well as in the moments of rest and prayer. When speaking with a priest at the conference, he said, 'You didn't ask to be created. God wanted to create you. He has a plan for you.' This quote embodies what I have been able to take away from SEEK, and what I would want others to hear as well. Lean into God's providential care, his plan, and his absolute love."

Fitzsimmons, a student at West Virginia University, was one in a group of 24 from Mountaineer Catholic in Morgantown attending SEEK. The conference, which gathered 18,000 college-age students from around the country, offered time dedicated to prayer, adoration, Scripture and the sacraments, inspiring speakers, fellowship, and entertainment, according to the SEEK website. The conference is annually presented by FOCUS, (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). This year's conference was held Jan. 2-9 at the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis.

The Mountaineer Catholic group included 16 students, four FOCUS missionaries, and two seminarians. The group was led by Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John University Parish in Morgantown and director of Campus Ministry for WVU, and Colleen Criste, director of Programs and Development for Campus Ministry for WVU.

There was a strong sense of camaraderie at the conference, Criste said, and a recognition of how large the Catholic world is.

"Sometimes, we can feel small or alone in our faith, but something like this provides the opportunity to experience solidarity with other Catholics of the same age with similar struggles and encourage one another," she said.

She highly recommends SEEK to any young adult desiring to grow deeper in their relationship with Christ and the church.

Echoing Criste's remarks, Father Crenwelge described SEEK as "an excellent opportunity for our students to see the church universal."

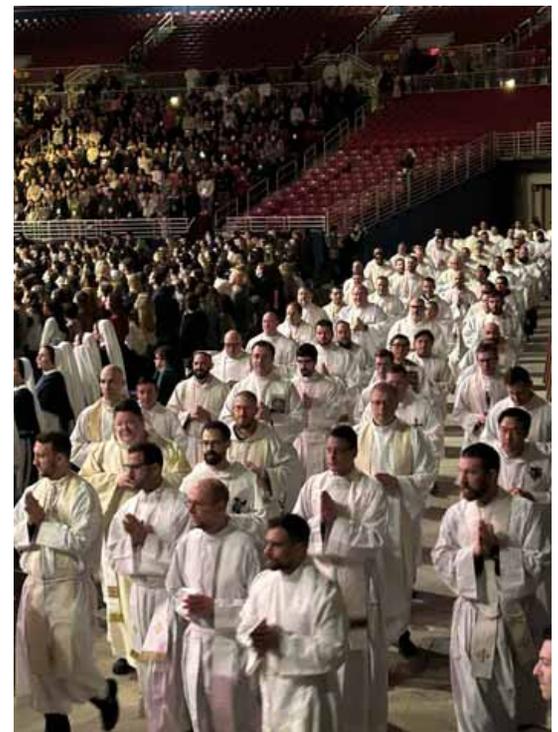
The college students were passionate about their faith, he continued. And they were joined by many religious brothers and sisters and priests.

"I wanted my students to see that, even though they attend school on a secular campus, they are not alone," Father Crenwelge said. "I also wanted them to benefit from the talks that were given in order to grow in their faith."

Another one of Father Crenwelge's students who attended the SEEK Conference was 18-year-old Colin Parker of Annapolis, Md., who is also a WVU student.

"It was inspiring to me to see so many young people make the effort to come to SEEK and not only to attend speeches and concerts but to also partake in the sacrament of confession as well as Eucharistic Adoration," Parker said. "In a time when faith is discounted by many young adults, to see thousands of students assembled in one place to show their commitment to Christ is profound and shows the dedication of our generation to be the future torchbearers of the church and our nation."

FOCUS is a Catholic collegiate outreach whose mission is to share the hope and joy of the gospel with college and university students, inspiring and equipping them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization, discipleship and friendships in which they lead others to do the same. This is stated on its website <https://www.focus.org>. Visit the site for more information.



Courtesy Photos
In the photos on this page, members of the Mountaineer Catholic group from Morgantown enjoy the 2023 SEEK Conference in St. Louis.



Cardinal Pell Dies at 81; He Kept the Faith Even Amid Tribulation, Pope Says

By **Cindy Wooden**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis praised the late Australian Cardinal George Pell as a faithful servant of God and of the Catholic Church, who steadfastly followed the Lord even “in the hour of trial” when he was jailed for sexual abuse before his conviction was overturned by Australia’s highest court.

Cardinal Pell died in Rome Jan. 10 at the age of 81 after suffering a heart attack following hip replacement surgery.

The cardinal’s funeral was expected to be celebrated in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican with burial to take place in St. Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney, but the Vatican did not offer details immediately.

In an interview with Italy’s Mediaset broadcast Dec. 18, Pope Francis was asked what part of his job he would have preferred not having had to deal with, and he responded, the Vatican’s financial chaos and scandals.

The need for a thorough clean up “was clearly seen

by Cardinal Pell, who is the one who started” making progress, the pope said, but then he was required to return to Australia “because of this calumny” of being accused of sexual abuse.

“He was innocent,” Pope Francis said in the December interview. “He is a great man, and we owe him so much.”

The pope made the same points in a telegram addressed Jan. 11 to Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals.

Offering his condolences also to Cardinal Pell’s brother and family members, Pope Francis said the Australian prelate would be remembered for “his consistent and committed witness, his dedication to the Gospel and the church, and particularly his diligent cooperation with the Holy See in its recent economic reform, for which he laid the foundations with determination and wisdom.”

He prayed that the cardinal, “who without wavering followed his Lord with perseverance even in the

hour of trial,” would be “received into the joy of heaven and receive the reward of eternal peace.”

Australian Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference, said, “Cardinal Pell’s impact on the life of the church in Australia and around the world will continue to be felt for many years. As we remember him and reflect on his legacy, I invite all Catholics and other people of goodwill to join in praying for Cardinal Pell, a man of deep and abiding faith, and for the repose of his soul.”

Australian Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, former president of the conference, said, Cardinal Pell “didn’t claim to be a saint; he knew he was flawed. But he did claim — and rightly — to be a man of faith and a man of the church.”

Cardinal Pell “became the victim of an outrageous injustice as he was convicted and jailed for 13 months before a final vindication,” Archbishop

Coleridge said, referring to the cardinal’s conviction in late 2018 on five counts of sexual abuse. The cardinal had served more than 400 days of a six-year sentence when the judges of the High Court of Australia overturned the conviction, concluding there was “a significant possibility that an innocent person has been convicted because the evidence did not establish guilt to the requisite standard of proof.”

