

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Assault on U.S. Capitol Shocks the Country and the World



CNS Photo/Leah Millis, Reuters

Police officers in Washington stand guard Jan. 6 as supporters of President Donald Trump gather in front of the U.S. Capitol.

By Rhina Guidos Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump breached the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6, putting the building on lockdown and interrupting the count of electoral votes to certify the 2020 election, capping the last

days of a tumultuous presidency with chaos.

Much of the country, and the world, watched aghast at scenes coming out of the nation's capital after Vice President Mike Pence said he had no authority to change the results of the election, affirming President-elect Joe Biden as the

next commander-in-chief.

Lawmakers, including the vice president, were rushed to safety after the angry mob broke into the building. Images on Twitter showed them breaking down doors and some asking the whereabouts of the vice president, who was said to have defied Trump by refusing

to block Congress from certifying the results. With "Trump 2020" flags, they freely roamed the halls of the capitol as scared law-makers crowded together to pray, some reported.

News reports also said explosive devices were found at the national

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Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointments:

Very Rev. James R. DeViese, Jr., J.C.L., J.V., has been granted a six-month sabbatical from parish ministry, effective January 25, 2021, to attend to family matters. He will continue to serve as Judicial Vicar and in all other offices to which he has been assigned.

Father Douglas Ondeck is appointed pastor of St. Patrick Parish, Weston; St. Bernard Chapel, Loveberry; and St. Bridget Chapel, Roanoke; with residence at the parish rectory in Weston, effective January 25, 2021. In addition, he is also appointed as chaplain at Sharpe Hospital in Weston.

In consultation with Bishop George Pallipparambil, S.B.D., of the Diocese of Miao, India, **Father Shaji Jacob Thomas Chennathu** is appointed administrator of Sacred Heart Parish, Huntington, and St. Peter Claver Parish, Huntington, with residence at the Sacred Heart Parish rectory, effective January 25, 2021.

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

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.

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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Capitol ...

Cont'd from Page 1

offices for the Republican and Democratic parties. Five people were killed.

"It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not," Pence wrote lawmakers in a letter just before a joint session of Congress to tally the Electoral College count, raising Trump's ire.

Pence ended the letter with "so help me God."

Hours earlier, Trump had publicly urged Pence via Twitter to refute congressional certification of the results, even though Biden won the popular as well as the electoral vote.

"States want to correct their votes, which they now know were based on irregularities and fraud, plus corrupt process never received legislative approval," Trump tweeted, prompting Twitter to flag the tweet as a claim about election fraud that "is disputed."

"All Mike Pence has to do is send them back to the States, AND WE WIN. Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!" the president continued.

After Pence refused, the president attacked him on Twitter.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify."

The House of Representatives reconvened the night of Jan. 6 to confirm the Electoral College win of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. in the November presidential election.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement the evening of Jan. 6 saying he joined "people of goodwill in condemning the violence today at the United States Capitol."

"This is not who we are as Americans," he said, adding that he is praying for members of Congress, Capitol Hill staff members, police officers "and all those working to restore order and public safety."

The archbishop called the peaceful transition of power "one of the hallmarks of this great nation" and stressed that in this "troubling moment, we must recommit ourselves to the values and principles of our democracy and come together as one nation under God."

Some Catholics on Twitter in Washington, such as Dawn Eden Goldstein, urged prayers for peace.

"It's now 3 p.m. in DC. Please join me in praying the Divine Mercy chaplet RIGHT NOW for peace in the US Capitol and the world. I live on Capitol Hill and the sirens are screeching," she wrote.

"A national disgrace and the inevitable result of the endless lies about the election spread by @realDonaldTrump and his supporters," tweeted Jesuit Father Jim Martin. "Here we see the fruit of these lies, these sins: anger, hatred, discord, despair and violence. 'And by their fruits you will know them' (Mt. 7:20)."

Utah Republican Sen. Mitt Romney told a reporter for The New York Times who was seeking safety along with lawmakers: "This is what the president has caused today, this insurrection."

Many criticized those who had taken part in the chaos while also carrying "Jesus saves" flags mixed in with Trump paraphernalia.

Biden, in a news conference hours after the chaos began, told Trump to go on national television, fulfill his oath "and defend the Constitution and demand an end to this siege."

"It's not protest; it's insurrection," he said.

Those in the United States were not the only



CNS Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, Pool via Reuters
Vice President Mike Pence hands the West Virginia certification to staff as Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., looks on during a joint session of Congress in Washington Jan. 7.

ones watching the unfolding scenes, the president-elect said in a speech directed at appealing to Trump. He said democracy was fragile and in the United States, it was "under unprecedented assault."

"Think what our children watching television are thinking. Think about the rest of the world is looking at," he said.

From England, Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury said there were "many lessons to be learned from the scenes in Washington."

"For the moment let us pray for the USA, the world's greatest defender of democracy until now, as it faces this huge shock. May God bless America with peace and reconciliation," he tweeted.

As Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, president of the Australian bishops' conference tweeted: "I didn't realize just how much the integrity of and respect for the democratic institutions of the U.S. matter to the rest of the world until this pandemonium erupted in D.C. From the other side of the world, I find myself shaken and disbelieving."

