July 17, 2026 Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Vol. 56, No. 30

THE CATHOLIC Spirit

Bishop Evelio asks Faithful to Support Venezuela Disaster Relief

Two powerful earthquakes struck about 100 miles west of Caracas on June 24, causing widespread destruction across parts of Venezuela.

Buildings collapsed, homes and essential infrastructure were damaged, and thousands of people have been left without safe shelter. Even as the full extent of the damage is still emerging, Catholic parishes have opened their doors to shelter displaced families and provide emergency assistance.

Bishop Evelio Menjívar is asking the faithful of our diocese to lift up the victims in prayer and support the relief efforts if you are able by clicking the link provided at the end of this message.

All funds will go to Catholic Relief Services. CRS is working through Caritas Venezuela and the local

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OSV News photo/Gaby Oraa, Reuters
People receive humanitarian aid in Tanaguarena, Venezuela, July 14 following the aftermath of the June 24 earthquakes.

Bishop Evelio to Close Yearlong Celebration of Diocese's 175th Anniversary on Sunday in Charleston

By Colleen Rowan

It began with West Virginia's Catholic Churches ringing their bells at 7:19 p.m. on July 19, 2025. This marked the offical founding of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and the opening of a yearlong celebration of its 175th anniversary. Masses, musical events, and special gatherings were held all over the state throughout the last year to mark this milestone of the church in West Virginia.

The jubilee, which carried the theme "Celebrating 175 Years of Hope," will culminate this weekend in Charleston with a closing Mass celebrated by Bishop Evelio Menjívar-Ayala at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Sunday, July 19, at 10:30 a.m.

Joining Bishop Menjívar will be Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan and clergy of the diocese. Catholics of the Charleston Vicariate and beyond are invited and encouraged to attend the closing Mass which will be followed by a reception.

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Notice from the Tribunal

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston hereby formally cites Mr. John Waak as the respondent in the contention of marital nullity (Case 4075-2025 Wright-Waak) introduced by his former spouse before this Tribunal. This contention has moved to Publication of the Acts, and the respondent Mr. John Waak has until July 30, 2026, to respond to the Tribunal at (304) 233-0880.

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

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

The Catholic Spirit

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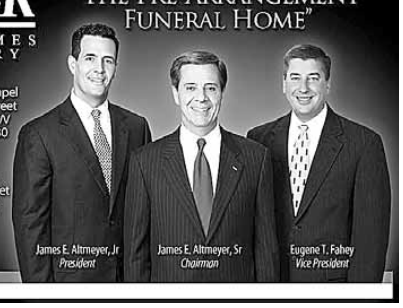

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Death Toll in Venezuela Nears 5,000 as Earthquake Recovery Intensifies

By Junno Arocho Esteves

(OSV News) — Twin earthquakes in Venezuela have left nearly 5,000 people dead, according to government officials, triggering a massive mobilization of humanitarian aid organizations.

In a July 15 update on X, National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez announced the latest figures, confirming that the death toll from the back-to-back disasters had reached 4,829.

The twin earthquakes, which struck the northern Venezuelan state of La Guaira in the evening June 24, measured 7.2 and 7.5 in magnitude and were the strongest to hit Venezuela in more than a century.

According to the figures released by Rodriguez, the number of injured was currently at 16,740. The earthquakes left 17,907 people homeless, with 20,857 individuals currently seeking shelter across 106 temporary camps. The infrastructural damage included 856 affected buildings and 190 total structural collapses.

Emergency crews have rescued 6,462 individuals from the disaster zones, and seismologists have recorded 1,284 aftershocks. In a report published July 16 by UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, the hundreds of aftershocks have continued to increase risks and hamper recovery efforts.

The earthquakes' extensive damage, especially to homes and schools, the organization noted, has created "a major child-focused humanitarian emergency" as well as hardships for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and people with disabilities.

Catholics around the world have joined in efforts to raise funds to assist Venezuelans struggling to find basic supplies, food and medicine.

The Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council, known as CELAM, posted a video on X July 15, urging Catholics to donate to Caritas Venezuela, following the launch of their campaign, "Tras el temblor, el amor" ("After the earthquake, love").

The campaign includes progress reports on the humanitarian aid the Catholic charitable organization has received and where it is distributed. In its July 10 report, Caritas Venezuela said it distributed 13,050 metric tons of aid in the 10 days following the twin earthquakes.

Water made up the largest share of the distributed aid at 5,612 tons, followed closely by 5,220 tons of food items. The organization also distributed 1,305 tons of hygiene products and 914 tons of donated clothing.

One of Caritas Venezuela's partners helping distribute the aid is Catholic Relief Services — the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' official overseas humanitarian and development agency.

CRS is "working extremely closely" with its in-country partner, the U.S. agency's spokesperson, Brittany Wichtendahl, told OSV News July 8.

Arriving in the Latin American nation July 9, Robyn Fieser — who is coordinating CRS emergency communications on the ground — found "there were literally blocks of buildings that were just pancaked onto themselves. There was massive destruction for blocks."