“The spiritual poise and strength he showed through all of this was extraordinary,” Archbishop Coleridge said. “It revealed a depth to George Pell that often went unrecognized.”

“Through his legal troubles,” the archbishop said, “he was identified wholly with the Catholic Church and vice versa. Pell was the church, and the church was Pell — big, powerful and heartless in the eyes of many.”

“Yet,” he continued, “if George Pell had anything they were a good heart and a sense of humor. It was a pity that more of this didn’t

show in his media appearances.”

Born June 8, 1941, in Ballarat, Australia, he was a star football player in high school and college, but left that behind to enter the seminary, studying first in Australia and then at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1966 at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican.

St. John Paul II appointed him an auxiliary bishop of Melbourne in 1987, archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, archbishop of Sydney in 2001 and gave him the cardinal’s red hat in 2003.

Soon after his election, Pope Francis named Cardinal Pell to his international Council of Cardinals to advise him on the reform of the Roman Curia and, in 2014, Pope Francis named him prefect of the new Council for the Economy.

Cardinal Pell’s death leaves the College of Cardinals with 223 members, 125 of whom are under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave.

Texts Attributed to Cardinal Pell Criticize Pope, Synod Process

By **Cindy Wooden**

ROME (CNS) — Australian Cardinal George Pell, who died in Rome Jan. 10, never made a secret of his staunch adherence to established Catholic moral teaching and his concern about fellow cardinals and bishops he saw as willing to abandon that teaching.

But in interviews he always was respectful of Pope Francis and argued repeatedly over the past 10 years that Catholics should not be attacking each other in the media, but calmly discussing their differences with each other.

However, the Italian blogger Sandro Magister, claimed Jan. 11 that Cardinal Pell was the author of a “A Memorandum on the Next Conclave,” which Magister published on his blog in March under the pseudonym “Demos.” The author of the memo begins by saying, “this pontificate is a disaster in many or most respects; a catastro-

phe.”

The text complained about Germany’s Synodal Path and its discussions about “homosexuality, women priests and communion for the divorced” while “the papacy is silent.”

But it went even deeper into specifics about Vatican finances and the ongoing need for financial reform, a subject Cardinal Pell was fully informed about since he had served as prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy.

Also, shortly after Cardinal Pell’s death, Damian Thompson, associate editor of the British magazine *The Spectator*, published what he said was a recent submission to the magazine by Cardinal Pell criticizing the current process for the Synod of Bishops as “a toxic nightmare.”

Cardinal Pell’s secretary, Father Joseph Hamilton, confirmed Cardinal Pell wrote the article for *The*

Spectator.

The article took particular aim at the working document for the synod’s continental stage. Titled “Enlarge the Space of Your Tent,” it attempted to present the most common hopes, dreams and concerns raised by Catholics in the local and national listening sessions. It was to be the basis of regional discussions being held from December to March.

In *The Spectator* article, Cardinal Pell described it as “this potpourri, this outpouring of New Age good will.”

“It is not a summary of Catholic faith or New Testament teaching,” he said. “It is incomplete, hostile in significant ways to the apostolic tradition and nowhere acknowledges the New Testament as the Word of God, normative for all teaching on faith and morals. The Old Testament is ignored, patriarchy rejected and the Mosaic Law,

including the Ten Commandments, is not acknowledged.”

In a September 2021 interview streamed live and uploaded by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Cardinal Pell had said Pope Francis has “a great gift of empathy and sympathy” and a great capacity to show closeness to people who are suffering and those who care for them.

Asked why there is so much opposition to Pope Francis among conservative Catholics, Cardinal Pell said, “I think a lot of conservative Catholics feel a little bit confused, a little bit uncertain, they wonder just what is being taught.”

Pope Francis, he said, has “a great gift, like Jesus did, of reaching out to those on the peripheries and ‘sinners,’ and categories that are not always seen in the front row at church and that can and has confused people.”

Church's Mission is Seen in Care for the Sick, Pope Says in Message

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The way individual Catholics and their parishes care for the sick offers a precise measure of just how much they either are part of or are fighting the “throwaway culture” that ignores or discards anyone seen as flawed or weak, Pope Francis said in his message for the World Day of the Sick.

The care of those who are ill shows “whether we are truly companions on the journey or merely individuals on the same path, looking after our own interests and leaving others to ‘make do,’” the pope said in the message, which was released by the Vatican Jan. 10.

The Catholic Church celebrates the world day Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

“Experiences of bewilderment, sickness and weakness are part of the human journey,” the 86-year-old pope wrote.

But, he said, the Bible makes clear that “far from excluding us from God’s people,” those situations of vulnerability “bring us to the center of the Lord’s attention, for he is our Father and does not want to lose even one of his children along the way.”

Those who profess belief in God, he said, should do likewise, placing the sick at the center of their attention.

To illustrate his point, Pope Francis used the parable of the good Samaritan, a story he often cites to illustrate the importance of community and fraternity in contrast to cruelty and self-absorption.

“The fact that the man, beaten and robbed, is abandoned on the side of the road” in the parable “represents the condition in which all too many of our brothers and sisters are left at a time when they most need help,” the pope said.

In addition, he said, in too many cases it is not easy “to distinguish the assaults on human life and dignity that arise from natural causes from those caused by injustice and violence. In fact, increasing levels of inequality and the prevailing interests of the few now affect every human environment to the extent that it is difficult to consider any experience as having solely ‘natural’ causes.”

The problem is not only illness, the pope said, but also loneliness and the feeling of abandonment, both of which

“can be overcome more easily than any other injustice, because — as the parable tells us — it only takes a moment of our attention, of being moved to compassion within us, in order to eliminate it.”

In the parable, he said, “two travelers, considered pious and religious, see the wounded man, yet fail to stop. The third passerby, however, a Samaritan, a scorned foreigner, is moved with compassion and takes care of that stranger on the road, treating him as a brother. In doing so, without even thinking about it, he makes a difference, he makes the world more fraternal.”

People need the love and support of others as they age and especially when they are ill, he said.

Usually, people are not prepared to fall sick, he said, and, often, “we fail even to admit that we are getting older.”

