John Soplinski Ordained Deacon

By Colleen Rowan

With family, friends, and the faithful gathered at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling May 27, Deacon John Soplinski was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Mark Brennan.

His diaconate is ordered toward the priesthood, the bishop said in his homily, which God willing, he will receive next year. Even as a priest, though, he does not lose his diaconate, the bishop said, “he builds on it.”

As a transitional deacon, Deacon Soplinski will spend the summer at St. Thomas Parish in Thomas serving others and preaching the gospel. The essence of the diaconate is service, which takes many forms, the bishop said. And one of the principle ways is by helping people in need.

“Deacons historically have attended people with many kinds of needs,” the bishop added. “Some finding shelter for the homeless, others visiting the sick, others by bringing clothes or food or furniture to poor families. Sometimes, deacons are called to stand up and defend people who are being attacked or oppressed in some way—the unborn, immigrants” and other groups as well.

St. Peter, the bishop said, reminds everyone serving in God’s name, whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God provides (1 Peter 4:11).

“Deacons imitate their savior,” the bishop said, noting the first reading for the Mass as St. Peter says, Jesus “went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” (Acts 10:37-43).

Another form of service rendered to the church by deacons is a ministry of the word. The bishop pointed to St. Stephen, one of the original deacons, who proclaimed God’s word in Jerusalem. This ultimately led to his martyrdom.

See “Soplinski” on Page 2
Seminarian Summer Assignments Announced

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Vocations Office has announced the summer assignments for seminarians. The assignments are from June 5 to July 27.

Deacon John Soplinski — St. Thomas Parish in Thomas
Joe Derico — Antigua Guatemala, Spanish Immersion
Don Vito Cortese — St. Margaret Mary Parish in Parkersburg
Timothy Kawash — St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town
Dominic Re — Omaha, Nebraska, Institute for Priestly Formation
Nathan Schmidt — St. Joseph Parish in Huntington
Bryan Tedeschi — Rome, Italy, Rome Experience
Michael J. Tupta — Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton

Soplinski... Cont'd from Page 1

The bishop shared that only a few days before the ordination, he observed the 50th anniversary of his first homily as a deacon. In his diaconate, the bishop would visit children in the hospital several days a week.

A third major service that deacons offer, the bishop said, is sacramental ministry. Along with assisting priests at Mass, deacons regularly bring holy Communion to the sick, the homebound, and prisoners, the bishop said, adding that they have been doing this since the first century.

“If someone can't go to church, the church goes to them in the person of the deacon,” Bishop Brennan said.

Deacons may also baptize and witness weddings, he noted.

“I hope Deacon John will get the opportunity to experience the joys of such sacramental ministry,” the bishop said.

“The spirit within such a deacon conducts his ministry matters. While holy Communion given by a grumpy deacon is still the Lord's body and blood, the sacrament is more joyfully received if offered with a smile,” the bishop continued, saying that St. Peter's counsel is wise: be serious and sober minded, so that you will be able to pray (1 Peter 4:7).

“It is good for a deacon or any servant of God to be serious about what he or she is doing, not gloomy or unable to laugh,” the bishop said, “but simply aware that it is God's work that is being undertaken.”

Prayer, as St. Peter said, should also accompany one's professional life, “for everyone needs the grace of God to do his work well.”

“When you see a deacon at the altar you are seeing an icon of the unity of the love of God and the love of neighbor,” Bishop Brennan said.

“The deacon is serving God directly at Mass, but is serving God's people before and after the Mass. It teaches all of us that we cannot choose between love of God and love of neighbor. Rather, we must love both.”

The gospel reading for the Mass (Matthew 9:35-38), states that seeing the crowds our Lord's heart was moved with pity for them because they were public and aban- doned like sheep without a shepherd, the bishop said, so the Lord himself taught and fed the crowds.

“In each generation of the church’s history, the Lord Jesus has raised up shepherds whose hearts are moved with the pity and concern for his people that they not be shepherdless. John, you are one whom he has called to that ministry — now deaconate, later priesthood. We are grate- ful that St. Peter’s counsel is in ac- cepting God’s call. I urge all of you, here today, to keep John in your prayers that he may be a gentle, patient, and compassionate shepherd of God’s people; and please pray for more candidates to step forward as he has. For the Lord’s harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few. So ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

The laity, Bishop Brennan said, do much good for the See “Soplinski” on Page 3

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.reportbishopshaxe.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.reportbishopshaxe.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: To Report to Diocesan Authorities: Contact the following components for persons of appropriate age and who are able to consent. The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s Safe Environment Program consists of the Diocese’s Policy Relating to Sexual Misconduct” or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: https://www.wvdhrh.org/report.asp. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6500.

Deacon John Soplinski, 35, of Wheeling, West Virginia, will begin his first ecclesiastical assignment on June 6 as a deacon of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. His assignment is at St. Thomas Parish in Thomas. He will assist in sacramental and pastoral ministry.