"It looked a little bit like a war zone," said Fieser, speaking to OSV News from Venezuela in a July 13 call. She asked people to "keep Venezuelans in their hearts."

In Bolivia, Caritas announced a nationwide collection set to take place in parishes July 26, urging donations that would provide food, medicine and temporary housing to victims in Venezuela.

In a July 16 statement, Bishop Heiner Wilmer of Hildesheim, president of the German bishops' conference, called on Catholics in the country to pray for Venezuelans and encouraged them to donate to Caritas Venezuela.

Initial donations made by German parishes and individuals, he noted, were "received with great gratitude in Venezuela" and distributed by Caritas.

"Through them, our aid reaches those in need directly. We must not abandon the victims of the earthquakes and must help now," Bishop Wilmer said.

"Church partners on the ground can distribute aid supplies quickly and effectively; they also support the often severely traumatized people with psychosocial services. Reconstruction will take years," the bishop added. "Please support Caritas International's vital emergency relief efforts with your donation."

(Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News.)

OSV News photo/Leonardo Fernandez Viloria, Reuters

Angel Flores, his wife, Catherine Pacheco, and their children gather their belongings outside the destroyed Mision Vivienda residential building in Catia la Mar, Venezuela July 9. The building collapsed in the wake of two catastrophic earthquakes that hit in quick succession June 24, devastating the country. The death toll in Venezuela has climbed to nearly 5,000 people.

Relief...

Cont'd from Page 1

Church to quickly deliver emergency shelter, food, safe water, medical care and other critical relief to those affected. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to support our brothers and sisters in need. To donate, visit https://www.crs.org/donate/venezuela-earthquake?ms=agicrs0226veq00bnr00

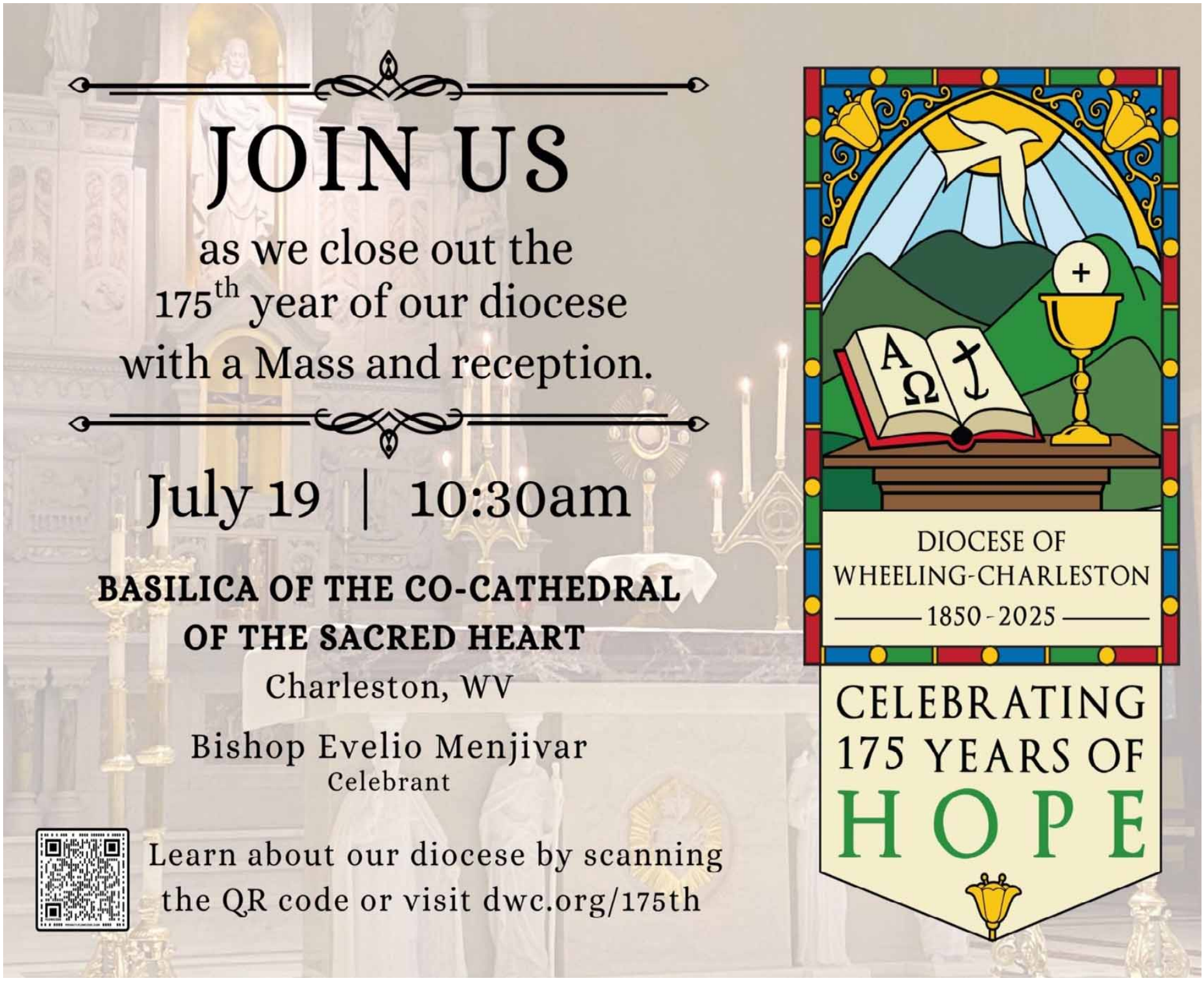
Anniversary ...

