

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Bishop Asks for Prayers after ‘Devastating’ Flash Flood in Ohio County

“I’ve never seen anything like this.”

—Lou Vargo, director of the Wheeling–Ohio County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency



Trisha Shriver Conrad photo

Cars lay mangled in Big Wheeling Creek in Ohio County the day after a flash flood devastated the area on June 14. The Wheeling–Ohio County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency said that approximately 70 vehicles have been removed from Little Wheeling Creek and Big Wheeling Creek.

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — Bishop Mark Brennan is asking for prayers after a flash flood devastated communities in Ohio County on June 14 leaving eight people dead, including a 3-year-old child. As of June 19, one person was still missing.

“I ask you to join me in prayer for all those affected by the devastating flash flood that occurred on Saturday in Ohio County,” Bishop Brennan said in a statement. “We pray especially for those who lost

their lives as well as those who are still missing.”

The hardest hit communities were Triadelphia and Valley Grove where homes, cars, businesses, and roads were washed away. On June 19, the Wheeling–Ohio County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency said that approximately 70 vehicles have been removed from Little Wheeling Creek and Big Wheeling Creek with a few more still awaiting removal. Preliminary reports, it said, indi-

cate more than two dozen homes have been destroyed, and more than 120 have sustained severe damage.

The Ohio County Sheriff’s Office said one person remains missing from the flood. Authorities are actively searching for 83-year-old Sandra Kay Parsons of Triadelphia. Anyone with information on her whereabouts is urged to contact 911.

Triadelphia residents who died in the flood were identified as

Michael Bokanovich, 73; Travis Creighton, 19; Lisa McMasters, 59; Kyleigh Minch Shotton, 26; and a 3-year-old child (the family asked that the child’s name not be published). Michael Veronis, 74, and his wife Connie Veronis, 71, of Moundsville also died in the flood.

At a press conference in Wheeling June 18, West Virginia Gov. Patrick Morrisey said that he had just learned that an eighth victim had been found. The victim is a

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Diocese Announces Special Collection Following Ohio-Marion County Flood Events

WHEELING—Recovery efforts continue after the severe flash-flooding event that occurred June 14-15. Ohio and Marion Counties have experienced generational flooding resulting in loss of life, property, and livelihood. With many roads just being re-opened, the scope of the devastation is becoming more visible.

Bishop Mark Brennan remains encouraged by those who have already come forward, including volunteers from our parishes, schools, and Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) to assist in the relief efforts as well as the first responders who continue to assist the victims of this horrific event. “The flooding isn’t, as insurance companies used to say, ‘acts of God,’” he said. “It’s the people helping out whom God motivates to aid their neighbors, those are acts of God through His human creatures.”

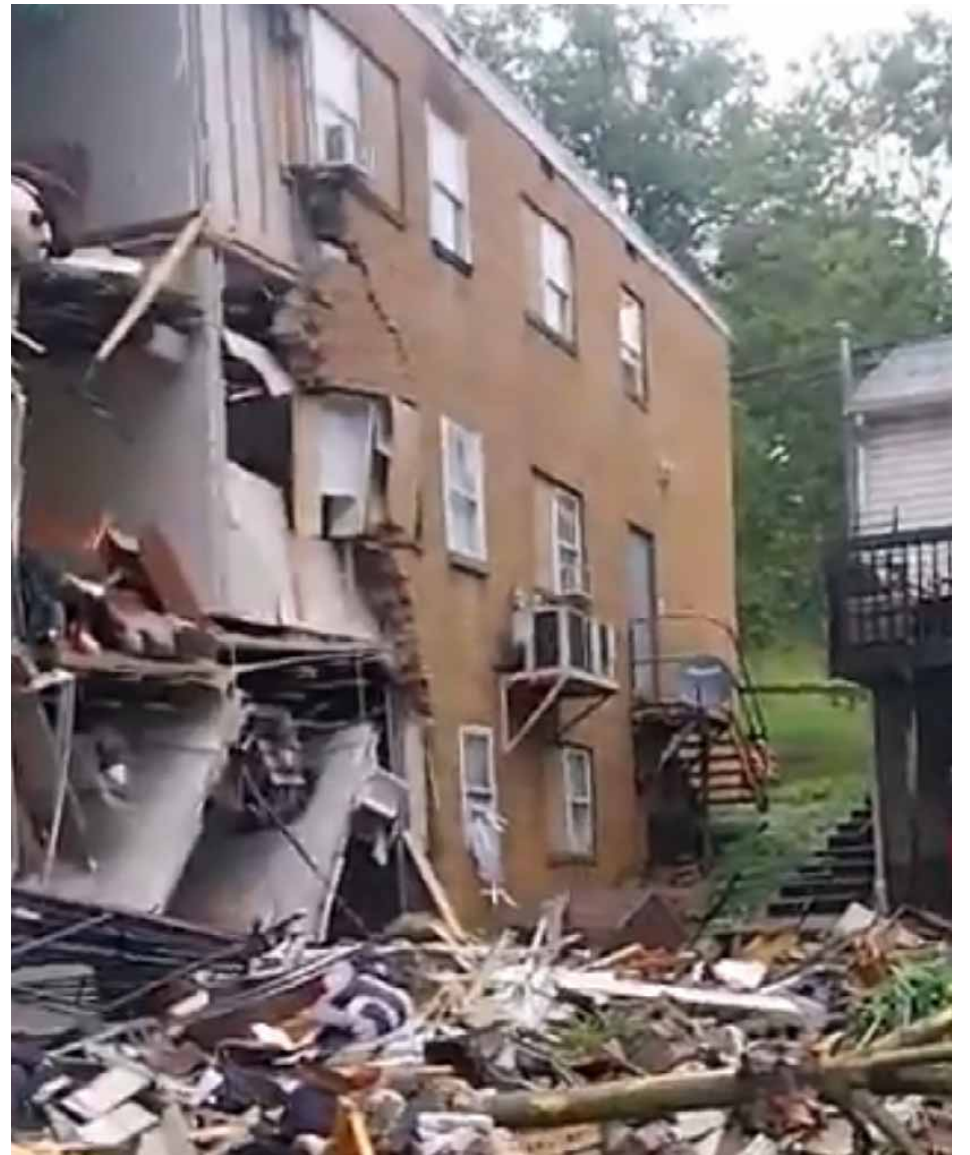
While Northern Panhandle parishes are conducting special collections for disaster assistance this weekend, Bishop Mark is asking all parishes and missions within the Diocese to conduct special collections on the weekends of June 28-29 and July 5-6 to support recovery efforts. Checks should be made out to your respective parish with “Disaster Relief” on the memo line. Donations can also be made on the diocesan website at

<https://dwc.org/disaster-relief/>. Click here to visit page.