“Our vulnerability frightens us, and the pervasive culture of efficiency pushes us to sweep it under the carpet, leaving no room for our human frailty,” he said. And even when people do not turn away, sometimes those who are sick think they should distance themselves from loved ones so they don’t become “a burden.”

But, Pope Francis said, “this is how loneliness sets in, and we can become poisoned by a bitter sense of injustice, as if God himself had abandoned us. Indeed, we may find it hard to remain at peace with the Lord when our relationship with others and with ourselves is damaged.”

If the Catholic Church is truly to be a “field hospital,” the pope said, then its members must act.

The church’s mission, he said, “is manifested in acts of care, particularly in the historical circumstances of our time. We are all fragile and vulnerable, and need that compassion which knows how to pause, approach, heal and raise up.”

“The plight of the sick is a call that cuts through indifference and slows the pace of those who go on their way as if they had no sisters and brothers,” Pope Francis insisted.

Those who are sick, he said, “are at the center of God’s people, and the church advances together with them as a sign of a humanity in which everyone is precious and no one should be discarded or left behind.”

Vatican Prosecutor Opens Investigation into Orlandi Disappearance

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The disappearance 40 years ago of Emanuela Orlandi has haunted her family, fueled conspiracy theories and provided grist for a recent Netflix series.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said Jan. 9 that Alessandro Diddi, Vatican City’s chief prosecutor, was opening a new file on the case, although he provided no details about the direction the investigation was expected to take.

The Italian news agency ANSA said Diddi’s decision was in response to requests by Pietro Orlandi, Emanuela’s brother.

Vatican investigators will begin by “analyzing the acts and documents related to prior investigations,” of which there have been many, ANSA said.

Pietro Orlandi told the television RaiNews24 that he had received copies of WhatsApp messages exchanged in 2014 by “two persons very close to Pope Francis that talk about documents” related to the case that never have been published. He said he was certain someone in the Vatican knew more about what happened to his sister.

Pietro and Emanuela are the children of a Vatican employee and grew up in an apartment inside the Vatican. Emanuela disappeared in Rome June 22, 1983, when she was 15.

Over the past 40 years, dozens of theories have been advanced to explain what happened to her. Some were related to the attempted assassination of St. John Paul II in 1981 — the idea being she was kidnapped to force the release from prison of the pope’s would-be assassin — to Vatican bank scandals and to organized crime.

In March 2019, the family’s lawyer said the family had been sent a letter with a photo of an angel above a tomb in the Vatican’s Teutonic Cemetery, which is reserved mainly for German-speaking priests and members of religious orders.

The letter said, “Look where the angel is pointing,” according to Laura Sgrò, the lawyer.

She filed a formal petition with the Vatican to investigate the matter and, following her request, the Vatican City State court ordered the opening of two tombs near the angel sculpture.

No human remains were found in either tomb during the search in 2019, so the investigators moved to two nearby ossuaries, which are vaults containing the bones of multiple people. The forensic anthropologist who led the study of the bones said none of them were more recent than the 1800s.

The four-part Netflix series looked at the various theories floated over the past 40 years and added the idea that the disappearance had to do with a high-ranking Vatican cleric, who allegedly had made sexual advances toward the 15-year-old.

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Migrant Pleas, Border Realities Confront President Biden in El Paso

By Maria-Pia Chin

OSV News — “Lord, I ask that you take me out of here soon ... I want to be with my mom and sister soon. Amen.”

The prayer of a migrant girl in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, neatly written on the back of a card with the image of the Sacred Heart, was one of the mementos President Joe Biden acquired from his time at the U.S.-Mexico border. Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, handed the president this prayer card toward the end of his visit to El Paso.

“She wrote a little prayer on the back in Spanish, which I translated for the president,” Bishop Seitz said at a Jan. 8 news briefing organized by U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, a Democrat whose congressional district includes all of El Paso and most of its suburbs.

The president met with the bishop of this border city, who is the new chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration, as well as other local officials and community leaders earlier that day.



OSV News Photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters
Yalimar Chirinos, a 19-year-old migrant from Venezuela, displays a sign near the U.S.-Mexico border in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, Jan. 7. The sign reads “Hello friends, we are from Venezuela, support us with what comes out from your heart.”

In this first trip to the border since he took office, Biden, who is Catholic, sought to “assess border enforcement operations” and talk to those helping to manage “the historic number of migrants fleeing political oppression and gang violence in Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua and Cuba,” according to the White House.

Biden’s visit — which lasted a few hours — came amid criticism over how he is handling the humanitarian crisis at the southern border.

Upon his arrival the afternoon of Jan. 8, Biden greeted local officials, Bishop Seitz and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who like Biden is also Catholic. Abbott presented Biden with a letter condemning the president’s approach to immigration.

The president then went to the Bridge of the Americas — which connects El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico — where he observed border officers demonstrate how they search vehicles for drugs and other contraband.

Next, he made an unscheduled stop to walk along a metal border fence that separates the U.S. city from Ciudad Juárez and to speak with Border Patrol agents. At that time, Biden was asked by journalists what he had learned at the border. “They need a lot of resources, and we’re going to get it for them,” he answered.

His last stop was the El Paso County Migrant Services Center, where workers greet people released from Border Patrol and help them find transportation and other needed services.

He greeted local elected officials, activists and community leaders there, including Bishop Seitz, Ruben Garcia of Annunciation House, and Sister Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus, who heads Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas.

Sister Pimentel said the president’s presence at the border was significant. The sister stressed the need to come together as a community — including the city government, Border Patrol and faith-based communities — to safeguard people’s dignity while creating policies to face the issue of migration.

“One of the things that we as church, especially people of faith, want to make sure not to ever lose sight of is the fact that they’re people, they’re human beings, they’re families, they’re children, and we cannot lose sight of that,” she said at the news briefing. “I hope this is the beginning of further actions.”

This trip took place amid the newly announced expansion of Title 42, a federal public health rule enforced by the Trump administration during the COVID-19 pandemic that permits immigration officials to block migrants at the border seeking asylum from entry. Set to end last December, the U.S. Supreme Court in an emergency order Dec. 27 decided to keep Title 42 in effect indefinitely. The court will render a final ruling later this year; it will hear oral arguments on the matter in February.

Under an expansion of Title 42 under Biden, the rule bars migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela from entering the U.S. while

providing some legal paths for them to seek entry to this country. These requirements include applying for entry or “parole” in their own country, arriving by air at their own expense with a valid passport, and having a sponsor to support them in the U.S. economically.