Cont'd from Page 1

"It is an great honor for the basilica to celebrate the conclusion of the 175th anniversary year of our diocese," said Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, Assoc. V.E., V.F., the basilica's rector. "This will be Bishop Evelio's first Mass at his Co-Cathedral. You are invited to join with Bishop Evelio and Bishop Emeritus Mark as we conclude this Year of Hope. May the Lord bless us as we continue to witness to the joy and hope in sharing Christ among the people in the hills and valleys of our beautiful state."

Bishop Brennan began the yearlong celebration with Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. He then traversed the state celebrating anniversary Masses for Catholics in Weirton as well as the Beckley, Clarksburg, Martinsburg, and Parkersburg vicariates.

Learn more about the anniversary and the diocese's history by visiting https://dwc.org/175th/



Juneteenth Celebration Draws Record Crowd in Martinsburg

MARTINSBURG — The Sumner-Ramer Memorial Heritage, Inc. Committee is proud to announce that the 2026 Juneteenth Celebration at War Memorial Park was a tremendous success.

This year's event attracted more than 300 people, surpassing last year's attendance and demonstrating the growing support for this important community celebration. People from all backgrounds and cultures came together to commemorate Juneteenth, making the event a true reflection of unity, fellowship, and community spirit.

Attendees included people of all races and ethnicities—Black, White, Hispanic, and many others—who joined together to celebrate not only African American history but American history as a whole. The event emphasized the importance of understanding our shared past while working together to build a better future for generations to come.

"We are very grateful for the overwhelming support from the community," said members of the Sumner-Ramer Memorial Heritage, Inc. Committee. "This celebration was about bringing people together as one community. Juneteenth is a significant part of American history, and it was wonderful to see so many people united in recognition of that history."

A special highlight of the day was the attendance of the mayor of Martinsburg, Kevin Knowles, who joined the celebration and showed his support for this important community event.

The committee extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who attended, participated, volunteered, performed, sponsored, and helped make the celebration possible. Their support contributed to a memorable day filled with education, entertainment, fellowship, and unity.

Looking ahead, the committee hopes to continue building on this success and welcomes even more community participation in the future. Plans are already underway for next year's celebration, and organizers hope to welcome 500 or more attendees to War Memorial Park for the 2027 Juneteenth Celebration.

The Sumner-Ramer Memorial Heritage, Inc. Committee thanks everyone for helping make this year's Juneteenth celebration one of the best yet and looks forward to an even bigger and better event next year.

Courtesy photo

Helen and Leonard Harris, right, are pictured with Martinsburg Mayor Kevin Knowles, left, at the 2026 Juneteenth Celebration at the city's War Memorial Park. Helen and Leonard are members of St. Agnes Parish in Shepherdstown.

Franciscan University to Host Academic Conference on St. Francis, Death, and Christian Hope

'Sister Death-Gate of Life' Conference will mark 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's passing into eternal life

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO — Eight hundred years after St. Francis of Assisi embraced death as "Sister Death," Franciscan University of Steubenville will gather scholars, clergy, religious, medical professionals, students, and lovers of Franciscan spirituality for a three-day academic conference on the mystery of death, human dignity, and Christian hope.

The Sister Death-Gate of Life Conference: St. Francis and Contemporary Questions in Death, Dying, and Human Dignity will take place November 5-7, 2026, at Franciscan University as part of the worldwide celebration of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' death and entrance into heaven.

The conference will explore how St. Francis' witness speaks to some of the most pressing questions of our time, including palliative and hospice care, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, emerging medical technologies, accompaniment of the suffering and dying, and the Christian hope of eternal life.

"What a gift to celebrate the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' death and passing into eternal life!" said Father Jonathan St. André, TOR, vice president for Franciscan Life at Franciscan University. "We are excited to gather people of all walks of life—scholars, friars, sisters, lay Franciscans, and lovers of St. Francis—to celebrate this anniversary through an exploration of Franciscan spirituality as it gives insight into the mystery of death and resurrection."

The conference will open Thursday evening with a keynote lecture from Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, president emerita of St. Bonaventure University, titled "When Death Is Unwelcome: Marianne of Molokai." A longtime teacher of Franciscan history and spirituality, Sister Carney continues to serve as a lecturer and leader for Catholic higher education and Franciscan organizations throughout the United States.

