

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Statement from Bishop Brennan on Lifting the Suspension of the Obligation to Attend Sunday & Holy Day Masses

June 2, 2021

My brothers and sisters in Christ, While God deserves our worship at all times, as our Creator and Redeemer, He Himself has set aside certain days for our common worship. He commanded the Hebrews to honor Him one day a week: *Remember to keep holy the sabbath day* [Exodus 20:8]. For them, that was Saturday, the last day of the week, and they were forbidden to work on that day.

For us Christians, Sunday, the first day of the week, is our weekly holy day, because it is the day when Jesus rose from the dead. Like the Hebrews, we should avoid unnecessary work and shopping on Sunday (modern conditions can make this nearly impossible) but, following the practice of the earliest Christians, our principal way of worshipping God on Sunday is to gather to celebrate Mass.

After changing bread into his sacred Body and wine into his sacred Blood, Jesus said, *Do this in remembrance of me* [Luke 22:19]. We respect the Lord's wishes when we assemble to hear his Word proclaimed and to offer to our Father, together with the priest, the Savior who has made himself present on our altar and who offers himself as food to us in Holy Communion.

It was a hard decision to close our churches to public Masses for two months last year. It was done for everyone's protection until we could figure out how to celebrate Mass safely. I lifted the obligation to go to Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation so that Catholics of tender conscience would not think they were sinning by not going to Mass.

Now, however, with the pandemic seeming to subside (although it is not over), I am removing the suspension of the obligation of Sunday and holy day Mass
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Father Szabo Ordained



John Sherwood Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan ordains Father Phillip Szabo to the priesthood at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town May 29. With them is seminarian John Soplinski.

By Colleen Rowan

In his 45 years of priesthood, Bishop Mark Brennan said he has never regretted it and never looked back. The bishop shared these words with those gathered at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town May 29 for the ordination of Father Phillip Szabo to the priesthood.

"The Lord has been faithful to me these 45 years," the bishop said in his homily. Speaking directly to Father Szabo, he said, "I pray that you may have that same abiding trust in him as you begin your priestly ministry."

Father Szabo's family and friends joined clergy, religious, and many others to celebrate this

joyous moment for him and for the diocese. More than 20 priests concelebrated the Mass, the majority from the diocese who came to welcome a new brother priest. Also present were priests from Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., the seminary Father Szabo
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Statement of the Bishops of the Province of Baltimore and the Archdiocese of Washington

Lifting the General Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Mass

We, the Catholic Bishops of the Province of Baltimore and the Archdiocese of Washington, give thanks to Almighty God for the progress our country has made in curbing the coronavirus pandemic. The average number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to decline due to the observance of safety protocols and the increase of the availability of the vaccine. At this time, many places in our region are enjoying a return to some sense of normalcy.

Therefore, we are lifting the dispensation of the Sunday and Holy Days Mass obligation in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Dioceses of Arlington, Richmond, Wheeling-Charleston, and Wilmington beginning on Saturday, June 26, 2021 and Sunday, June 27, 2021. We welcome and encourage the Faithful to return to full in-person participation of the Sunday Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic faith (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 1247 and Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2180).

This obligation does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus, another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions. One should consult his or her local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass (Canon 87).

Safety protocols and other liturgical directives in each diocese remain in effect until modified or revoked by the respective Diocesan Bishop.

Let us continue to be united in prayer for one another and for an end to the global pandemic.

Given on June 2, 2021

Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Washington

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Baltimore

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop, Diocese of Arlington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop, Diocese of Richmond

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan
Bishop, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Most Reverend William Francis Malooly
Apostolic Administrator, Diocese of Wilmington

Statement ...

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attendance. What does this mean in practice?

The precept to take part in Sunday or holy day Mass is serious. It means that healthy persons with the ability to go to Mass should do so. While the precept is serious, the Church has always been mild in its application. Among many situations that could impede your going to Mass, you may be taking care of a sick person or fear bringing home an infection from Mass; you may be traveling a long distance on Sunday (perhaps 100 miles); you may be required to work on Sunday and no local Mass fits into your schedule. In these and similar situations, you are excused from taking part in Mass. But sitting at home watching a live-streamed or televised Mass, when you are healthy and could easily go to Mass, is not sufficient to fulfill the Sunday Mass obligation. Those who ignore or scoff at this obligation are certainly not respecting God nor honoring the Lord Jesus.

Going to Mass in-person is simply better. We should be with our fellow Catholics to hear the Word of God proclaimed. We can only receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist by being at Mass. The Lord himself said, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them* [Matthew 18:20]. We are not isolated individuals, but members of a people and that becomes more real to us when we are together.

I urge, then, all our Catholics who do not have genuine excuses for not going to Mass to join us once again in our parishes for Sunday and holy day Masses. Do it to honor the God who made you and the Redeemer who suffered and died for you. Do it for your own benefit and for that of your fellow parishioners. We have missed you and very much wish to see you with us again. Refresh our hearts and your own by coming back to Mass.

May God abundantly bless you and your loved ones!

Sincerely in Christ,

Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

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

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


To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator: please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988.

In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability," then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

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.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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



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Spirit


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June 4, 2021, Vol. 52, No. 23

Publisher: Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....


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Member
Catholic Press Association
West Virginia Press Association



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National Press Photographers Association, Inc.

Published 24 times per year. 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.

Pope Promulgates Revised Canon Law on Crimes, Punishments

By **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A series of laws and procedures promulgated by now-retired Pope Benedict XVI and, especially, by Pope Francis to protect children, promote the investigation of allegations of clerical sexual abuse and punish offenders are included in a heavily revised section of the Code of Canon Law.

The revision of “Book VI: Penal Sanctions in the Church,” one of seven books that make up the code for the Latin rite of the Catholic Church, was promulgated June 1 and will go into effect Dec. 8, Pope Francis wrote.

Rewriting 63 of the book’s 89 canons, the revision addresses a host of issues that have come up in the life of the church since St. John Paul II promulgated the code in 1983. The descriptions of crimes of sexual abuse, including child pornography, are more explicit, and the required actions of a bishop or superior of a re-

ligious order in handling allegations are more stringent.

The revised canons also include new references to the attempted ordination of a woman and to a variety of financial crimes; like with the new canons dealing with sexual abuse, they rely on language from laws promulgated separately over the past 20 years.

“In the past, much damage has been caused by a failure to perceive the intimate relationship existing in the church between the exercise of charity and recourse — when circumstances and justice require it — to the discipline of sanctions. This way of thinking, as experience has taught us, risks leading to a life of behavior contrary to the discipline of morals, for the remedy of which exhortations or suggestions alone are not sufficient,” Pope Francis wrote in “Pascite Gregem Dei” (Shepherd God’s Flock), the apostolic constitution promulgating the changes.

While church law applies to all Catholics, the pope said, for bishops, the observance of canon law “can in no way be separated from the pastoral ‘munus’ (service) entrusted to them, and which must be carried out as a concrete and inalienable requirement of charity not only toward the church, the Christian community and possible victims, but also toward those who have committed a crime, who need both mercy and correction on the part of the church.”

Over the years, he said, it became clear that the code’s description of crimes and penalties needed to be “modified in such a way as to allow pastors to use it as a more agile salvific and corrective instrument, to be employed promptly and with pastoral charity to avoid more serious evils and to soothe the wounds caused by human weakness.”

The revised book was presented to the press June 1 by Archbishop Filippo Iannone and Bishop Juan Ignacio Ar-

rieta, respectively president and secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts. In 2009, Pope Benedict had asked the council to begin the revision project.

The revision moves the canons about the sexual abuse of children — on the part of a priest, religious or layperson working for the church — out of the section on violations of the obligation of celibacy and into a newly titled section of “Offenses Against Human Life, Dignity and Liberty.”

It adds to canon law the crime of “grooming,” calling for penalties, including dismissal from the priesthood for a cleric who “grooms or induces a minor or a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason or one to whom the law recognizes equal protection to expose himself or herself pornographically or to take part in pornographic exhibitions, whether real or simulated.”

However, the revised language still refers to rape and

other forms of sexual abuse as “an offence against the Sixth Commandment” — You shall not commit adultery.

