

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## 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.

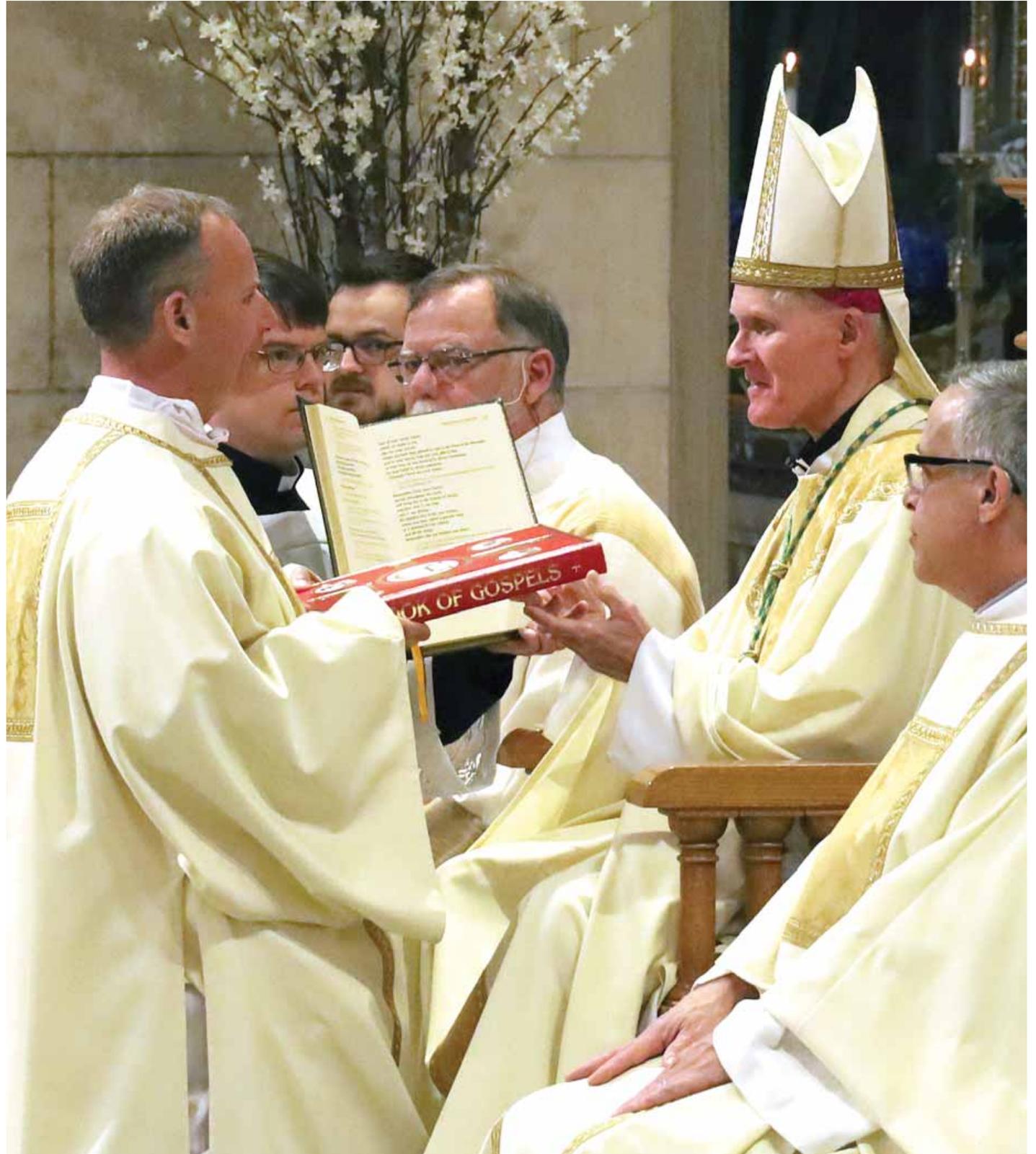
“Deacons historically have attended people with many kinds of needs,” the bishop added. “Some finding shelter for the homeless, others visiting the sick, others by bringing clothes or food or furniture to poor families. Sometimes, deacons are called to stand up and defend people who are being attacked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

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Colleen Rowan Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan places the Book of the Gospels in the hands of newly ordained Deacon John Soplinski during his ordination to the diaconate at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling May 27.