On Friday, Dr. Charles Camosy, associate professor of moral theology and ethics at The Catholic University of America, will deliver the second keynote, "Pax et Bonum at the Threshold: Franciscan Nonviolence from the NICU to the Nursing Home." Camosy is a moral theologian and bioethicist whose work focuses on human life issues from conception to natural death.

The final keynote on Saturday will feature Father Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., professor emeritus at Saint Louis University, and Brother Thomas A. Piolata, OFM Cap., assistant professor of systematic theology at The Catholic University of America. Their lecture, "Romano Guardini: An Early 20th-Century Pioneer of St. Bonaventure's Theology," will draw from the Franciscan intellectual tradition and its continuing relevance for the Church today.

Along with keynote and other lectures about St. Francis, Franciscan spiritually, and modern issues surround death, the conference schedule includes a performance of an early-Baroque requiem by Franciscan's Schola Cantorum, a presentation of iconographic artwork by students, academic paper sessions, daily Mass, times of prayer and worship, a welcome reception, and concluding prayer.

"The best thing to do in this Year of Jubilee of St. Francis would be to visit St. Francis' home in Assisi, Italy," Father St. André said. "A runner-up to that pilgrimage is to join others who love St. Francis and Franciscan spirituality at the 'Sister Death-Gate of Life' Conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville. Stimulating academic lectures, artistic and musical presentations, and times of prayer and worship together will make for a wonderful opportunity to gather."

As part of the Jubilee Year of St. Francis, Franciscan University is also serving as a pilgrimage destination where the faithful may receive a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions: sacramental confession, reception of the Eucharist, prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, and detachment from sin. The University has designated several pilgrimage sites for the jubilee, including the historic Portiuncula Chapel, Christ the King Chapel, and Sacred Heart Chapel on its Steubenville campus, as well as Maria Thron Church at the Kartause Maria Thronus Iesu in Gaming, Austria.

The conference comes at a moment when cultural, medical, and legal debates continue to shape how society understands life's final moments. By returning to St. Francis' embrace of "Sister Death," Franciscan University will invite participants to consider how the Catholic tradition offers not despair but hope and confidence in the resurrection.

For more information or to register, visit the Sister Death-Gate of Life Conference page on Franciscan University's website.

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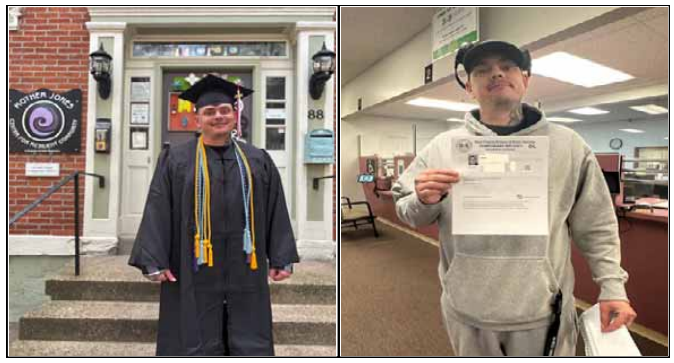
Within the Diocese of Wheeling Charleston, Catholic Charities West Virginia and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) have been working for social change across the United States for over 50 years. Created by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, CCHD works with a two-pronged approach. One arm educates Americans about the realities of poverty. The other arm confronts the unique challenges of those living in poverty by funding community and economic development projects. These organizations work in innovative ways to build self-reliance and power for those in poverty.

The annual Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston collection for CCHD is the weekend of July 18th and 19th.



HOH-Share's CCHD project, Uplift WV, helped Ryan overcome homelessness and unemployment. Now he leads others toward recovery, reentry, and stability through service and support.

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USCCB Urges Trump Administration to 'Advance Real Solutions' Instead of IVF

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other Catholic groups submitted public comments in opposition to a proposed government regulation that would expand insurance coverage for in vitro fertilization.

IVF is a form of fertility treatment opposed by the Catholic Church because it separates procreation from the marital act and often involves the destruction of human embryos, among other concerns.

The proposed regulation, announced in May by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Treasury, aims to help implement President Donald Trump's February 2025 executive order to expand IVF access, the departments indicated. It would establish a new category of limited excepted benefits, similar to limited-scope dental or vision benefits, the departments said at the time.

In a 17-page public comment dated July 13 and addressed to the Labor Department, the Office of the General Counsel at the USCCB stated that it "appreciates the Departments' recognition of infertility as a serious matter and their intent to support family formation."

"The Church affirms the deep desire of spouses to welcome children and supports medical efforts to address infertility. At the same time, public policy should not promote practices that undermine the dignity of human life or sever the connection between procreation and the marital act," the comment said. "The USCCB therefore evaluates the proposed rule both positively and critically."

The comment was signed by William J. Quinn, general counsel for the USCCB, and Daniel Balserak, associate general counsel.

After explaining the Church's objections to IVF, they urged the government to consider promoting instead what they called restorative reproductive medicine.

