

THE CATHOLIC  
*Spirit*

## A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Brennan *The Gift of Life, a Gift to Cherish*

January 24, 2025

What if there were no children? What if there were no smiling babies, no rambunctious toddlers, no agile teenagers playing soccer or the violin, no young adults marrying and starting their families?

The birth rate in the United States in 1950 (the Baby Boom era) was 24.2 births *per 1000 women*. In 2024 it was 12 births per 1000 women and is likely to be below that figure in 2025. The fertility rate *per woman* in 1950 was 3.1 children; in 2024 it was 1.6, down almost 50%. The replacement rate to keep the population even is 2.1 children per woman. (Statistics from *HCH stats*, Oct 4, 2024, and *Macrotrends*,

no date). West Virginia reflects these trends, having the highest percentage of population loss by state in the 2020 census.

Rather than rehearse all the reasons for this dramatic decline in the birth and fertility rates, let's focus on the actual effects of that decline. The accumulation of millions of individual decisions not to have children or to abort those already conceived has already led to a shortage of workers (e.g., nurses, restaurant workers), a shrinking base of workers to support those living on Social Security, a strain on our health care system as the aged need more and more services, a push for euthanasia and assisted

**See "Letter" on Page 3**



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis baptizes a baby during Mass in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican Jan. 12, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

## West Virginia Parishioners Encouraged to Share Their Voices in DMI Survey

By Colleen Rowan

**WEST VIRGINIA**—In the last few weeks, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston parishioners have been encouraged to partake in the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey, which Bishop Mark Brennan said will provide feedback "invaluable in helping us understand how we can better serve each of you and our wider community."

Its importance is also being shared by parish priests and in parish bulletins and social media. As the survey's deadline draws near, the diocese is offering easy access to the DMI on its website. Every parish has its own survey and links to each one are provided in the listing of parishes on the site. One can access his or her parish's survey by clicking the name of the parish.

Bishop Brennan first spoke of the DMI in an Oct. 25 letter to the Catholic faithful of West Virginia, in which he also announced the diocese's partnership with Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) to create a three-year evangelization plan for the diocese.

The bishop explained that a key component of this **See "DMI" on Page 4**

## 50th Anniversary of the Appalachian Pastoral Letters to be Celebrated

By Joyce Bibey

**WEST VIRGINIA**—Fifty years ago, the 25 bishops of Appalachia took a stand to be advocates for the powerless of the Appalachian region.

Together the faith leaders became a voice for beautiful hills, valleys, and people of Appalachia that

were suffering and ignored. They composed a public letter in response to concerns raised by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia in 1974 regarding the economic and political inequalities that characterized the Appalachian region after committee members had traveled throughout Appalachia, lis-

tening to individuals, community groups, volunteers and church workers. The bishops then united to bring the economic and political inequalities faced by Appalachian communities to life.

The original landmark letter "This Land is Home to Me" written in 1975, was surely an answer to

generations of prayers from the people of all backgrounds living in the 397 counties and 13 states (Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and all of West Virginia) that are part of the **See "Appalachian" on Page 5**

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Mass of Christian Burial Celebrated for Father John Ledford, Page 6

Memory Patients Able to Get Latest Infusion Therapies Closer to Home, Page 16

# Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark E. Brennan has made public the following appointments:

**Msgr. Paul Hudock** has been elected to a three-year term on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, effective December 31, 2024, and terminating December 31, 2027. This is in addition to his current assignment in Hispanic ministry at Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg and St. Mary Parish in Star City.

**Father Jose Manuel Escalante** has been elected to a three-year term on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, effective December 31, 2024, and terminating December 31, 2027. This is in addition to his current assignment as parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Franklin, Epiphany of the Lord Parish in Moorefield, and St. Mary Parish in Petersburg.

**Father Dennis Schuelkens, Jr.** has been elected to a three-year term on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, effective December 31, 2024, and terminating December 31, 2027. This is in addition to his current assignment as pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish and Sacred Heart of Mary Parish in Weirton.

**Father Shinu Lukose, CST,** has been elected to a three-year term on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, effective December 31, 2024, and terminating December 31, 2027. This is in addition to his current assignment as parochial vicar of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town and St. Peter Chapel in Harpers Ferry.

**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.report-bishopabuse.org](http://www.report-bishopabuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org). **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other concerns such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in WV. EthicsPoint can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

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

### 2025 Issues and Print 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

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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



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# National Prayer Vigil for Life Ends Today

**WASHINGTON** – Catholics across the country are invited to observe a nationwide prayer vigil from Thursday, January 23 to Friday, January 24, to pray for an end to abortion and a greater respect for all human life.

The National Prayer Vigil for Life is hosted each January by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Pro-Life Secretariat, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and The Catholic University of America's Office of Campus Ministry. The vigil has always taken place on the eve of the March for Life, which marks the date of the historic 1973 Roe v. Wade

decision by the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Opening Mass will take place in the Great Upper Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, January 23. The principal celebrant and homilist for the Opening Mass will be Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Immediately following the Opening Mass, a National Holy Hour for Life will take place with a Eucharistic Procession, Eucharistic Adoration, Recitation of the Rosary, and Benediction. The Opening Mass and Holy

Hour of the National Prayer Vigil for Life will be broadcast on various Catholic networks and will be live-streamed on the Basilica's website at [www.nationalshrine.org/mass](http://www.nationalshrine.org/mass).

The vigil concludes at 8 a.m. on Friday, January 24 with the Closing Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert J. Brennan of Brooklyn.

The full schedule of the 2025 National Prayer Vigil for Life is listed below. (All times are in Eastern Time.)

Thursday, January 23: 4:45 p.m. Chaplet of Divine Mercy; 5 p.m. Opening Mass with Bishop Thomas; 7 p.m. Holy Hour for Life

Friday, January 24: 8 a.m. Closing Mass with Bishop Brennan

The live television broadcasts on January 23 from 5-8 p.m. and on January 24 from 8-9a.m. will be provided by the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) and will be available via live-stream on the Basilica's website.

For more information about on-site attendance at the Basilica for the National Prayer Vigil for Life, please visit the information page on the Basilica's website.

A plenary indulgence is available this year for those participating in the Opening or Closing Mass and/or the Prayer Vigil (the other usual conditions for a plenary indulgence apply).

## Letter...

Cont'd from Page 1

suicide to eliminate the elderly, and fewer children to adopt, which forces many couples to go to other countries to adopt or turn to in vitro fertilization (IVF), an expensive and morally problematic procedure that separates parents from the conception of their child while leaving excess embryos frozen or discarded.

More broadly, we can be sure that, having eliminated tens of millions of children by abortion and an untold number by contraception, we have deprived ourselves of many human beings who would be contributing to the welfare of our people, were they alive. Growth is healthier than decline. We are hurting our nation by having fewer and fewer children.