“What we’re trying to do is broadly incentivize a safe and orderly way, and cut out the smuggling organizations,” Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said during the flight to El Paso, according to a pool report.



OSV News photo/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters
U.S. President Joe Biden walks with Border Patrol officers as he walks along the border fence during his visit to the U.S.-Mexico border to assess border enforcement operations in El Paso, Texas, Jan. 8.

However, migration advocates, including U.S. bishops, have argued that many people fleeing violence and persecution would not qualify for the program. At the Jan. 8 news conference, Bishop Seitz said he worries about those already on their way to the U.S.

“They’ve sold everything they own just to be able to make the trip and made this perilous 3,000-mile journey,” Bishop Seitz said. “They finally arrive in Ciudad Juárez, for instance, and then what? Where do they go?”

The bishop said that he and other advocates for migrants shared their concerns with the president and his aides.

During his nearly four-hour visit to El Paso, Biden did not meet with migrants or deliver public remarks. After the short visit, Biden traveled to Mexico City, where he and the presidents of Mexico and Canada gathered for a Jan. 9-10 North American leaders’ summit.

(Maria-Pia Negro Chin is Spanish Editor for OSV News.)

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Biden Expands use of Title 42 While Broadening Legal Path for Some Migrants

By **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The Biden administration announced new immigration policies Jan. 5, expanding the use of Title 42 while increasing legal paths for some individuals to seek asylum while remaining in their home countries instead of migrating to the southern border.

Title 42 is a federal public health rule permitting immigration officials at the border to block migrants seeking asylum from entry. The Trump administration implemented the rule in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, although the move was seen as part of his attempts to reduce migration more broadly.

The policy has been criticized by some public health experts, who argued it was politically motivated rather than evidence-based, and by President Joe Biden, who has been seeking to end the policy while facing a legal challenge from southern U.S. states asking the federal courts to keep it in place.

The Supreme Court has left Title 42 in place until it hears the case, which could be as soon as February. The court's announcement Dec. 27 in *Arizona v. Mayorkas* has been criticized by some Catholic groups, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has argued it harms asylum-seekers and is a temporary measure ill-suited for permanent immigration policy.

Title 42 has been used approximately 2.5 million times (including multiple attempts by the same individual) to expel migrants, including those seeking asylum, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.

According to the Biden administration's Jan. 5 announcement, Title 42 will now be invoked to bar migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela who have not attempted to seek asylum in another country, such as Mexico, first. Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Migration, praised the new legal pathways in a statement, but said it is "difficult for us to consider this progress when these same pathways are contingent on preventing those forced to flee their native land from availing themselves of the right to seek asylum at our border."

"Under this approach, many of the most vulnerable will be excluded from relief and subjected to dangerous circumstances, contravening U.S. and international refugee law, as well as Catholic social teaching," Bishop Seitz said.

The Catholic Church teaches in its catechism that while a country has the right to regulate its borders for the sake of the common good, more prosperous countries "are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin" (No. 2241).

Bishop Seitz added it "simply defies reason and lived realities to require those facing persecution, trafficking, and torture to only pursue protection from within those potentially life-threatening situations."

Dylan Corbett, executive director of Hope Border Institute, a group that says it brings the perspective of Catholic social teaching to immigration policy, said in a statement, "The expansion of Title 42 to include Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans is a broken promise."

Corbett said the administration should be instead moving toward "fully restoring asylum at the border" instead of "entrench[ing] a dangerous, ineffective, and inhumane policy."

"The poor and vulnerable at our nation's doorstep deserve more," he said.

Joan Rosenhauer, executive director of Jesuit Refugee Service/USA said in a statement that "Expanding Title 42 takes US policy in precisely the wrong direction, blocking access to asylum for even more people in need of protection."

"As the Administration itself has argued, Title 42 is a COVID-era policy ungrounded in science and instead has been used as a tool to bypass our legal systems and undermine the right of individuals and families to request asylum," Rosenhauer said.

The Biden administration sought to contrast its expansion from the Trump administration's ban by pointing out that its policy will create additional legal pathways to asylum, including the use of an online application process and safety screening, rather than simply blocking migrants who seek asylum at the border. Homeland Security

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a Jan. 5 statement that "We can provide humanitarian relief consistent with our values, cut out vicious smuggling organizations, and enforce our laws."

"Individuals without a legal basis to remain in the United States will be subject to prompt expulsion or removal," he said. "Individuals who are provided a safe, orderly, and lawful path to the United States are less likely to risk their lives traversing thousands of miles in the hands of ruthless smugglers, only to arrive at our southern border and face the legal consequences of unlawful entry." The move prompted criticism from Biden's own party. Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., Alex Padilla, D-Calif., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., said in a Jan. 5 joint statement that the administration's actions would do "nothing to restore the rule of law at the border," but instead "will increase border crossings over time and further enrich human smuggling networks."

Furthermore, they added the ad-

ministration's plan, while it would benefit some, also disadvantages "thousands of migrants fleeing violence and persecution who do not have the ability or economic means to qualify for the new parole process."

Bishop Seitz said he and the other U.S. Catholic bishops "share the President's disappointment regarding a lack of bipartisan cooperation in Congress on this issue."

"We also wholeheartedly agree that to truly address the irregular movement of people in our hemisphere, we must tackle the root causes of forced migration, promoting integral human development in sending countries so people may flourish there," he said. "We urge the Administration to reverse its present course in favor of humane solutions that recognize the God-given dignity of migrants and provide equitable access to immigration and humanitarian pathways."

(Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.)

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U.S. House Passes Two Pro-Life Measures Facing Steep Odds in the Senate

By **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The U.S. House of Representatives Jan. 11 passed two pro-life measures, however neither has a clear path through the U.S. Senate to become law.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act passed first in a 220-210 vote, with one member, Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, D-Texas, voting present, and with Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, joining Republicans to support the bill. According to proponents, the bill would require any infant that survives an abortion procedure to receive appropriate medical care for their gestational age.

A second measure, a resolution condemning violence against “pro-life facilities, groups and even churches,” also passed in a 222-209 vote. This resolution condemned the violence that erupted following the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* which overturned prior precedents that found a constitutional right to

abortion.