The continued use of the Sixth Commandment to refer to any improper, immoral or even criminal sexual activity “is traditional” in church law, Bishop Arrieta said, and for Catholics its meaning “is clear,” which is necessary when drafting a law that will be valid on every continent and in every culture.

In incorporating recent church law regarding abuse, the new code does not refer to abuse of “vulnerable” adults or “vulnerable persons” as Pope Francis did in his May 2019 *motu proprio*, “Vos estis lux mundi.”

Bishop Arrieta said the term “vulnerable person,” while understood and recognized in the law of many countries, is not universally accepted as a legal category of persons deserving special protection. Instead, the new law refers to people whom

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USCCB President Explains How Planned Discussion on Eucharist Was Set

By **Dennis Sadowski, Catholic News Service**

After receiving an unprecedented letter from 67 bishops appealing for a delay in a discussion during the bishops’ upcoming spring general assembly on whether to prepare a teaching document on the reception of Communion, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ president explained in a memo the procedure followed in bringing the question to a vote during the June 16-18 virtual meeting.

The back-and-forth messages follow an increasingly public debate among the bishops about Catholic politicians who support keeping abortion legal and whether they should be denied access to the Eucharist.

In a May 22 memo to fellow bishops, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles explained that the USCCB Administrative Committee approved a request from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, for the discussion on drafting a document to examine the “meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church.”

The Administrative Committee includes conference officers and all of the committee chairmen. It set the spring assembly agenda during its meeting in March.

Bishop Rhoades chairs the bishops’ Committee on Doctrine, which would draft the document if approved by the full assembly.

Archbishop Gomez’s memo came in response to a May 13 letter, which was obtained by Catholic News Service, to him from 67 bishops who asked that any discussion on “eucharistic coherence” be removed from the assembly agenda.

The Pillar, a news and analysis website covering the Catholic Church, first reported on the bishops’ letter, which cites May 7 correspondence from Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, to Archbishop Gomez.

The bishops wrote that “we respectfully urge that all conference-wide discussion and committee work on the topic of eucharistic worthiness and other issues raised by the Holy See be postponed until the full body of bishops is able to meet in person.”

Four cardinals are among those signing the letter: Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey.

Archbishop Gomez said USCCB rules require that the body of bishops

first be asked whether to issue a document on a particular topic. Bishop Rhoades took such a step by asking the Administrative Committee to include time on the spring agenda to discuss such a question. The committee agreed.

The process, the memo explained, involves the creation of an “Action Item” for the bishops to consider.

“Importantly, the Action Item does not ask the body to approve a final statement, but only whether drafting of a text may begin,” the memo said.

It added that if the action is approved, the doctrine committee would begin its work, subject to the conference’s “usual process of consultation, modification and amendment” when presented for consideration at a future general assembly.

“As you will note, the focus of this proposed teaching document is on how best to help people to understand the beauty and mystery of the Eucharist as the center of their Christian lives,” the archbishop wrote.

Archbishop Gomez’s memo included a draft, dated May 14, of an outline of a possible document with the proposed title “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the life of the Church: Why It Matters.”

It outlines three parts, subtitled “The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Believed,” “The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Celebrated” and “The Eucharist: A Mystery to be Lived.”

Each part has three topics that would be addressed including, respectively, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in Communion, unity, beauty and identity as the “fount and apex of the whole Christian life,” and moral transformation, eucharistic consistency and missionary discipleship. The letter from the bishops was sent on letterhead of the Archdiocese of Washington. The archdiocese did not respond to a CNS email seeking comment.

The bishops said the serious nature of “eucharistic worthiness” and other issues raised in Cardinal Ladaria’s letter requires the bishops to “forge substantive unity,” something which they said is “impossible to address ... productively in the fractured and isolated setting of a distance meeting.”

“The high standard of consensus among ourselves and of maintaining unity with the Holy See and the universal church as set forth by Cardinal Ladaria is far from being achieved in the present moment,” the prelates

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wrote. "Moreover, as the prefect's sound theological and pastoral advice opens a new path for moving forward, we should take this opportunity to re-envision the best collegial structure for achieving that," the letter said.

Cardinal Ladaria in his letter urged the U.S. bishops to proceed with caution in their discussions about formulating a national policy "to address the situation of Catholics in public office who support legislation allowing abortion, euthanasia or other moral evils."

The cardinal also reiterated what he had said he had told several groups of U.S. bishops during their 2019-2020 "ad limina" visits, namely that "the effective development of a policy in this area requires that dialogue occurs in two stages: first among the bishops themselves, and then between bishops and Catholic pro-choice politicians within their jurisdictions."

Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, one of the 67 signatories of the letter to Archbishop Gomez, said the correspondence was not meant to be divisive, but was in fact "in keeping with Cardinal Ladaria's exhortation for an extended and serene dialogue."

"The letter is basically a direct response to Cardinal Ladaria's intervention," Wester told CNS May 26.

"The letter asked Archbishop Gomez to share it with the Administrative Committee. It is trying to use the processes of the conference," Arch-

bishop Wester said, noting that the Administrative Committee must set the final agenda for the June plenary assembly.

Archbishop Wester said the letter was "meant to create unity among the bishops" in advocating for a better time to have this discussion. The June meeting will be virtual, which means that 275 bishops will be in a giant Zoom meeting, he said.

The ability to talk both formally and informally with brother bishops is "very, very constrained on Zoom," he noted. The November plenary session of the U.S. bishops' conference is likely to be in person, which Archbishop Wester thought would be more conducive for the kind of extended discussion envisioned by Cardinal Ladaria in his letter.

Meanwhile, two archbishops issued statements May 25 in support of keeping the discussion on a possible document focused on the Eucharist at the June general assembly agenda.

Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila of Denver and Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco called for work on a document on eucharistic coherence to continue and the discussion to take place during the bishops' June spring general assembly.

Archbishop Gomez has followed the correct procedures to facilitate "this critical discussion as a body of bishops," Archbishop Aquila said.

Without citing who, Archbishop Aquila said "there have been some who have misrepresented" what Cardinal Ladaria's letter said, "but it was

clear from it that the USCCB's plan to discuss and debate this important issue is warranted and encouraged."

In contrast," he continued, "the publication of the letter calling for a halt to discussion at our June meeting on this vital issue risks creating an atmosphere of factionalism, rather than unity among the bishops."

Archbishop Cordileone said he was "deeply grieved by the rising public acrimony among bishops and the adoption of behind-closed-doors maneuvers to interfere with the accepted, normal agreed-upon procedures of the USCCB."

"Those who do not want to issue a document on eucharistic coherence should be open to debating the question objectively and fairly with their brother bishops, rather than attempting to derail the process," Archbishop Cordileone said.

He said he was looking forward to "serene dialogue," as Cardinal Ladaria urged in his letter, during the upcoming June general assembly "so that we may discern 'the best way forward for the Church in the United States to witness to the grave moral responsibility of Catholic public officials to protect human life at all stages.'"

Archbishop Cordileone issued a pastoral letter May 1 focusing on the unborn, Communion and Catholics in public life. It emphasized that "those who reject the teaching of the church on the sanctity of human life and those who do not seek to live in accordance with that teaching should not receive the Eucharist."

In a May 26 statement, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee chairman, said he also supports Archbishop Gomez and the opportunity for the bishops to authorize the doctrine committee to prepare a draft of a "timely and much-needed document 'on the meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church.'"

Because of COVID-19, Catholics have been deprived of the Eucharist for a significant period of time, he said, but even before the pandemic, "there was evidence that many Catholics do not understand or believe" in the Real Presence in the Eucharist. Many people need to be re-catechized about the gift of the Eucharist. We need to foster what St. John Paul (II) termed 'eucharistic amazement.'

"In addition, we have several prominent Catholics in public life who profess to be devout Catholics while acting in a manner contrary to Catholic moral teaching and in violation of the most fundamental of human rights, the right to life," Archbishop Naumann said. "Whether intentionally or not, they are sowing seeds of confusion about Catholic teaching, especially among our young people."

He also said, "It would be a failure in our responsibility as bishops to neglect to address in a timely manner these challenges to what is central to our Catholic spirituality."

Contributing to this report was Greg Erlandson in Washington.

Sacred Heart Parishes

OF BLUEFIELD & PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA

and Father Sebastian Devasya, pastor,
offer our heartfelt congratulations and prayerful best wishes to
our dear friend, Father Phillip Szabo,



for his Ordination to the Priesthood!