God's will for us is clear: *Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it* (Genesis 1:28). Having created us, God wants us to flourish. Because we are mortal, we have to reproduce or there will be no smiling babies, rambunctious toddlers, agile teenagers and young married couples. Each of us received our life as a gift from God and our parents. It is up to us to cherish that gift and share it with the next generation. Apart from those whom God calls to a celibate life – mostly priests and religious but some lay people as well – the normal vocation of God's children is to marry and have a family.

Those who favor abortion and contraception often speak of "reproductive freedom." We need to speak of reproductive responsibility. God's command to be fertile and multiply calls for a generous response by His people. There are indeed reasons why a married couple may feel compelled to avoid a pregnancy at a certain time: the number of children they already have, the sickness of one or both spouses, the loss of a job or other economic hardship. The Church leaves that decision to the couple. But

the couple should not use their freedom to be selfish. An openness to life is a sign of faith in a God who continues to be faithful to His people. Married couples should trust God to help them have and raise their children with a sufficiency of what they need. People are more valuable than things.

When a couple decides that having another child at this time would be irresponsible, they must consider the means to achieve that goal. Not all means toward a good end are themselves good. Thanks to our provident God, there are modern natural means for family planning: the symptom-thermal method, the Billings method, the Creighton model, all of which reveal to the couple when they are fertile and when they are not. Instruction is needed but it is needed to learn how to drive a car, use a computer or kick a soccer ball correctly. All these methods require some sexual abstinence by the couple, but it is temporary. Catholics rightly expect celibate priests and religious to abstain from sexual relations for their entire adult lives. I do not think it is too much to ask that married couples abstain from their sexual union for a few days during the wife's fertile period when they must postpone a pregnancy.

Abortion is the killing of an unborn child who has no defense against the scalpel or the chemicals. It is sad that so many people ignore the injustice and cruelty of this act. But why is contraception wrong? After all, no child exists so no child is harmed. Yet something is harmed: the couple's relationship with God. There is no friendship without respect. A married couple ought to respect the way God has allowed the reproductive capacity of human beings to evolve.

When the unitive or love-making dimension and the procreative or child-creating dimension of the one sexual union of the man and woman are both present, as they are periodically, their co-presence should be respected.

Jesus' words, *What God has joined together, no human being must separate*, also apply to the nature of the bodily union in which *they are no longer two but one flesh* (Mark 10: 8-9). The moral evil of contraception is that it forcibly separates what God has joined together: the unitive and procreative dimensions of the sexual act.

God has already provided a natural means for postponing a pregnancy in the relatively short period of time in which the woman is fertile. For most of human history, society needed couples to have as many children as they could, because so many died before maturity. Because of advances in health care, the mortality rate for young children drastically declined in the late 19th and 20th centuries and some pressure began to be felt to allow longer intervals between pregnancies. In His providence, God arranged for effective methods of natural family planning to be discovered in the 20th century. For those who desire to honor God in their lives, this is the way to exercise reproductive responsibility when there is need to avoid an untimely pregnancy.

Men and women, young and old are marching in Washington, DC, today to affirm the value of the unborn child's life and to say they are ready to help women who need support in order to carry their babies to term. They will recommit themselves to working in their states to convince their friends and neighbors to join them in a renewed respect for human life in our land. We must all remember that our lives are God's gift to us, a gift to cherish and a gift to share. May our faith in the Lord inspire us to trust him and bear good fruit by generously receiving new generations of children with love.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Mark E. Brennan*

+Mark E. Brennan

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston



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## DMI...

### Cont'd from Page 1

partnership is the implementation of the DMI which has successfully gathered the voices and experiences of over 600,000 parishioners across more than 40 dioceses in the U.S. since its inception in 2013.

“What I find particularly compelling about the Disciple Maker Index is that it invites you—the faithful of our Diocese—to reflect on where you are in your journey of faith, both as disciples and as missionaries,” the bishop wrote in his letter. “I know the diocese has offered different sur-

veys in the past, and we recently completed a Synod process, but please know your feedback in the Disciple Maker Index will be invaluable in helping us understand how we can better serve each of you and our wider community.”

The DMI takes just 10 to 15 minutes to complete and is available through Thursday, Feb. 6. The faithful can access the survey for their parish at <https://dwc.org/2024-dmi-survey-links/>.

Diocesan officials said that all responses will be confidential. Paper surveys are available and can be obtained at one's parish. The deadline is

Feb. 13 for the paper survey.

Through the initiative, all active priests in the diocese have participated in a similar survey. Upcoming elements of the initiative include one-on-one interviews with a small number of parishioners, focus groups, and an envisioning process with CLI.

“This comprehensive approach will allow us to gather diverse perspectives and ensure that the final outcomes resonate with our entire diocesan family,” the bishop said in his letter.

The initiative will conclude by August.

Bishop Brennan is excited about the potential fruits of these tools and initiatives.

“As we begin this process, I want you to specifically understand that I am not commissioning this project to close parishes,” he stressed. “This is an effort to revitalize and grow our Catholic community in this diocese. Even if our state is losing population, our Church can grow if we make a determined effort, through prayer and action, to reach out to our absent Catholics and to the many West Virginians with no religious affiliation. To that end, I am asking you to join me in this effort...”

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

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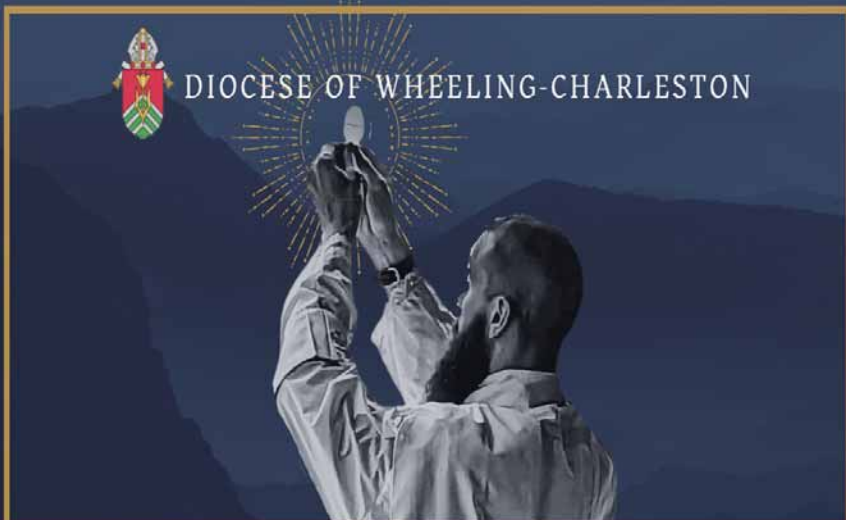
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## Appalachian...

Cont'd from Page 1

Appalachian Mountain region. The letter is considered one of the most significant statements to emerge from the U.S. Catholic Church. It's become a model for groups all over the world that want to promote social justice. More than 200,000 copies of the pastoral letter are in circulation, and it's been translated into several languages.