Sopi, as he is known, was born in Wheeling on Jan. 1, 1988. He was raised in Parkersburg and graduated from Parkersburg High School in 2006. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious studies and a Master of Divinity degree from the Franciscan Institute of Theology and Ministry at the University of Notre Dame in 2011 and 2013, respectively. He completed a residency at Holyoke Catholic Parish in Holyoke, Massachusetts, during the 2013-14 academic year.

Sopi was called to the diaconate by Bishop Mark E. Brennan in 2016 and ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Brennan on May 26, 2018, at St. Thomas Church in Thomas. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Brennan on June 2, 2018, at Wheeling-Charleston Cathedral.

The bishop shared that Sopi is “a servant of God’s people.”

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, under “Accountability”, then “Report Misconduct” or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: https://www.wvdhrh.org/report.asp. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

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Cont’d from Page 2
work of the Lord, and the church could not go forward without all that the laity do, whether they are working directly for the church or simply trying to live good lives out in the public sphere and influence this society toward better values.
“We also need deacons and priests and consecrated persons,” the bishop said. “Pray for them, and together let us work for the progress of the gospel in our diocese and throughout the world.”
The Rite of Ordination took place before the homily in the Election of the Candidate. During the Promise of the Elect, after the homily, Deacon Soplinski stood before the bishop and promised to serve the people of God as deacon. Those gathered at the cathedral then prayed the Litany of Supplication as he prostrated himself before the altar. Deacon Soplinski then knelt before the bishop, who laid his hands on his head and prayed the Prayer of Ordination. Deacon Soplinski was vested with the stole and dalmatic (vestments of a deacon) by his uncle, Msgr. Robert J. Saly, Jr., who serves as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.
Deacon Soplinski then knelt before the bishop who placed the book of Gospels in his hands. He then received the kiss of peace from his brother deacons. The designated concelebrants of the Mass were: Msgr. Joseph L. Peterson, V.G.; Very Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens Jr., V.E., pastor of the parishes of St. Joseph the Worker and Sacred Heart of Mary in Weirton; and Father Brian J. Cornelwege, director of Vocations, pastor of St. John University Parish in Morgantown, and director of Campus Ministry, West Virginia University, Morgantown.
Deacon John Yaquinta of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Stonewood, served as deacon of the word; and Deacon Harry Evans of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley, served as deacon of the call.
The Church does not claim that the bread and wine in the Sacrament change at the physical level. The appearances remain those of bread and wine; not even at the molecular level is there any change. The change occurs at a metaphysical level. *Metē* in Greek means “after, beyond.” In a way that we can describe but not truly explain, the Lord Jesus appropriates the bread and wine into his risen body, not to feed himself but so that we might feed on him. Theologians use the term “transubstantiation” to describe this change. Incorporated into the risen Christ, the bread in its deepest reality is no longer bread but the Lord’s Body; and the wine is no longer wine but the Lord’s Blood.

**‘We become what we eat’**

In the middle of the second century AD, St. Justin Martyr gives us our first post-New Testament description of the Eucharist:

For not as common bread and common drink do we receive [the Eucharist] but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of his word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh [First Apology, § 66].

Notice that Justin reflects the Christian belief that the change in the bread and wine into Christ’s Body and Blood effects a true change in us (by transmutation). As St. Augustine would later say: “We become what we eat.” The change in us from being incorporated, beginning with our baptism, into the risen Christ gains strength by Christ coming to us in the Eucharist, making us resemble him more and more even as we retain our individual personality, talents and interests. St. Paul grasped this mystery when he wrote: *Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me* [Galatians 2:20]. Although not directly referring to the Eucharist in this passage, we know...
Although our senses cannot detect it, the Lord changes the deepest reality of the bread and wine into his Body and Blood by his divine power.”

—Bishop Mark E. Brennan

Eucharist... Cont’d from Page 4
from 1 Corinthians that Paul would always have remembered it was the Lord who gave himself up for me that he was receiving in the Eucharist.

“Becoming what we eat” means enacting in our lives the self-giving that Christ exhibited in his. Remember the image I evoked before: behind the sacred host is the body that was crucified for us. Jesus’ sacrifice for us impels us to offer ourselves in sacrifice for others. The Eucharist’s power to nourish our personal relationship with the Lord in sacramental reception, prayer and adoration must also foster in us a willingness to serve others. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you also should do [John 13:15], said Jesus to his disciples after washing their feet at the Last Supper when he instituted the Eucharist. Personal Eucharistic piety is a foundation on which an edifice of service must be constructed. Our love for the Lord in the sacrament should deepen our concern for others and move us to do what we can, singly or together, to alleviate suffering, overcome oppression and achieve justice as the prelude to social peace.

Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity

But we will not be able to persevere in doing good and overcoming evil if we do not hold to the authentic Christian belief that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Which raises the question: why is it that many contemporary Catholics have trouble believing in Christ’s true presence in the Eucharist? I have no complete answer to offer but I will mention a few reasons that come to my mind.