Szabo...

Cont'd from Page 1
attended.

It is God who calls men to the priesthood, Bishop Brennan said as he continued his homily. He said that God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." Turning to Father Szabo, Bishop Brennan said, "God, in a loving act of divine providence, called you before you were aware of it to be a priest..."

The bishop continued by saying that Jeremiah protested that he was too young and did not know how to speak. "You are not too young," the bishop said to Father Szabo, "and God has already strengthened you to speak his word in two languages. And he will continue to uphold you if you are faithful to that saving word."

The bishop pointed out that St. Paul, in the second reading, exhorts all to not live for themselves but for Christ who died for everyone and was raised up. Bishop Brennan reminded all those gathered and all those watching the livestream on the diocese's website that this applies to all of the baptized. In a particular way, he said, it applies to a priest who has committed himself to serve God's people whether convenient or inconvenient. The bishop recalled a time in his own priesthood when he had to cancel his vacation because he was needed to fill in for a parish in need of a priest. This was in addition to his job as a full-time vocation director.

"St. Paul also says that we regard no one according to the flesh," the bishop said, and that all are sisters and brothers in the Lord. Here, he said, celibacy poses a challenge. When the bible says it is not good for the man to be alone, the bishop said, it states a basic fact about human beings: "We need one another. No one should be alone," he said.

So, how does a celibate priest avoid becoming miserably lonely? the bishop asked. "First, by letting the Lord Jesus be your friend in prayer and in worship," he said, "encountering him in his word and in his people."

Second, the bishop said, is to have good priest friends — peers who are living the same life. Priestly fraternity is a great support, he noted. And finally, he said, forming wholesome and lasting friendships with



John Sherwood Photo

Father Phillip Szabo prostrates himself before the altar during his ordination to priesthood at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town May 29.

members of the laity, which is most rewarding. Bishop Brennan shared that he still enjoys the friendship of married couples from parishes he has served.

"St. Paul also says that we priests, like himself, are engaged in a ministry of reconciliation," Bishop Brennan continued. "We are ambassadors for Christ through whom God has reconciled the world to himself not counting people's transgressions against them."

In a very broad sense, he said, a priest's ministry in preaching, teaching, and counseling ... is often about reconciling people to God and to one another urging them to step back from the barriers they have erected to loving God and their neighbor. In a more restrictive, fruitful sense this reconciliation, he said, takes place in the sacrament of penance in which sin is manifested by the penitent and absolved by Christ through the priest.

In his own priesthood, the bishop said, he realized, "My job was not to solve everyone's problems or pretend to be a master counselor. My job was to forgive sin and to reconcile the penitent to God and the church. Now, I find that ministry most satisfying as I hope you will too, Phillip."

In the gospel, the bishop continued, the Lord says: unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies it produces much fruit. This, Bishop Brennan said, relates well to what St. Paul says about living not for oneself but for the Lord. Constantly giving of oneself, the bishop stressed, can lead to mental, physical, and spiritual fatigue and worse if one is not careful. "Seek a certain balance in your life," he said to Father Szabo, "so that along with faithful service to your people you have some

time for prayer, for rest, and recreation and enjoyment of friends.

"Most of all you must go to the Lord and find strength in him," Bishop Brennan said. "That applies to all of us, but certainly to the priest."

Pointing to the Gospel of Matthew, "Come to me, all of you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest," the bishop said to Father Szabo, "That is a promise the Lord makes to you. I can testify that he keeps his word. Thus refreshed in the Lord, your giving of yourself will, in God's way and time, bear fruit. ...

"We must be patient and, like the farmer who sows the grains of wheat, wait without anxiety for the harvest."

"It is a privilege to be one of Christ's priests, but he is the high priest," Bishop Brennan said. "We simply participate in his priesthood. We do so in a way different from but complementary to the laity's participation in it. For you also are priests of the new covenant through your baptism, but the ordained priest is ordained to serve you."

In concluding his homily, the bishop encouraged Father Szabo to know that in bad days the Lord takes care of all.

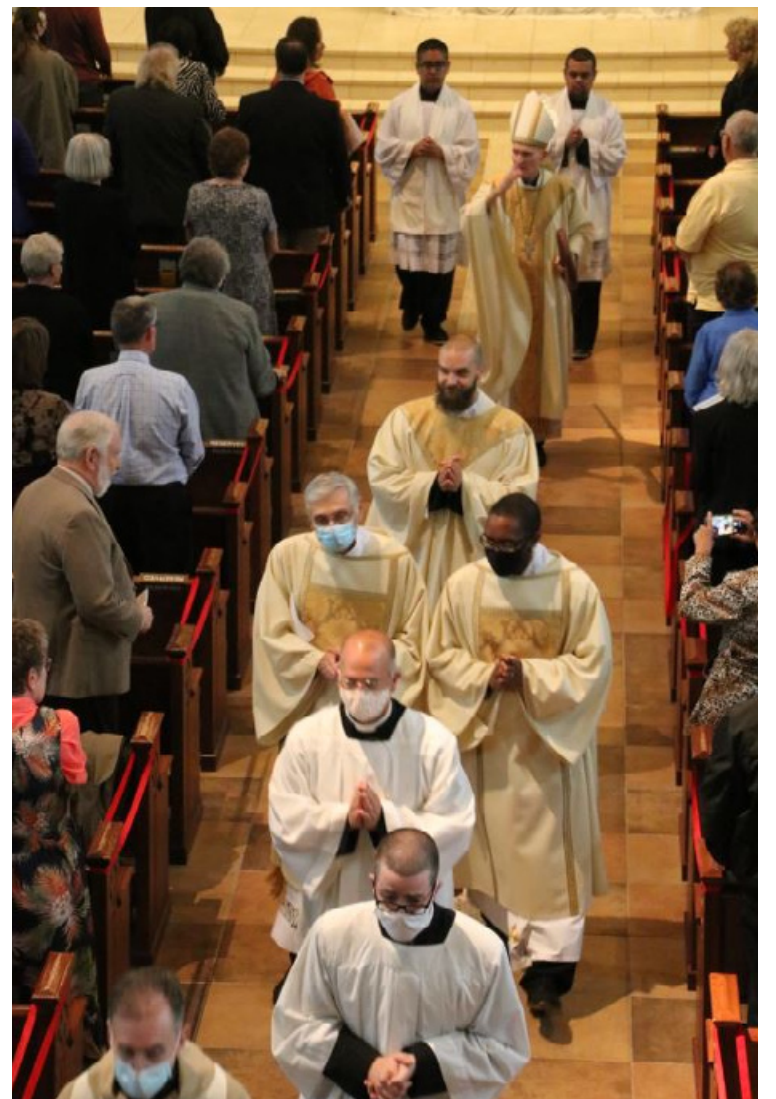
"Have no fear," he said to Father Szabo, "Christ has called you, and he will walk with you all the way."

Following the bishop's homily, Father Szabo stood before the bishop and promised to serve the people of God as a priest. This was followed by the Litany of Supplication as the people prayed for Father Szabo while he prostrated himself before the altar. As he then knelt before the altar, the bishop laid his hands upon Father Szabo's head, and prayed the prayer of ordination, consecrating him to the Lord's service. Priests present also came forward to lay their



John Sherwood Photo

Father Phillip Szabo is vested by Father Timothy Grassi.



John Sherwood Photo

At the end of the ordination Mass, newly ordained Father Phillip Szabo processes in front of Bishop Mark Brennan.

hands upon Father Szabo's head as well.

Father Szabo was then vested with the stole and chasuble by Father Timothy Grassi and Father Giles LeVasseur, two priests of the diocese who have played important roles in his vocation discernment.

Father Szabo then knelt before the bishop, who anointed

his palms with holy chrism. The bishop then presented to him the paten of bread and chalice of wine. The bishop, followed by the priests present, then gave him the kiss of peace.

Father Szabo will begin his first assignment with the faithful of Morgantown June 22 as parochial vicar of St. John University Parish.

Appreciation Dinner for Deacons to be Held in Morgantown

By Colleen Rowan

MORGANTOWN—An appreciation dinner in their honor will gather the deacons of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston with Bishop Mark Brennan June 10 in Morgantown.