On January 31, the public is invited to Wheeling University where the 1975 Appalachian letter was signed for a 50th Anniversary Celebration - Remember.... Recognize.... Rekindle - "Bring to others beyond the mountains, the promise of their vision."

It will be an afternoon and evening of celebratory and informative presentations, Mass, fellowship dinner, Appalachian music and art, and social hour to honor the legacy of the pastoral letters and a renewed commitment to a just and sustainable future for Appalachia and its people. The day begins with registration at 2:30 p.m. at Swint Hall; 3 p.m. Opening Celebration in Troy Theater; 3:15 p.m. presentations; Mass at 5:15 p.m. in the Chapel of Mary and Joseph; and dinner at 6 p.m. in Swint Hall; the Festival of Appalachian Music and Art begins at 7 p.m. at Mt. de Chantal Conservatory; and an 8:15 p.m. social with refreshments to conclude the evening.

Those planning on attending the events are asked to RSVP at: <https://dwcforms.wufoo.com/forms/50th-anniversary-of-atthis-land-is-home-to-mea>

Gather and celebrate the clarion call that echoes today, one of awareness and social justice to address issues of poverty, powerlessness, and environmental concerns within the region; essentially using their platform to advocate for the people of Appalachia based on their lived experiences gathered through extensive community outreach.

### Two Additional Enrichment Opportunities

1. The 20/20 Vision Series for 2025 - A Closer Look at the Appalachian Pastoral Letters from 1975, 1995, and 2015.

2. This Land is Home to Me Seminar - meeting once a week for three weeks and can be presented to parish, school, or other organized groups.

20/20 Vision Series on the Appalachian Pastoral Letters: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Consecrated Life and the St. Joseph Retreat Center will offer 12 sessions throughout 2025 as part of the Vision 20/20 Series. Each will be held over Zoom and begins at 7 p.m., lasting about an hour.

Bishop Mark Brennan will be the featured speaker for the first session at 7 p.m., Jan. 27, "Our Home, Our History."

Tom Breiding, the director of the Appalachian Institute at Wheeling University will present a three-part series on "This Land is Home to Me (the 1975 letter) on Feb. 24, March 31, and April 28.

Beth Collins, former director of the Appalachian institute and current executive director of the Sisters of St. Joseph health and Wellness Foundation, will present a three-part series on the follow-up letter "At Home in The Web of Life" written in 1995. Collins' sessions will be held May 19, June 23, and July 28.

Rodica Stoicoiu, Ph. D, an academic, pastoral minister, and author, will present a three-part series on the third pastoral letter "The Telling Takes Us Home" written in 2015, at 7 pm, Aug. 25, Sept. 22, and Oct. 27.

The final two sessions are for inspiration and mindfulness: An Evening of Appalachian Music - presented by Breiding on Nov. 24; and series' finale, "Where Do We Go from Here?" - presented by Bishop Brennan on Dec. 15.

The cost for the complete 12-session series is \$120 or participants can pay \$15 per session. To register for the event email Anna Marie Troiani at [atroiani@csjoseph.org](mailto:atroiani@csjoseph.org).

The series was originated by Shirley Carter, BA, MAAT, director of Hilltop Campus Ministry and interim director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the diocese.

When asked how the series originated, Carter responded: "20/20 vision has always been considered perfect, and hindsight is often 20/20. We had just lived through a pandemic, and it was a time to look back, focus, and try to see things more clearly. People were still hesitant and were searching for creative ways to gather, share their faith, and be part of a community. The first year's series was all covid-related themes... Unmask your Real Self, Testing Positive in a Negative World, The World Needs a Pandemic of Prayer, to name a few."

Anna Marie Troiani, executive director of the St. Joseph Retreat Center, graciously offered to host the series and co-sponsor it with the diocese.

"The concept was so well received, that I wanted to continue the series the following year. Shirley comes up with the themes and the topics and we work together to seek out interesting and qualified speakers for each session," Troiani said.

Carter then explained that she creates each year's series based

upon themes relevant to what is happening in the world, the church, and our diocese.

"While the first series was reaching out to people during Covid, and last year's was entirely based upon the Eucharistic Revival, the theme of Vision 20/20 for 2025 is relevant to us today as we celebrate the Appalachian Pastoral letters, our diocesan anniversary, and the Jubilee Year of Hope.

"This Land is Home to Me" Seminar is in conjunction with our diocese's longstanding partnership with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community of Faith Formation (VLCFF) which offers courses and seminars on varied topics. With approval of, and in consultation with the directors of the VLCFF, Rodica Stoicoiu and Shirley Carter have developed a seminar for this anniversary year focusing on the Appalachian Pastoral "This Land is Home to Me." The sessions, which are once a week for three weeks, will be offered online, on zoom, or onsite based upon the needs of the group. The series can be offered for parish groups and vicariate groups as well as individuals who may be interested. The cost is underwritten by the diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. Class sizes are limited to 15.

"It has been such an exciting adventure to develop this seminar with Rodica and to have the overwhelming approval of this initiative by the University of Dayton. It will be piloted and offered in our diocese, and the VLCFF has agreed to make it a permanent part of their course catalog which is offered internationally," Carter stated. "This significant document, which was promulgated in our own diocese 50 years ago, is not dead or outdated and now, 50 years later, we can rekindle its relevance to the people in our state as 'now we lend our own voice'."

Stoicoiu added: "The seminar 'This Land is Home to Me' provides a unique opportunity for us to dive deeply into the complex realities of poverty, powerlessness and suffering experienced by the people of Appalachia as seen through the lens of Catholic social teaching and witnessed in the pages of this pastoral letter. This is an exciting chance to gather and reflect on our calling, our hope, and the possibilities of change that we the baptized can bring here and now in our communities."

For more information or to schedule sessions at your parish, contact Shirley Carter at [scarter@dwc.org](mailto:scarter@dwc.org) or Rodica Stoicoiu at [rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com](mailto:rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com)

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.)

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# Mass of Christian Burial Celebrated for Father John Ledford

By Joyce Bibey

Known for his loud and proud Tennessee drawl, his quick wit, and sheriff's star, Fr. John Ledford's life and service to the diocese was celebrated Friday, January 17th at his funeral Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Wheeling.

Very Rev. John Selwin Ledford, V.F. 77, died on Jan. 10, 2025, in Glen Dale. He served the diocese since 1975, often weaving a story from his childhood days on his beloved family farm in Tennessee, into his homily and conversations.

The original social media post announcing his passing was viewed by more than 67,000 people from all over the world including Germany, United Kingdom, Philippines, Nigeria, India, Italy, Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, among others, reflecting the relationships he built with not only his brother priests and the people he served, but also the many exchange students he hosted in West Virginia.