First, many of us are practical materialists. Reality for us is what we can see, hear and touch. St. Teresa of Avila understood this: “We prefer the bird in the hand to the two in the bush.” We stand on material reality and shy away from faith in what we cannot see (the two birds hidden in the bush). So, we say, “Whatever the Eucharist is, it can’t be Christ’s Body and Blood. That’s not possible scientifically.” In a purely materialist conception of reality, that is true. But the Church does not claim the change in the Eucharist is a natural phenomenon. It is, as I said above, a metaphysical reality. Although our senses cannot detect it, the Lord changes the deepest reality of the bread and wine into his Body and Blood by his divine power. It’s mysterious. Some people, sadly, cannot live with mystery.

Another problem inhibiting many American Catholics from believing in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is our heightened individualism. There is a healthy individualism but it is exaggerated in many of our compatriots. In my many years of working with immigrants, I have learned that people in many other parts of the world balance a respect for individual views and preferences with a respect for commonly understood values and practices. But too many Americans, including some Catholics, will prioritize their private opinion over any other view, no matter how solidly grounded and supported that other view may be. So, some Catholics think the Eucharist is just a bit of bread and a sip of wine because they do not give any weight to the testimony of Scripture, such as we saw in St. Paul, or the Christian tradition, such as we saw in St. Justin Martyr, or to the witness to the power of the Eucharist given by our saints and millions of ordinary Catholics through the centuries. Individual private opinion puts on blinders and blocks out all other claims to truth.

I do not have a magic formula for overcoming these obstacles but they must be overcome. We could point out that a purely materialistic view of life does not account for the full human experience: our interior freedom, our concern for others and the transcendent, which is evident going back to pre-historic times and continues in most people today. We could also point out that a society organized along purely materialistic lines tends to oppress people: the Marxist societies of the last hundred years have done immense harm to people, as have capitalist societies that are not held in check by laws and customs that foster the common good and individual freedom. Materialism chokes the human spirit.

Our heightened individualism is hard to tackle, because the true antidote is humility, a virtue we typically resist. If a person is reasonably open-minded, however, he or she might revise a private opinion when a good explanation of the common view is presented – for example, the power of the Eucharist to sustain people’s life of faith, especially in difficult circumstances. Others might discover that their private view butts head with reality, making them more open to considering what the Church believes and teaches. The recent pandemic taught us that we are social beings; we are not designed to go it alone. That is as true in the Church as in society generally. I can only hope that more Catholics will respect what their brothers and sisters in the faith have testified about the Eucharist and will joyfully embrace that Eucharistic faith.

Read Part II of Bishop Mark E. Brennan’s article, Reflections on the Eucharist, in the July 7 issue of The Catholic Spirit. The Parish Year of the Eucharistic Revival opens on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Sunday, June 11, 2023). On this day throughout the diocese, parishes will be holding Eucharistic processions in their communities. The faithful are encouraged to participate in their parish’s procession.
Thousands Flock to Missouri to Visit Nun’s Apparently Incorrupt Body

By Megan Marley 
GOWER, Mo. (OSV News) — Thousands flocked to a rural Missouri monastery over the Memorial Day weekend to venerate the apparently incorrupt body of a Benedictine nun with visitors telling OSV News the experience has been spiritually powerful for them.

“It’s electrifying. It’s galvanizing the hearts of the faithful and the unfaithful as well,” said Luke Nold of Easton, Missouri, a volunteer helping the crowds converging at the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus, located outside of Gower.

“I’ve talked to people who have come from as far as Colorado, as near as Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa. … northern Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina. And some of the stories I’m hearing are just profound. A local mortician came out just in disbelief; this doesn’t happen in real life.

The remarkably intact remains of Benedictine Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster of the Most Holy Rosary have been on display for several weeks at the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus. On April 28, the Benedictine Sisters of Mary, Queen of the Apostles established the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus. Sister Wilhelmina, the foundress, died at age 95 in May 2019.

Bodily incorruptibility has long been regarded as a potential — though not conclusive — divine sign affirming an individual lived a life of sanctity. The bodies of more than 100 canonized saints have been seemingly untouched by decay.

A May 22 statement from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, said the condition of Sister Wilhelmina’s remains “has understandably generated widespread interest and raised important questions.” It added, “Bishop (James V.) Johnston is working to establish a thorough process for understanding the nature of the condition of Sister Wilhelmina’s remains.”

As word of Sister Wilhelmina’s remains spread, pilgrims from several states have steadily descended on the abbey, praying before and touching items to the body, which the sisters cleaned and protected with a coating of wax.

The visits intensified ahead of a May 29 rosary procession, after which Sister Wilhelmina’s body was encased in glass at the altar shrine. The steady stream of pilgrims — which one law enforcement official told OSV News numbered “close to 5,000” on just Friday alone of Memorial Day weekend — flowed on either side of the body. They knelt for 60-second intervals before the body, and then passed by a table to touch Sister Wilhelmina’s veil.

Many pilgrims also stopped to spend some time in Eucharistic adoration at the abbey’s church. Outside, hay bales and folding chairs formed makeshift confessionals in the nearby fields.