**Inside:** Bishop Brennan offers Reflections on the Eucharist, Pages 4-5

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Shinnston Parish Project is Reviving its Faithful, Page 11

## 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...

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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 with which 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 service, the bishop said, and 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 troubled and abandoned 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 diaconate, later priesthood. We are grateful for your generosity in accepting 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 servant of God's people; and please pray for more candidates to step forward as he has. For the Lord said, 'The 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.reportbishopabuse.org](http://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](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

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

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

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



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Mailing: PO Box 230  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
(304) 232-0444  
Fax: (304) 233-8551  
Web site: [www.thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://www.thecatholicspiritwv.org)  
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**Publisher:** Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....  
**Executive Editor:** Colleen Rowan, Ext. 347 ..... [crowan@dwc.org](mailto:crowan@dwc.org)  
**Advertising:** contact Colleen Rowan  
**Freelance Writers:** Martina Hart, John Sherwood,  
**Member**  
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## 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](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

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Clockwise from top: Bishop Mark Brennan and newly ordained Deacon John Soplinski, left, stand with clergy following Deacon Soplinski's ordination to the diaconate; Bishop Brennan prays the Prayer of Ordination over Deacon Soplinski, kneeling; Deacon Soplinski is vested by his uncle, Msgr. Robert J. Saly, Jr.; and Deacon Soplinski prostrates himself before the altar.



## Soplinski...

**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 re-

ceived 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. Crenwelge, director of Vocations, pastor of St. John

University Parish in Morgantown, and director of Campus Ministry, West Virginia University, Morgantown.

Deacon John Yaquina 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.





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# Reflections on the Eucharist

BY BISHOP MARK E. BRENNAN

The Catholic Spirit is pleased to share Bishop Mark E. Brennan's *Reflections on the Eucharist* as the church in the United States prepares to close the Diocesan Year of the National Eucharistic Revival and, at the same time, open the Parish Year of the revival on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Sunday, June 11, 2023). Bishop Brennan's article will be published in two parts with Part I presented here. Read Part II of his article in the July 7 issue of *The Catholic Spirit*.

The Eucharist is a mystery but it begins with a simple fact: at the Last Supper Jesus took hold of a loaf of bread and said to his disciples, *This is my body that is for you* [I Corinthians 11:24]. Now, imagine that you were there. Had the Lord said, without bread in his hands, *This is my body that is for you*, would you have had any doubt that his physical body was his body? You might have wondered what *that is for you* meant – this would become clearer when Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified – but you would not have doubted that you were seeing his body.

However, St. Paul, in telling us what he was told either in an appearance of the risen Lord or by one or more of the Apostles who were at the Last Supper, makes clear that Jesus did indeed hold a loaf of bread in his hands. Now, imagine the scene again: you see the bread Jesus is holding but behind it is his physical body. Which one was nailed to the cross? The bread? Of course not. It was his physical body that was crucified. Yet the Lord had already identified his physical body with the bread. There is the mystery that grows out of the simple fact that the Lord held bread in his hands and spoke about it at the Last Supper.

Here we must see the connection between the Bread of the Eucharist and the body of Jesus that died on the cross. When we receive Christ in Holy Communion, we participate in the new life of his risen body but that body still bears the wounds he suffered on the cross. They no longer cause him any pain but they are physical reminders of what he went through to save us. That is why St. Paul continues: *As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes* [I Corinthians 11:26]. When we re-



Colleen Rowan Photo

The Most Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance during adoration at the Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Oct. 3, 2022.

ceive the Lord in Holy Communion, we receive him who loved us so much that he was willing to die for us. He has risen from the dead but will come again to raise us up. Then the final purpose of the Eucharist will be fulfilled: to bring us to eternal life.

The faith of the Catholic Church has been, from the time of the New Testament to now, that we receive the real Christ in the Eucharist. He is not content to send us a text message or an email or call us

on the phone or send us a postcard; he comes in person. He comes disguised but it is he. Therein lies the mystery. It is to revive among our Catholic people a true appreciation of the Lord's Real Presence in the Sacrament, that we American bishops have begun a multi-year Eucharistic Revival project. It is doubtful that even faithful Catholics receive the full benefit of the Eucharist if they do not recognize whom it is that they are receiving.

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. *Meta* 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 the 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

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“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...

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from I 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.