Among his prized possessions next to his well-used leather-bound bibles, prayer books, and statue of St. John Vianney (patron saint of priests), were countless slides of his scenic railroad travels, and a scrapbook of certificates he earned in his youth from 4-H and FFA leadership trainings, Boy Scouts of America, Junior Membership of the Hampshire Swine Registry, his Junior Jersey Breeder Award from the American Jersey Cattle Club, and his Pro-Marksman Diploma from the Junior National Rifle Association.

The Vicar Forane celebrated Mass with great conviction and boisterous emphasis in sincere praise of the Lord. Before the final hymn he would be sure to have thanked his lectors, altar servers, cantor, organist, and the faithful in attendance. Those who spent time with him knew his love of trains, watch/clock makers, travel, farming, history, mentorship, coun-



Joyce Bibey photo

**Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the Mass of Christian Burial for Very Rev. John Selwin Ledford, V.F., at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Jan. 17. Concelebrating are his brother priests.**

try, and family.

He enjoyed mentoring the many young and foreign-born priests he worked with, and as Fr. Priyesh Sebastian, M.C.B.S., of St. Francis Xavier (Moundsville) noted in a tribute to him, "He made every moment a memory."

"He was like a father to me and to others," said Fr. Doney Chacko, R.C.J., of St. James and John (McMechen & Benwood respectively). "He had great patience with us, was always teaching us, and helped us feel like family (when our own parents and family are so far away). I love him and will miss his presence."

Fr. Ledford had an endearing nickname for everyone, including "Sergeant Major" being one of

his favorites, a title bestowed on his parish office manager Barb Klos. No matter the shenanigans he may have pulled to make those around him smile, Fr. Ledford never failed to include a sincere southern accentuated, "God bless" in his farewells to everyone.

As Bishop Mark Brennan remarked, Fr. Ledford was a dedicated servant to Christ, insisting on continuing to serve Christ, all of His people, and His Church many years after the pastor could have retired.

While members of his parish are mourning his loss, they are also sad they are not able to celebrate with their pastor his 50th Anniversary of the priesthood, which would have been April 19th. Folks at his visitation and vigil Thurs-

day remarked that even Jesus couldn't wait to celebrate Sheriff Father John Selwin Ledford.

He was born August 4, 1947, in Lewisburg, Tenn., the son of the late Katherine T. (Orr) and Selwin Ledford.

He is a 1969 graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he received a Bachelor of Science in agriculture; and a 1977 graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville, where he received a Bachelor of Science in accounting.

He attended Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., graduating in 1975, and was ordained to the priesthood on April 19, 1975, by Most Rev. Joseph H. Hodges at the Cathedral of St. Jo-

seph in Wheeling.

His first assignment was for St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Saint Albans, as a deacon from 1974 to 1975. After his ordination to the priesthood, he was associate pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Weirton from 1975 to 1977, chaplain of WV Northern Community College from 1975-1976, and associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Huntington from 1977 to 1981. He served as Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus Council #931 (Huntington) from 1977-1981.

Fr. Ledford then became pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Nitro in 1981 to 1994, while also serving as pastor of Christ the King in Dunbar from 1984-1994. He then served as pastor of **See "Ledford" on Page 7**

# Ledford...

**Cont'd from Page 6**

St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee from 1994 to 1996, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Berkeley Springs from 1996 to 2002, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Stonewood from 2002 to 2010. While in Stonewood, he also served as designated pastor of Notre Dame High School in Clarksburg from 2006 to 2008. He then served as pastor of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town from 2010 to 2018, and chaplain to the Knights of Columbus Council # 2931 in 2011. Fr. Ledford was appointed to the Presbyteral Council for the diocese that same year serving until 2013. He was appointed vicar forane of the Martinsburg Vicariate and as pilgrimage director for the diocese in 2012. The following year, he served as temporary administrator of St. Leo Parish in Inwood. In 2014, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the Priests' Health and Retirement Association.

In June 2018, Fr. Ledford was appointed pastor of St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale and vicar forane of the Wheeling Vicariate in 2020, serving in both roles until his passing.

Fr. Ledford served as a pro-synodal judge of the Tribunal of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston from 1981 to present, and deanery moderator of the Charleston Area Diocesan Council of Catholic Women from 1981 to 1989. He was a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus and was the state chaplain of West Virginia Knights of Columbus from 1983 to 1985.

He was an associate member of the Fraternal Order of Police, a member of the National Railway Historical Society, and the National Association of Railroad Passengers. He was a member of the Lions Club in Moundsville at the time of his passing, and had been a member of the Lions Clubs across West Virginia since 1977.

Fr. Ledford was an active member of inter-faith clergy associations in each community and county assigned, most recently the Harrison County Clergy Association from 2002-2010, South Jefferson Clergy Association from 2010-2018, and the Moundsville Area Clergy Association from 2018 to present.

Accolades he was certainly proud of included

serving as chaplain and lieutenant for the Weirton Police Reserve, and chaplain and reserve deputy sheriff of the Cabell County Sheriff's Department.

Prior to becoming a priest, Fr. Ledford worked as a deputy for several counties in Tennessee in the late 1960s while attending the University of Tennessee. As a priest his reserve police and sheriff department duties were unpaid.

He was also preceded in death by his brother Lavoy Ledford. He is survived by his sister-in-law Jamie Clayton Ledford, and nieces Karin Graser and Molly Ledford.

Services for Father Ledford began with the Reception of the Body at 2 p.m., Jan. 16, at St. Jude Church in Glen Dale, with Fr. Doney Chacko, R.C.J., presiding. A Vigil was held that evening with Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, Associate V.E., V.F., presiding, and Very Rev. John Rice, V.G., V.F., as the homilist.

Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 17th was presided by Bishop Mark Brennan.

Interment will be in Tennessee where Fr. Ledford will be buried with his family on top of a hill overlooking the family homestead.

Memorial contributions



Joyce Bibey photos  
Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the Mass of Christian Burial for Very Rev. John Selwin Ledford, V.F., at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Jan. 17 (above, right). Also shown are Father Ledford's Deputy Reserve Sheriff badge and his CSX hat (above) and tributes to the beloved priest (right).



can be made to the Seminarian Education Fund for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston as Fr. Ledford wished. Gifts may be sent to Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230,

Wheeling, WV 26003 (checks made to Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston with "Ledford gift: Seminarian Fund" on the memo line).

Arrangements were by Altmeyer Funeral Home, 1400 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV (<https://www.altmeyerfuneralhomes.com>).



Father Ledford's parishioners gather at St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale for the vigil service Jan. 16.

Joyce Bibey photo



Pictured are Knights, Bill Hagy and Fran D'Egidio; also pictured are Belinda Chapman and staff members of the Children's Home Society of Huntington.