"Washington: Democracy wounded" read the large headline on the front page of the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, Jan. 7. In smaller type, it explained that Congress reconvened to certify the presidential election of Joe Biden "after the violent assault committed by supporters of Trump and during which four people died."

Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of Rhode Island said he would be celebrating Mass "for our troubled nation."

"In this holy season, as we continue to observe the birth of the Christ Child, may peace, harmony, unity and fraternity be restored in our country. May God bless and guide America!" he wrote.

From Dallas, Bishop Edward J. Burns, tweeted: "Let us pray that this one nation, under God, will always follow the paths of peace and justice."

Later in the afternoon, Trump released a video continuing to wrongfully and repeatedly insist he had won the election. Claiming fraud, he seemed to address supporters who had caused the chaos and told them to "go home."

"But you have to go home now, we have to have peace we have to have law and order, we have to respect our great people in law and order, we don't want anybody hurt," he said. "It's a very tough period of time ... we have to have peace, so, go home we love you. You're very special, you've seen what happens, you see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil. I know how you feel but go home and go home in peace."

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori released a statement later in the day saying that "our hearts are heavy as we witness the shocking and unlawful protests occurring in our nation's capital."

"We fervently pray for peace and for God's protection over our country, our lawmakers, and all those in harm's way this terrible day. May peace-loving Americans of good will throughout the United States come together to engender peace, reconciliation and healing in our wounded and broken nation, which remains and must always be one, under God," he said.

Other Catholic bishops and leaders of Catholic organizations joined in separate statements denouncing what took place at the Capitol.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns said it was appalled by the actions of a "violent mob" and called on Trump and elected officials to "condemn the disgraceful behavior witnessed today at the Capitol and to leave behind the hateful rhetoric, false claims and failures in leadership that have led to it."

In the hours after the initial chaos unfolded, the Biden transition team gathered religious leaders from around the country to pray for healing in a Zoom call. The prayers offered by leaders and those joining in on the chat called for peace and justice and for a renewed strength in the midst of this dark time.

Similarly, the Diocese of Syracuse, New York, livestreamed a Holy Hour of prayer for the nation. Syracuse Bishop Douglas J. Lucia, said in a tweet announcing the prayer service that he believed "prayer for peace and unity is imperative at this time."

(Contributing to this report was Carol Zimmermann.)

Diocese's Pre-K to Eighth-Grade Catholic Schools, Some of Its High Schools Reopen Jan. 19

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade Catholic schools and some of its high schools will open their doors back up to students Jan. 19 for in-person instruction, five days a week.

"We are very excited about this good news!" Catholic Schools Superintendent Mary Ann Deschaine said in a Jan. 1 letter to school families. The news came from Gov. Jim Justice who announced in a press conference Dec. 30 that all West Virginia elementary and middle schools will reopen to in-person learning, five days each week on Jan. 19.

Catholic and public high schools may open as long as they are in counties not designated as red on the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) COVID-19 County Alert System Map.

Schools began remote instruc-

tion Jan. 4 while preparations for transition to full-time, in-person instruction began. Preparations, Deschaine said, include logistical issues for individual schools and programs.

"We will take the opportunity between now and Jan. 19 to continue to address these issues, with the intent of moving back to our traditional in-person format as soon as possible," Deschaine said in her letter.

A vital part of the preparation also includes the state's offering of the COVID-19 vaccine to all teachers, service personnel, and other school employees age 50 and older.

"Our Catholic school personnel have been offered the opportunity to participate in the WV vaccination program. We are very grateful to Gov. Justice for including our Catholic school personnel in the initial stages of the COVID vaccine roll-out," Deschaine said in her letter.

According to a press release from the governor's office, vaccinations were made available Jan. 5 with an anticipated completion date of Jan. 19. Justice said the vaccine will then be offered to all teachers, service personnel, and other school employees under the age of 50.

Justice also announced at the press conference that the state will no longer be using the West Virginia Department of Education's COVID alert map and that the DHHR COVID-19 County Alert System Map now determines high school in-person instruction only. The map does not affect elementary and grade schools.

"It doesn't matter what color the DHHR County Alert Map System indicates for our pk-8th grades students—they will be back in school, five days per week, for in-person instruction," Deschaine said in her letter.

The diocese's Catholic high school students, she said, will also return to in-person instruction, five days per week, as long as their county is not designated red on the DHHR COVID-19 County Alert Map.

"If the county should turn red during the instructional week, the school must transition the next day to remote learning," Deschaine said.

Justice also announced at the press conference that winter sports and extracurricular activities are postponed until March 1.

"This ordeal has been long, and it has caused a great deal of concern and angst," Deschaine wrote in her letter. "However, we have been able to meet needs and reassure our children through the mutual support and encouragement of all parents, parish communities, and school staff. Thank you for your continued support!"

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Like the Magi, Look to the Heavens for Hope, Pope Says on Epiphany

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

In times of doubt and suffering, Christians must not focus on their problems, but instead lift up their eyes to God, who leads them toward the hopeful promise of great things to come, Pope Francis said on the feast of the Epiphany.