All of the money collected will remain in West Virginia and will be managed by CCWVa. Monies will support immediate and long term needs met by CCWVa and affiliated Catholic agencies and will be allocated along a four-tier priority list as follows:

1. Parishes in and around the affected area who directly assist families will receive funds to give aid to those in need.
2. CCWVa Regional staff will receive funding for direct, short-term recovery assistance to victims.
3. Partner agencies who work with CCWVa to administer relief to West Virginia residents affected by the flooding.
4. Funds will be given to CCWVa for long-term humanitarian and recovery efforts. This fund assists families long after other organizations have moved out, helping families and individuals in the rebuilding process to restore safe, secure, and sanitary living conditions.

Please remember in prayer all those whose lives have been changed in the wake of these disasters. Let us come together now to support our brothers and sisters in Christ who have been injured and lost their homes, cars, employment, and access to food and water.



Screenshot/Colyn Jones via Storyful

This apartment building in Fairmont partially collapsed following heavy rainfall and flash flooding in Marion County June 15.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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

The Catholic Spirit’s Print Schedule for 2025

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

2025 Print Issues and Dates: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15; Triumph of the Cross, September 12; Month of the Rosary, October 3; Advent, November 21; Christmas, December 19



June 20, 2025
Vol. 56, No. 25

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Published every Friday by e-mail and printed 10 times a year (see schedule above). All issues sent to each registered Catholic household free of charge. Donations to help offset the cost of producing The Catholic Spirit are welcomed. Out-of-diocese subscriptions are \$25 annually. The Catholic Spirit intends its news reports to be fair and accurate in every regard. The opinions of correspondents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Catholic Spirit. Submission of news releases, stories and color photos welcomed and encouraged. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

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



Trisha Shriver Conrad photo

A flash flood ravages Ohio County on June 14.

“We watched at least four or five vehicles going down the creek with their headlights and their taillights on and just praying that nobody was in them.”

— Tammy Rosenthal, a Triadelphia resident and parishioner of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling

Flood ...

Cont'd from Page 1
male, but his identity has not been released.

At a press conference the previous day, Ohio County Sheriff Chief Deputy Kent Lewis called it the “largest mass casualty” in Ohio County, which began late in the evening of June 14 as torrential rains began to fall in the region. Flood waters quickly rose to en-

gulf communities along U.S. 40 (National Road), Middle Wheeling Creek, Little Wheeling Creek, as well as runs and streams. All of these feed into Big Wheeling Creek, which rose from 3 feet at 8:45 p.m. to roughly 10 feet at 10:15 p.m. that evening, according to The Weather Channel.

As the danger became apparent, residents took to social media to warn their

neighbors. Around 9:30 p.m., Matt Koval, a parishioner of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in the Elm Grove suburb of Wheeling, posted to Facebook: “Folks in the Wheeling area, if you are in a safe place STAY THERE. Vehicles are getting washed away with people in them.”

St. Vincent’s parishioner and Triadelphia resident Tammy Rosenthal and her family witnessed the horror as it unfolded. After reach-

ing safety at a gas station in the town, she stood with her husband Tom and their sons Trevor, 23, and Trenton, 17, along with neighbors feeling helpless at what they were seeing.

“We watched at least four or five vehicles going down the creek with their headlights and their taillights on and just praying

that nobody was in them,” Tammy told The Catholic Spirit.

Many made the sign of the cross as they saw them, she said.

It was still not raining at this point in Triadelphia, Tammy said. This is why so many were shocked to see the rising waters. Earlier

See “Flood” on Page 4

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Trisha Shriver Conrad photo

The degree of the devastation from flash flooding is visible upon entering the town of Triadelphia.

“I ask you to join me in prayer for all those affected by the devastating flash flood... We pray especially for those who lost their lives as well as those who are still missing.”

—Bishop Mark Brennan

Flood ...

Cont'd from Page 3

that evening, at around 8:30 p.m., Tammy said she and her family were home and all received an emergency alert of a flood warning on their cell phones. She looked outside but there was no rain, and the creek was low. What they did not know was that the rain was coming down in regions farther up the creek. Just 20 minutes later, she heard cars speeding down the road, “and then people started yelling, ‘We need to get out! We need to

get out! The water is coming up!’”

Grabbing their dog and cat, the family got in the car and drove to the gas station.

As the water receded in the early morning hours of June 15, cars lay mangled in Little Wheeling Creek and Big Wheeling Creek among chunks of debris.

“I’ve been doing this for 35 years. I’ve seen major floods here in the city, in the county. I’ve never seen anything like this—the way it occurred,” Lou Vargo, director of the Wheeling–Ohio County Homeland Se-



Trisha Shriver Conrad photo

The aftermath of the June 14 flash flood in Triadelphia is shown above.

curity and Emergency Management Agency, said at a press conference in Wheeling the morning of June 15. Joining him at a second press conference in the city a few hours later was Governor Morrisey, who declared a state of emergency in Ohio County. He additionally declared a state of emergency in Marion County that day which also experienced severe flash

flooding that led to a partial collapse of an apartment building in Fairmont. No deaths were reported but the area has suffered severe damage from the flooding.

What Ohio County experienced on June 14 was a unicorn event (a rare weather phenomenon), the governor said at the press conference in Wheeling.

“A lot of the rain hit

very narrow areas and there were roughly 3 to 4 inches of water that fell in the area in less than an hour,” he said.

Morrisey went on to report that 19 swiftwater rescues were conducted by the state’s Division of Natural Resources which also used drones, UTVs, 4x4 vehicles, and dive teams in the rescue operation.

See “Flood” on Page 5

Flood ...

Cont'd from Page 4

Also at the press conference was Maj. Gen. James Seward of the West Virginia National Guard, which Morrissey mobilized to support local emergency operations. Seward then joined the governor in Triadelphia and Valley Grove to view the devastation which left more than 12 roads and three bridges closed in the city and county.

Deacon Thomas McFadden, permanent deacon at St. Vincent's and Our Lady of Seven Dolours Mission in Triadelphia, spoke to The Catholic Spirit echoing the bishop's call for prayers for those affected by the flooding and encouraging all to "reach out to others in need and offer any assistance."