Three Democrats, Rep. Gonzalez, as well as Reps. Chrissy Houlihan of Pennsylvania and Marie Perez of Washington state, joined the resolution.

Neither measure is likely to be considered by the Senate, which remains under Democratic control.

The measures come in the first week of legislative business for the new Republican majority in the House after spending their first week in power electing a House speaker, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

The votes took place as some Republican leaders, including former President Donald Trump, have blamed the issue of abortion as being responsible for the GOP’s lackluster performance in November’s midterm elections.

However, the House saw Republicans publicly restate their commitment to advancing pro-life policies.

Rep. Mike Johnson, R-La., the House Republican Conference vice

chairman who introduced the resolution condemning the violence against pro-life facilities, said in a statement Congress needed to “make the position of Congress crystal clear: violence, property damage, threats and intimidation tactics must be condemned, and these clear violations of federal and state laws must be prosecuted.”

Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., co-chair of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, said in remarks on the House floor that “pregnancy care centers across the country have suffered a surge of violent attacks, firebombing and vandalism by pro-abortion activists in a coordinated effort to intimidate frontline volunteers and licensed medical professionals providing critical support to mothers in need and their unborn baby boys and girls.”

“Now more than ever, we — and that includes the Biden administration — need to ensure the safety and security of the estimated 3,000 pregnancy care centers that provide life-affirming alternatives to

abortion — offering critical, quality care for pregnant women facing challenging circumstances and helping to save so many unborn, innocent lives,” Smith said.

Some lawmakers supportive of legal abortion, including Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., however, argued Republicans should condemn violence against abortion clinics.

“Republicans have put forth a measure that condemns attacks on anti-choice facilities but says nothing about the growing violence against women’s health clinics,” DeGette wrote on Twitter. “By ignoring these attacks, Republicans are sending a dangerous message that will embolden the extremists behind them.”

Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Mo., who sponsored the reintroduction of the Born-Alive bill, said in a statement the legislation would “provide commonsense protections for innocent children and their mothers and will ensure all babies receive the essential care they need

See “Life” on Page 13

National March for Life Steps into a Post-Roe World

By **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — As the March for Life prepares to hold its 50th annual event later this month, the national organization is taking its first steps into a post-Roe landscape.

The March for Life first took place in Washington, D.C., in 1974 in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion nationwide the previous year. Pro-life advocates have gathered in Washington to march each year since then to protest the ruling, with a smaller-scale event during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

But the Supreme Court’s June 2022 ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* that overturned *Roe* led some to question whether the national march would continue as a protest up Constitution Avenue ending at the high court itself.

Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, told OSV News there was a “discernment process” about how the March would proceed.

“In a way, it was almost not a question because we have become the largest, longest running human rights demonstration worldwide,” Mancini said. “And the idea of shutting that down, while the human

rights abuse of abortion is still sadly wildly rampant in the United States, just would make no sense.”

While the national event was tied to *Roe*, Mancini said, “the deeper foundation of the March for Life and its reason for being is to march in opposition to the human rights abuse of abortion and to witness to the beautiful, inherent dignity of unborn children and their mothers.”

While some changes were considered, Mancini said, such as potentially holding the March at a different time of year, March organizers “ultimately decided that we’re right where we should be, and we will continue to march in January.” The 2023 March for Life’s theme is a nod to the pro-life movement’s new landscape: “Next Steps: Marching in a Post-Roe America.”

Speakers at the 2023 March for Life event, scheduled for Jan. 20, will include actor Jonathan Roumie, known for his role as Jesus in the biblical television drama “*The Chosen*,” as well as the musical group We Are Messengers.

Mancini said the March’s next steps include “the need to continue changing hearts and minds,” as well as enacting legislation and other advocacy work at both the state and the

federal levels, and “increasing the safety net for families that are facing an unexpected pregnancy.”

“We really have our work cut out for us,” Mancini said.

Mancini pointed to another Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) — which declared racial segregation legal under the U.S. Constitution — as an example of an egregious ruling the high court overturned decades later in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Even then, she pointed out, more hard work remained to be done for racial integration following that decision.

“It puts some perspective on where we are with our human rights abuses and how it does take time to change culture,” Mancini said.

The *Dobbs* ruling sent the issue of legal abortion back to the U.S. states to legislate upon — a possibility the March for Life prepared for prior to the *Dobbs* case by launching individual state marches. But abortion remains a national issue as well, Mancini said. “It’s not just a state issue, it’s both-and,” Mancini said, indicating the U.S. Congress’ and the White House’s roles in regulating abortion at the federal level.

This year’s March for Life underscores that point by physically switching its end

point from the U.S. Supreme Court to the U.S. Capitol.

While pro-life leaders have hailed the *Dobbs* decision for overturning *Roe*, they have seen a series of ballot losses for the pro-life cause in its wake. During the Nov. 8 midterm elections, voters in five U.S. states with ballot measures concerning abortion either rejected moves to restrict abortion, or they voted to codify

abortion access. Winning hearts and minds, and the ballot box, requires making the case for pro-life policies with compassion, Mancini said.

“We want to do everything possible to be as loving and as compassionate, and yet as honest and clear, as possible,” she said.

(Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.)

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The Prayers of Bakhita, the Hope and Help of a Book

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

By Elizabeth Scalia

When she was canonized by Pope St. John Paul in 2000, Josephine Bakhita immediately became the patron saint of survivors of human trafficking.

Even a cursory read of her story more than explains why. Kidnapped from the Sudanese village where her father was a chieftain and ironically renamed, “Bakhita” (Arabic for the “lucky” or “fortunate” one) by her captors, Josephine endured such sustained trauma that she eventually forgot her own name. Living in enslavement as both child and adult, Bakhita suffered through unspeakable physical abuses, including a horrific and repeated branding ritual where flour and salt would be rubbed into open wounds created by whips or sharp, thin blades. In a life of long suffering, she once said these memories were “the most terrifying” to recall.

She was bought and sold five times, the last being to an Italian vice consul, Callisto Legnani, who eschewed corporal punishment and who apparently treated Josephine humanely enough that when he was required to return to Italy she begged to be taken, too. In Italy, Legnani gave Bakhita over to the wife of a friend, who assigned her nursemaid duties over a young daughter. When, after several years, the woman found it necessary to return to Sudan, she put both child and nanny into the care and keeping of the Canossians sisters in Venice, where Bakhita had her first encounter with Christianity. In Roberto Italo Zanini “Bakhita: From Slave to Saint” (Ignatius Press, 2013), she is quoted as saying that these sisters “instructed me with heroic patience and introduced me to that God who from childhood I had felt in my heart without knowing who He was.”