“This does not mean denying reality, or deluding ourselves into thinking that all is well. Rather, it is a matter of viewing problems and anxieties in a new way, knowing that the Lord is aware of our troubles, attentive to our prayers and not indifferent to the tears we shed,” the pope said.

The pope celebrated Mass with a little over 100 people, all wearing masks and seated socially distanced from each other, at the Altar of the Chair St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 6.

In accordance with an ancient tradition, after the proclamation of the Gospel on Epiphany, a singer from the Sistine Choir chanted the announcement of the date of Easter 2021 (April 4) and the dates of other feasts on the church calendar that are calculated according to the date of Easter.

After celebrating Mass, the pope prayed the Angelus in the library of the Apostolic Palace.

In his Angelus address, the pope said that Christ is “the star who appeared on the horizon, the awaited Messiah, the one through whom God would inaugurate his kingdom of love, of justice and of peace.

“He was born not only for some, but for all men and women, for all peoples,” the pope said.

Christians, he added, “must also be the star for our brothers and sisters” and shine bright “by drawing near to the other, encountering the other, assuming the reality of the other. This is the only way that the light of God, who is love, can shine in those who welcome it and attract others.”

“Woe to us if we think we possess it, that we only need to ‘manage’ it!” he exclaimed. “Like the Magi, we too are called to allow ourselves to be fascinated, attracted, guided, illuminated and converted by Christ.”

Earlier, in his homily at Mass, the pope focused on three phrases proclaimed in the day’s readings that offered “a few useful lessons from the Magi” on “what it means to be worshippers of the Lord.”

“Like them, we want to bow down and worship the Lord,” he



Pope Francis walks near a figurine of the baby Jesus as he celebrates Mass on the feast of the Epiphany in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Jan. 6.

CNS Photo/Paul Haring

said.

Reflecting on the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, the pope said the words of encouragement — “lift up your eyes” — spoken to the exiled people of Israel are a call to “lay aside their weariness and complaints, to escape the bottleneck of a narrow way of seeing things, to cast off the dictatorship of the self, the constant temptation to withdraw into ourselves and our own concerns.”

Trusting in the Lord, despite problems, gives rise to gratitude, he said, and “our hearts become open to worship.”

On the other hand, he said, focusing exclusively on problems and not looking to God for hope causes “fear and confusion to creep into our hearts, giving rise to anger, bewilderment, anxiety and depression.”

“When we lift up our eyes to God, life’s problems do not go away, but we feel certain that the Lord grants us the strength to deal with them,” the pope said. “The first step toward an attitude of worship, then, is to ‘lift up our eyes.’”

The second phrase — “to set out

on a journey” — recalls the Magi’s journey to Bethlehem to worship baby Jesus, he continued.

A journey, he said, always sparks a “transformation, a change” in which one learns new things and finds “inner strength amid the hardships and risks” he or she may encounter along the way.

“Like the Magi, we too must allow ourselves to learn from the journey of life, marked by the inevitable inconveniences of travel,” he said. “We cannot let our weariness, our falls and our failings discourage us.”

Even one’s sins, when one recognizes and repents of them, “will help you to grow,” the pope added.

Pope Francis said the final phrase

— “to see” — invites Christians to look “beyond the veil of things visible, which often prove deceptive,” and instead follow the example of the Magi who observed the world with a “theological realism” that allowed them to perceive “the objective reality of things and leads to the realization that God shuns all ostentation.”

It is “a way of ‘seeing’ that transcends the visible and makes it possible for us to worship the Lord who is often hidden in everyday situations, in the poor and those on the fringes,” the pope said. It is “a way of seeing things that is not impressed by sound and fury, but seeks in every situation the things that truly matter.”

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National Prayer Vigil for Life Will be Virtual This Year

By **Catholic News Service**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Each year on the night before the annual March for Life, at least 10,000 people have filled the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the National Prayer Vigil for Life.

This year, due to local restrictions on attendance sizes because of the pandemic, the prayer vigil will be virtual.

Catholics across the country are instead being encouraged to take part in a nationwide prayer vigil from Jan. 28 through Jan. 29, marking the 48th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalizing abortion.

The vigil will begin with a live broadcast at 8 p.m. EST on Thursday, Jan. 28 from the basilica, starting with the praying of the rosary followed by Mass. Bishops from across the country will lead Holy Hours throughout the night in the livestreamed vigil.

The service can be viewed on EWTN or livestreams from the basilica or from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The principal celebrant and homilist for the opening Mass will be Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, USCCB's chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities. The vigil will end at 8 a.m. Jan. 29 in a closing Mass celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

"Now, more than ever, our nation is in need of prayer for the protection of the unborn and the dignity of all human life," Archbishop Naumann said in a statement. "I am happy to be joined by bishops in dioceses across the country who are hosting pro-life prayer events including during the overnight hours of Eucharistic adoration. I invite all Catholics to spend time with our Lord and join in this nationwide vigil for life."