Volunteers from neighboring parishes — including St. Joseph in Easton and Seven Dolors in Hurlingon — and from Knights of Columbus councils across the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph were on hand to direct traffic, hand out water and food, and shuttle visitors in golf carts.

Maegan Meyers of Lincoln, Nebraska, traveled to the abbey with her family for “love of the saints and to be able to have (her) kids experience that.”

The two-hour journey to see a possible saint in the making was “such a gift,” she said. “We were just talking about just how prevalent and how loud the culture is, and how very clear it is, the timing of this,” said Meyers. “(We have) just so much gratitude for her witness.”

For some, Sister Wilhelmina’s apparently miraculous incorruptibility was a sign of divine approval for her founding of the religious community. After 50 years as a member of the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore — a historically African American religious community whose foundress, Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, is on the path to sainthood — Sister Wilhelmina established the Benedictine Sisters of Mary, Queen of the Apostles in 1995.

The congregation uses the older forms of the Roman Rite promulgated prior to the start of the Second Vatican Council: they have Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal and chant the psalms according to the 1962 Monastic Office. The sisters have even had commercial success with their recordings of chants, topping Billboard’s traditional classic album charts in 2013 and 2014.

Joshua Smith from Auburn, Maine, who attends Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal, commonly called the “traditional Latin Mass,” told OSV News his two daughters are members of the congregation and he saw Sister Wilhelmina while she was still alive. Smith said he finds the nun’s apparent incorruptibility “as some confirmation that we’re on the right path. … It kind of binds us together.”

As an African American, Roberta Crawford of Kansas City, Missouri, told OSV News it was “even more awesome to know” that Sister Wilhelmina also was Black, and that “her belief was strong.”

“This is kind of a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and it was something we needed to see,” she said. “We’re not Catholic, but we have a belief that we just needed to see it, that it actually happened.”

Through experiences like this, “we still see how God is acting in our life,” said Father Sam, a priest from the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who did not provide his last name. He told OSV News he was visiting with fellow Hispanic Catholic parishioners.

“God is using these kinds of events to be able to show his power, to help us to understand that God is alive,” the priest said, “so we may trust in him and believe in him.”

(Megan Marley is the digital editor for OSV News. Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News. OSV News senior writer Maria Wienert contributed to this report.)
Memorial Day Service Led by Berkeley Springs Knights and Newly Installed Chaplain

The Berkeley Springs Catholic community honored the men and women who have given their lives in service to this country at a Memorial Day service led by Knights of Columbus Council 12191. These knights also served their country in the military. Prayers were led by Father Michael O. Lecias, chaplain and captain USARNG, NG, West Virginia Air National Guard. He is also pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Berkeley Springs.

Leading the service was Pat Narango, grand knight of Council 12191, and Patrick McBee, financial secretary of the council, among others.

The service was held after Mass May 28 in front of the Morgan County Courthouse in Berkeley Springs.

“We started this tradition a couple of years ago and this has been part of the K of C’s project in honor of those who served and are still serving our military,” Father Lecias said, noting that one of the elements of service of the Knights of Columbus is patriotism.

Leading a Memorial Day Service in Berkeley Springs are, from left, Father Michael O. Lecias, chaplain and captain USARNG, NG, West Virginia Air National Guard; Pat Narango, Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus Council 12191 of Berkeley Springs; and Patrick McBee, financial secretary of the council.

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Superintendent of Catholic Schools Mary Ann Deschaine Leaving; Jennifer Hornyak Named Interim Superintendent

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., who has served as superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for the last five years, has announced her resignation and that she has accepted the same position with the Diocese of Knoxville, Tenn.

“I can only say that Wheeling-Charleston’s loss will be Knoxville’s gain,” Bishop Mark Brennan said.

“Bishop Brennan has named Jennifer Hornyak, who currently serves as associate superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, as interim superintendent until a permanent replacement is found. The bishop said that Hornyak is a veteran of the Catholic school’s department and he is confident she will be able to handle everything during the interim.

“I have great confidence in her abilities and I am grateful for her willingness to step up and be the interim superintendent,” Bishop Brennan said.

In an announcement to Catholic schools May 31, Director of Diocesan Administrative Services Bryan Minor said that during Deschaine’s time in West Virginia, she has successfully completed the Intentional Growth Model planning and implementation for the entire Catholic school system; led schools through the COVID pandemic; guided the Cognia accreditation process for the diocese’s 24 Catholic schools; assisted schools with implementation of common admission and enrollment platform; assisted schools and the government relations team with the rollout of the HOPE Scholarship program; put Theology of the Body teaching in place for this upcoming 2023-2024 school year; and standardized a number of policies, documents and procedures to meld the schools into a stronger system of schools, among other achievements.

Minor said, “We wish nothing but the best for Mary Ann and her family as she embarks on this next adventure.”

Hornyak has served in the diocese’s Catholic Schools Department for 22 years, and is looking forward to taking on her new role.

“I am happy to step in as interim to have a smooth transition, especially for our principals who are doing tremendous work in the schools,” Hornyak said. “I want the consistency for them to be there so that we can prepare for the next school year and start off strong.”