Eventually declared a free woman through a ruling by the Italian court, Bakhita was baptized and confirmed as “Josephine Margaret” on the very same day, deciding to remain with the Canossian sisters, whose community she eventually joined. Living mostly at the Canossian convent in Schio, not far from Milan, she worked as a seamstress and doorkeeper, which brought her into close contact with the local villagers. It was these men and women who, upon her death in 1947, extolled Josephine’s sanctity.

Writer Sarah Robsdottir dedicated her recently published Young Adult novel “Brave Water” (Voyager Comics and Publishing, 2022) to Josephine Bakhita. The story tells the harrowing tale of a character not unlike the saint, a young female who is kidnapped from her African village while gathering water but manages, with help, to battle her way to freedom.

In an email interview, Robsdottir, who is Catholic, said she first became aware of the evils of human trafficking when a flyer arrived in her mailbox a decade ago. “It described the difficulties teenagers in developing nations face in order to acquire clean drinking water and how young girls between the ages of twelve and fifteen are often targeted by human traffickers while on their way to the springs. I locked eyes with the girl on the cover of the flyer, and knew I had to tell her story.”

Though the book is not based specifically on Bakhita’s story, Robsdottir shared that between her initial ideas for the book and its eventual publication, “I did a lot of research on human trafficking, and I read and reread ‘From Slave to Saint’ and sought St. Josephine Bakhita’s intercession over the project.”

The author has pledged at least 25% of the proceeds from “Brave Water” to charities that fight human trafficking. “Presently my ‘go-to’ organization is Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO), which fights human trafficking and also drills wells and cultivates job opportunities for those in need,” she said.

Robsdottir’s efforts are not merely material, but also spiritual. “I realize how limited I am in raising awareness about this grave evil through my book and social media, and how little money I actually have to donate,” she added, “I take great comfort in praying the ‘Hail, Holy Queen’ every day. I trust in the powerful intercession of Our Lord’s Mother in the lives of my brothers and sisters in chains.”

(Elizabeth Scalia is Culture Editor at OSVNews.com)



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

A tapestry of St. Josephine Bakhita, an African slave who died in 1947, hangs from the facade of St. Peter's Basilica during her canonization in 2000 at the Vatican. Pope Francis released a video message marking the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, which is celebrated on the Feb. 8 feast of St. Bakhita.

Life...

Cont'd from Page 12

at an incredibly vulnerable moment.”

“All children should have the right to receive life-saving care, especially those who survive an abortion,” she said.

However, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., chair of the House Progressive Caucus, stated the bill is redundant.

“This bill is absurd for so many reasons, number one, it is obviously ALREADY illegal to kill a baby,” she posted to Twitter, adding: “The only new action this bill takes is to threaten jail time for health care workers.”

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities, praised the House for passing the Born-Alive bill.

“We commend the House of Representatives for passing legislation to protect innocent children from infanticide, and urge the Senate to follow suit,” Bishop Burbidge said in a statement. “Babies who are born alive during the process of an abortion deserve compassionate care and medical attention — just the same as any other newborn baby.”

Infants who survive botched abortions are rare, but Melissa Ohden, founder and CEO of the Abortion Survivors Network, said in a statement that tens of thousands of abortion survivors like her do exist.

“We applaud Congresswoman Wagner’s leadership in ensuring infants like me, and countless others, are guaranteed medical care and legal protections when abortions fail and life wins,” she said.

Other leading pro-life organizations praised the House for passing these measures.

Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life, said in a statement her organization “is grateful to House Republicans for prioritizing commonsense and compassionate pro-life bills in the new Congress.”

“We urge all legislators to vote in favor of these measures which align with the values of the vast majority of Americans,” she said.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, said in a statement, that the GOP leadership recognized the federal government’s “crucial role in protecting our most vulnerable children and their mothers in the Dobbs era,” and both initiatives “affirm the sanctity of life.”

“Our government’s most sacred duty is to safeguard the lives of all Americans,” she said.

(Kate Scanlon is OSV News’ Washington-based National Reporter.)

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HOPE SCHOLARSHIP WEST VIRGINIA



Community Town Hall with Director of Hope Scholarship, Adam Schuemake

Wednesday, January 18th

6:00-7:30pm

Parkersburg Catholic High School

3201 Fairview Ave,
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Mike DeRose

Principal

304-485-6341

mderose@pchs1.com

Join the conversation with Parkersburg Catholic Schools as we host our first WV Hope Scholarship Town Hall/ parent Q&A session, led by the WV Director of Hope Scholarship, Adam Schuemake.

The Hope Scholarship is a WV education savings account program that gives parents an opportunity to build an individual learning experience that is tailored to their child's needs. The scholarship allows K-12 students to receive financial assistance that can be used for tuition, fees and other educational costs.**

The Town Hall will be hosted at the Parkersburg Catholic High School Media Center. All community members are invited to attend.

**Parkersburg Catholic is committed to working with families to ensure that private education is a viable financial option for all who are interested. If you have questions or concerns regarding tuition costs at PCS, please attend this meeting or contact the school directly so we can identify methods of tuition assistance to meet your needs.

Note: this scholarship is not run, managed, or determined by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston or the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese.

Please contact Mike DeRose, Principal for PCS to RSVP or address any questions leading up to the event.



For more information concerning the Hope Scholarship, click here



Biden amplía el uso del Título 42 a la vez que amplía el camino legal para algunos migrantes

Por **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — La administración Biden anunció nuevas políticas de inmigración el 5 de enero, ampliando el uso del Título 42 y aumentando las vías legales para que algunas personas busquen asilo mientras permanecen en sus países de origen en lugar de migrar a la frontera sur de Estados Unidos.

El Título 42 es una regla federal de salud pública que permite a los funcionarios de inmigración en la frontera bloquear la entrada de los inmigrantes que buscan asilo. La administración Trump implementó esta regla en 2020 al comienzo de la pandemia de COVID-19, aunque la medida se consideró parte de sus intentos de reducir la migración de manera más amplia.