The National Prayer Vigil for Life is hosted by the USCCB's Pro-Life Secretariat, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and The Catholic University of America's Office of Campus Ministry.

The closing Mass for the vigil Jan. 29 will be open to the public but because of attendance restrictions allowing only 100 people inside the basilica, admission will be allowed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Australians Call on Authorities to Solve Mystery of Funds from Vatican

By **Marilyn Rodrigues, Catholic News Service**

SYDNEY (CNS) — People inside and outside the church are calling on authorities to get to the bottom of mystery funds transferred from the Vatican to Australia.

As Australia's bishops are considering requesting information from the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, a source close to the Vatican told *The Catholic Weekly*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Sydney, that it was "completely implausible" that \$2.3 billion Australian dollars (US\$1.8 billion) in Vatican funds transferred to Australia from Rome between 2014 and 2020 were legitimate.

In October 2020, the Holy See released a detailed 2019 financial statement. It closed the year with a budget deficit of 11 million euros (about US\$12.9 million at the Oct. 1 exchange rate). The statement showed it had 307 million euros in revenues, 318 million euros in expenditures and a total of 1.4 billion euros in net equity.

The source told *The Catholic Weekly* the Vatican did not have AU\$2.3 billion to spend.

"This is completely inconsistent with the financial information the Vatican has published, while its improved financial policies signed by Pope Francis in 2014 require any investments to be completely disclosed," the source said. "Given the suspicious nature of these transfers, they certainly warrant further investigation."

The Vatican has said it does not know the origin or destination of the money, with a senior Vatican official telling media the Holy See would seek details from Australian authorities.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, told *The Australian* newspaper that the bishops may also ask the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre to reveal whether any of the funds sent from Vatican City in 47,000 separate transactions went to Catholic organizations in Australia.

He said the bishops did not know about the transfers until December, were "astonished" at their scale and will request an investigation from Pope Francis into how they occurred without the bishops' knowledge.

Since October, Australian Sen. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells has pursued an alleged transfer of AU\$1.14 million from the Vatican to Australia at the time of the investigation into Australian Cardinal George Pell for historical sexual abuse offenses, of which he was later cleared by a unanimous decision of the High Court.

Fierravanti-Wells, chair of the Australian government's Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation, sought information from the transaction reporters and analysis center, the Australian Federal Police, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade about the nature of the transfers and about local investigations and cooperation with the Vatican's own ongoing investigations into financial corruption and mismanagement.

The discovery of the mystery transfers, reported by the analysis center in December, raises even more questions.

"This is a complex web of issues involving actions both in Rome and in Australia," Fierravanti-Wells told *The Catholic Weekly*.

"There are many legitimate questions remaining unanswered, including from Vatican authorities, AFP, AUSTRAC and most especially, from Victorian police and judicial authorities. Transparency and accountability of these institutions to the Australian public require that the matters be pursued," she said.

A former Australian financial services director who has never worked for the Catholic Church told *The Catholic Weekly* that the large number of transfers seemed to be "designed to avoid reporting." Under federal law, banks and money transfer companies are required to report amounts transferred locally or from overseas over AU\$10,000. One possible explanation that the funds may have been intended for investment purposes in this country was "highly unlikely, if not fanciful," the retired director said.

"A reputable international investor would not be investing a large sum of money in one regional market but would be looking to diversify across markets and regions," the retired director said.

"Such an investor would most certainly be looking to major global managers based outside Australia to achieve such diversification. ... Nor would such an investor be involved in such a high number of individual transactions of small amounts, as such investors make decisions to get into (and out of) markets as quickly as possible."

When releasing the Vatican's budget report last year, Jesuit Father Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves, head of the Secretariat for the Economy, spoke of Pope Francis' commitment to transparency and said that "it is possible that in some cases, the Holy See has been not just poorly advised, but also swindled."

He spoke in relation to the Vatican's current investigation into some of its investments, including a London luxury property deal.

"I believe that we are learning from past mistakes or imprudence," he said.

Australian Federal Police are investigating some of the transfers and have referred some information to the Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

In a December interview, Cardinal Pell, whom Pope Francis hired in 2014 to oversee and reform the Vatican's finances, described the Holy See as risking "slowly going broke."

Expressing support for his successor, Father Guerrero, the cardinal said it was important that "he continues to have the support of the pope and that he is not thwarted the way I was thwarted."

The *Catholic Weekly* sent questions to the Australian Federal Police and Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre but did not receive responses before its deadline.

(Rodrigues is a reporter for *The Catholic Weekly*, Sydney.)

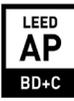


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South Charleston Parish Makes Sure At-Risk Youth Are Not Forgotten at Christmas

By Colleen Rowan

SOUTH CHARLESTON — For the past few years, Blessed Sacrament Parish has made sure the young residents at the James H. “Tiger” Morton Juvenile Center in Dunbar are not forgotten at Christmas. “...your generosity helps us restore hope for these at-risk juveniles and helps remind them that there is always someone who cares for them,” Morton Center staff said in a thank you letter to the parish. “God bless you!”