Answering the Call to Help

Area residents and businesses have been stepping up and answering the call for help since the disaster occurred, and Tammy said the Triadelphia community is overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude.

"There were so many people down here volunteering from companies, businesses, local people that said ... 'I'm going to come help,'" Tammy said. "There are local athletes down here helping, there's a paving company down here trying to remove all the mud with their equipment. There have been numerous organizations coming down bringing cleaning supplies, food, just offering a hand. It's honestly amazing."

Staff from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Mount Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling took their heavy equipment out to Triadelphia to volunteer with debris removal efforts on National Road. Diocesan employees at the chancery have been volunteering in relief efforts as well. St. Vincent's announced on Facebook that it is collecting items for those in need and asked residents to let the parish know of anyone that needs assistance.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish School donated water, food, and leftover supplies from its festival to support families in need. SVS also commended its students who have volunteered in relief efforts.

"We're proud of our students and grateful to be part of a community that takes care of each other," SVS officials said.

Other parishes in the area are doing their part by collecting donations of needed items such as cleaning products for flood relief efforts as well.

Wheeling Central Catholic High School and Wheeling Park High School boys' basketball teams announced they will play a flood relief benefit game on June 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the CCHS gym with all monetary donations collected going to the Triadelphia and Valley Grove Volunteer Fire department.



Courtesy photo

Staff of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Mount Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling volunteer with debris removal efforts on U.S. 40 in Triadelphia.



Courtesy photo

Levi Powell, left, and Fulton Klein, who will be seventh graders at St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling this year, volunteer in clean-up efforts in Valley Grove.

ments. During the flooding, the Triadelphia Volunteer Fire Department's building sustained significant damage.

Wheeling University opened its Alma Grace McDonough Center as a drop-off site for donations. Greatly needed items include: fans, dehumidifiers, squeegees, boots, laundry detergent, box cutters, scrub brushes, hammers, and crowbars.

Bishop Brennan has approved

a special collection for flood victims to be held in parishes and missions of the diocese's Wheeling Vicariate this weekend (June 21-22). Diocesan officials said that proceeds from this collection will be split between Catholic Charities West Virginia (75%) for the work already being accomplished by its Catholic Neighborhood Center on 18th St. in Wheeling and the St. Vincent de Paul Society (25%). The society is different

from the Wheeling thrift shop with the same name; it's a chartered group of parishioners from local parishes who support a variety of charitable needs of the less fortunate. They will use the funds for utilities, rent, appliances, gasoline, bedding, etc. Funds from this collection will be restricted for flood relief purposes.

The bishop is also asking all parishes and missions within the diocese to conduct special collections on the weekends of June 28-29 and July 5-6 to support recovery efforts. See details in the story on Page 2 of this issue.

"As our community mourns together, I am encouraged by those who have already come forward, including our diocesan employees, to assist in the relief efforts as well as the first responders who continue to assist the victims of this horrific event," Bishop Brennan said in his statement. "I encourage all who are able to serve as the hands of Christ to assist our neighbors in need."

While it is heartening to see the support her hometown is receiving in its time of need, the aftermath of this disaster is surreal for Tammy. She shared that on the front door of her home is an "X", placed there by emergency personnel to indicate that her house had been searched and that all of her family members are accounted for. As she recalled watching a fireman mark that "X" on her home, she said, "It's just something you can't imagine."

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Catholic Charities West Virginia Launches Transitional Housing Program

MORGANTOWN — Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) has expanded its services in Morgantown to offer a transitional housing program.

“The need for transitional housing for individuals experiencing homelessness is significant,” said CCWVa Grace Shelter Director Jessica Thompson. “Grace Transitional Housing extends the support Catholic Charities can offer to our neighbors in need. It provides a bridge from homelessness to permanent housing.”

This transitional housing program compliments Catholic Charities’ Grace Shelter, a 19-bed emergency shelter also located at Hazel’s House of Hope, and undertaken by the agency in 2024. Both programs reflect the agency’s mission to serve the most vulnerable West Virginians.

“Beyond shelter, these programs offer hope, dignity and compassion,” said Thompson.

Grace Transitional Housing will serve individuals ages 18 years and older who are experiencing homelessness. Five apartments are located in Hazel’s House of Hope on Scott Avenue. Units are furnished, and utilities are included in the rent. This allows individuals to save money for a deposit and first month’s rent for their future, permanent housing.

“Affordable housing remains out of reach for millions of renters in the U.S. Transitional housing like what we will offer at Grace helps residents build a rental history, connect with supportive services to build financial literacy and improve their job prospects, and eventually secure permanent housing,” said Thompson.

All units have carpet and vinyl flooring. Rent includes water, heat, air conditioning, electric, sewer, and trash. The site includes one two-bedroom and four one-bedroom units. Applicants must submit a completed application and

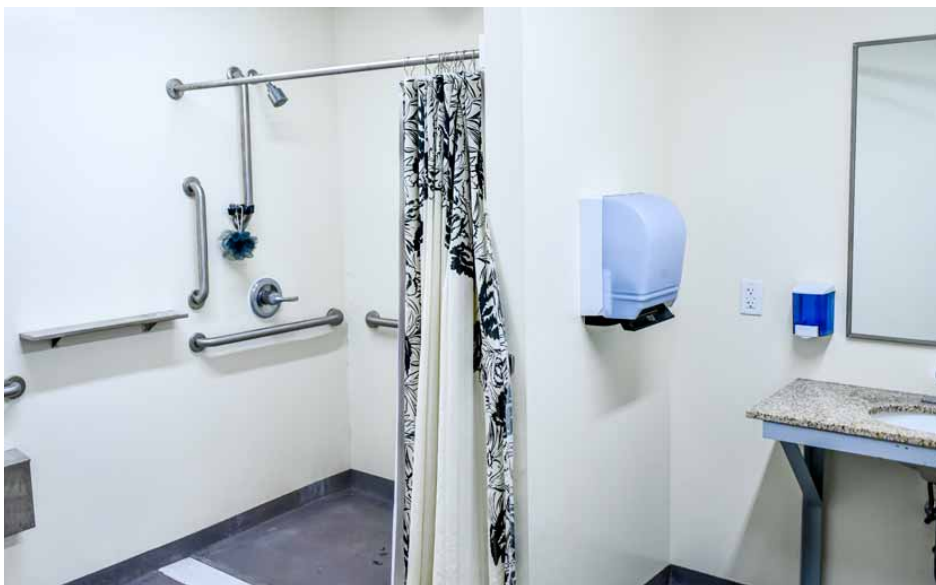


proof of income to be placed on the waiting list. The lease term is six months.