To be held in honor of St. Ephrem, a fourth century deacon and a doctor of the church, the gathering will begin with Mass celebrated by the bishop at 5 p.m. in the St. Theresa Chapel at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown with the dinner to follow.

"It is a time that we share our life's journeys with one another in faith and fellowship," said Deacon Doug Breiding, director of Catholic Cemeteries for the diocese.

A total of 39 deacons serve in the diocese, providing outreach to the poor, ministering to individuals in prison, working with young people, visiting the sick and assisting priests in parishes. The diocese also has 10 retired deacons who serve when needed.

The deacons are expected to gather for ongoing formation three times a year and a yearly retreat, Deacon Breiding said, and an awareness came about that it would be nice to gather with the bishop.

"St. Ephrem, one of a few feast days of deacons in the liturgical calendar, was selected to gather the deacons and their wives for a Mass and dinner with the bishop,"

Deacon Breiding said.

Deacon John Yaquinta, deacon at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Stonewood, remembered that in formation deacons rarely got together.

"The St. Ephrem's Dinner allows them to gather together, with brother deacons and their wives, to share a meal with the bishop, and just enjoy each other's company," he said. "I am very thankful to Msgr. Cincinnati and St. Francis de Sales Parish for hosting the event."

For more information, contact Tina High, secretary to the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, by calling (304) 233-0880, ext. 271, or by e-mail to thigh@dwc.org.

Leadership Retreat Set for W.Va. Catholic Teens

Applications Open to Serve on Youth Board

By Joyce Bibey

WEST VIRGINIA—Final plans are being set for the 2021 Youth Board Leadership Retreat for Catholic teens across West Virginia slated for June 29-July 2 at John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston.

Jessica Petter, of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the diocese, said it is not too late to

register for the event. The retreat is open to all teens who have applied to serve on the Youth Board or are considering serving.

"The board is made up of teens called, transformed, and designated by God for this important mission," Petter said. "The focus of this retreat is our teen leaders. We want them to know that: they are uniquely called by the Lord to

lead others closer to Christ; they have been transformed and equipped for this mission by God; and they are designated to lead by the grace of your baptism and yes to the Lord."

There is no cost for this event!

Please register for this event by June 16 returning registration forms available at: <https://dwc.org/diocese/ministries/youth-and-young-adult-ministry/youth-ministry/teen-leadership-retreat/> to jpetter@dwc.org or send via U.S. mail to: Attn: JESSICA PETTER, Evangelization & Catechesis, P.O. BOX 230 Wheeling, WV 26003

The opportunity to serve for the 2021-2022 year on the Youth Board is empowering spiritually, Petter said.

"Rooted in prayer, both as a group and individual reflection, the work of this board is important to the diocese as these individuals

work to strengthen the spirit and voice of teens in the Church," Petter said.

This application is open to all incoming high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors "desiring to grow their relationship with God and are dedicated to leading others closer to Christ," Petter said, adding students should, "Consider where they believe God is calling them to serve."

To register to serve on the Youth Board complete the forms available at: <https://dwc.org/diocese/ministries/youth-and-young-adult-ministry/youth-ministry/dwc-youth-board-application-2021-2022/>

The DWC Youth Board will be comprised of Catholic youth representing each of the six vicariates in our Diocese (Wheeling, Clarksburg, Parkersburg, Charleston, Martinsburg, and Beckley regions).

Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointments:

Msgr. Paul A. Hudock has been granted a sabbatical beginning on May 31, 2021, and ending on August 18, 2021.

Father Carlos Melocoton, Jr., has been granted a sabbatical beginning on May 31, 2021, and ending on August 18, 2021.

Father Phillip R. Szabo is appointed parochial vicar of St. John University Parish in Morgantown with residence at the parish rectory, effective June 22, 2021.

Father John Rice is reappointed as chaplain of the West Virginia State Council of the Knights of Columbus for the Fraternal Years 2021-2023, effective immediately. This is in addition to his current assignment as pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Parkersburg and St. Monica Mission in Lubeck.

Father Paul D. Yuenger is retiring from active ministry, effective July 14, 2021.

In consultation with Father Edward Przygocki, provincial animator of the Society of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles, USA Province, **Father Harold F. Dunn, M.S.A.**, is appointed temporary administrator of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling and Our Lady of Seven Dolors Mission in Triadelphia, effective May 31, 2021, and ending on August 18, 2021.

In consultation with Very Rev. Joseph Thottankara, M.C.B.S., provincial superior of the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Zion Province in Kerala, India, **Father Tijo George, M.C.B.S.**, is appointed pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Huntington and St. Stephen Parish in Ona with residence at the parish rectory in Huntington, effective July 14, 2021.

In consultation with Bishop Remigiose Inchananiyil of Thamarasserry (Syro-Malabarese), **Father Thomas K. Kalapurackal** is appointed pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Charleston and Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Elkview with residence at the parish rectory in Charleston, effective July 14, 2021.

Law ...

Cont'd from Page 3

the law recognizes as deserving of the same protection extended to minors and those with "an imperfect use of reason."

The revised law also foresees penalties for "a person who neglects to report an offence, when required to do so by a canonical law."

Bishop Arrieta said that provision refers to the obligation to report serious crimes, such as sexual abuse, to church authorities, not civil authorities. If criminal reporting to the state is obligatory, the state will enforce that, he said.

The revised code also says, "Both a person who attempts to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the woman who attempts to receive the sacred order, incur a 'latae sententiae' (automatic) excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished by dismissal from the clerical state."

Given that Pope Francis in April 2020 formed a second "Study Commission on the Female Diaconate," Bishop Arrieta was asked why the revised canon did not specify priestly ordination, leaving open the possibility of ordaining women to the diaconate.

Canon law, he said, relies on the current state of the teaching of the church. "If we come to a different theological conclusion, we will modify the norm," he said, just as was done in January when Pope Francis ordered a change in the wording of canon law so that women, as well as men, could be formally installed as lectors and acolytes.

CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE *Spring 2021*

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Sacred Heart of Mary, Weirton – Wednesday, June 9 at 6:30 p.m.

St. Anthony, Fairmont – Friday, June 11 at 6:00 p.m.



Colleen Rowan Photo

The Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel at St. Ann Parish in Shinnston is pictured above.

Adoration Chapels Reopen

By Colleen Rowan

Adoration chapels in the central region of the state and the Eastern Panhandle have reopened to adorers.

The Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel at St. Ann Parish in Shinnston officially reopened May 23.

"Welcome back!" parish officials gleefully said to parishioners in the announcement of the reopening.

"This is the opening stages," said St. Ann parishioner John DeMarco, who is also a member of the chapel reopening committee. "We're limiting it to two days a week, and then hopefully build it back up to seven days a week."

The chapel is now opened on Sundays and Wednesdays from 6 a.m. to midnight. Covid-19 protocols will still apply at this time: no more than two adorers are allowed in the building at one time. "Unless they are from the same household, they can have

more than two," DeMarco said.

Parish officials stated, "Anything that is touched must be self-sanitized, and a mask is required if you are not vaccinated."

DeMarco added that for safety, any reading material adorers bring into the chapel must be taken with them or disposed of upon their departure.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the chapel was closed along with all churches in the diocese. When churches reopened last May, adoration was held in the church hall.

Father Chris Turner, associate pastor of St. Ann's and of St. James the Apostle Parish in Clarksburg, said St. Ann's is pleased to have reopened the adoration chapel on the limited basis.

"This endeavor is due to the incredible amount of hard work and sacrifice of so many of our dedicated parish family members," Father Turner said.

Now that the chapel has reopened, adoration will no longer be held in the church hall.

The Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel offers the Catholic faithful the opportunity to spend time with Christ. "It's quiet and peaceful," DeMarco said.

Adorers come from around the area, throughout West Virginia, and other states and they are invited to sign a visitor's book.

Located next to St. Ann Church, the chapel opened Oct. 24, 1999, as one of more than 1,000 perpetual adoration chapels in the U.S. The chapel was dedicated to Blessed Margaret of Castello, patroness of people with disabilities, the unwanted, and the unborn.

"In this world where there are many who are unwanted, especially the unborn, I thought that she would be a good patroness for the chapel," said the late Father Karl R. Wohinc in an

interview with The Catholic Spirit in 2003. Father Wohinc served as a beloved pastor of St. Ann's from 1984 to 2012. A plaque honoring Father Wohinc for making the chapel possible hangs inside.