The parish has been purchasing Christmas gifts for the youth at the center for the last four years. Father Finnell said the parish receives requests from many agencies asking to help with gifts, but the Morton Center caught their attention because it involved older kids.

“We allocated \$500 from our Tithe Fund to purchase age-appropriate Christmas gifts for the kids,” said Father John Finnell, pastor of the parish. “They are usually selected by staff members but this year we involved some of our youth group in the selection of gifts and will be doing that more in the coming years.”

In the thank you letter, Morton

“...your generosity helps us restore hope for these at-risk juveniles and helps remind them that there is always someone who cares for them. God bless you!”

— Staff of the James H. “Tiger” Morton Juvenile Center in Dunbar in their letter to Blessed Sacrament Parish in South Charleston

Center staff said that many of their young residents do not receive gifts during the holiday, and without the donations from the community they would not receive gifts in the facility.

“In the year 2020, there has been so much negativity,” staff said in the letter. “It is because of people like you, that we are able

to continue to spread joy. A lot of people view our juvenile population as youth who have made mistakes, which they have, but it is our goal to successfully rehabilitate them and reward them for their efforts and positive behaviors.”

Mary Odin has been director of Music and Youth Ministry at Blessed Sacrament since June. It was suggested to her by fellow parishioner Natalie Zellers that the project was something the youth group might want to participate in. And through an online shopping spree, Odin and a few of the youth group members selected items they knew kids their age would appreciate as gifts.

“It was really fun,” Odin said, “and we’re already making plans to involve everyone next year. Group shopping for other youth would be a great focus for a youth group Christmas party. We’re planning, in faith, that we’ll be able to do it together in person in December 2021.”

Odin went on to say that Zellers has been long involved with the project.

In 2020 Blessed Sacrament Parish gave away about \$77,000 through its Tithe Fund, which Father Finnell said is 10 percent of the Sunday offertory in addition to other designated donations, to special projects like the Morton Center. It also includes monthly allotments for the agencies the parish calls “Partners in Community Service” and to individual grants when needs come to their attention.

“For many years we have had an informal covenant with Good Shepherd Church in East Bank/Coalburg because their tiny congregation serves an immense number of people in a high poverty area,” Father Finnell said. “Tithing is part of our stewardship philosophy in which we step out in confidence that in the Kingdom of God everyone gives what they can and receives what they need.”

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Madonna Students Hold CARE-avan for Nursing Home Residents, Health Care Workers



Courtesy Photos

Above and below: Students from Madonna High School in Weirton, along with their families, participate in their CARE-avan through the grounds of local nursing homes to let the residents and health care workers know they are thinking of them.

By Colleen Rowan

Just a few days before Christmas, 34 students from Madonna High School in Weirton along with their families led a CARE-avan through the grounds of local nursing homes to let the residents and health care workers know they were thinking of them.

The students gathered to do the CARE-avan because of their relationship with these facilities, said Amy Granato of the school's Campus Ministry and Religion Department. During non-Covid times, she said, Madonna students visited with residents of local geriatric and nursing home facilities in many ways.

"Our kids play cards and board games, do arts and crafts, paint the fingernails of the female residents, go Christmas caroling during the Christmas season, etc.," Granato said. "As a matter of fact, our students had scheduled to lead weekly Stations of the Cross at Weirton Geriatric during Lent 2020—the coronavirus struck before our kids were ever able to pray the stations even

one time."

The CARE-avan is one way that the students can keep the relationships with the residents going while still staying safe, Granato said. Many of the students have family members, neighbors, and friends in the facilities as well.

"They know first-hand how tough things have been and continue to be for these folks," Granato said. "Also, the students can gather together while remaining socially distant by remaining in their own family vehicles. Students enjoyed showing their creativity by decorating their vehicles and dressing up in their 'fanciest and silliest' Christmas outfits."

Health care workers, she said, also enjoyed and appreciated the students "drive-by shout-outs" as much as the residents.

Granato, who organized the event, said that students also brought the CARE-avan to the Weirton facilities of Serra Manor, Weirton Geriatric, and Wyngate last spring.

"So, it seemed like a good idea to do one at Christmastime," she said.

For the Christmas CARE-avan, the students returned to Serra Manor, Weirton Geriatric, and Wyngate and included Brightwood and Golden Oaks in Follansbee as well.

"We got out and walked around past residents' windows since their rooms were on the back side of the building," said Christine Holmes, advancement director at Madonna who also participated. "I believe our students realized how much a simple wave hello or a sign saying 'Merry Christmas' could make a huge impact to someone who has been unable to have visitors during COVID-19 restrictions."

Students who participated also brought canned-goods that were donated to local organizations that help out people in need in the Weirton Community, Granato said. Nearly 250 non-perishable food items were collected.

Students asked Granato if the CARE-avan could take another trip during Catholic Schools Week and Valentine's Day, and go to more residential facilities.





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Diocese's Preparing for Christian Marriage 2021 Retreats Announced

WEST VIRGINIA—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has announced the schedule for Preparing for Christian Marriage Retreats for 2021. All of the retreats will be held at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston on the following dates: Feb. 27-28, May 22-23, Aug. 21-22, and Nov. 13-14.