More than 1,000 homeless individuals currently live in West Virginia. In the six counties of the West Virginia Continuum of Care Region 1, more than 230 people were unhoused or residing in emergency shelters as of January 2025. Region 1 includes Monongalia, Preston, Marion, Tucker, Doddridge, and Harrison counties.

Several other CCWVa programs are housed within Hazel’s House of Hope, including the agency’s Child Care Resource Center, WV Birth to Three, Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services, Emergency Financial Assistance program, and Grace Shelter.

For information, visit www.ccwva.org.



Courtesy photos

Clockwise from top: The Catholic Charities Grace Shelter in Morgantown is shown; and Grace Transitional Housing apartments in Morgantown are shown.

St. John University Parish Will Host its Third Annual Morgantown Eucharistic Procession

MORGANTOWN — St. John University Parish will be hosting its third annual Morgantown Eucharistic Procession on Sunday, June 22, for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord. The procession will begin at the close of the parish's 11 a.m. Mass. It will start at St. John's and travel up University Boulevard to St. Mary Parish in Star City. This is a 2.6 mile Eucharistic Procession.

"Any Eucharistic Procession is a public witness to our Catholic Faith and to our faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist," said Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John's. "The Church has stressed since the 13th century the importance of processions in honor of our Lord. However, a procession this long is a true testament to our faith in West Virginia of the Holy Eucharist."

Last year, over 130 people join us in the procession. Father Crenwelge would like to get 150 this year.

"The bigger the procession, the more people driving by will wonder, 'What is this about?'" he said. "Each year, I had people email me afterward saying how moving it was to witness the procession in Morgantown as they were driving by. The first year, as we processed by, one man pulled over, got out of his car, and got down on his knees, and waited for the Eucharist

to be processed by him. It was a beautiful testament to faith. Processions grow faith. Yes, it takes work to organize a procession this big, but the Lord always pours out his graces upon us when we participate in it. It's all about the Eucharist!

"We invite anyone and everyone to join us! We will have the Knights of Columbus with us. Any other parish organization is more than welcome to join us. This is not just a parish event, but truly a community event," Father Crenwelge said.


Christian Davis, a parishioner of St. John's, commenting on last year's procession said, "I thought it was very inspiring seeing an entire Catholic community joined together with the common goal of being witnesses of our Faith."

There will be a midway stopping point with a roadside altar. And participants will pause to get water. People can rest for a few minutes before the procession continues onward.

The procession will end at St. Mary's with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Afterward, there will be a reception sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

"We want to do this every year and have it become a staple of the year," Father Crenwelge said. "Please come out and join us!"

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5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - Retreat Begins / Session 1
6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - Break/Book Signing
7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. - Session 2/7 Sorrows Rosary

Saturday, July 26, 2025

8:00 a.m. - Mass
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Session 3/Procession to Mary
(Bring Flower from Home for Consecration to Mary)
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Break/Book Signing
11:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Session 4
12:30 p.m. - Retreat Ends

Info: **Angelle** angelle@immaculee.com
Ana Bone communications@stjameswv.org

Daily Living


with Fr. Chapin


Sunday Mornings

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- 6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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USCCB President: Bishops Stand with Immigrants ‘in This Challenging Hour’

By **Gina Christian, OSV News**

(OSV News) — “No one can turn a deaf ear to the palpable cries of anxiety and fear heard in communities throughout the country in the wake of a surge in immigration enforcement actions,” said the leader of the nation’s Catholic bishops in a June 16 statement that assured all impacted of their shepherds’ support.

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. military archdiocese, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a reflection ahead of the USCCB’s weeklong retreat in California, a triennial gathering that this year replaces the bishops’ usual spring plenary session.

The archbishop said the occasion of the bishops’ gathering seemed “appropriate to give voice to a profound concern in the hearts of the Shepherds of the Church in our Country” over the Trump administration’s immigration policies.

While he commended law enforcement actions “aimed at preserving order and ensuring community security” as “necessary for the common good,” Archbishop Broglio said, “The current efforts go well beyond those with criminal histories.”

Following through on a campaign pledge, President Donald Trump has cracked down on immigration to the U.S. Among the administration’s efforts are terminating protected status for migrants from several conflict-wrought nations, fully or partly banning travel to the U.S. from several nations, ordering Immigrations and Customs Enforcement to meet daily arrest quotas of 3,000, halting visa interviews for foreign students, attempting to end birthright citizenship and deporting persons without permanent legal status in the U.S. to third countries in defiance of court orders.

While the administration claims to

target criminal actors in its sweeps, several high-profile arrests and deportations have impacted individuals with no demonstrated criminal record. Some 44% of the more than 51,000 in ICE detention facilities as of June 1 are estimated to have no criminal record, other than entering the U.S. without permission, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

The USCCB and Catholic Charities USA are among some 200 non-governmental organizations named in a congressional probe for allegedly aiding immigrants its leaders call “inadmissible aliens” during former President Joe Biden’s administration.

“In the context of a gravely deficient immigration system, the mass arrest and removal of our neighbors, friends and family members on the basis of immigration status alone, particularly in ways that are arbitrary or without due process, represent a profound social crisis before which no person of good will can remain silent,” said Archbishop Broglio. “The situation is far from the communion of life and love to which this nation of immigrants should strive.”

He pointed to Pope Leo XIV’s recent video address to the young people of Chicago and the world — in which, said Archbishop Broglio, the pope “reminded us that at the heart of the Christian faith is an invitation to share in the communion of life and love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the first community and based completely on love.”

“The Holy Father also challenged us to be a sign of hope by making the world a better place,” said Archbishop Broglio.

The archbishop noted the backlash sparked by Trump administration policies on immigration.

“The many actions of protest

throughout the country reflect the moral sentiments of many Americans that enforcement alone cannot be the solution to addressing our nation’s immigration challenges,” he said.

“While protest and dissent can be a legitimate expression of democratic participation, violence is never acceptable,” Archbishop Broglio stressed.