Hornyak has served as associate superintendent for the diocese for the past five years. She previously served as the director of Educational Technology and has worked with teachers and principals in many areas including educational technology, professional development, data analysis of assessment data, and school improvement.

She earned two undergraduate degrees from Wheeling University and a master’s degree in educational technology from Boise State University. She also earned a graduate certificate in School Technology Coordination from Boise State. In addition, she has earned a Certificate in Catholic School Management from Villanova University.

“Jen Hornyak has been a leader in Catholic education in this diocese for more than two decades,” Minor said. “She’s made all the connections and knows the leadership, and we look forward to her sharing her time and talent with the diocese in this interim role.”

Jennifer Hornyak

A Message from Bishop Mark Brennan

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“We belong to something greater than ourselves...”

A Message from Bishop Mark Brennan
Morgantown Catholics Invited to Join in What is Hoped Will be Area’s Largest Eucharistic Procession

By Colleen Rowan

MORGANTOWN—The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi Sunday), June 11, will kick off the Parish Year of the U.S. Bishops’ National Eucharistic Revival, and one Morgantown parish wants to make it unforgettable.

On that day, area Catholics are invited to join in forming what is hoped will be the area’s largest Eucharistic procession—from St. John University Parish in Morgantown to St. Mary Parish in Star City.

“We’ve never done something that big in Morgantown before,” said Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John’s, but he knows it can be done.

The procession will begin at the close of the 11 a.m. Mass at St. John’s (around noon) on Sunday, June 11, as participates make the 2-mile journey following Jesus to St. Mary Church.

“I know many will see 2 miles as a long way, and in one aspect, it definitely is,” Father Crenwelge said. “Yet if we truly believe in the Eucharist, we will want others to come to believe in him too. If we are able to walk for 2 miles, then this is an excellent opportunity to show our love for our Lord. This small, external display of our adoration and love for the Lord is nothing in comparison to the love that he showed us on the cross.”

As the source and summit of the life of the church, the Eucharist is also that unifying force within the church, said Father John P. McDonough, pastor of St. Mary’s.

“This is an opportunity to make a strong statement about Catholic identity to the people of Morgantown by joining in the 2-mile procession from St. John to St. Mary and showing forth our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.”

Members of the Catholic community are hoping that people will see, in the procession, their belief in Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist.

“I’m incredibly excited,” said 21-year-old St. John’s parishioner Autumn Fitzgibbons. “I really hope that it fosters a good spirit of devotion for all those who will be attending and those who will be viewing it. I hope that people who see us on the street will be curious … and that it will be a good thing to promote our Eucharistic Lord.”

Now, more than ever, she said, it is important to show that our Lord is everywhere, but especially in the Eucharist.

“It changes people,” she said of the Eucharist. “So, I think it would be really good within our modern times to show that we believe that this is our Lord—body, blood, soul, and divinity,” and to show that with the procession.

“We need to bring Jesus to the streets,” Father Crenwelge said. “We need to be proud to be Catholic. Processes are public expressions of faith. I hope people of all ages can make this.”

With the closing of the Diocesan Year of the three-year Eucharistic Revival, Father Crenwelge said, parishes have now been asked to begin starting events for the Parish Year.

“This is just one small way to help revive faith in our Eucharistic Lord,” he said.

Father Crenwelge encourages members of other parishes to join in the procession. The faithful can still attend Mass at their parishes, he said, and then join St. John’s parishioners for the procession, around noon, outside of St. John’s.

“All are welcome!” Father Crenwelge said. “People will come out in the heat for all sorts of sporting and entertainment events. We should be willing to do the same for our Lord as well.”

At the end of the procession, there will be a reception at St. Mary’s.

St. John University Parish, Morgantown, Will Host Second Family Adoration June 10

MORGANTOWN—St. John University Parish in Morgantown will have its second Family Adoration on Saturday, June 11, at 10 a.m. Family Adoration is a time when families can bring their young children to be in front of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed for a very short time (usually 30 minutes) to the young children’s attention spans. During that time, songs are sung, a short explanation of what is happening is given and there is time for prayer. Confessions are heard at the same time, so that the parents can make use of the sacrament.

“Family Adoration is meant to introduce children to praying before the Blessed Sacrament and introduce the children to the idea of silence in prayer. It also promotes community amongst our families,” said Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John’s.

The parish’s first Family Adoration was held May 13.

“I was so glad when some of our young families were able to organize the event,” Father Crenwelge said. “It was a great success. We had a good turn out, and the families stayed afterward to socialize with each other.”

St. Joseph, Martinsburg, Fifth-Grader Wins Knights’ Poster Contest

St. Joseph School in Martinsburg congratulates fifth-grader Naomi Oshiyoye, pictured here, whose colorful depiction of a nativity scene was named the state’s best in the “Keep Christ in Christmas” poster contest by the Knights of Columbus State Council of West Virginia. Naomi also won in 2022. She was presented with a $50 prize May 26 during an assembly in the school gym.