La política ha sido criticada por algunos expertos de salud pública, quienes argumentaron que tenía motivaciones políticas en lugar de basarse en evidencia, y por el presidente Joe Biden, quien ha estado tratando de poner fin a la política mientras enfrenta un desafío legal de los estados del sur de EE.UU. que están pidiendo a los tribunales federales para mantenerla.

La Corte Suprema ha dejado vigente el Título 42 hasta que escuche el caso, lo que podría ser tan pronto como en febrero. El anuncio de la corte del 27 de diciembre en Arizona v. Mayorkas ha sido criticado por algunos grupos católicos, incluida la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de EE.UU.,

que ha argumentado que perjudica a los solicitantes de asilo y es una medida temporal inadecuada para la política de inmigración permanente.

El Título 42 se ha utilizado aproximadamente 2.5 millones de veces (incluidos varios intentos por parte de la misma persona) para expulsar a los migrantes, incluidos los que buscan asilo, según datos de la Oficina de Aduanas y Protección Fronteriza de EE.UU.

Según el anuncio de la administración Biden del 5 de enero, ahora se invocará el Título 42 para prohibir el ingreso a inmigrantes de Cuba, Haití, Nicaragua y Venezuela que no hayan intentado buscar asilo en otro país, como México.

El Obispo Mark J. Seitz de El Paso, presidente del Comité de Migración de la USCCB, elogió las nuevas vías legales en un comunicado, pero dijo que es "difícil para nosotros considerar esto como un progreso, cuando estas mismas vías dependen en prevenir aquellos que se ven obligados a huir de su tierra natal, a acogerse al derecho de solicitar asilo en nuestra frontera".

"Bajo este enfoque, muchos de los más vulnerables serán excluidos de estas protecciones y estarán sujetos a circunstancias peligrosas, contraviniendo las leyes internacionales y de EE.UU. sobre refugiados, así como la enseñanza social católica", dijo el Obispo Seitz.

La Iglesia Católica enseña en su catecismo que mientras un país tiene derecho a regular sus fronteras en aras del bien

común, los países más prósperos "están obligados, en la medida de sus posibilidades, a acoger al extranjero en busca de la seguridad y los medios de subsistencia que no puede encontrar en su país de origen" (n. 2241).

El Obispo Seitz agregó que "exigir que quienes enfrentan persecución, trata y tortura solo busquen protección dentro de esas situaciones potencialmente mortales simplemente desafía la razón y las realidades vividas".

Dylan Corbett, director ejecutivo de Hope Border Institute, un grupo que dice traer la perspectiva de la enseñanza social católica a la política de inmigración, dijo en un comunicado: "La expansión del Título 42 para incluir a cubanos, haitianos y nicaragüenses es una promesa incumplida".

Corbett dijo que, en cambio, la administración debería avanzar hacia "restaurar completamente el asilo en la frontera" en lugar de "afianzar una política peligrosa, ineficaz e inhumana".

"Los pobres y vulnerables a las puertas de nuestra nación merecen más", dijo.

Joan Rosenhauer, directora ejecutiva del Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados/Estados Unidos dijo en un comunicado que "la expansión del Título 42 lleva esta política estadounidense precisamente hacia la dirección equivocada, bloqueando el acceso al asilo para aún más personas que necesitan protección".

"Como ha argumentado la propia administración, el Tí-

tulo 42 es una política de la era COVID sin base científica y, en cambio, se ha utilizado como una herramienta para eludir nuestros sistemas legales y socavar el derecho de las personas y las familias a solicitar asilo", dijo Rosenhauer.

La administración Biden buscó contrastar su expansión con la prohibición de la administración Trump al señalar que su política creará vías legales adicionales para el asilo, incluido el uso de un proceso de solicitud en línea y controles de seguridad, en lugar de simplemente bloquear a los inmigrantes que buscan asilo en la frontera.

El secretario de Seguridad Nacional, Alejandro Mayorkas, dijo en una declaración del 5 de enero que "podemos brindar ayuda humanitaria de acuerdo con nuestros valores, acabar con las organizaciones de contrabando y hacer cumplir nuestras leyes".

"Las personas sin una base legal para permanecer en Estados Unidos estarán sujetas a una pronta expulsión", dijo. "Las personas a las que se les brinda un camino seguro, ordenado y legal hacia los Estados Unidos tienen menos probabilidades de arriesgar sus vidas atravesando miles de millas en manos de traficantes despiadados, solo para llegar a nuestra frontera sur y enfrentar las consecuencias legales de la entrada ilegal".

La medida provocó críticas del propio partido de Biden. Los senadores Bob Menéndez, D-N.J., Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., Alex Padilla, D-Calif., y

Cory Booker, D-N.J., dijeron en una declaración conjunta del 5 de enero que las acciones de la administración "no harán nada para restaurar el estado de derecho en la frontera", sino que "aumentará los cruces fronterizos con el tiempo y enriquecerá aún más las redes de tráfico humano".

Además, agregaron que el plan de la administración, si bien beneficiaría a algunos, también perjudica a "miles de migrantes vulnerable que huyen de la violencia y la persecución y que no tienen los medios económicos para calificar para el nuevo proceso".

El Obispo Seitz dijo que él y los otros obispos católicos de EE.UU. "comparten la decepción del presidente con respecto a la falta de cooperación bipartidista en el Congreso sobre este tema".

"También estamos totalmente de acuerdo en que, para abordar verdaderamente el movimiento irregular de personas en nuestro hemisferio, debemos abordar las causas fundamentales de la migración forzada, promoviendo el desarrollo humano integral en los países de origen para que las personas puedan prosperar allí", dijo. "Instamos a la Administración a revertir su curso actual a favor de soluciones humanas que reconozcan la dignidad otorgada por Dios a los migrantes y brinden un acceso equitativo a la inmigración y las vías humanitarias".

(Kate Scanlon es una reportera nacional de OSV News.)

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:

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

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

Para informar a las autoridades 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 eclesísticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al 304.230.1504. También puede lla-

mar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, 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.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA MISSION MOMENT

Raising Awareness about Poverty

January is Poverty Awareness Month, a month-long initiative to raise awareness and call attention to the growth of poverty in our country.

Across the state, Catholic Charities West Virginia staff and volunteers meet people and families daily who are impacted by poverty. Since poverty looks different from one person to another, it can be challenging to recognize.