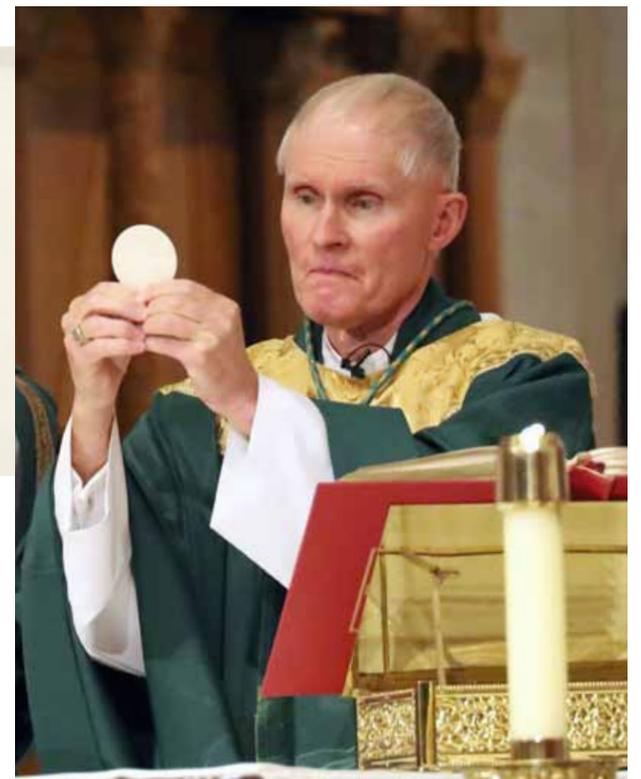
First, many of us are practical materialists. Reality for us is what we can see, hear and touch. St. Teresa of Avila understood this: “We prefer the bird in the hand to the two in the bush.” We stand on material reality and shy away from faith in what we cannot see (the two birds hidden in the bush). 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



Colleen Rowan Photo  
Savannah Baker receives her first Holy Communion at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling May 21.



Colleen Rowan Photo  
Bishop Mark E. Brennan elevates the Eucharist during Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling in September 2022.

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 capacity to love, human beings’ attraction to 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."

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 had exhumed the body of their foundress to transfer it to a new shrine altar honoring St. Joseph.

Despite a lack of embalming, an in-ground burial in a wooden coffin and water pooling in the grave, both the remains and the habit looked essentially the same as when Sister Wilhelmina died at age 95 in May 2019.

Bodily incorruptibility has long been regarded in both Catholic and Orthodox traditions 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 Dolours in Hurlingen — 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 mak-



OSV News Photo/Megan Marley  
**The exhumed body of Sister Mary Wilhelmina Lancaster, foundress of the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, lies in repose in the church at the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus in Gower, Mo., May 21.**

ing 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 Wiering contributed to this report.)



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# 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.



Courtesy Photo

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. "I wish Mary Ann well in her new position. I am sure she will bring to that assignment the same spirit of dedication and love for God, his church and the teachers and children of Knoxville Catholic schools that she showed here."

Deschaine will be leaving at the end of June.

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 a 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



**Jennifer Hornyak**

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 edu-

cational 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."

# 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 participants make the 2-mile journey following Jesus to St. Mary Church.

"I know many people 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 belief 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.

Processions 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 10, 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 fit 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 turnout, and the families stayed afterward to socialize with each other."

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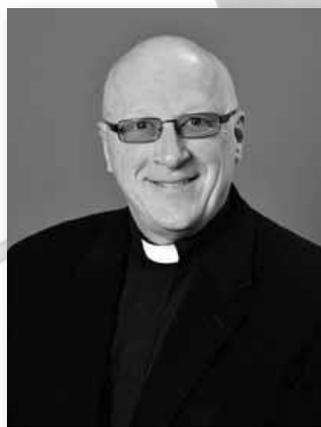
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## St. Joseph, Martinsburg, Fifth-Grader Wins Knights' Poster Contest



Courtesy Photo

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.

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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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  - 6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
  - 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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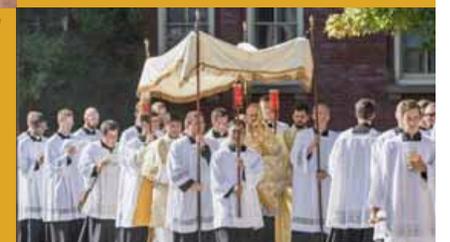
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Photo Illustration by Joyce Bibey

Father Chris Turner is pictured with his poster in the background, prompting viewers to be the Body of Christ, a Eucharistic people.

**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.

“When Bishop Mark Brennan announced the National Eucharistic Revival, we began to embrace the idea of putting more emphasis on the Eucharist and teaching its meaning,” the Harrison County priest said.