The retreats are held in collaboration with local parish leadership. In order to register, an engaged couple must be referred by their pastor, associate pastor or deacon who is assist-

ing them in preparation for their marriage. It is recommended that Marriage preparation retreats be scheduled early during a couple's engagement and completed at least one month prior to their wedding date.

Registration for a retreat in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston may be completed at the following web address: <http://www.marriage.org/pfcm-registration/>

Early registration is encouraged as spaces fill quickly. As long as space allows, the registration deadline is one month prior to

the start of the chosen weekend. In the event a diocesan retreat is canceled, registrants will be notified in advance.

Stated on the diocese's Marriage and Family website, the Marriage Preparation Weekend is described as a retreat designed to allow time for engaged couples to get away to a quiet place to learn the Catholic understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage.

"Through theologically-based sessions, couples hear of the four core aspects of Catholic marriage: faith, communica-

tion, sexuality, and stewardship," the website states. Time is also allowed for couples' reflection and discussion. The weekend retreat is free and includes four meals, one overnight stay, and one workbook.

The schedule for all of the retreat weekends begins on Saturday morning with 9 a.m. check-in followed by morning sessions, lunch, afternoon sessions, dinner and evening prayer. The retreat continues Sunday morning with breakfast, a morning session, celebration of Mass, and concludes with lunch

and issuance of Certificates of Completion.

If Friday evening lodging is needed, it should be made separately and directly with the pastoral center.

For more information, updates, and to register, visit www.dwc.org, click Events at the top of the page, then click Marriage Preparation for Engaged Couples.

Information may also be obtained by contacting Jeanne McKeets in the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis by sending e-mail to jmckeets@dwc.org.

St. Joseph Retreat Center Offering Healing Circle - Online January to May

WHEELING—Healing Circle - Online is a five-part series to be offered once a month beginning Jan. 14 from 7 to 8 p.m.

The online gatherings will be facilitated by Dr. John Spiesman and are based on the work of Lynne McTaggart, an investigative author internationally known for her groundbreaking work on consciousness and intention.

"She's also architect of the Intention Experiment, a global 'laboratory' involving thousands of readers around the world testing the power of group thoughts to heal the world, with great success," retreat

officials said. "In our healing circles, we will practice using the power of intention to heal ourselves, each other, other concerns of our hearts, and the world."

The Healing Circle - Online will also be offered from 7 to 8 p.m. Feb. 18, March 11, April 8, and May 13.

There is a \$5 donation to participate in each gathering.

For more information or to sign up, contact Anna Marie Troiani, executive director of the St. Joseph Retreat Center by e-mail to atroiani@csjoseph.org or by calling (304) 312-3691.

New Programs, Resources Begin at West Virginia Institute for Spirituality This Month

CHARLESTON—The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality in Charleston has many upcoming opportunities and new resources available beginning this month.

All of the programs are being offered via Zoom, and there is still time to register. "And, if you know someone who might be interested, please be sure to share this list with them," WVIS officials said. View the list at wvis.org.

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality (WVIS) offers programs throughout the year. These programs, which are currently offered via Zoom, are aligned with WVIS's mission of providing opportunities for deepening mindfulness, prayer practice, interior peace, and for integrating moral and ethical values.

Upcoming opportunities include Contemplative Prayer Group, Prayer Counseling Sessions, 19th Annotation Training Intensive, and much more.

Additionally, WVIS offers programs for continuing education and/or CEU credit as applicable, for social workers, registered nurses, licensed professional counselors, and spiritual directors.

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Message from Our CEO

By Beth Zarate, Catholic Charities West Virginia President and Chief Executive Officer

I am incredibly proud to be a part of Catholic Charities West Virginia and our work as the social service arm of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Working together we serve vulnerable West Virginians while addressing the most pressing community issues and focusing on solutions to eradicate poverty. We are called to put our faith in action and embrace the challenges of today. The pandemic has brought much uncertainty and many service modifications. I have seen our staff rise to the challenges with great ingenuity, compassion, resilience, courage and integrity. We are reminded daily to trust that God is working in our lives.

As we begin this New Year, I am thankful to you for your generosity of spirit and heart. I am reminded that we are better together, that we must work shoulder to shoulder to meet all adversity and that with God all things are possible. My prayer is that in all things we resolve to be kinder to ourselves and each other, forgive mistakes and offenses, build trust and work together!

At Catholic Charities we work to be experts in resources and networks, at comprehensive assessment of people and how to best meet their needs, at helping our clients navigate the mountains of paperwork in social systems, at compassionate and caring services, and at instilling a plan - a hope for the future. Four of the most important words we can say are "Let's make a plan?"

My plan for 2021 is to continue to lead a team that embraces challenges and one that is willing to take on really big ideas in service to others. To pray daily for the wisdom to make good choices and the grace to handle every situation. To fully honor our mission and vision for a West Virginia where all people can access the services they need to be happy, healthy and reach their full potential.