Take the “Smith” family, for example. Both parents have jobs and a stable income. And yet, they and their two children had been living with extended family because they could not afford a home of their own. They were experiencing homelessness.

Consider the actual startup cost of finding a place to rent. You need to save up a security deposit and at least your first month of rent. You also need furniture — a bed for your children and a table for your



Catholic Charities West Virginia serves families and individuals who are impacted by poverty.

Courtesy Photo

family’s meals; cleaning supplies to help keep your family healthy; dishes, bedding, and towels.

Understandably, the Smiths had trouble saving enough to get started in their own place.

Many families are faced with similar struggles. The minimum wage in West Virginia (\$8.75/hour) means that two earners, like the Smiths, can make \$36,400 if both are working full time. Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment takes about one-third of that gross income.

Once you factor in taxes, childcare, clothing, and food, there’s not much left.

The Smiths came to us during a vulnerable time. They asked for help and we met this family with dignity and compassion. In addition to helping them with their security deposit, we invited other members of the community to help out as well. The response was overwhelming and the family received a table, chairs, twin bed, full bed, sofa, dresser, bath towels, dishes,

and bedding.

Living in poverty can lead to feelings of despair and hopelessness. Pope Francis, in his message for World Day of the Poor, said, “Let us ask ourselves: what is demanded of us as Christians in the face of this reality? We are required to nurture tomorrow’s hope by healing today’s pain.” We are grateful and humbled by this call to serve!

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org.

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

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Women Invited to Listen to Their Inner Voice at Upcoming Retreat

CHARLESTON—A women’s retreat, “Listening to Your Inner Voice: Grace Unfolding,” with Karen A. Vernal will be held March 24-26 at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston.

The retreat is co-sponsored with the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Vernal is president of Vernal Management Consultants, LLC, a firm dedicated to igniting the spirit and skills of leaders through executive coaching and consultation. Vernal’s passion for her work is rooted in her relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph, and her early experiences in West Virginia, working with children in residential treatment. She often says that the children were her best teachers. She brings their lessons of courage, creativity, resilience, spirit, and forgiveness into every aspect of her work while embracing the charisma of the Sisters of St. Joseph: “to move always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.” In recent months, Vernal has been asked by leaders to accompany them in their spiritual journey, helping them to discover what matters most.

“Our time together this weekend is inspired by the work of Parker Palmer, author, poet, teacher, and activist,” Vernal says in retreat promotional materials. “In his book: ‘Let Your Life



Photo Courtesy of Ministry of the Arts
 “I Prayed for the Heart of a Star” by Sister Mary Southard CSJ (www.ministryofthearts.org) is used on promotional materials for “Listening to Your Inner Voice: Grace Unfolding” retreat.

Speak’, he asks us this question: ‘Is the life I am living the same life that wants to live in me?’ This is a different question than we may

ask of ourselves. We may ask: ‘What does God want of me?’ ‘Where am I being led?’ These questions invite an image of an ‘outside’ voice. We will explore how God is speaking through our inner spirits in our everyday experiences.

“I am delighted to share

this time with you!” she says.

Through presentation, dialogue, quiet reflection, designed activities, good fun, small group conversation, and communal prayer, participants are invited to open their hearts, and listen deeply to the inner voice leading all into grace unfolding.

Prior to her work in leadership development, Vernal served on the faculties of Marquette University and West Virginia Wesleyan College, directed a shelter for domestic abuse and sexual assault survivors, and developed a private counseling practice in Milwaukee.

On a personal note, she is married to Tom Kolb and together they have three adult children, two of whom are married, and three grand-



Karen A. Vernal

children, who teach them curiosity and wonder and delight.

Register online at www.dwc.org/2023-Womens-retreat

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Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule Spring 2023

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Sunday, March 19: Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling, 10:30 a.m.
 Sunday, March 26: St. Ann, Shinnston, 1:00 p.m.
 Saturday, April 15: St. Augustine, Grafton, 11:00 a.m.
 Saturday, April 15: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, 5:15 p.m.
 Sunday, April 16: St. Luke the Evangelist, Cheat Lake, 11:00 a.m.
 Tuesday, April 18: St. John, Benwood, 6:30 p.m.
 Monday, April 24: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, April 25: St. Patrick, Weston, 5:30 p.m.
 Sunday, April 30: St. Matthew, Ravenswood, 2:00 p.m.
 Saturday, May 6: St. Mary, Star City, 11:00 a.m.
 Saturday, May 6: St. John University, Morgantown, 5:00 p.m.
 Thursday, May 11: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Albans, 6:30 p.m.
 Saturday, May 13: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 14: Our Lady of Fatima, Huntington, 11:00 a.m.
 Sunday, May 14: St. Joseph, Huntington, 5:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, May 17: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 6:30 p.m.
 Friday, May 19: St. Leo, Inwood, 6:30 p.m.
 Saturday, May 20: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 9:00 a.m.
 Saturday, May 20: St. James, Charles Town, 5:00 p.m.
 Sunday, May 21: St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs, 9:00 a.m.
 Sunday, May 21: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 4:00 p.m.
 Monday, May 22: Assumption, Keyser, 6:00 p.m.
 Sunday, May 28: St. Paul, Weirton, 2:00 p.m.
 Thursday, June 1: St. Agnes, Charleston, 6:00 p.m.
 Sunday, June 11: Sacred Heart, Princeton, 11:00 a.m.
 Sunday, June 18: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 11:00 a.m.



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James D'Antonio, MD
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Iliana Hurtado, MD
Cardiology

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Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-242-4800



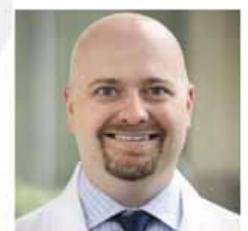
Walid Gharib, MD
Cardiology

10 Medical Park | Tower 1
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-243-8362



George Sokos, DO
Advanced Heart Failure

10 Medical Park | Tower 1
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-243-8362



Steven Sorci, DO
Advanced Heart Failure

10 Medical Park | Tower 1
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-243-8362



Dean Wickel, MD
Vascular Surgery

20 Medical Park | Suite 102
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-242-4800



Ganga Prabhakar, MD
Cardiac Surgery

10 Medical Park | Suite 104
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-243-8669



Robert Herron III, DO
Thoracic Surgery

10 Medical Park | Suite 104
Wheeling, WV
Phone: 304-243-8669