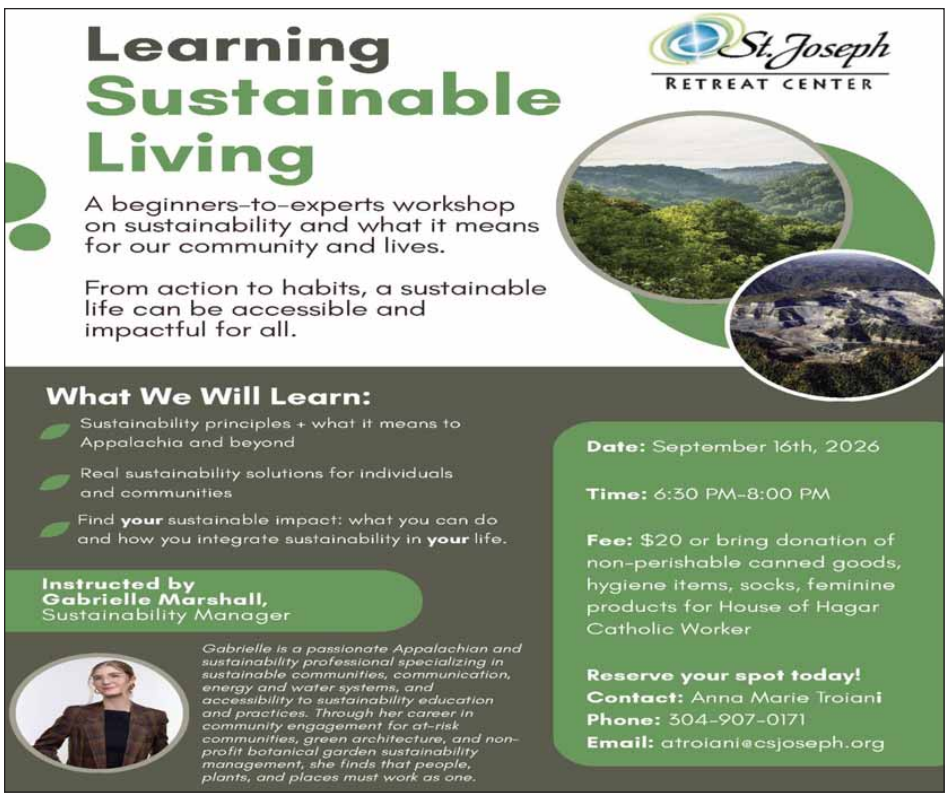
"RRM approaches generally recognize that infertility is a symptom of an underlying condition, not a disease in and of itself; and they therefore seek to restore normal reproductive function by identifying and treating its root causes," they wrote. "In contrast to restorative reproductive medicine, in vitro fertilization does not aim to treat the underlying causes of infertility but seeks to bypass them — in a sense, overriding the symptom."

The USCCB also urged that the final rule "should clarify that no employer, having chosen to offer fertility benefits, must cover any particular service, and should proactively protect the religious liberty and conscience rights of employers and employees."

The comment was submitted on the final day of the public comment window for the proposed regulation.

"The proposed rule represents a valuable opportunity to advance real solutions to infertility that respect the God-given dignity of parents and of children, born and preborn," the comment stated. "We urge the Departments to refocus the rule on therapeutic, restorative treatments, and to abandon its inclusion of IVF, which is profoundly flawed both legally and morally."

The National Catholic Bioethics Center, the Catholic Medical Association and the National Association of Catholic Nurses USA filed a similar public comment. They argued that the proposal lacks sufficient conscience protections, among their other objections to IVF.



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U.S. Franciscans Appeal for Help in Ending Israeli Settler Violence Against Christians

By Junno Arocho Esteves

(OSV News) — Franciscans in the United States urged U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to help stop increased attacks against Christians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

According to a statement released July 9, the 12 provincial ministers representing the U.S. Franciscan provinces said they received a response to their June 16 letter following the latest attack on Palestinian Christians in the village of Taybeh.

"The State Department responded on June 24th, stating, 'Our office continues to track issues of violence against Christians in Israel and the West Bank, and we take it very seriously. We appreciate the work you do to highlight these concerns,'" the Franciscans said.

Despite the response, the Franciscans said they were "compelled to amplify" their appeal and make it public as attacks against Christians continue to rise.

"Violence continues to grow unabated. The world cannot be blind to the atrocities, and we hope the release of our letter can bring greater attention and advocacy for peace to this tragedy," said Franciscan Father Lawrence Hayes, provincial minister of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In late June, Israeli settlers set fire to homes and vehicles in Taybeh, killing three people. The Israeli Defense Force said it apprehended five suspects involved in the attack.

In an interview with Vatican News published July 7, Father Bashar Fawadleh, a parish priest in the West Bank, said that after repeated attacks against Christians in the area, Israeli settlers began constructing an illegal outpost in an area belonging to Taybeh.

Israeli settlements in the West Bank are considered a violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states that an "occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Despite repeated appeals to the international community, Father Fawadleh told Vatican News that Christians in the area continue to live in fear as Israeli settlers continue to attack villagers.