For more information about the Blessed Margaret of Castello Eucharistic Adoration Chapel or to volunteer, contact DeMarco at (304) 669-2057, or Cindy Bee at (304) 709-2908.

Adoration also resumed in the Adoration Chapel at St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town May 31 with a blessing before the 7 a.m. Mass.

"Join us for the blessing and to see the changes made to the chapel since the lockdown in March 2020," parish officials posted on the parish's Facebook page before the opening. "It's a beautiful space thanks to the hard work of our maintenance and art staff."

Hours will be the same until further notice. The capacity of the chapel is limited to two persons or one-family.

The parish thanks all for their patience during this time.

"Our faithful adorers are thrilled to be back!" parish officials said.



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Catholic Distance University Offers Affordable Online Degree Programs to West Virginia Students

CHARLES TOWN—Catholic students seeking an affordable online degree that provides guaranteed transfer opportunities to APUS and Shepherd University need look no further than Catholic Distance University (CDU) in Charles Town. Since 1983, CDU has educated thousands of students worldwide who wish to deepen their faith while earning degrees that develop critical thinking skills that employers value highly. The first and only exclusively online Catholic university in the U.S., CDU has provided online education for more than 20 years. Bishop Mark Brennan serves on the Board of Trustees, and Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, serves as chancellor.

Tuition is affordable, and students receive personalized attention from the well-credentialed faculty. The AA degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Catholic Studies is ideal for recent high school graduates who wish to complete a degree online while saving money by living at home. The BA in Theology degree completion program is open to students who have earned at least 18 undergraduate general education credits; no previous theology credits are needed, and transfer credits are generously accepted. The program is ideal for students who began college but took a break and now wish to complete their degrees.

CDU maintains an agreement with the American Public University System (APUS) in Charles Town, which offers over 50 undergraduate degree programs completely online. Graduates of CDU's AA and BA degree programs can transfer all of their undergraduate credits to the BA degree program in APUS' School of Arts and Humanities. Fifteen credits earned in CDU graduate coursework are also transferrable to the APUS MA in Humanities Program.

Students also benefit from CDU's articulation agreement with Shepherd University, which offers 53 undergraduate majors. Gradu-

ates of CDU's AA degree program with a GPA of 2.8 or higher who have not matriculated at any other institution of higher education are guaranteed transfer admission to Shepherd University. A maximum of 72 credit hours from CDU are allowed toward fulfillment of the 120 credit hours required for baccalaureate completion.

Through the Graduate School of Theology, which is accredited by The Association of Theological Schools, CDU offers two graduate degree programs in Theology and Theology and Educational Ministry. Three graduate certificates are offered as well: one for Catholic educators, one in Sacred Scripture, and one in Church History. Credits earned in the certificate programs can later be applied to the degree programs, and a "Fast Track" MA program allows undergraduate students in good standing to earn an MA degree in less time and at less expense.

Many CDU graduate students are working adults juggling career, family, and volunteer responsibilities who seek the convenience of asynchronous online classes. About 90% of graduate program alumni serve the Church in some form of ministry as do 80% of undergraduate alumni.

Deacon Adam Walk, a recent MA in Theology graduate, says he enjoyed CDU for its sense of community: "I have never met a single one of my professors or fellow students in person, but I can say that I felt like I was part of a community that is both faithfully Catholic and eager to learn."

"This was encouraged by the professors—the second great aspect of CDU—who were passionate about their subject matter and committed to the learning experience of their students," he continues. "Assomeone who has studied most of his adult life in one form or another—face-to-face and online, undergraduate to doctoral level—I can say that I have never had a better collection of teachers than I had at CDU."

CDU's robust Catholic community is fostered through a vibrant online Student Life Center that is the online equivalent of a campus-based student union and provides access to resources that promote student success. In the SLC, students engage in conversation, discuss theological issues, pray together, and enjoy fellowship in the chapel. A faculty advisor and a student life director answer questions that arise and foster discussions.

CDU's mission is to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world. Using distance education, the university

educates teachers and learners worldwide in Catholic theology, the liberal arts, and faith development for the growth of faith, ecclesial service, and leadership for the New Evangelization. In keeping with its mission, CDU also offers noncredit continuing education courses and certificates.

Known for faithful transmission of the teachings of the Church, CDU is the only online university recommended by The Cardinal Newman Society, an organization dedicated to promoting faithful Catholic education.

To learn more, visit cdu.edu.

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Sister Rachel Blais is New Provincial Councilor for Sisters of Charity

GREENSBURG, Pa.—The United States Province of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill announces the election and installation of the 2021-2026 Provincial Leadership Team. Sister Mary Norbert Long, SC, was elected to a five-year term as Provincial Superior. Joining her on the Provincial Council are Sisters Donna Marie Leiden, Mary Jo Mutschler, and Rachel Blais. Members of the United States Province gathered on Sunday, May 23, 2021, at Caritas Christi, the congregation's motherhouse, for a special Liturgy that included the Rite of Installation. The Most Reverend Larry J. Kulick, JCL, Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg, was the presider and homilist at the Installation Mass.

President/Provincial Superior Sister Mary Norbert previously served two consecutive terms as a First Councilor/Treasurer for the United States Province. In that capacity, she was responsible for the legal and organizational matters concerning stewardship of resources and sponsored ministries of the province. She has 58 years of experience in Catholic education with 43 years of service as an administrator that include six years served as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Tucson. As the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Sister Mary Norbert was a member of the Arizona Catholic Conference. Sister Mary Norbert served on and led numerous committees, boards, and advisory councils of her religious community, the Ari-



Sister Rachel Blais, SC

zona Catholic school system, and several civic organizations. Along with Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, Sister Mary Norbert was a 2008 Girl Scout World Award honoree. She was presented with the World of Learning Award for her tireless work with the youth of the Saint Mary-Basha Catholic School community. In 2012, the Diocese of Phoenix recognized Sister Mary Norbert for "making a profound difference in Catholic education" with the Guardian of Hope Award.

Vice President/ Provincial Councilor Sister Donna Marie Leiden currently serves as the administrator of Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the congregation. Throughout her religious life, Sister Donna Marie has enthusiastically embraced the challenge to continue the mission of Catholic education. Her extensive experience includes service in the roles of teacher, principal, vice principal, and guidance counselor in the

Greensburg, and Pittsburgh Dioceses from 1963 to 1989. Sister Donna Marie was elected to serve as General Councilor of the congregation from 1989-1997. She was principal at Bishop McCort High School from 1997 to 2006. Her administrative talents were recognized in 2006 when Sister Donna Marie was named President of Institutional Advancement for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and again in 2007, when she was appointed as Director of Education for the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese, a position she held until 2018. Sister Donna Marie's dedication to serving the Church of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese was acknowledged in 2004 with the Prince Gallitzin Cross Award, presented to individuals who embodied the "hardy, faith-filled spirit of the Prince-Priest of the Alleghenies."

From 2014 to 2019, Vice President/Provincial Councilor Sister Mary Jo Mutschler served on the General Council of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, which oversees both the United States and Korean Provinces. A noted educator, Sister Mary Jo was the assistant superintendent of elementary schools for the Diocese of Pittsburgh from 1997-2014. Other educational roles include teacher, middle school principal, mathematics curriculum director, elementary school principal, and educational consultant for the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Greensburg. She was the director of the Greco Institute, Shreveport, La., and an

adjunct professor at Fordham and Loyola Universities. From 1989-1997, she served the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill as Councilor for Mission and Ministry. Sister Mary Jo's dedication to serving the Church was recognized in 2009 with the Manifesting the Kingdom Award.

Since 2001, Vice President/Provincial Councilor Sister Rachel Blais has extended various ministries of compassion in West Virginia. Currently she serves as the Director of Saint Ursula Food Pantry and Outreach in Pursglove. From 2006 to 2019 Sister Rachel was the coordinator of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and visited parish shut-ins at St. Mary Church in Morgantown. She was employed at West Virginia University as a field education coordinator for social work students and as a campus minister at St. John University Parish, the Catholic parish of the university. Sister Rachel volunteered at the Federal Corrections Institution in Morgantown and served as a board member for Empty Bowls of Monongalia County, a non-profit organization committed to alleviat-

ing hunger. Prior to her ministry in West Virginia, she served students in the Dioceses of Phoenix and Tucson in Arizona and the Dioceses of Greensburg and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania in roles that included religion teacher, campus minister, youth minister, and director of religious education.