Wishing you a 2021 with much hope and promise!

Blessings,
Beth



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

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Asalto al Capitolio de los Estados Unidos conmociona al país y al mundo

Por Rhina Guidos, Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)— Turbas de simpatizantes del presidente Donald Trump pusieron un paro al conteo del voto electoral el 6 de enero en Capitolio de los Estados Unidos, después de cientos de personas invadieron el edificio federal y desenlazando caos durante los últimos días de una presidencia tumultuosa.

Gran parte del país, y del mundo, observó las escenas que salían desde la capital de la nación después de que el vicepresidente Mike Pence dijera que no tenía autoridad para cambiar los resultados de las elecciones, afirmando al presidente electo Joe Biden como el próximo líder estadounidense. Legisladores, igual que el vicepresidente, fueron evacuados y llevados a un lugar seguro después de que una turba invadió el edificio mientras miembros del congreso debatían el escrutinio de los votos electorales. Las imágenes en Twitter mostraron a la turba derribando puertas y algunos preguntando por el vicepresidente, quien desafió a Trump al negarse a impedir que el Congreso certificara los resultados. Con banderas de "Trump 2020", se movían libremente por los pasillos del capitolio mientras legisladores asustados se juntaban desde su lugar seguro para orar, algunos reportaron.

Reportes también dijeron que se encontraron artefactos explosivos en las oficinas nacionales del partido republicano y demócrata y que al menos una persona falleció tras un disparo que resultó durante el desorden. "Es mi juicio meditado que mi juramento de apoyar y defender la Constitución me limita a reclamar autoridad unilateral para determinar qué votos electorales deben contarse y cuáles no", escribió Pence a los legisladores en una carta justo antes de una sesión conjunta del Congreso para hacer el recuento del Colegio Electoral, provocando la ira de Trump.

Pence terminó la carta con "Dios me ayude".

Horas antes, Trump había instado públicamente a Pence a través de Twitter a refutar la certificación del Congreso de los resultados, a pesar de que Biden ganó el voto popular y electoral. "Los estados quieren corregir sus votos, que ahora saben que se basaron en irregularidades y fraude, además el proceso corrupto nunca recibió la aprobación legislativa", tuiteó Trump, lo que llevó a Twitter a marcar lo que escribió como un reclamo sobre fraude electoral que "está en disputa".

"Todo lo que Mike Pence tiene que hacer es enviarlos de regreso a los estados, Y GANAMOS. Hazlo Mike, este es un momento de extrema valentía!" tuiteó el presidente.

Después de que Pence se negó, el presidente lo atacó en Twitter. "Mike Pence no tuvo el valor de hacer lo que debería haberse hecho para proteger a nuestro país y nuestra Constitución, dando a los estados la oportunidad de certificar un conjunto de hechos corregidos, no los fraudulentos o inexactos que se les pidió que certificaran previamente," tuiteó Trump.

Después del tuit, la violencia se desenfrenó.

El arzobispo José H. Gómez de Los Ángeles, pres-

idente de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, emitió un comunicado noche el 6 de enero diciendo que se unía a las "personas de buena voluntad para condenar la violencia hoy en el Capitolio de los Estados Unidos".

"Esto no es lo que somos como estadounidenses", dijo, y agregó que está orando por los miembros del Congreso, los miembros del personal de Capitol Hill, los oficiales de policía "y todos los que trabajan para restaurar el orden y la seguridad pública".

El arzobispo calificó la transición pacífica del poder como "uno de los sellos distintivos de esta gran nación" y destacó que en este "momento preocupante, debemos volver a comprometernos con los valores y principios de nuestra democracia y unirnos como una sola nación bajo Dios".

Algunos católicos en Twitter en Washington, como Dawn Eden Goldstein, instaron a orar por la paz.

"Ahora son las 3 p.m. en DC. Únase a mí para rezar la coronilla de la Divina Misericordia AHORA MISMO por la paz en el Capitolio de los Estados Unidos y el mundo", escribió. "Una vergüenza nacional y el resultado inevitable de las interminables mentiras sobre la elección difundidas por @realDonaldTrump y sus seguidores", tuiteó el padre jesuita Jim Martin. "Aquí vemos el fruto de estas mentiras, estos pecados: ira, odio, discordia, desesperación y violencia. 'Y por sus frutos los conoceréis' (Mt. 7:20)".

El senador republicano de Utah Mitt Romney le dijo a un reportero del New York Times quien buscaba seguridad junto con los legisladores: "Esto es lo que el presidente ha causado hoy, esta insurrección".

Muchos criticaron a los que estaban participando en el caos y al mismo tiempo llevaban banderas que decían "Jesús salva" a la par de parafernalia de Trump.

Biden, en una conferencia de prensa horas después de que comenzara el caos, le dijo a Trump que saliera a la televisión nacional, cumpliera su juramento "y defienda la Constitución y exija el fin de este asedio".

"Esto no es protesta, es insurrección", dijo.

Aquellos en los Estados Unidos no fueron los únicos que vieron las escenas que se desarrollaban, dijo el presidente electo en un discurso dirigido a apelar a Trump. Dijo que la democracia era frágil y que Estados Unidos estaba "bajo un ataque sin precedentes".