"We are simply asking to remain on our land without fear," the priest said.

In their initial appeal to Rubio, the heads of the Franciscan provinces warned of the "nearly 2,000 years of the continuous presence of the indigenous Christian community in the Holy Land being uprooted and heading toward eradication."

They also lamented the inaction of IDF forces "who seem unable, or perhaps unwilling, to curtail the expansion and violence."

"We fear the violence against Palestinians by radical Israeli settlers is growing to a breaking point. The implications of a Holy Land without a mediating Christian community is dire," the Franciscan provincial leaders told Rubio.

Concerns have also been raised in Gaza as Israeli forces continued their attacks despite a ceasefire. According to Vatican News, five people were killed July 12 in strikes that the Israeli military said targeted a weapons production site operated by Hamas.

A United Nations official also released a statement July 13 condemning the obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza after "armed personnel affiliated with the de facto authorities" raided a food distribution point as well as a U.N. World Food Program warehouse where they "assaulted two truck drivers who were delivering humanitarian supplies."

"These incidents are not isolated," said Ramiz Alakbarov, the United Nations deputy special coordinator for the Middle East peace process. "They are completely unacceptable and reflect an increasingly dangerous pattern of intimidation, violence and obstruction, including smuggling attempts, targeting and abusing humanitarian operations."

Alakbarov called for an end to "all interference with humanitarian operations," saying that the people of Gaza "have already endured immense suffering" and "cannot be subjected to further delays or disruptions in the delivery of life-saving assistance."

"I reiterate that humanitarian organizations must be able to carry out their work safely, independently, impartially and without fear of intimidation or violence," he said.

(Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News.)

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Obituary
Sister Phyllis Carpenter, SAC

Sr. Phyllis Carpenter, S.A.C., was born on September 23, 1932, to the late William and Vivian F. (Tichenor) Carpenter in Monongah, West Virginia. She was the fourth of five children, all of whom have preceded her in death: Marian Louise Swanger, Roger William Carpenter, Russell Lee Carpenter, and Dana Sue Larson. She is survived by her nephews, whom she deeply cherished.

Sr. Phyllis was devoted to her West Virginia roots and prided herself on being a coal miner's daughter. The town in which she was born witnessed the deadliest coal mine explosion in U.S. history on December 6, 1907. That history left an indelible mark on her as the town has prided itself on keeping memories alive.

In 1952 when she was in college, she became interested in the Catholic Church. "I was impressed by the fact that they could set their beliefs down, and they knew WHAT they believed. That was what stabilized me during that period of my life. So, I embraced that religion and got acquainted with both the Pallottines and Ursuline Sisters."

She entered the Pallottine Missionary Sisters in 1955 attracted by the German Sisters' work and service ethic, their missionary calling, and their joyful spirits. Not everything went smoothly from there. Her family had no problem with her becoming Catholic but did not want her to become a Sister. She struggled with disappointing them, and despite their protests, she later recalled, "I 'eloped' and ran off to the convent" in January 1955.

From there she continued her education at Marshall University receiving her M.A. in Special Education and Learning Disabilities. Sister was an excellent teacher and taught at Sacred Heart School and Our Lady of Fatima School in Huntington, W.Va.; Spring Lake, Mich.; Laurel, Md.; and in the public school system in Buckhannon, W.Va. from 1961 until she retired in 1991. In the summers, she did extensive research and worked in the archives of the Pallottine Missionary Sisters.

"Archival work paved the way for the second great love of my life: family and local history. 'To forget one's ancestors is like a root without a source; a tree without roots'" — Old Chinese Proverb.

After her retirement she continued to tutor, volunteering at Morgantown Public Library and WVU Library as a genealogist and local historian; she volunteered with CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate. She also did prison ministry, writing to inmates. In her free time, Sister wrote poetry and illustrative photos that number in the hundreds – a testament to her journey with God.

Sister Phyllis spent some years living alone and living simply. She thrived on quiet and was restless in the community setting. However, that did not keep her from being involved with the province and the Congregation. One of her greatest joys was being invited to come to Rome and work on committees. Her vast knowledge of the province history has been an asset to the Pallottines.

Throughout her life, she did research on individual Sisters and historical happenings within the Province. She wrote a detailed manuscript called, On the Shoulder of Giants, that was used extensively in formation. She helped create a province video in the 1990's that documented the life of our various houses and ministries. She also assisted with another documentary celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Sisters in the United States. Sister desired to ensure that no Sister would be forgotten through the annals of time and worked diligently to make sure that their lives were recorded for the archives.

We thank God for the gift of Sr. Phyllis.

A Holy Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at St. Mary's Medical Center Chapel. Interment followed at Springhill Cemetery in Huntington, West Virginia. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Pallottine Missionary Sisters Retirement Fund.