The newly elected Provincial Council is responsible for the administration and leadership of the United States Province, which numbers 125 sisters in active or retired ministry. Another 196 sisters serve in the Korean Province.

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill is an international apostolic congregation of women religious who are present in three countries, five United States dioceses and one United States archdiocese. Sisters of Charity have traditionally ministered in the areas of education, health care, pastoral care and social services. For additional information about the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and their ministries, visit www.scsch.org and www.sistersofcharityofsetonhillgeneralate.org.

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A Special Six-Part Series on the Diocesan Pastoral Council

Archer, Velloso, DeChristopher to Serve Faithful of Clarksburg Vicariate on Diocesan Council

By Joyce Bibey

CLARKSBURG—The Clarksburg representatives on the reestablished Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) look forward to assisting Bishop Mark E. Brennan as a voice for their region.

Jim Archer, of Fairmont; Charlotte Velloso, of Morgantown; and Perri DeChristopher, of Star City, not only hope to strengthen the Catholic community in West Virginia in their roles on the DPC, but also hope their leading by example encourages others to get involved in their parishes and communities.

Archer has been a member of All Saints Parish in Bridgeport since he moved to West Virginia in 1991 from Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Although a cradle Catholic, when I was 21, I had a life transforming experience of the love of the Father poured into my heart by the Holy Spirit which caused me to surrender my life to Jesus and things have never been the same since," Archer said. "As I started to attend mid-week prayer meetings, Mass became a living sacrament and the Eucharist the foundation of an intimacy with Jesus."

He says his spirit is "formed by the heart of God to share His heart!"

Over the last few decades, Archer has served his parish as a prayer group leader, parish council member, adult faith formation team member, and lector. On a wider stage he has been the director of The Ark and The Dove Retreat Center in Gibsonia, Pa.; and a member on the National Service Committee (NCS) for Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He is currently the development manager for the NCS and its council; and board of directors member for the Gibsonia center.

He said he is honored to be serving on the Diocesan Pastoral Council and chairing the Pastoral Concerns Committee for the next year.

"We have been hard at work to begin the process of listening to parishioners and making recommendations to the bishop and his

staff," he said. "In a time of global crisis, the Church is being renewed and called forth to renew each other and the world. The DPC is a small part of that but none the less an essential one!"

Charlotte Velloso is a parishioner at St John's University Parish in Morgantown. She was raised Episcopalian, but her family converted to Catholicism when she was 12.

"I committed myself personally to the faith while I was an undergraduate in college," she said. She is very active at the Newman Center at WVU, as she is a founding member of a chapter of the Thomistic Institute at WVU and helps lead and organized the young women's ministry. Currently she is working on starting a Catholic young professionals group in Morgantown. Being involved and strengthening the Catholic community is "vital" to Velloso.

Her Catholic identity is an integral part of who she is and how she chooses to view the world. She values being not only part of the Church of the future, but also the Church of today.

"It can be difficult to live out one's faith in our secular culture, so through God's grace, I would like to help build a vibrant, flourishing, and authentic Catholic community where Christ has planted me," she said.

"I believe that lay voices are valuable to our Catholic hierarchy and that lay people have an important perspective," she said. "Often, lay people who are involved in various parish councils or diocesan positions are middle-aged or older. Young people have a lot to share and contribute, and I don't believe they have been heard. I hope to help fill this gap by bringing the concerns of college students to the council, to ensure that lay Catholics of all ages and stages of life are able to build up our beautiful Catholic diocese."

Velloso considers being Catholic - part of the Church that God Himself created is the highest honor.

"Being Catholic means



Jim Archer



Charlotte Velloso



Perri DeChristopher

that I can look to the saints, Church tradition, and Church teaching to guide me," she said. "It means that I am invited to partake in the most precious Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ at Mass, as He himself instructed us to do so the night before His crucifixion. It means that I can regularly participate in the sacrament of confession in order to grow in a more intimate relationship with Our Lord and to shed habits of vice. It means to belong to a Catholic tradition and heritage that is rich, ancient, and vast.

"Being Catholic means that I don't have to figure out how to correctly interpret every passage of the Bible or every theological issue, and instead I can rely on the tradition and teachings of the Church, discussed, contemplated, and established by brilliant minds throughout the ages.

"Being Catholic means realizing that God, in His goodness, gave humanity a Church that — though filled with sinful humans who err — is complete, coherent, and consistent in Her teaching of theology and morality. Being Catholic means that I am able to embrace my vocation — to be a wife and a mother —

and that I understand that my priority is to God, then to my husband, and then to my future children," and she concluded. "Being Catholic has transformed my vision of the world, how I interact with others, and my ultimate purpose."

Velloso will serve on the DPC for two years and sit on the Lay Life and Ministry Committee.

The third Clarksburg Vicariate member on the DPC is Perri DeChristopher. She will serve for three years on the council and its Justice and Peace Committee. She sees it as a way to give back to the parish family she cherishes.

DeChristopher is proud of the fact that she has been a member of St. Mary's in Star City her entire life. She and her husband Chuck Porter are raising their children, Sydney and Chase, in the parish. Her love for her parish family is evident in her reason to serve on the DPC.

She said her parents and the longtime members of St. Mary's are great Catholic community role models. Prior to COVID restrictions, her parents continued to be active "in all things of 'social service' to the church (funeral dinners, special

events, kitchen fundraisers).

"This was a great example for our family," she said, adding that her own family enjoys serving Mass as altar servers and ushers, as well as helping with religious education, whenever needed.

"Not only is service a wonderful way to help with the day-to-day activities of our church, but it is also a great way to meet and build friendships with other individuals and families within our church," she said.

"I was encouraged to pursue participation in the Diocesan Pastoral Council by my family and friends, and particularly my mother," DeChristopher said. "She and other senior members of our local church had become disappointed and saddened with the most recent alarming activities discovered in our Diocese. Seeing parishioners who dedicated their entire lives to supporting our church, crestfallen at the revelations disclosed, motivated me to seek any position where I can encourage transparency and laity involvement in all aspects of our church and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. I am elated at the opportunity I have been provided."

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In the Stillness of Prayerful Meditation Weirton Woman Finds Courage to Share Her Gifts

By Joyce Bibey

Writing has always been a fond pastime for Cathy Burns Horstman, but it wasn't until recently she knew it would be a way to give life to her faith.

She grew up in a family that cherished three things – faith, family, and education.

Horstman has been a member of St. Paul Parish in Weirton since she was six years old. Her father Bob Burns worked for Hancock County Schools and her mother Bette Davis Burns taught preschool and eventually became the principal at St. Paul School. For her and her seven siblings, they understood to be successful in life was to embrace being a lifelong learner and keep balanced by leaning on the greatest teacher — Jesus Christ.

She and her husband Jim have raised their three sons,



Courtesy Photo

Pictured is the cover of Cathy Burns Horstman's book, "God's Poetic Moments Within."

Jacob, Justin, and Jonathan, with the same mindset.

Two years ago, Horstman remembers sitting alone and praying. It was at this moment when she felt moved to go out of her comfort zone to help others. As a registered nurse in Pittsburgh, she made a career of helping others, but this feeling was pressing her to do more than that.

"I clearly recall reflecting and asking God if I should be doing more and what would that be," she said. "Then the thoughts came to me that God gives everyone gifts and talents, some are blessed with a voice that when they sing everyone claps for them, and some have a voice through their writing. I rose my head and my eyes went right to the spot where I kept my folder of all my writings."

She brought the folder out and went through it.

"I've been writing as long as I can remember," she said. "I would write poems and short stories for people to lift their spirits or inspire them when life threw things at them that they didn't plan."

She knew it was time to share her talents.

"I never thought of my writing as a gift I should share with a wider audience," she said. "What I write is personal or inspired by an individual or circumstance. But as I sat there and sorted through each one in my folder, I realized what I wrote about are things so many others experience — loss, depression, new beginnings, relationships, parenting, (etc.)"

She admits coming to a quick halt in her thoughts and became very apprehensive about the idea.