Her poster is now vying for top honors from the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus. National winners are expected to be announced this summer.
Confirmation Schedule
Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

- Saturday, June 10: Sacred Heart, Princeton, 11:00 a.m.
- Saturday, June 10: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley, 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday, June 18: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 11:00 a.m.
- Saturday, June 24: Mater Dolorosa, Paden City, 5:00 p.m.

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8:00 WBOY NBC 12 Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
11:00 WDVM 25 Hagerstown-Washington D.C.
Plus watch online at - www.mydailyliving.com and YouTube

10 The Catholic Spirit
June 2, 2023
Mountaineer Catholic
Grow your Faith with us!
By Joyce Bibey

Have you ever heard someone say, “Mass is so boring, I don’t get anything from it?”

Maybe you can even admit saying that yourself.

“We take for granted that everyone knows the Blessed Sacrament is the Body and Blood of Christ,” Father Chris Turner of St. Ann’s in Shinnston said.

Mass is spending time with God, receiving His graces, and the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Taking that for granted or not understanding that is a big problem in the Church.

“It’s our problem,” he said.

So, Father Chris and the music ministry team at St. Ann’s has chosen to take action to teach and revive the understanding that the Eucharist is Jesus, the Bread of Life, present for us.

“One tangible way St. Ann’s is accomplishing this is through what many would consider an unorthodox way, but has proven to be invaluable — a humble poster project. We receive his Body and Blood transformed from bread and wine, so that we, the people of God, can be united with Him and each other.

One tangible way St. Ann’s is accomplishing this is through what many would consider an unorthodox way, but has proven to be invaluable — a humble poster project. We receive his Body and Blood transformed from bread and wine, so that we, the people of God, can be united with Him and each other.

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Father said. “Our families do so, but what they gain from it?”

The posters decorate the back of the Pike Street church and will stay up through July of 2024, the end of the Parish Year of the National Eucharistic Revival.

Driscoll’s poster is a mosaic with the face of Jesus revealed on a cross on the Eucharist elevated above a chalice. Another parishioner drew a stairway to Heaven and wrote “Every time I receive the Holy Eucharist, I feel one step closer to Heaven!”

One of the posters “is almost an ad,” Father Chris said with a proud laugh, as he acknowledged the poster made showcasing Adoration and the times that their Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel is open (Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6 a.m. to midnight).

The poster also prompts the viewer with Jesus’ question to his disciples, “Could you not keep watch with me for just one hour?” (Matthew 26:40).

“One of my favorite things here at St. Ann’s is the Adoration Chapel,” Father said. “Our families know it’s here, but we can definitely do a better job of inviting them to come in and spend time with Christ; and teach them why it’s not only important to do so, but what they gain from it.”

Even though he grew up in a devout Catholic family and active in his faith, he like many Catholics didn’t know what Adoration was until adulthood.

“To put it simply it wasn’t a thing,” he said gesturing with air quotation marks. “But we should all know that its graces are endless. It is in Eucharistic Adoration we can be ourselves and, in the silence, talk to Jesus.

Father’s poster features real life images, illustrating “The Eucharist in Action: Feeding the hungry, serving the poor, comforting the broken, and loving one another.”

“These images show agony and depression, as well as compassion, hope, and joy in the midst of terrible surroundings,” he said. “It makes you instantly feel for the people in the photos and also realize how lucky we are in this country. I want it to make us think about what we have.

See “Revival” on Page 12
Father Chris Turner admires a few of the posters that are part of a National Eucharistic Revival poster project his parishioners completed as a hands-on way to reflect on and express what the Eucharist means to them.

Revival...

Cont’d from Page 11

we do and how we can serve as a Eucharistic people.

“We go to Mass and receive Communion to strengthen us and become one with Christ,” he said. “We are guilty, and I am guilty of taking that for granted. We need to get our parish families and our own families revived.”

One of his favorite saints is St. Maximilian Kolbe who said, “If angels could be jealous of men, they would be 0 for one reason: Holy Communion.”

“He was a smart one,” Father Turner said. “If this project has made someone realize that Christ is here waiting for them in the Eucharist — then it’s been successful.”

Driscoll said she hopes other parishes can run with St. Ann’s idea and form their own poster or art projects open to all ages within the parish as a way not just to teach and preach Eucharistic revival, but also to be an active participant in an effort to awaken our thinking and our world.
Nationals Pitcher, Dodgers Players Join Chorus Criticizing LA Team for Plan to Honor ‘Sisters’ Drag Group

By Our Sunday Visitor staff

LOS ANGELES (OSV News) — Washington Nationals starting pitcher Trevor Williams, known for his devout Catholic faith and prominent tattoos, expressed his disappointment with the Los Angeles Dodgers’ decision to re-invite and honor a controversial drag group called the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

The Dodgers’ announcement came after the franchise initially rescinded their invitation due to backlash from political and religious leaders across the nation.

Taking to his social media accounts while the Nationals were in Los Angeles May 29, Williams voiced his concerns about the Dodgers’ decision, sparking widespread attention. His viral tweet quickly gained millions of views and was shared by tens of thousands of people, illustrating the growing outrage from both Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Williams stated, “To invite and honor a group that makes a blatant and deeply offensive mockery of my religion, and the religion of my family, is so disrespectful to me.”