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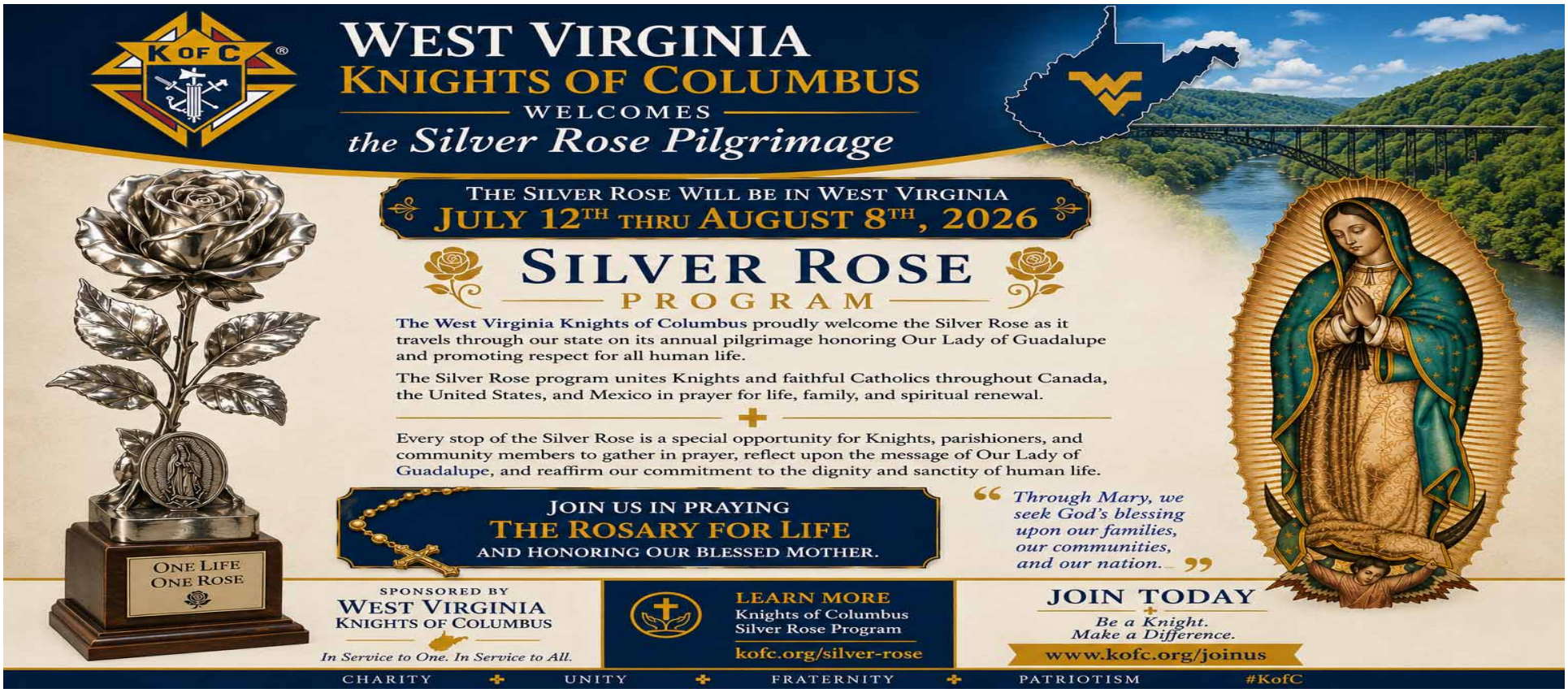

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'Mantengan a los venezolanos en sus corazones' tras los terremotos, dice una coordinadora de una

Por Gina Christian

(OSV News) -- Los daños causados por los dos terremotos consecutivos que sacudieron Venezuela el 24 de junio son "mucho peores de lo esperado", afirmó una trabajadora de respuesta ante desastres de Catholic Relief Services (CRS), quien pidió a la gente que mantuviera "a los venezolanos en sus corazones".

Al llegar a este país latinoamericano el 9 de julio, Robyn Fieser, que coordina las comunicaciones de emergencia de CRS sobre el terreno, se encontró con que "había, literalmente, manzanas enteras de edificios que se habían derrumbado unos sobre otros. La destrucción era enorme en varias manzanas".

"Parecía una zona de guerra", afirmó Fieser en una conversación telefónica con OSV News desde Venezuela el 13 de julio.

Al menos 4.500 personas perdieron la vida durante los sismos de 7,2 y 7,5 grados, que se produjeron con solo 39 segundos de diferencia en junio.

Miles de personas siguen desaparecidas, y muchos sobrevivientes luchan por rescatar los cuerpos de sus seres queridos entre los escombros.

"Hablé con un hombre que me contó que, al sentir los terremotos, corrió inmediatamente a casa, se calzó los zapatos y salió a ayudar", explicó Fieser. "Era uno de las personas que simplemente intentaban ayudar a la gente a salir de allí como pudieran".

Las infraestructuras eléctricas, de agua y de saneamiento han quedado gravemente dañadas por los terremotos.