"Sharing such personal writings was intimidating for

me," she said. "Not only was I putting my writing out there for critics to possibly make fun of, but I was also being vulnerable by uncovering my feelings and beliefs."

However, the voice inside her kept nudging her to keep going. Maybe it was the moment she flipped to one poem in particular, "My Hand." Right there on the page, in her own words she specifically wrote about the responsibility to use our hands to serve others like God.

I look at my hand and what do I see?

An instrument God has given me.

I look at my hand and what do I know?

My heart will decide which way it will go....

And so it began, Horstman pulled five poems out and sent them to Christian Faith Publishing for them to consider as the basis of a short inspirational book. With the publishing house's endorsement, she spent the last two years weaving together her works into her book "God's Poetic Moments Within."

Once her book was in print, she received a note of affirmation as if a sign. The note was completely out of the blue and from someone who mentored her writing talent, she said.

"When I opened it and read his sentiment, I knew I made the right decision to listen to that prayerful prompting," she said. The note was from her eighth-grade journalism teacher Dwight McUmar.

"Even when you think God's not with you, He is," she said. "He cares. My words are reflective of life and reminds people of the hope God gives us."



Courtesy Photo

Cathy Burns Horstman

As she contemplated the idea of the book the interpretation of Zechariah 4:10 came to mind "From small beginnings come great things."

She knew she had to rely on her faith to make this decision just as she had throughout her life.

"As an adult I find great hope in Psalm 91," she said. It is a prayer of someone who puts their trust in God no matter what the circumstance."

Her hopes for the book are what she felt at that moment of medication two years ago "to give hope. I know this is what God wants me to do. It is my mustard seed." By sharing it is putting it in rich soil

and allowing it to grow in the glory of God, she said.

Through her story Horstman hopes other Catholics will find the courage to share their gifts to inspire others and, moreover, make it a habit to sit in silence, praying and letting God speak to them, "because He will. You just have to listen."

"God wants us to have a personal relationship with him," she said. "You can go to church every Sunday and read the bible from cover to cover, but it is not life changing until you realize that He is there waiting on you to have the personal relationship whether you are in eighth grade or a mature adult."

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

Madonna Student Organizes Effort to Aid Texas Families Struggling after Winter Storms

By Colleen Rowan

WEIRTON—After seeing news reports of the suffering that people in Texas had endured this winter with extreme cold and power outages, a student from Weirton's Madonna High School wanted to help.

Anna Backel, a junior at the school, organized a clothing drive in March for Houston Children's Charity.

"I just felt bad seeing the kids like that," she said in an interview with WTOV News. "I just thought we needed to do something."

Backel learned about the organization through Maria Canella, an English and language arts teacher at Madonna whose son lives in Houston. Backel then enlisted the help of fellow Madonna student and friend Gabrielle Orecchio, and got to work right away.

"Anna came to me and she asked me if I want to help, and there was no way I could've said no," Orecchio told News 9.

Canella helped organize the effort, and Backel created a flyer to inform her fellow students and the community about the need in Houston.

"Due to unusually cold temperatures that the state of Texas experienced this winter, the Houston Children's Charity is in desperate need of certain items to be able to help the children of the area," the flyer stated. The flyer was distributed at school, and classes were asked to bring in certain items. The freshman brought in underwear and socks, sophomores collected gym shorts, juniors collected T-shirts, and seniors donated throw blankets.

By the end of the clothing drive, more than 70 boxes of the needed items had been collected for the charity.

A representative of the charity sent a thank you video to Canella, Backel, and the school



Anna Backel

in April: "We just wanted to thank you all so much for thinking of us, all the way in West Virginia. We are so appreciative. So many of our kids' families right here in our area are still experiencing the effects of the winter storm we had two months ago, so we know they are going to go into good hands and our kids are going to be so happy to receive them."

The representative thanked everyone for their support and said: "Thank you Mrs. Canella for organizing this, and Anna you're amazing and your leadership skills are out of this world!"



Courtesy Photo
Madonna High School students pack boxes for Houston Children's Charity.



Creating a More Accessible Space

By Trina Bartlett, CCWVa Eastern Regional Director

Imagine you have an in-person job interview and need clean clothes to wear, but you cannot afford to go to the laundromat. Perhaps you have four school-age children and your water has been shut off. Maybe you are experiencing homelessness and do not have a place to take a shower.

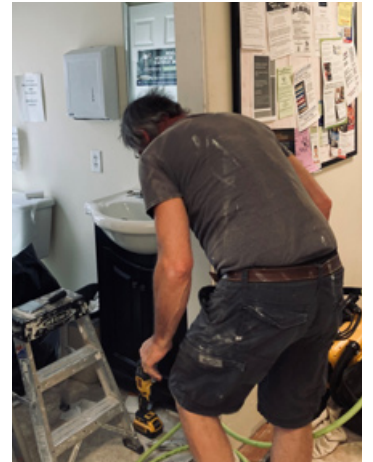
For many of our neighbors, these are real situations. Fortunately, our staff in the Martinsburg office has been able to address them by offering free shower and laundry services. Unfortunately, the washer and dryer unit, as well as the shower, have been on the second floor, which is accessible only by a narrow stairway. Additionally, the shower stall did not accommodate people with physical disabilities.

In the fall of 2020, Catholic Charities West Virginia received a \$29,835 Women Investing in Shepherd (WISH) grant from the Shepherd University Foundation to modify the bathroom facilities on the first floor to add a handicap accessible shower and to accommodate the washer and dryer unit. Remaining grant funds will be used to purchase laundry detergent, soap, and shampoo, and to pay monthly water bills.

Many individuals seeking assistance from Catholic Charities and other social service agencies have mobility issues, with many using wheelchairs, walkers and canes. Additionally, some individuals are arthritic or have oxygen tanks. By moving these services to the first floor and ensuring the facilities are accessible to people with disabilities, services will be available to more people.

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

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God's love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.



Courtesy Photo
A contractor widens a bathroom doorway to be accessible for all clients.

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· The candidate will have a minimum of five years of successful educational experience with preference for administrative experience.

A resume with three references may be emailed with all attachments in PDF to Rev. Father Douglas A. Ondeck at dondeck@dwc.org or mailed to 210 Center Ave., Weston, WV June 18, 2021.

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Family Embarks on Pilgrimage to Churches Consecrated to Diocese's Patron Saint

By Colleen Rowan

For the Year of St. Joseph, the Mannings of Wheeling are doing something very special as a family. Jacob Manning, his wife Adrienne, and their three children 12-year-old Ellie, 10-year-old Sarah, and 3-year-old Declan are visiting churches in the diocese named for St. Joseph. On their family pilgrimage, they will attend Masses and discover each church's beauty and uniqueness in this year dedicated to the patron of the universal church and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

"Our goal is to visit each of the churches in our diocese consecrated to St. Joseph," said Jacob, who is one of the 22 men in the diocese currently in formation for the permanent diaconate. He and his family are members of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. Their pilgrimage was inspired by Bishop Mark Brennan who, at a pastoral council meeting at the cathedral, mentioned that he hoped there would be pilgrims visiting the cathedral during this year as well as the other churches around the state.

"On my way home I thought this would be a great way to travel around the state and do something special this year," Adrienne said. "Jacob and the kids loved the idea."

Making these pilgrimages as a family would not only be a prayerful opportunity for them, but would also be a memorable time together.

"Obviously, we attend Mass together weekly, so we always enjoy Mass as a family," Jacob said. "Pope Francis, in declaring this the Year of St. Joseph, emphasized among other things St. Joseph's role in the Holy Family. We thought a good way to celebrate that would be to spend additional time as a family going to Mass together, seeing parts of the state we haven't seen, and seeing how parishes around the state celebrate St. Joseph."

There are eight churches in West Virginia named for St. Joseph. The Mannings began their pilgrimage attending Mass together on the So-



Courtesy Photo
Jacob Manning, his wife Adrienne, and their children 12-year-old Ellie, 10-year-old Sarah, and 3-year-old Declan are pictured at St. Joseph Church in Proctor.

lemnity of St. Joseph at their home parish, the cathedral. Bishop Brennan celebrated the March 19 Mass officially opening this special year for the diocese.