Through your generosity, the St. Joseph Council of the Knights of Columbus collected \$3,360 in donations to provide new winter coats to children at Altizer, Gallagher, and, Highlawn Elementary Schools. Additional coats were provided to the Children's Home Society of Huntington to be distributed throughout the area where additional need exists. With your continuing donations, we have now collected donations equaling 50% of next year's distribution.

*Bill Hagy, Grand Knight*

*Thank You!*



# Wisdom, Strength, Humility Focus of Inauguration Day Prayers for President Trump

By Maria Wiering, OSV News

**(OSV News)** — As Catholics prayed across the country for President Donald Trump as he was sworn in as the nation's 47th president Jan. 20, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York was in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in Washington offering an opening prayer during the inauguration ceremony minutes before Trump took the oath of office.

"Be still and know that I am God," Cardinal Dolan began, before evoking pivotal moments in U.S. history where the nation's leaders turned to the Lord.

"Remembering General George Washington on his knees at Valley Forge. Recalling Abraham Lincoln at his second inaugural, 'with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.' Remembering Gen. George Patton's instructions to his soldiers as they began the Battle of the Bulge eight decades ago: Pray! 'Pray when fighting. Pray alone. Pray with others. Pray by night. Pray by day.' Observing the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King who warned, without God 'our efforts turn to ashes,' we, blessed citizens of this one nation under God, humbled by our claim that 'In God We Trust,' gather indeed this Inauguration Day to pray," he said.

Cardinal Dolan prayed "for our president Donald J. Trump, his family, his advisers, his Cabinet, his aspirations, his vice president; for the Lord's blessings upon Joseph Biden; for our men and women in uniform; for each other, whose hopes are stoked this new year, this inauguration day."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops did not release an Inauguration Day statement Jan. 20, but did post an Inauguration Day prayer on X. "Assist with your spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to your people over whom he presides," it began. "May he encourage due respect for virtue and religion. May he execute the laws with justice and mercy. May he seek to restrain crime, vice, and immorality."

The prayer also asked that the "light of your divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress" and for all U.S. citizens, "that we be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of your holy law."

In a Jan. 20 statement, Louis Brown Jr., executive director of the

Christ Medicus Foundation, a Catholic health care ministry that works to protect religious freedom for medical professionals and patients, said that with the new administration, the organization had "great hope for the renewal of a culture of life, justice and human dignity for all Americans."

A former political appointee at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the first Trump administration, Brown said that "we offer prayers for President Donald Trump, his administration and our elected leaders that they be guided by Our Lord, that they may do justice, protect life, protect our country, and respect and defend human freedom."

In his inauguration invocation, Cardinal Dolan referred to King Solomon's appeal "for wisdom as he began his governance."

"God of our fathers, in your wisdom you set man to govern your creatures, to govern in holiness and justice, to render justice with integrity," the cardinal prayed. "Give our leader wisdom, for he is your servant aware of his own weakness and brevity of life. If wisdom, which comes from you be not with him, he shall be held in no esteem. Send wisdom from heaven that she may be with him, that he may know your designs."

"Please, God bless America, please mend her every flaw," he continued. "You are the God in whom we trust, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen."

At the inauguration's benediction, Father Frank Mann, a retired priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, prayed with gratitude for the "many gifts you have bestowed upon our lands," and "the freedoms we cherish, for the strength of our communities and for the resilience of our spirit."

"As our president and vice president embrace their newly appointed roles, we humbly implore that your everlasting love and wisdom will envelop them," he prayed. "Grant them the clarity of mind to navigate the challenges that lie ahead and the compassion to serve all citizens with fairness and integrity."

He also prayed for comfort for "those who feel lost or disheartened." "In this time of transition, may your light shine upon them, reaffirming their belief in a brighter tomorrow," he prayed.

Father Mann had befriended the president after caring for the graves of Trump's parents, Mary and Fred Trump, in a Queens cemetery. He



OSV News photo/Saul Loeb, pool via ReutersReuters  
Donald Trump is sworn in as the 47th U.S. president in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington Jan. 20.

recalled their memory in his prayer.

"From their place in heaven, may they shield their son from all harm by their loving protection

and give him the strength to guide our nation along the path that will make America great again."

(Maria Wiering is OSV News senior writer.)

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# A Statement of Archbishop Broglio on Executive Orders Signed by the President

**WASHINGTON**—In response to this week’s Executive Orders signed by President Trump, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) offered the following statement:

“Many of the issues President Trump addresses in his recent Executive Orders, along with what may be issued in the coming days, are matters on which the Church has much to offer. Some provisions contained in the Executive Orders, such as those focused on

the treatment of immigrants and refugees, foreign aid, expansion of the death penalty, and the environment, are deeply troubling and will have negative consequences, many of which will harm the most vulnerable among us. Other provisions in the Executive Orders can be seen in a more positive light, such as recognizing the truth about each human person as male or female.


“I wish to reiterate that the Catholic Church is not aligned with any political party, and

neither is the bishops’ conference. No matter who occupies the White House or holds the majority on Capitol Hill, the Church’s teachings remain unchanged. It is our hope that the leadership of our Country will reconsider those actions which disregard not only the human dignity of a few, but of us all.

“Following the ancient tradition, Pope Francis has declared 2025 as a Jubilee Year of Hope. As Christians, our hope is always in Jesus Christ, who guides us

through storm and calm weather. He is the source of all truth. Our prayer is one of hope that, as a Nation blessed with many gifts, our actions demonstrate a genuine care for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, including the unborn, the poor, the elderly and infirm, and migrants and refugees. The just Judge expects nothing less.”

The USCCB will publish additional information pertaining to specific Executive Orders on [usccb.org](http://usccb.org).



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SCAN ME



# Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Held in Wheeling



Kelly Klubert photo

From left: Bishop Mark Brennan; Rev. Kenny Hardway from the First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ; Donald Walters; MLK Committee Chair Ron Scott, Jr.; Tressie Fitzhugh; and MLK Committee Co-chair Wanda Morgan pause after the MLK March and award ceremony at West Virginia Northern Community College in Wheeling Jan. 19. Walters was honored with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, and Fitzhugh was honored with the Rosa Parks Award. These were just a few of the events held as part of the Martin Luther King Celebration in Wheeling Jan. 19 and 20 to honor the memory of King and promote the equality, peace, and brotherhood that he worked to achieve.

# Quo Vadis Retreat

## Middle School Discernment Retreat

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

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

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

Opportunities for Charitable and Spiritual Works of Mercy

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

**RETREAT IS FREE!!!**

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

You're Invited to Attend... **15th Annual**

# Hope GALA

Catholic Charities

*Enjoy an evening of dinner, drinks, dancing and celebrating those we serve! A special highlight of the Gala will be honoring an individual with our Charity in Action Award.*

**Date: March 1, 2025 at 6pm**  
**Location: The White Palace**  
 1801 National Rd  
 Wheeling, WV 26003

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

# La Vigilia de Oración por la Vida tendrá lugar el 23 y 24 de enero

## Por OSV News

**WASHINGTON (OSV News)** — Se invita a los católicos de todo el país a celebrar una vigilia nacional de oración del 23 al 24 de enero para pedir el fin del aborto y un mayor respeto por toda vida humana.