His concerns were echoed by other Catholic leaders, including a former auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, Bishop Robert E. Barron, now head of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota.

In a statement, Bishop Barron described the behavior of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence as offensive and categorized the group as an anti-Catholic hate group.

Dominican Father Patrick Briscoe, editor of Our Sunday Visitor, lamented the Dodgers’ about-face, saying, “Countless women religious have dedicated their lives to public service in the United States. That legacy should be cherished, not thrown beneath the feet of jeering crowds at a Pride Night publicity stunt.

In his eighth year in the MLB, Williams joined the Washington Nationals this season, following previous stints with the New York Mets, Chicago Cubs and Pittsburgh Pirates. He is married and has four children. In a recent interview, Williams emphasized his identity as a Catholic man who aspires “to build up heaven,” rather than being solely recognized as a baseball player.

Clayton Kershaw, starting pitcher for the Dodgers, also disagreed with the decision to honor the anti-Catholic group. “I don’t agree with making fun of other people’s religions,” Kershaw told the Los Angeles Times. “It has nothing to do with anything other than that. I just don’t think that, no matter what religion you are, you should make fun of somebody else’s religion.”

Kershaw took to Twitter to announce that the Dodgers would reinstate “Christian Faith and Family Day” at Dodger Stadium July 30. That decision, he confirmed, is in response to honoring the Los Angeles chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

His teammate, relief pitcher Blake Treinen, is the latest Dodger to say he disagrees with the team honoring the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence during their Pride Night June 16. He expressed disappointment in seeing the Dodgers honor a group that makes a blatant mockery of Catholics and the Christian faith, Treinen wrote in a lengthy statement posted via his friend Sean Feucht’s Twitter account.

“I understand that playing baseball is a privilege, and not a right. My convictions in Jesus Christ will always come first. Since I have been with the Dodgers’ they have been at the forefront of supporting a wide variety of groups. However, inviting the Sister’s of Perpetual Indulgence to perform disenfranchises a large community and promotes hate of Christians and people of faith,” said Treinen.

He said that “this single event alienates the fans and supporters of the Dodgers, Major League Baseball, and professional sports. People like baseball for its entertainment value and competition. The fans do not want propaganda or politics forced on them.”

He also said he believes “Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I believe the word of God is true, and in Galatians 6:7 it says, ‘do not be deceived, God cannot be mocked; a man reaps what he sows.’ This group openly mocks Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of my faith, and I want to make it clear that I do not agree with nor support the decision of the Dodger’s to honor the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. ‘But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’ Joshua 24:15.”

(Our Sunday Visitor is a national Catholic newsweekly based in Huntington, Indiana.)
Por Maria Wiering, OSV News (OSV News) — La Hermana Wilhelmina Lancaster del Santísimo Rosario afirmó haber tenido profundas experiencias religiosas, comenzando en su niñez. Nació como Mary Elizabeth Lancaster el 13 de abril de 1924 en St. Louis. Su bisabuela, Mary Madden, había sido esclava.

En una breve autobiografía descubierta después de la muerte de la hermana Wilhelmina, ella escribió que en su Primera Comunión en 1934, Mary Elizabeth, de 9 años, tuvo "un experiencia inolvidable", donde "Nuestro Señor me preguntó si sería suya". "Parecía ser un hombre tan guapo y maravilloso. Acepté de inmediato.

Luego me dijo que nos encontrábamos con Dios y me acarició. "Estamos en el cielo", dijo. Regresó a la casa madre de las Oblatas, incluso en sus hábitos, escribió. "Hasta ahora, no he conocido a otra religiosa que tenga la misma pasión por su llamado".

Cuando Sor Wilhelmina tenía 13 años, su confesor semanal le preguntó si habría considerado la vida religiosa. "Por supuesto que no lo había considerado, pero él pensó que podría ser una buena hermana", escribió. Le escribió a la superíndora de las Hermanas Oblatas de la Providencia en Baltimore, una comunidad religiosa históricamente afroamericana cuya fundadora, la Madre Mary Elizabeth Lange, ha sido bendecida por la Iglesia.

La hermana Wilhelmina, quien fue la primera hermana en ser bendecida por la Iglesia, escribió a su confesor que estaba interesada en la vida religiosa. "El Señor me preguntó si sería suya". "Parecía ser un hombre tan guapo y maravilloso. Acepté de inmediato. Luego me dijo que nos encontrábamos con Dios y me acarició. "Estamos en el cielo", dijo. Regresó a la casa madre de las Oblatas, incluso en sus hábitos, escribió. "Hasta ahora, no he conocido a otra religiosa que tenga la misma pasión por su llamado".

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Pope Creates Ecclesiastical Province of Las Vegas

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Pope Francis has created the ecclesiastical province of Las Vegas, comprised of the Archdiocese of Las Vegas and the suffragan dioceses of Reno, Nevada, and Salt Lake City. He also named Las Vegas Bishop George Leo Thomas the first metropolitan archbishop of Las Vegas. Archbishop Thomas, who turned 73 May 19, was appointed the third bishop of Las Vegas Feb. 28, 2018.