After the results of a

2019 pew study revealed that only 30 percent of Catholics acknowledge Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist, Bishop Brennan and the bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, voted to launch a national revival to strengthen the Church and reach out to the 70 percent of us who are missing the encounter with Jesus through the Eucharist — the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord. The Blessed Sacrament — our holy Communion — are not symbolic. 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 unsophisticated way, but has proven to be invaluable — a humble poster project. The idea came from Colleen Driscoll, parishioner and assistant music director. Liturgical Music Director Jimmy Mazzie bought the posterboards and handed them out to St. Ann’s parishioners at Mass as Father

Chris explained the purpose was to showcase what the Eucharist means to them.

“It was so great to see the reaction,” he said. “Men, women, and children in the parish participated as an individual or together. It’s evident when you look at the display that they have taken the mission to heart and spent a lot of time thinking about and creating their poster.”

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 **See “Revival” on Page 12**

#FaithInWV

Do you know an exceptional Catholic in West Virginia, someone or a group who are shining examples of #FaithInWV? Email Joyce Bibey your feature idea to [jbibey@dwc.org](mailto:jbibey@dwc.org). Visit [FaithInWV.org](http://FaithInWV.org) and every issue of The Catholic Spirit to read more inspiring stories.



Courtesy Photo  
 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 so 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.



## First Holy Communion in Williamson

Courtesy Photo  
 Young parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish in Williamson, pictured here, received their first Holy Communion May 28. In the first row, from left, are Merse' Njopang, Piper Lendearo, Sawyer Lendearo, and Jameson Restar. In the second row, from left, are altar server Guadeloupe Varela; Father Biju Parampil, pastor of the parish; Daniella Varela; Mabel Lendearo; and Liam Restar.



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# 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 over 4 million people in Los Angeles county alone, undermines the values of respect and inclusivity that should be upheld by any organization.”

Williams called on the Dodgers to reconsider their association with the group, emphasizing the need for an inclusive environment that respects the religious beliefs of all fans and employees. Williams also encouraged his fellow Catholics to reevaluate their support for any organization that permits such

mockery of its fans and their beliefs. He expressed his frustration, hurt and disappointment with the situation, knowing that he is not alone in feeling this way.

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 the team’s Pride Night June 16. He expressed disappointment in seeing the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence “being honored as heroes at Dodger Stadium. Many of their performances are blasphemous, and their work only displays hate and 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 Dodger’s 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 Sister’s 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.)

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# Detalles sobre la vida de la fundadora benedictina de Missouri, cuyos restos se afirma que están incorruptos

**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 "una 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 encontraríamos con Él todos los domingos en la Sagrada Comunión. No le dije nada sobre esta conversación a nadie, creyendo que todos los que iban a la Sagrada Comunión escuchaban hablar a Nuestro Señor con ellos".

Las notas con su bosquejo autobiográfico de ocho páginas, compartidas por su comunidad religiosa, también mencionan que la futura hermana Wilhelmina también tuvo una visión de la Virgen María, quien le agradeció por rezar el Rosario.

La hermana Wilhelmina, quien fundó las Hermanas Benedictinas de María, Reina de los Apóstoles, en Gower, Missouri, murió en mayo de 2019 a los 95 años. El 28 de abril, su cuerpo fue exhumado de su tumba para trasladarlo a una tumba en la capilla del monasterio. A pesar de que su cuerpo no fue embalsamado, su ataúd de madera sufrió daños y el agua se asentó sobre su tumba, todos los elementos que deberían haber contribuido a la descomposición de su cuerpo, su cuerpo fue encontrado notablemente intacto, dicen las hermanas de la comunidad.

Las hermanas dijeron que se puede

emprender una causa de santidad para la hermana Wilhelmina si primero se establece una devoción generalizada a su fundadora.

Cuando Sor Wilhelmina tenía 13 años, su confesor semanal le preguntó si había considerado la vida religiosa. "Por supuesto que no lo había considerado, pero él pensó que podía ser una buena hermana", escribió. Le escribió a la superiora de las Hermanas Oblatas de la Providencia en Baltimore, una comunidad religiosa históricamente afroamericana cuya fundadora, la Madre Mary Elizabeth Lange, ha sido declarada Sierva de Dios y está en camino a la santidad. La superiora respondió, diciéndole que esperara hasta que terminara la escuela secundaria antes de ingresar.

Aunque su hija había asistido a escuelas públicas hasta el octavo grado, los padres de Mary Elizabeth querían que asistiera a una escuela secundaria católica, por lo que fundaron la "Escuela Secundaria Católica St. Joseph para Negros", "que duró hasta que el arzobispo (Joseph E.) Ritter puso fin a la segregación de los negros en la diócesis", escribió.