La Vigilia anual de Oración por la Vida es organizada cada mes de enero por la Secretaría Pro-Vida de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB), la Basílica del Santuario Nacional de la Inmaculada Concepción de Washington y la Oficina de Pastoral Universitaria de Catholic University of America.

Tiene lugar en la víspera de la Marcha por la Vida, una manifestación anual el viernes más cercano al 22 de enero, fecha de la histórica decisión *Roe v. Wade* de 1973 de la Corte Suprema de EE.UU., que legalizó el aborto como un derecho constitucional. Esta decisión fue anulada por el alto tribunal en 2022.

La 52ª Marcha Nacional por la Vida tendrá lugar el 24 de enero de 2025.

"Invito con entusiasmo a los católicos de todo el país a unirse, ya sea se en persona o virtualmente, para orar por el fin del aborto y la construcción de una cultura de la vida", dijo el obispo Daniel E. Thomas de Toledo, Ohio, presidente del Comité de Actividades Pro-Vida de la USCCB, según la declaración de la USCCB anunciando las fechas.

Desde 2022, año en el que la Corte Suprema, al escuchar el caso *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, revocó casi medio siglo de

precedentes que consideraban el aborto como un derecho constitucional, los distintos estados han restringido el aborto o han ampliado el acceso al mismo.

"Juntos, debemos orar para cambiar los corazones y construir una cultura de la vida mientras abogamos por los más vulnerables", dijo el obispo Thomas. "Espero abrir nuestra Vigilia con la Santa Misa junto con muchos otros obispos, cientos de sacerdotes, religiosos consagrados, seminaristas y muchos miles de peregrinos".

Durante esta vigilia, la Misa de apertura del 23 de enero tendrá lugar en la Gran Iglesia Superior de la basílica, de 5 p.m. a 7 p.m., con el obispo Thomas como celebrante principal y homilista. Tras la Misa tendrá lugar una procesión eucarística y la Hora Santa Nacional por la Vida. La Misa de clausura de la vigilia será celebrada por el obispo Robert J. Brennan de Brooklyn.

El evento será retransmitido por medios católicos y en directo a través de la página web de la basílica: [www.nationalshrine.org/mass](http://www.nationalshrine.org/mass). Se puede encontrar más información sobre el programa en la página web de la USCCB, [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org), y más información sobre la asistencia presencial a la basílica en su página web.

El 22 de enero, la Iglesia católica de Estados Unidos celebra anualmente el Día de Oración por la Protección Legal de los Niños No Nacidos. Desde 2013, los obispos católicos de Estados Unidos también han invitado a los fieles a unirse a



Foto OSV News/Bob Roller

Una mujer carga a su hija durante la Misa de apertura de la Vigilia Nacional de Oración por la Vida el 19 de enero de 2023, en la Basílica del Santuario Nacional de la Inmaculada Concepción en Washington.

la novena 9 Días por la Vida antes del día de oración, con el objetivo de poner fin al aborto. La novena por la vida de este año comenzó el 16 de enero.

La Instrucción General del Misal Romano describe el 22 de enero como un tiempo para rezar "por la plena restauración de la garantía legal del derecho a la vida" y para hacer "penitencia por las violaciones a la dignidad de la persona humana cometidas mediante abortos".

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

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

**Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números 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 eclesásticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa está protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

# Employment Opportunities

## Principal, St. Francis de Sales Central Catholic School Morgantown, W.Va.

St. Francis de Sales Central Catholic School (SFdSCCS) in Morgantown is seeking applicants for the anticipated vacancy of Principal for the 2025-26 school year.

Beginning July 1, 2025 SFdSCCS will transition to a President/Principal leadership model. At that time, Mr. Arthur Moore, currently serving in his thirteenth year as Principal of SFdSCCS, will shift from his current role to that of President. In today's world, Catholic school leaders must focus not only on academic leadership but also prioritize the advancement functions of the school such as: enrollment, strategic planning, projects, fundraising, public relations, and marketing. Separating these two roles will allow for a better focus on day-to-day responsibilities at the building level (i.e. Principal), as well as the handling of long-term management and overall strength of the school from a strategic planning standpoint (i.e. President). Though the new Principal and President will work in separate capacities to oversee the comprehensive administrative aspects of managing the school, they will have a shared duty of ensuring the mission and philosophy of the school remain at the forefront. The ideal candidate for Principal must have a strong commitment to their faith life, including a passion for Catholic education. He or she should demonstrate the ability to lead faculty/staff members in a Christ-like fashion and remain professional in all circumstances. The candidate will foster a positive culture within the building, promote academic growth, act with purpose in his or her decision-making, and have a keen attention to detail. He or she will be one who understands that teaching is an art and can inspire and direct teachers to reach their full potential. The candidate will exhibit good administrative and social skills to interact with parents and students, and the ability to communicate with the School Pastor and President. The candidate needs an understanding of what it means to be a good steward of resources entrusted to the school, and ensure that building, facilities, and grounds remain in top shape. Lastly, the candidate understands that this is a ministerial position at a religious institution and that there are officially taught and

commonly accepted beliefs in our program. The communication of which is a fundamental purpose and mission of a Catholic school, and its students and staff have a right to expect such communication implicitly and explicitly from its principal.

### Requirements:

- Practicing Catholic with a strong commitment to Catholic education
- Master's Degree (or higher) in Educational Leadership or School Administration
- Valid Educational Leadership Certification from the state of West Virginia or from a state that has reciprocity with West Virginia
- Minimum of 5+ years of successful teaching experience
- Minimum of 2+ years in the field of school administration

### Preferred Skill Set:

- Excellent administrative, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Strong leadership skills and initiative
- Keen attention to detail
- Superior ability to manage multiple functional areas and set clear expectations
- Experience in curriculum and professional staff development
- Authentic role model for the teachers, students, and parents
- Role Model for Faith-Based Leadership
- High Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Collaborative Leadership
- Conflict Prevention and Resolution Skills
- Strong Organizational and Personnel Management
- Ability to Motivate and Establish Trust
- Creative and Effective Problem Solver
- Work with people beyond giving and receiving instructions. Must be adaptable to performing under stress and when confronted with emergency situations