The establishment of the new province and the appointment of the metropolitan archbishop was publicized in Washington May 30 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. At a news briefing in Las Vegas, Archbishop Thomas said he planned to go to Rome June 28 with pilgrims from the archdiocese and fellow clergy and that on June 29 he will receive the pallium from the pope.

The pallium is the woolen band that the heads of archdioceses wear around their shoulders over their Mass vestments. Archbishop Pierre will place it over his shoulders in Las Vegas Oct. 2, the feast of the Guardian Angels, during a major celebration at the Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer that will formally establish Las Vegas as an archdiocese.

Priest: Catholics ‘Viciously’ Assaulted Outside Baltimore Planned Parenthood Giving Faithful Witness

BALTIMORE (OSV News) — A May 26 confrontation outside the doors of a downtown Baltimore Planned Parenthood center left witnesses at a neighboring pro-life pregnancy center disturbed by the level of violence and praying for the recovery of the injured, both of whom were Catholic.

According to a police report, a 73-year-old man and an 80-year-old man were attacked outside of the Planned Parenthood in a building that shares a wall with Options@328, a pro-life pregnancy resource center operated by the Center for Pregnancy Concerns. Gina Ruppert, executive director of the Center for Pregnancy Concerns, told Catholic Review, the Baltimore archdiocese’s newspaper, her staff heard the commotion and medical personnel from the center assisted the injured men. Ruppert added the men assaulted are part of a regular group who assemble for peaceful prayer outside the centers.

The victims were identified as Dick Schafer and Mark Crosby, Catholic parishioners of Christ the King Catholic Church in Towson, Maryland, by their pastor, Father Ed Meeks, right before his Sunday homily.

“They were doing God’s work, and they paid the price for it. That’s the world that we live in,” Father Meeks said. He noted Crosby faces a number of surgeries to “repair the damage to his orbital bone and to the eye itself,” but told him that he is “rejoicing that he’s undergone this for the cause of Christ.”

A GoFundMe page for Crosby’s medical bills has been set up by Dr. Jay Walton, president of Baltimore County Right to Life, who identified him as a volunteer for the organization: https://www.gofundme.com//please-donate-to-help-pro-life-mark-crosby. As of May 31, more than $37,000 had been raised, well over the set goal of $10,000.

Holy See Gives Fort Worth Bishop ‘Full Governing Powers’ over Carmelites in Arlington, Texas

(OSV News) — The Holy See has declared Bishop Michael F. Olson of Fort Worth to be “pontifical commissary” of the Monastery of Saint Joseph of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, according to a decree from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life dated May 31, 2023 and published on the website of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Bishop Olson “will assume his office upon communication” of the decree, it said.

This role, the decree says, gives Bishop Olson “full governing powers” over the community, as well as “the faculty to appoint, if necessary, the nuns to assume the roles of overseer of the community members, legal representative, treasurer, etc.” The decree states that the dicastery made its declaration “after careful consideration of the particular situation” regarding the nuns in Arlington, Texas.

The dicastery also “safeguards all the administrative and legal acts already performed by the same bishops,” the decree says. Sanation is a canonical term meaning that such acts have been made valid retroactively.

In an accompanying statement, the diocese noted that with this decree the Holy See “recognized and acknowledged that Bishop Olson has been, and continues to be, entrusted with full governing responsibility for the monastery.”

The statement said the decree “is in response to the challenge to Bishop Olson’s authority to conduct an investigation into the admitted violations of the sixth commandment of the Decalogue and the vow of chastity by the Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes (Gerlach) of Jesus Crucified, O.C.D., Prioress of the Monastery in Arlington, Texas.”

It asks for prayers for the sisters and for Bishop Olson.

The decree was made after the superior of the discalced Carmelite community sued the bishop and the Diocese of Fort Worth following the bishop’s launch of an investigation into allegations against that superior.

Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes of Jesus Crucified Gerlach and Subpriorress Sister Francis Therese Sharp, along with their cloistered religious community at the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington, Texas, filed the lawsuit in Tarrant County district court May 3 accusing Bishop Olson of overstepping his ecclesiastical authority by initiating the investigation. The nuns say they answer directly to the pope.

A May 16 statement issued from the Diocese of Fort Worth said that Bishop Olson received a report in April that Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes “committed sins against the Sixth Commandment and violated her vow of chastity with a priest from outside the Diocese of Fort Worth.” It said that the priest’s superiors have been notified.

According to the statement, the diocese began an ecclesiastical investigation into the allegation April 24 at the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity, and Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes responded with civil litigation.

In an affidavit May 10, Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes stated that the monastery was an “institution of pontifical right” that depends “immediately and exclusively on the Pope regarding matters of internal governance and discipline.”

“We are and have never been under the control of the Bishop of the local Diocese: we answer directly to the Pope,” she said.

June 2, 2023
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