"En cierto modo, puse en un segundo plano la idea de convertirme en hermana y me dediqué a aprender tanto como pude sobre todo lo que había que aprender", escribió la hermana Wilhelmina. Desafortunadamente, mis padres me mimaron y me dejaron sentarme demasiado con libros y papeles cuando debería haber estado cocinando, cosiendo y haciendo las tareas del hogar". Ya de niña llevaba un cuaderno de poemas y rimas, y aspiraba a convertirse en escritora de ficción al estilo de Louisa May Alcott, autora de "Mujercitas".

A pesar de esas aspiraciones, el día de su graduación de la escuela secundaria, la hermana Wilhelmina les dijo a dos Hermanas Oblatas de la Providencia

que estaban presentes que quería unirse a ellas, y en septiembre, la joven de 17 años se fue de St. Louis a Baltimore. "Sabía que el noviciado era un tiempo de prueba durante el cual la comunidad me examinaría y decidiría si tenía vocación o no", escribió, "sin embargo, ese día de septiembre, cuando entré en la capilla del noviciado por primera vez, ese mismo Señor que me habló en mi Primera Comunión me acogió con amor, me abrazó y me prometió que a partir de ese momento sería suya".

La hermana Wilhelmina hizo sus primeros votos en 1944 y luego enseñó en escuelas católicas, aunque no le gustaba especialmente enseñar. Obtuvo su título universitario en 1966. "Durante los 22 años entre 1944 y 1966 tuve un breve y feliz período de trabajo doméstico, principalmente limpieza, en St. Rita's Residence en St. Louis y luego en St. Frances Home for Girls, donde aprendí que los niños tenían preocupaciones y corazones rotos", escribió. En 1972, la hermana Wilhelmina dejó definitivamente la enseñanza después de "disciplinar a un estudiante que se quejaba", dijo. Regresó a la casa madre de las Oblatas y comenzó a trabajar en una historia para la orden, pero se sintió "desanimada" por sus fracasos, incluso en la enseñanza. En ese momento se inspiró para escribir un poema en honor a Jesús en la Eucaristía, que luego otra hermana puso música.

Mientras tanto, estaba consternada por los cambios que estaban haciendo las Oblatas, incluso en sus hábitos, escribió. Si bien adoptó un hábito modernizado durante tres años, volvió al hábito tradicional de la orden en 1974.

"No tenía ningún pensamiento o deseo de dejar mi comunidad en esos días, pero estaba entusiasmada por verla reformada", escribió. "Habíamos dado un giro equivocado, dije, y deberíamos regresar. La regla del silencio y el

capítulo mensual (reunión) se habían ido hace mucho tiempo". Comenzó a abogar por que su comunidad comenzara una rama contemplativa, pero fue en vano.

A principios de la década de 1990, la hermana Wilhelmina se conectó con los sacerdotes de la Fraternidad Sacerdotal de San Pedro, una comunidad de sacerdotes conocida por celebrar la Misa en latín y usar textos litúrgicos promulgados antes del Concilio Vaticano II, que había comenzado a ministrar en Scranton, Pensilvania. Con su ayuda, estableció una nueva comunidad religiosa afiliada a los sacerdotes de la Fraternidad en 1995, rompiendo finalmente los lazos con las Oblatas en 1998.

"Parece que hice una tontería", dijo sobre la fundación de la nueva comunidad. "A los que dicen que dejar mi antigua comunidad para fundar una nueva no tiene sentido, les respondo que sólo es comprensible en la vida de fe... Si hay algo que quisiera transmitir a la comunidad, sería: Devoción a Nuestra Madre Santísima, Verdadera Devoción a Nuestra Madre Santísima".

En 2006, la comunidad se mudó de Scranton a un área rural en la diócesis de Kansas City-St. Joseph por invitación del obispo Robert W. Finn, cambiando su nombre a las Benedictinas de María, Reina de los Apóstoles. Establecida originalmente como una asociación pública de fieles, la comunidad fue elevada en 2014 al estatus de Instituto Religioso de Derecho Diocesano.

En 2018, el priorato de la comunidad obtuvo el reconocimiento oficial como abadía. Al año siguiente, la comunidad estableció su primera casa filial en Ava, Missouri. Las hermanas celebran su culto en latín, según la forma de la Misa promulgada antes del Concilio Vaticano II, y cantan los salmos según el Oficio Monástico de 1962.

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

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

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesísticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la

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

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

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

## 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.

“These two men were there 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/f/please-donate-to-help-prolifer-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 “sanates 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-to 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 Subprioress 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.



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