**About Our School:** We are a thriving central school that serves four Catholic parishes in Morgantown, WV. For more than a century, dat-

ing back to 1915, SFdSCCS has consistently remained a beacon of Catholic education in the Morgantown community. Rooted in its mission statement, "Here to serve, not to be served", SFdSCCS strives to produce well-rounded students who go forth with a firm foundation in faith and academics. Conveniently located at the intersection of two major interstates (I-68 and I-79), SFdSCCS sits just above St. Francis de Sales Parish on a picturesque exquisitely maintained 53-acre campus. Our PK2-8th program has a strong enrollment of 450 and is served by a competent, passionate, and nurturing faculty and staff. SFdSCCS is a resource rich community, with West Virginia University and Ruby Memorial Hospital (West Virginia's largest) at the epicenter of jobs. By all standards, our school is well-positioned for success into the foreseeable future and has built a strong reputation for academic excellence over its long history. Our commitment to quality education has made us a leading Catholic school in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and the entire state of West Virginia. We continuously strive to maintain this distinction by upgrading our facilities and instructional programs, while offering enriching extracurricular activities to complement our academic curriculum. Graduates of our program regularly transition to Honors and AP courses in high school and are consistently inducted into the National Honor Society with many graduates ultimately becoming Valedictorian or Salutatorian in their respective high schools. We maintain two classrooms per grade level and offer a comprehensive preschool program for children 2 years of age until kindergarten. Our strong enrollment fortifies our financial position, allowing us to make strategic investments and to provide competitive salaries for our teachers and staff.

**Person To Contact:** All interested candidates should email a letter of interest, updated resume, and three reference letters to Principal Arthur Moore at [amoore@sfccs.org](mailto:amoore@sfccs.org) or call at (304) 291-5070. Applications will be accepted through Friday, February 21, 2024. Additional details about this job vacancy can be provided upon request.

## 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, see the diocesan website: <https://dwc.org/diocese/administrative/human-resources/employment-opportunities/>

Contact the Director, Gerri Wright at (304) 342-0507.

## St. John XXIII Pastoral Center Job Opening – Maintenance Worker

The Maintenance Worker 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 Maintenance worker is responsible for the physical condition of the Center facilities including the grounds. This position involves responsibility for general maintenance and repairs of buildings, all equipment and vehicles, operation and maintenance of water treatment & waste disposal, groundskeeping and physical preparation of areas used by groups. Responsibility includes being proactive to troubleshoot and resolve issues with the building, equipment and grounds. Some of the required qualifications include mechanical, plumbing, electrical, multi-tasker, problem solver & self-starter, detail oriented, team player and welcoming & respectful to all guests. Works evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays when needed. Helps in kitchen & housekeeping when needed.

For more information, please see the diocesan website at the following web address: <https://dwc.org/diocese/administrative/human-resources/employment-opportunities/>

Contact the Director, Gerri Wright at 304.342.0507 or [gwright@dwc.org](mailto:gwright@dwc.org) to schedule an interview or for more information.

# Employment Opportunities

## Coordinator, Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care

At Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa), we have a culture deeply rooted in Catholic social teaching and respect all Catholic beliefs and practices.

The Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care (NPCOC) Coordinator is responsible for the general administration of the NPCOC. The coordinator is responsible for collaborating and coordinating with homeless and housing resources across the five counties of the Northern Panhandle service area. The coordinator administers entitlement funds from HUD and other financial resources, oversees special projects and existing services with the NPCOC and makes recommendations involving strategic planning. The coordinator acts as an advisor to the Board.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES:** Ensure compliance with laws, regulations, program guidelines, and contractual obligations of all NPCOC funded entities. Provide regular communication with existing and new applicants for NPCOC funding. Engage with stakeholders through the entire NPCOC. Assist in writing and submission of the NPCOC Collaborative Application in partnership with the Executive Team and others selected to participate.

**QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The require-

ments listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability required.

Bachelor's degree in social work, education, or related field. Master's degree preferred. Licensed Social Worker preferred. Two (2) to five (5) years of progressive experience in similar position completing related tasks. Knowledge of issues related to homelessness. Highly organized, initiative-taking and ability to work with little supervision. Excellent interpersonal communication skills and computer skills. Ability to multi-task. Excellent oral and written community skills.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS:** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.


**WORK ENVIRONMENT:** The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job.


- Hybrid position with office available in Weirton, Wheeling, or New Martinsville.

- Must reside in Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, or Wetzel counties.


- The position will have travel required as needed. Mileage will be reimbursed.

- The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate. Click here to apply.



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# Memory Patients Able to Get Latest Infusion Therapies Closer to Home

**MORGANTOWN** — The WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI) is providing patients greater state-wide and regional access to a groundbreaking Alzheimer’s disease treatment.

RNI stands at the forefront of Alzheimer’s care in part due to its use of monoclonal antibody (MAB) therapy to treat patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or mild Alzheimer’s disease. The rising demand for treatment, coupled with the treatment schedule and the state’s rural infrastructure, drove the need to support patients closer to home.

Alzheimer’s disease currently affects nearly seven million Americans who are 65 and older, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. In 2020, approximately 38,000 West Virginians – or 10.2 percent of adults over the age of 65 in the state – had Alzheimer’s. Nearly 14 percent of West Virginians who are 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline, diagnosed when a person experiences memory loss or confusion, but performs normally on cognitive tests. As Alzheimer’s becomes a mounting health crisis throughout the state and region, the need for readily available treatments grows.

The team at RNI became one of the nation’s early adopters in using MAB therapy to help slow progression of early onset or mild Alzheimer’s. The drugs aducanumab (Aduhelm), lecanemab (Leqembi), and donanemab (Kisunla) work to

reduce the buildup of plaques in the brain. Patients receive the drugs through IV infusion.

Infusions of Aduhelm began in late 2021 at the WVU Cancer Institute. The treatment required one dose to be given per month. In December 2022, WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital offered its first infusion, and expansion to WVU Medicine Garrett Regional Medical Center in Oakland, Maryland, followed shortly thereafter. At the time, demand for the therapy was low, and because of the dosage frequency, there was adequate space to accommodate everyone, even if the trip tended to be long or cumbersome.

“Over the past several years, 30 percent and more of the referrals for our Memory Health Clinic have come from greater than two hours away,” Larry Georgiana, senior director of clinical operations for RNI’s Neurology Clinic, said. Patients were not only coming from all over the state, but also from surrounding states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. While not ideal, a once-

a-month trip to Morgantown for an infusion seemed doable for most patients.

After the FDA approval of Leqembi in early 2023, the team at RNI transitioned patients to the new drug and phased out use of the now-discontinued Aduhelm. The Leqembi treatment plan calls for one infusion every two weeks, along with MRI testing at certain intervals over the first several administrations. This presented a new challenge – more doses and tests meant more trips to an infusion center. More patients in an infusion center meant less space for other patients. With an increasing number of people throughout the state affected by MCI or Alzheimer’s who would benefit most from the treatment, leadership at RNI knew further expansion was needed immediately.

The infusion program was launched statewide using a patient-centric approach, and as a result, it grew exponentially. The idea was to leverage the expertise at RNI and put patients through a multidisciplinary workup at RNI’s Morgantown campus, then get the patients started on the MAB therapy in their community.