"Piense en lo que piensan nuestros niños que están viendo la televisión. Piense en lo que está mirando el resto del mundo", dijo.

Desde Inglaterra, el arzobispo Justin Welby de Canterbury dijo que había "muchas lecciones que aprender de los escenarios de Washington".

"Por el momento, oremos por Estados Unidos, el mayor defensor de la democracia en el mundo hasta ahora, que enfrenta este gran impacto. Que Dios bendiga a Estados Unidos con paz y reconciliación", tuiteó.

El obispo Thomas J. Tobin de Rhode Island dijo que estaría celebrando la misa "por nuestra atribulada na-

ción".

"En esta temporada santa, mientras continuamos observando el nacimiento del Niño Jesús, que la paz, la armonía, la unidad y la fraternidad sean restauradas en nuestro país. ¡Que Dios bendiga y guíe a América!", escribió.

Desde Dallas, el obispo Edward J. Burns tuiteó: "Oremos para que esta nación, bajo Dios, siga siempre los caminos de la paz y la justicia".

Por la tarde, Trump publicó un video en el cual continuaba insistiendo equivocadamente de que había ganado las elecciones. Reclamando fraude, pareció dirigirse a los partidarios que habían causado el caos y les dijo que se fueran "a casa".

"Pero tienen que irse a casa ahora mismo, tenemos que tener paz, tenemos que tener derecho de estado, tenemos que respetar a nuestra gran gente en la ley, y el derecho de estado, no queremos que nadie resulte herido", dijo. "Es un período muy difícil ... tenemos que tener paz, así que váyanse a casa, los queremos mucho. Son muy especiales, han visto lo que pasa, ven la forma en que se les trata a los demás (de parte de los) que son tan malos y tan malvados. Sé cómo se sienten, pero váyanse y váyanse en paz".

El arzobispo de Baltimore, William E. Lori, emitió una declaración más tarde ese mismo día en la que decía que "nuestros corazones están apesadumbrados al presenciar las impactantes e ilegales protestas que ocurren en la capital de nuestra nación".

"Oramos fervientemente por la paz y la protección de Dios sobre nuestro país, nuestros legisladores y todos los que se encuentran en peligro en este terrible día. Que los estadounidenses de buena voluntad amantes de la paz en todo Estados Unidos se unan para engendrar paz, reconciliación y sanación en nuestra nación herida y quebrantada, que permanece y debe ser siempre una, bajo Dios", dijo.

Otros obispos católicos y líderes de organizaciones católicas se unieron en declaraciones separadas denunciando lo ocurrido en el Capitolio.

La Oficina Maryknoll para Asuntos Globales dijo que estaba consternada por las acciones de una "turba violenta" y pidió a Trump y a los funcionarios electos que condenaran "el comportamiento vergonzoso que se presencia hoy en el Capitolio y que dejen atrás la retórica de odio, las afirmaciones falsas y los fracasos en liderazgo que lo ha llevado".

En las horas después del caos inicial, el equipo de transición de Biden reunió a líderes religiosos de todo el país para orar por la sanación por Zoom. Las oraciones ofrecidas por los líderes y los que se unieron al chat pedían por la paz y justicia y una fuerza renovada en medio de un tiempo oscuro.

De manera similar, la Diócesis de Syracuse, Nueva York, transmitió en vivo una Hora Santa de oración por la nación. El obispo de Syracuse, Douglas J. Lucia, dijo en un tuit que anunciaba el servicio de oración ya que "la oración por la paz y la unidad es imperativa en este momento".

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

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la 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.

Visiting Hours Cut Back, Treatment Tent to Open at Wheeling Hospital

WHEELING—As of Jan. 8, visitation will be further restricted at Wheeling Hospital due to the COVID-19 surge.

There will be no visitation to floors 2, 3 4 and 5 of Tower 5 or to the ICU. In addition, visitation to CVSD, IMU, Oncology and Floors 4 and 5 Main Hospital will be permitted only between the hours of 2-4 p.m. Only 1 visit per patient per day is permitted.

Visitation guidelines for Labor and Delivery and Pediatrics remain the same: in Labor and Delivery (one visitor al per patient per day); and Pediatrics (two visitors per patient per day to allow mother and father to visit).

Other visits will be handled on case-by-case basis.

Visitors must enter and exit through the Main Entrance. They will be screened and required to wear masks. They must remain in

the patient's room while in the hospital and are not permitted in common areas, including the cafeteria and Gift Shop.

No visitors under age 18 permitted.

To further address the surge in patients, the hospital is installing a tent to help with ER overflow.

"To help with the surge we've been experiencing, we're installing a semi-permanent tent outside our Emergency-Trauma Department," Wheeling Hospital CEO Douglass Harrison said.

"The tent, which will open next week, will hold 10-12 non-COVID ER overflow patients. It will have flooring, will be heated, have hot and cold running water, computer hookups and phone lines. The patients will be comfortable and receive treatment in a much more timely manner."

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