At the same time, he observed that injustice can be a trigger for conflict, quoting Pope Francis’ encyclical “*Evangelii Gaudium*”: “Without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode.”

Archbishop Broglio said that “the chronic lack of opportunities for legal status for our immigrant brothers and sisters, together with the growing denial of due process to them, is injurious to human dignity and is a considerable factor in the breakdown of the rule of law.”

He added, “Likewise, unfounded accusations against Catholic service providers, who every day endeavor to pro-

vide critical support and care to the most vulnerable, contribute to societal tensions and a growing climate of fear.”

Speaking on behalf of the nation’s bishops, Archbishop Broglio said, “I want to assure all of those affected by actions which tear at the fabric of our communities of the solidarity of your pastors.”

“As your shepherds, your fear echoes in our hearts and we make your pain our own. Count on the commitment of all of us to stand with you in this challenging hour,” he said.

He also acknowledged “those in our Catholic service and community organizations working to promote the common good by binding up the wounds of the afflicted.”

Archbishop Broglio assured “those motivated by the urgency of the current moment to work for just and humane solutions to these immigration challenges” of “the cooperation and goodwill of the Catholic Bishops of our country.”

(Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.)



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U.S. Bishops' Pro-Life Chairman Urges Catholics to Advocate for Life on Anniversary of Dobbs Decision

By OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Ahead of the June 24 anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision, the U.S. bishops' pro-life chairman is calling on Catholics to advocate for greater protections for preborn children.

Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, urged the faithful "to engage their elected officials on all issues that threaten the gift of human life, in particular the threat of abortion."

In its June 24, 2022, ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Roe v. Wade decision issued Jan. 22, 1973, which had legalized abortion in all 50 states. With Dobbs, the high court returned the

issue of abortion to the states.

With Dobbs, the court ended nearly 50 years "of virtually unlimited, nationwide abortion," Bishop Thomas said in a June 16 statement.

"Hope had never been lost in God's power to right that wrong and accomplish what the world believed to be impossible," he said. "During this Jubilee Year of Hope, we are called to reflect more deeply on the enduring hope that has been won for us through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The Dobbs decision not only gave states the freedom to protect preborn children but also paved the way for pro-life victories nationally," Bishop Thomas continued. "The federal government is now closer than ever to defunding Planned Parenthood and other organizations whose

abortion profiteering harms women and babies."

However, "despite the good that Dobbs decision accomplished, the battle for life is far from over," he said. "We know that several states have enacted extreme pro-abortion policies, overriding existing pro-life safeguards, with some states leaving children vulnerable to abortion even up to birth."

In confronting today's challenges, "let us find hope anew in this Jubilee Year and be strengthened in our resolve to serve the cause of life," the bishop said.

"May our Catholic parishes continue to welcome, embrace, and accompany women facing unexpected or challenging pregnancies through initiatives like Walking with Moms in Need," Bishop Thomas added. "And may we never tire of sharing Christ's mes-

sage of mercy with all who are suffering in the aftermath of an abortion through ministries like Project Rachel."

Walking With Moms in Need was launched in 2020 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

The nationwide, parish-based initiative aims to increase support for pregnant and parenting mothers in need. "It works to ensure that any woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, or parenting in difficult circumstances, can turn to her local Catholic Church and be connected with the resources she needs," its website says. "Volunteers walk with moms throughout the motherhood journey, offering them authentic Christian friendship and ongoing support."

Project Rachel is described as "a ministry of the

Catholic Church in the U.S. to those who have been involved in abortion" on its website. "It is a diocesan-based network of specially trained priests, religious, counselors, and laypersons who provide a team response of care for those suffering in the aftermath of abortion," it states.

"Even amidst the increasing attacks on human life, we know that the 'storms that buffet us will never prevail, for we are firmly anchored in the hope born of grace, which enables us to live in Christ and to overcome sin, fear and death,'" Bishop Thomas said, quoting from Pope Francis' document establishing the 2025 Jubilee Year.

"As we move forward in hope, may we be united in our efforts to protect God's gift of life, in every stage and circumstance," he added.

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Supreme Court Upholds Tennessee's Gender Transition Ban for Minors

By Kate Scanlon, OSV News
WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The U.S. Supreme Court on June 18 upheld a Tennessee state law banning certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender.

The question at issue in the case — *United States v. Skrmetti*, the Biden administration's challenge to a law in Tennessee restricting gender transition treatments, including puberty blockers for minors — was whether Tennessee's law, Senate Bill 1, violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The high court's rul-

ing said that it did not.

In a majority opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote, "This case carries with it the weight of fierce scientific and policy debates about the safety, efficacy, and propriety of medical treatments in an evolving field. The voices in these debates raise sincere concerns; the implications for all are profound. The Equal Protection Clause does not resolve these disagreements. Nor does it afford us license to decide them as we see best."

"Our role is not 'to judge the wisdom, fairness, or logic' of the law before us ... but only to ensure

that it does not violate the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment," he continued. "Having concluded it does not, we leave questions regarding its policy to the people, their elected representatives, and the democratic process."

Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti said in a statement that "the common sense of Tennessee voters prevailed over judicial activism."

In guidance on health care policy and practices released in March 2023, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine stated the church's opposi-

tion to interventions that "involve the use of surgical or chemical techniques that aim to exchange the sex characteristics of a patient's body for those of the opposite sex or for simulations thereof."

"Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person," the document states.

(Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.)

Knights Launch Sacred Heart Novena for Pope Leo XIV's Intentions

By Gina Christian, OSV News
(OSV News) — The Knights of Columbus are inviting the faithful to take part in a novena to the Sacred Heart dedicated to the intentions of Pope Leo XIV.

The nine days of prayer will begin June 19, the anniversary of the pope's priestly ordination as the former Augustinian Father Robert Prevost.

The novena will conclude on June 27, the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, devotion to which — with precedents in at least the 11th and 12th centuries — spread broadly among Catholics following private revelations and visions received from 1673 to 1675 by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Visitation sister in France.

The novena also commemorates the 350th anniversary of the final revelation to St. Margaret Mary. Prayers for the novena can be obtained by visiting the novena's website at <https://www.kofc.org/un/en/campaigns/papal-novena.html>.

Through the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, a pontifical society tracing its roots to the 19th century, the faithful are asked to dedicate themselves to specific monthly intentions en-

trusted by the pope to the universal church.

During this month, Pope Leo's intention is "that the world might grow in compassion," according to the network's website, which states, "Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion on the world."