Los líderes y organizaciones católicas se movilizaron rápidamente para prestar ayuda, y CRS --la agencia oficial de ayuda humanitaria y desarrollo en el extranjero de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos-- "colaboró muy estrechamente" con su socio en el país, Cáritas Venezuela, según explicó la portavoz de CRS, Brittany Wichtendahl, a OSV News el 8 de julio.

Ambas organizaciones forman parte de Cáritas Internationalis, la red humanitaria mundial de la Iglesia católica universal.

CRS y Cáritas Venezuela han distribuido conjuntamente cientos de kits de emergencia con alimentos y productos de higiene, además de lonas para servir de refugio.

"La gente ha perdido sus hogares", afirmó Fieser. "Conocí a tres enfermeras que se alojan en tiendas de campaña en una pequeña plaza justo al lado de su iglesia".

CRS y Cáritas Venezuela están trabajando para proporcionar a los venezolanos los productos básicos necesarios para la vida cotidiana mientras se esfuerzan por reconstruir sus vidas, afirmó.

"Necesitan comida, necesitan agua", dijo Fieser. "Estamos proporcionando kits de higiene para que la gente pueda lavarse y cepillarse los dientes, y nos estamos encargando de los pañales para sus hijos. Estamos proporcionando mantas, comida… Necesitan de todo, porque no están en sus casas".

Esta catástrofe agrava las crisis que llevan años afectando a esta nación latinoamericana. En una actualización de la situación publicada en su página web, CRS señaló que, antes de los dos terremotos, "se calcula que 7,9 millones de personas ya necesitaban ayuda debido a años de crisis económica, inseguridad alimentaria y servicios públicos debilitados".

La actual líder, Delcy Rodríguez --quien ascendió al poder tras la captura y la imputación en enero por parte de EE UU. del entonces presidente Nicolás Maduro y su esposa, Cilia Flores-- se ha enfrentado a la creciente indignación de muchos venezolanos, que han señalado la lenta respuesta de su Gobierno ante los terremotos.

Fieser afirmó que los daños van mucho más allá de lo físico.

"Todas y cada una de las personas con las que he hablado están traumatizadas, todas y cada una", afirmó.

Una mujer con la que habló Fieser salió de su piso tras los terremotos y vio "gente cubierta de polvo, gente tirada en el suelo" mientras sonaba la alarma de su teléfono.

Ahora, "cualquier tipo de ruido fuerte que se parezca siquiera a una alarma la asusta", afirmó Fieser.

Quienes aún tienen acceso a sus hogares siguen mostrándose cautelosos, sobre todo porque "ha habido muchas réplicas", señaló.

"He hablado con personas que dicen que no pueden cerrar las puertas cuando se duchan porque tienen demasiado miedo de quedarse atrapadas en una habitación", explicó Fieser, añadiendo que algunas "duermen junto a la puerta principal de sus casas porque no quieren quedarse atrapadas".

Otros, en cambio, "no paran de llorar", señaló Fieser. "El impacto traumático de todo esto es extremadamente fuerte. Y creo que el apoyo emocional es, en cierto modo, tan importante como otros elementos vitales, como la comida y el agua. La gente está gravemente traumatizada por lo ocurrido".

Fieser admitió que, con los cadáveres aún bajo los escombros, "se puede oler" la descomposición.

https://www.crs.org/es/dona/terremoto-en-venezuela?ms=agicrs0226eqk00spa00

Gina Christian es reportera multimedia de OSV News.)

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores: La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estado Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web www.repostbishopabuse.org. Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiásticas correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web www.dwc.org, favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diocesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia 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 a menores: 304-293-6400.

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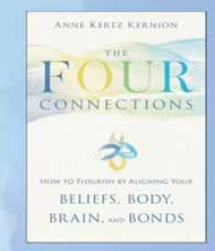

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Over four decades ago, Anne founded Cards by Anne and became an award-winning author in 2021 with "Spiritual Practices for the Brain: Caring for Mind, Body, and Soul," bridging health and spiritual wisdom. Anne's third book, "The Four Connections: How to Flourish by Aligning Your Beliefs, Body, Brain, and Bonds," was published by Loyola Press in early 2026. She currently teaches a weekly yoga class and enjoys biking, running, and hiking. Anne and her husband Jack have three children and six grandchildren.

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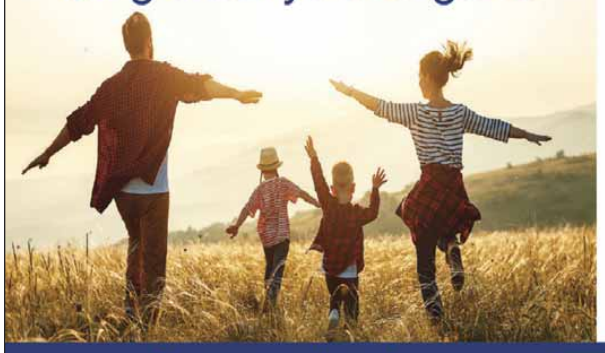

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