“We knew if we’d set this up, we could help a lot of patients,” Marc W. Haut, Ph.D., director of the RNI Memory Health Clinic, said.

All patients receive an ini-

tial workup and examination at the RNI Memory Health Clinic. The workup follows stringent RNI protocols and includes MRI and PET imaging, blood tests, physical and neurological examination, and a neuropsychological evaluation.

After completing all tests, a multidisciplinary team develops a treatment plan. Patients then receive the IV infusion at the infusion center closest to them. Return trips to Morgantown are only necessary for follow-up visits and MRI imaging to check for side effects. Thanks to the connectivity within the WVU Health System, RNI team members can put in orders for patients allowing the infusion centers in the local communities to do the infusions themselves.

Along with the Cancer Institute, Wheeling Hospital, and Garrett Regional Medical Center, the program rapidly expanded to include WVU Medicine Princeton Community Hospital, Berkeley Medical Center in Martinsburg, and Thomas Hospitals in Charleston, which began offering the infusions in October.

“I am so thankful that we can provide advanced Alzheimer’s disease therapies to West Virginians,” Joseph Malone, M.D., chief of Cognitive Neurology, said. “Being in a rural area should not be a barrier to getting the best possible care, and RNI

has put in incredible efforts to help patients access these therapies in their own communities.”

Physicians and patients in extremely rural areas of the state are already seeing benefits.

“For patients on a Leqembi treatment regimen, there are already a lot of stressors in their lives and

**See “Memory” on Page 17**

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## Memory...

**Cont'd from Page 16**  
for their families," Stephen Cox, D.O., neurologist at Princeton Community Hospital's Neurology Clinic, said.

"Having access to this Alzheimer's treatment right here in our region of southern West Virginia and southwest Virginia eliminates the need for hours of travel to an academic medical center. This not only eases the emotional and physical burden on families but also improves the likelihood that patients can consistently attend all their appointments, which is crucial for the effectiveness of this treatment."

"This has provided convenience to my family to be able to take me to the treatments without it taking a full day to drive to Morgantown or Princeton and back," a patient at Thomas said. "When we first started going down the path of doing the infusions, those were the only two options. We live in Charleston, so we're able to get it done in a couple of hours as opposed to a full day which, with all the other appointments and everything else we have to deal with, it makes it more convenient and manageable for me to get what I need so my husband can continue working. We don't have to make arrangements for other people to take me."

While the Alzheimer's infusion program now serves more


patients due to its rapid growth, opportunities for expansion into additional communities still exist. RNI is also working to extend its MRI testing to some of the participating communities, which will further reduce return trips to the main hub in Morgantown.


"Everybody wins here," Georgiana said. "We win because we can provide patients with our expertise in this space. The patient wins by receiving the care they need in their own community. And then the community hospitals win because they can provide this care to their own patients and community."

The WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI) is a comprehensive multidisciplinary patient care, education, and research institute providing neurological and mental healthcare for 275,000 patients annually. The 250 physicians and scientists of the RNI improve lives by pioneering advances in neuroscience, brain health, and therapeutics. The RNI team uses the latest technologies with academic, government, and industry partners to make tangible progress to combat public health challenges ranging from addiction to Alzheimer's disease. For more information about the WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, visit [WVUMedicine.org/RNI](http://WVUMedicine.org/RNI).

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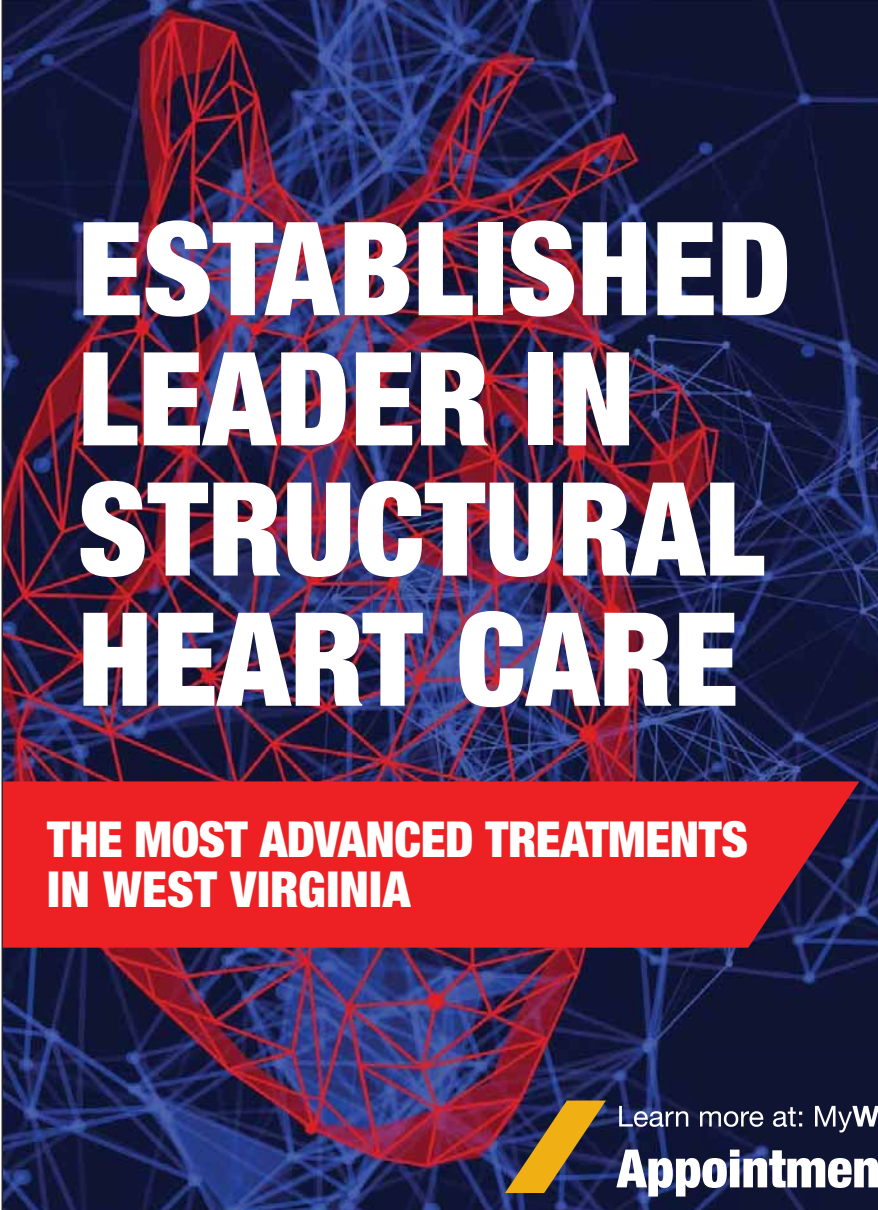
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