Participants in the Knights' novena are also welcome to submit their own intentions, which Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly will bring to Rome later in this Jubilee Year.

"Our Holy Father can count on the loyalty and prayers of the Knights of Columbus — now and always," said Kelly in a June 17 statement. "In solidarity with him, I invite all Knights, their families, and people of goodwill to join in this special novena for the pope and his intentions, as we support the Church's mission of evangelization through our works of charity and faith formation."

The Knights are also encouraging the faithful to enthrone, or reverently install, an image of the Sacred Heart in their homes.

The organization has prepared a booklet for a home ceremony, based on a format promoted in the early 20th century by Chilean Father

Mateo Crawley-Boevey, a priest of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and founder of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the Home apostolate, which was approved by both his superior general and St. Pius X.

The enthronement is intended to honor the primacy of Christ in the daily life of the family and its members. Images and instructions are available from the Knights at shopcatholicinfo.com.

Earlier this year, the Knights unveiled a Pilgrim Icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus during a Eucharistic Holy Hour at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut, where Blessed Michael McGivney founded the organization in 1882. The icon is a reproduction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as painted by Pompeo Batoni in 1767 and venerated in Rome's Church of the Gesù.

The reproduction is one of more than 300 icons, all of which received the apostolic blessing of the late Pope Francis, now on tour throughout the world as part of the Knight's pilgrim icon program.

(Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.)



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Pope: Resist the 'Temptation' of Embracing Weapons

By **Justin McLellan, Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The world must resist the allure of modern weapons which threaten to give conflicts a ferocity surpassing that of previous wars, Pope Leo XIV said.

"The heart of the church is torn apart from the cries that arise from places of war," he said at the conclusion of his general audience in St. Peter's Square June 18. "In particular from Ukraine, from Iran, from Israel, from Gaza."

"We must not become accustomed to war," the pope said.

"Rather, we must push against the allure of powerful and sophisticated weapons as a temptation."

Quoting the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World ("Gaudium et Spes"), Pope Leo said that in modern-day warfare "scientific weapons of all kinds are used," and consequently "its atrocity threatens to lead the combatants to a barbarity far greater than that of past times."

"Therefore, in the name of human dignity and international law, I repeat to those responsible that which Pope Francis used to

say: 'War is always a defeat,'" the pope said. And, quoting another of his predecessors, Pope Pius XII, he added: "Nothing is lost with peace. All can be lost with war."

Pope Leo's message came a few days after he expressed deep concern over the "seriously deteriorating" situation in the Middle East shortly after Israeli airstrikes were carried out on nuclear sites in Iran and retaliatory drone attacks on Israel were launched June 13.

"No one should ever threaten the existence of another," the pope had said during an audience with pilgrims in Rome for the Holy Year

2025 June 14. While it is right to hope for a world "free from the nuclear threat," he said, "it is the duty of all nations to support the cause of peace, taking paths of reconciliation and promoting solutions that ensure security and dignity for all."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, told the Italian news agency ANSA June 17 that the Holy See is advocating for nuclear disarmament and has prepared a document on the immorality of not only the use but the possession of nuclear arms — a notion previously expressed by the late Pope Francis.

As 'New Nightmare' Unfolds Between Israel and Iran, 'Never-Ending Tragedy' in Gaza Continues

By **OSV News**

JERUSALEM (OSV News) — As continued bombardment between Israel and Iran entered its fifth day, Catholic clergy in both countries called for peace and an end to further bloodshed in the Holy Land and the Middle East.

"It seems like we have fallen into a new nightmare," Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, said in an interview with Vatican News published June 16. "First, we saw the destruction caused by the war in the surrounding territories; now we see it in the heart of the Holy Land."

On June 17, Israeli tanks fired into a crowd trying to get aid from trucks in Gaza, killing at least 59 people, according to medics, as reported by Reuters. It was "one of the bloodiest incidents yet in mounting violence as desperate residents struggle for food," the agency said.

Father Gabriel Romaneli, pastor of Holy Family Church, the only Catholic parish in the Gaza Strip, warned that the suffering of the Palestinians in the enclave is being forgotten.

According to another June 16 report by French newspaper Le Monde, the Gaza civil defense agency said Israeli soldiers opened fire and killed 20 people waiting to collect food at an aid distribution site in Rafah. The Israeli military said it was investigating the incident, Le Monde reported.

"Imagine a city like Rome (which has a population slightly larger than that of Gaza), whose inhabitants are forced to collect food in three or four distribution points located in different areas, with all that this entails in terms of hardship and danger. What we see today in Gaza is shameful," Father Romaneli told SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference.

Israel launched a June 13 preemptive strike against Iran and said the country's nuclear ambitions posed an "existential threat."

"Iran is only moments away from a nuclear weapon. The threat posed by Iran is imminent and Israel has no choice but remove it before it is too late," Israel's Embassy to

the Holy See said in a statement sent to OSV News June 13.

Not long after Israel launched its attack, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which is led by Italian Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, tweeted a prayer for peace on its X account.

"We lift our weary hearts to you, Lord, longing for your light amid the shadows of fear and unrest," the prayer read. "Teach us to be peacemakers."

Before Iran responded with its own volley of missiles, which struck Tel Aviv and Haifa, Cardinal Pizzaballa said the consequences of Israel's preemptive strike were "difficult to predict at this time."

"It is necessary to understand what kind of reaction will come from Iran," the cardinal said in a June 13 interview with TG2000, the daily news program of the Italian bishops' conference.

"There will certainly be a response. Its scale and real-world consequences will have to be determined. This is not an act that will aid deescalation."

"We are all tired, all of us



OSV News photo/Hatem Khaled, Reuters
Mourners carry the body of a young Palestinian in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip June 17. The youth was killed in what the Gaza Health Ministry said were Israeli airstrikes.

are tired of war, but we are all fused inside this vicious cycle, incapable of looking beyond. The concentration of military force is also a sign of political weakness," Cardinal Pizzaballa said.

Although it was not specified, the cardinal likely referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political troubles,

including surviving a vote that would have dissolved the current parliament.

Outside of the cardinal's interview with TG2000, the Latin Patriarchate has not issued any official statement regarding the conflict. However, the patriarchate took issue with a text circulating on WhatsApp **See "Tragedy" on Page 13**

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Tragedy ...

Cont'd from Page 12 and "on social media that falsely purports to be a statement" from Cardinal Pizzaballa, which included a prayer to the Virgin Mary.

"Cardinal Pizzaballa has not given any interviews or made any public statements on the matter in recent days, and the content of the text has neither been written nor approved by him," wrote Faid Jubran, spokesperson for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in a June 17 statement.

In his June 16 interview with Vatican News, the custos of the Holy Land echoed Cardinal Pizzaballa's concerns, lamenting the fact that "many here, not only Christians, want to leave a country which, in recent years, seems incapable of guaranteeing peace."

The Holy Land, Father Patton said, has "become entangled in a spiral of war that continually expands like a fire that can no longer be controlled."

"Christians, like the rest of the population, are scared," he said. "I have already seen firsthand the terror of children during the war in Syria, I have heard it told from Gaza, now it is here too: children who tremble when they hear the sirens of the alarm and then the explosions of the missiles. These are traumas that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives."

Despite the uncertainties of the escalating conflict, Father Patton told Vatican News that missionaries in the country have no intention of leaving.

"There is no longer any observance of the 'rules' of international law of war,

and therefore we are all in the same boat, without distinctions of ethnic or religious affiliation," he said. "We are not mercenaries who abandon the flock to save themselves. This is the mission that the church has entrusted to us, and here we will remain, trusting in the help of heaven."

As the world's attention shifted from the war in Gaza to Iran, Father Romanello said the situation in the enclave is beyond desperate.

"Eyes that do not see, heart that does not hear," the priest said of the situation in a June 16 interview with SIR.

"No one talks about (the war in Gaza); international attention seems to have waned, but here, there is fighting every day, and the population is experiencing a never-ending tragedy," the Argentine priest said.

The pastor of Holy Family said that the dire circumstances have led people in Gaza to "no longer have hope for a future different from this one." Nevertheless, he added, as Christians, "we try to find a foundation

of hope in prayer."

"The war will end, we don't know when, but it will end," he said.



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A Homily by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore

Mass for the Preservation of Peace & Justice

In Thanksgiving for the Work of CRS, Catholic Charities, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

(The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Lori at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on June 11. Bishop Mark Brennan concelebrated the Mass.)

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

We gather today in a spirit of deep gratitude and with no small amount of urgency. We are grateful for the faithful and persevering work of Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, & the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—organizations that don't just provide aid, but witness to the love of Christ in the flesh. In shelters and refugee camps, food pantries and war zones, they serve as the Church's outstretched hand to the poor, the displaced, the hungry, and the vulnerable.

We also gather with urgency, because that work is under threat. In recent months, the U.S. government abruptly suspended refugee resettlement funding and halted international humanitarian aid – forcing the Church and its agencies to lay off employees, terminate programs, and most painfully, turn away those most in need. These decisions have done more than disrupt logistics – they have frayed bonds of trust that are essential to our mission of mercy.

We have seen this erosion of trust not only in international aid decisions but here at home as well. Recent immigration raids have left many families shaken, not because they were hiding wrongdoing, but because the enforcement actions were carried out in ways that provoked fear and anxiety among ordinary, hard-working immigrants – our neighbors, our parishioners, our friends. While governments have the right to enforce laws, they must do so with humanity and prudence. It is never necessary to instill fear in order to ensure order. The peace we are called to build cannot be reconciled with tactics that sow division and dread in our communities.

And so, I find myself turning to the Gospel we just heard proclaimed, where the disciples are gathered behind locked doors, confused and afraid. It strikes me that in some ways, we too feel we are behind closed doors – hemmed in by decisions beyond our control, wondering how we go on. And into that room, Jesus enters. "Peace be with you," He says. And again: "Peace be with you." Then He breathes on them and says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

This is the first commission of the Church after the Resurrection. Jesus doesn't give the disciples a strategic plan or a budget. He gives

them His peace, and the Holy Spirit, and then sends them into the world – wounded, messy, and unjust as it may be – to be bearers of reconciliation, healing and hope. That same Spirit has carried the Church's mission through every century, and it must carry us now, especially when the work is harder, leaner, and more costly.

In my own life and ministry, I often draw strength from the words and witness of Cardinal James Hickey, former Abp. of Washington, who was not only a spiritual leader, but a friend and mentor. He gave me one of the most lasting images of the Church's mission: a Church that never turns away from suffering but stands with Mary beneath the Cross.

During the Lenten retreat he preached to the Papal Household in 1988, Cardinal Hickey remarked:

"Through our poverty and our weakness in the face of massive human needs, the strength and power of the Cross are communicated. Through our inadequacy to address the tremendous social problems of hunger, disease, poverty, and oppression, the abundant life of Jesus can shine through to our world. The strength necessary for the Church to serve the needs of humanity comes from the Cross of Jesus."

And the Cardinal went on to remind us that: "Standing with Mary beneath the Cross of Jesus, the Church can bring to the destitute, the troubled, and the ill a tremendous love that understands the redemptive power of all suffering even as it seeks to alleviate that very suffering. The Church [he said] must never fall into the trap of thinking of itself as just another agency for providing human services... The care and concern the Church brings to those in need are different... The Church must bring a redeeming love that seeks both the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all who suffer."

That is the vision of charity we need, now more than ever. The Gospel does not promise us ease or clarity. But it does promise that the Holy Spirit is with us, and that Jesus will breathe peace into our chaos, and send us forward not by our own strength but by His.

Isaiah, in the first reading, spoke of a day when peace would be more than the absence of conflict – when it would flow from justice itself: "Then justice will dwell in the wilderness... The work of justice will be peace... My people will live in a peaceful country, in secure dwellings & quiet resting places"... This is the peace we work toward – a peace that flows not from politics, but from righteousness, solidarity, and grace.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, gives us the path forward when the work seems overwhelming; he says: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

So, what do we do now?

We do what Christians have always done in difficult times: We renew our identity: We are not vendors. We are the Body of Christ, animated by the Spirit, driven by love. We build anew: Even as relationships and programs change, we must find new partnerships, support local leaders, and invest in the grassroots energy of our parishes and communities.

We advocate without fear: Social media, bulletins, homilies, and action alerts – these are not optional endeavors; they are part of how we form consciences and uphold the dignity of the least among us.

We remain present: Even when we can't serve in the same ways, we can still accompany, still stand beside, and still show up for those in need.

Above all, we remember that the Risen Jesus does not leave us behind locked doors. He enters, even now, with a word of peace and a command to go out. So let us go, not in despair, but with the strength of the Cross and the peace of Christ. Let us be bold in hope and let us be worthy of the trust the world has placed in us, not because we are powerful, but because we are faithful. Amen.

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Presidente de la USCCB: Los obispos están con los inmigrantes 'en esta difícil hora'

Por Gina Christian, OSV News

(OSV News) — "Nadie puede hacer oídos sordos a los gritos palpables de ansiedad y miedo que se escuchan en las comunidades de todo el país a raíz de un aumento de las acciones de aplicación de la ley de inmigración", dijo el líder de los obispos católicos de la nación en una declaración del 16 de junio que aseguraba a todos los impactados el apoyo de sus pastores.

El arzobispo Timothy P. Broglio, de la Arquidiócesis militar de EE.UU. y presidente de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de EE.UU. (USCCB por sus siglas en español), emitió una reflexión antes del retiro de una semana de la USCCB en California, una reunión trienal que este año sustituye a la habitual sesión plenaria de primavera de los obispos.

El arzobispo dijo que la ocasión de la reunión de los obispos parecía "apropiada para dar voz a una profunda preocupación en los corazones de los pastores de la Iglesia en nuestro país" sobre las políticas de inmigración de la administración Trump.

Si bien elogió las acciones de aplicación de la ley "destinadas a preservar el orden y garantizar la seguridad de la comunidad" como "necesarias para el bien común", el arzobispo Broglio dijo: "Los esfuerzos actuales van mucho más allá de aquellos con antecedentes penales".

En cumplimiento de una promesa electoral, el presidente Donald Trump ha tomado medidas enérgicas contra la inmigración en Estados Unidos. Entre las medidas adoptadas por la Administración Trump se encuentran la supresión del estatuto de protección de los

inmigrantes procedentes de varios países en conflicto, la prohibición total o parcial de viajar a Estados Unidos desde varios países, la orden al Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas de cumplir cuotas diarias de 3.000 detenciones, la interrupción de las entrevistas para la obtención de visas para estudiantes extranjeros, el intento de poner fin a la ciudadanía por derecho de nacimiento y la deportación a terceros países de personas sin estatus jurídico permanente en Estados Unidos, en contra de las órdenes judiciales.

Aunque la administración afirma que sus redadas se centran en delincuentes, varias detenciones y deportaciones importantes han afectado a personas sin antecedentes penales demostrados. Según el Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse de la Universidad de Syracuse, se calcula que el 44% de los más de 51.000 detenidos por el ICE hasta el 1 de junio carecen de antecedentes penales, aparte de haber entrado en Estados Unidos sin permiso.

La USCCB y Catholic Charities USA se encuentran entre las 200 organizaciones no gubernamentales mencionadas en una investigación del Congreso por ayudar supuestamente a inmigrantes a los que sus dirigentes denominan "extranjeros inadmisibles" durante el gobierno del ex presidente Joe Biden.

"En el contexto de un sistema de inmigración gravemente deficiente, la detención masiva y la expulsión de nuestros vecinos, amigos y familiares basándose únicamente en el estatus migratorio, particularmente de forma arbitraria o sin el debido proceso, representan una profunda crisis social ante

la que ninguna persona de buena voluntad puede permanecer en silencio", dijo el arzobispo Broglio. "La situación dista mucho de la comunión de vida y amor a la que debería aspirar esta nación de inmigrantes".

Señaló el reciente discurso en vídeo del Papa León XIV a los jóvenes de Chicago y del mundo — en el que, dijo el arzobispo Broglio, el Papa "nos recordó que en el corazón de la fe cristiana está la invitación a compartir la comunión de vida y amor del Padre, el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo, la primera comunidad y basada completamente en el amor".

"El Santo Padre también nos desafió a ser un signo de esperanza haciendo del mundo un lugar mejor", dijo el arzobispo Broglio.

El arzobispo señaló la reacción provocada por las políticas de la administración Trump sobre inmigración.

"Las muchas acciones de protesta en todo el país reflejan los sentimientos morales de muchos estadounidenses de que la aplicación de la ley por sí sola no puede ser la solución para abordar los desafíos de inmigración de nuestra nación", dijo.

"Aunque la protesta y la disidencia pueden ser una expresión legítima de participación democrática, la violencia nunca es aceptable", subrayó el arzobispo Broglio.

Al mismo tiempo, observó que la injusticia puede ser un desencadenante de conflictos, citando la encíclica "Evangelii Gaudium" del Papa Francisco: "Sin igualdad de oportunidades, las diversas formas de agresión y de guerra encontrarán un caldo de cultivo que tarde o temprano provocará su explosión".

El arzobispo Broglio dijo que "la falta crónica de oportunidades de estatus legal para nuestros hermanos y hermanas inmigrantes, junto con la creciente negación del debido proceso a ellos, es perjudicial para la dignidad humana y es un factor considerable en la ruptura del estado de derecho".

Y añadió: "Del mismo modo, las acusaciones infundadas contra los proveedores de servicios católicos, que cada día se esfuerzan por proporcionar apoyo y atención críticos a los más vulnerables, contribuyen a las tensiones sociales y a un creciente clima de miedo".

Hablando en nombre de los obispos de la nación, el arzobispo Broglio dijo: "Quiero asegurar a todos los afectados por acciones que desgarran el tejido de nuestras comunidades la solidaridad de sus pastores".

"Como sus pastores, su miedo resuena en nuestros corazones y hacemos nuestro su dolor. Cuenten con el compromiso de todos nosotros para acompañarlos en esta difícil hora", dijo.

También expresó su reconocimiento a "quienes, en nuestras organizaciones católicas de servicio y comunitarias, trabajan para promover el bien común sanando las heridas de los afligidos".

El arzobispo Broglio aseguró a las personas afectadas "por la urgencia del momento actual" quienes buscan "trabajar por soluciones justas y humanas a estos desafíos de la inmigración" que ellas cuentan con la "cooperación y buena voluntad de los obispos católicos de nuestro país".

(Gina Christian es reportera multimedia de OSV News.)

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores:

La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estados Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web www.repostbishopabuse.org. Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación.

Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911.

Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513.

Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas: La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesásticas correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea directa de abuso sexual

de la diócesis al 833.230.5656.

Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web www.dwc.org, favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrece la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381.

EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está protegida.

Enlaces e información:

Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de crímenes contra a menores: 304-293-6400.

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