It was then on to the Mannings' second visit in their pilgrimage—the historic St. Joseph Church in Proctor, which is the oldest church in the diocese consecrated to the saint. Msgr. Kevin M. Quirk, pastor, welcomed them to a Sunday morning Mass in April.

"Going to Proctor made for an early morning," Jacob said, "but all of us were excited to go not only to visit the church but also to see Msgr. Quirk. We did contact him in advance to see if he could point out his favorite aspects of the church, and he obliged."

With nice weather that day, Jacob said that he and his family took a walk around the grounds after Mass. Jacob and Adrienne's two older children are writing

about their pilgrimage in journals for this special year, Jacob said. In their writings about the visit to Proctor, the girls shared their thoughts about the Mass and their impressions of the church. Sarah liked that the parish has maintained the stone stations of the cross through the cemetery, and she thought the grounds were very pretty. Ellie thought it was nice to see a church that was different than the cathedral. She also thought it was interesting to see the older parts of the cemetery.

"St. Joseph in Proctor is a beautiful example of an older church in the diocese," Jacob said. "We were welcomed as visitors by several people after Mass, and we felt very welcome."

As for the rest of their visits around the diocese, the Mannings do not have a set plan. Some of the churches are a bit of a drive from Wheeling, Jacob said, and they will have to plan for that. There are six more churches in the diocese consecrated to St. Joseph that the Mannings have not yet visited. They are: St. Joseph the Worker in Weirton, St. Joseph in Huntington, and the Chapels of St. Joseph in Mason, Pennsboro, and Whitesville.

The Mannings' visits also will give them the chance to see more priests they know, and they are looking forward to that as well.

"Our longest drive will probably be Martinsburg," Jacob said, "but we are excited to see Father Tom Gallagher."

During the pandemic, Jacob said the family watched livestreamed Masses from a few of these churches, "and we are excited to see them in person."

The Mannings also are considering visits to a few other churches outside of West Virginia, such as St. Joseph Cathedral in Columbus, Ohio. They are also considering a visit this year to the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Maryland, which is commemorating the 100th anniversary of her death, "and since our daughter's name is Elizabeth," Jacob said, "we may make a pilgrimage there."

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Declaración del obispo Brennan sobre el levantamiento de la suspensión de la obligación de asistir a las misas dominicales y festivas

2 de junio de 2021

Mis hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Si bien Dios merece nuestra adoración en todo momento, como nuestro Creador y Redentor, Él mismo ha reservado ciertos días para nuestra adoración común. Él ordenó a los hebreos que lo honraran un día a la semana: Acuérdate de santificar el día de reposo [Éxodo 20: 8]. Para ellos, ese era el sábado, el último día de la semana, y ese día tenían prohibido trabajar.

Para nosotros los cristianos, el domingo, el primer día de la semana, es nuestro día santo semanal, porque es el día en que Jesús resucitó de entre los muertos. Como los hebreos, debemos evitar el trabajo innecesario y las compras los domingos (las condiciones modernas pueden hacer que esto sea casi imposible) pero, siguiendo la práctica de los primeros cristianos, nuestra forma principal de adorar a Dios el domingo es reunirnos para celebrar la misa.

Después de cambiar el pan en su sagrado Cuerpo y el vino en su sagrada Sangre, Jesús dijo: Hagan esto en memoria mía [Lucas 22:19]. Respetamos los deseos del Señor cuando nos reunimos para escuchar su Palabra proclamada y ofrecer a nuestro Padre, junto con el sacerdote, el Salvador que se ha hecho presente en nuestro altar y que se ofrece a nosotros como alimento en la Sagrada Comunión.

Fue una decisión difícil cerrar nuestras iglesias a misas públicas durante dos meses el año pasado. Se hizo para la protección de todos hasta que pudiéramos descubrir cómo celebrar la Misa de manera segura. Levanté la obligación de ir a misa los domingos y los días santos de precepto para que los católicos de conciencia tierna no pensarán que estaban pecando al no ir a misa.

Ahora, sin embargo, con la pandemia que parece remitir (aunque no ha terminado), estoy eliminando la suspensión de la obligación de asistir a la misa dominical y de los días santos. ¿Qué significa esto en la práctica?

El precepto de participar en la Misa dominical o en los días santos es serio. Significa que las personas sanas con capacidad para ir a Misa deben hacerlo. Si bien el precepto es serio, la Iglesia siempre ha sido suave en su aplicación. Entre muchas situaciones que podrían impedirle ir a misa, puede estar cuidando a una persona enferma o tener miedo de traer a casa una infección de la misa; es posible que viaje una larga distancia el domingo (quizás 100 millas); es posible que deba trabajar los domingos y ninguna misa local se ajuste a su horario. En estas y otras situaciones similares, no puede participar en la misa. Pero sentado en su casa viendo una transmisión en vivo o televisada

1 Misa, cuando está sano y puede ir fácilmente a Misa, no es suficiente para cumplir con la obligación de la Misa dominical. Aquellos que igno-

ran o se burlan de esta obligación ciertamente no están respetando a Dios ni honrando al Señor Jesús.

Ir a misa en persona es simplemente mejor. Deberíamos estar con nuestros compañeros católicos para escuchar la proclamación de la Palabra de Dios. Solo podemos recibir a Jesucristo en la Eucaristía estando en Misa. El Señor mismo dijo: Donde dos o tres están reunidos en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos [Mateo 18:20]. No somos individuos aislados, sino miembros de un pueblo y eso se vuelve más real para nosotros cuando estamos juntos.

Insto, entonces, a todos nuestros católicos que no tienen verdaderas excusas para no ir a misa a que se unan a nosotros una vez más en nuestras parroquias para las misas dominicales y de los días santos. Hazlo para honrar al Dios que te hizo y al Redentor que sufrió y murió por ti. Hágalo por su propio beneficio y el de sus compañeros feligreses. Te hemos echado de menos y deseamos mucho verte de nuevo con nosotros. Refresca nuestros corazones y el tuyo regresando a la Misa.

¡Que Dios te bendiga abundantemente a ti y a tus seres queridos!

Sinceramente en Cristo,

Mark E. Brennan

+ Mark E. Brennan
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

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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 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.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números variarán 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 eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la

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

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

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

Catholic Leaders: Biden Budget aims to Help Vulnerable but Excludes Unborn

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee called on Congress May 28 to preserve the Hyde Amendment in any federal budget proposal and "to work toward a budget that truly builds up the common good of all." The head of the Catholic Health Association of the United States likewise called on Congress to support "the long-standing prohibition of federal funding for abortion and maintain the Hyde Amendment." Earlier the same day, President Joe Biden unveiled his proposed budget of \$6 trillion for fiscal year 2022 that would include spending to improve and modernize the nation's infrastructure, provide free pre-K and community college, and increase domestic programs. His plan does not include the Hyde Amendment, which has been included in spending bills since 1976 to prohibit federal tax dollars from directly funding abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered. In their respective statements, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, CHA's president and CEO, said the Biden proposal has a number of provisions to help vulnerable Americans but is remiss in leaving out Hyde, which protects the most vulnerable — the unborn.

At Migration Summit, Bishops Commit to Work Toward 'Church without Borders'

By Catholic News Service

MUNDELEIN, ILL. (CNS) — After hearing the story of a Salvadoran immigrant and her plight to leave her home country, bishops from the U.S., Central America and Mexico meeting in Mundelein June 2 turned to a camera facing a woman identified as Maria Antonia. Even though she was thousands of miles away, in Irving, Texas, they gave her a blessing via Zoom. "Our wish is that your family find stability and you'll find peace and continue to experiment God's consolation," said Bishop Oswaldo Escobar Aguilar of her home country. The bishop of the Diocese of Chalatenango, El Salvador, led a dozen other brother bishops in the blessing as they saw through her story the reality of the complexities they discussed June 1 and 2: violence, displacement, looking for safety and a chance to start again. On the final day of a historic meeting of bishops and international Catholic organizations gathered at Mundelein Seminary outside of Chicago, they discussed the challenges the church faces even while trying to get Catholics to understand church teaching on migrants such as Maria Antonia. "We need to evangelize our own, we really do," said Don Kerwin, executive director of the Center for Migration Studies in New York.

Scholar Discounts New Claim St. Peter's Remains May be in Forgotten Tomb

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The remains of St. Peter may have been and possibly still could be buried in catacombs under the Mausoleum of St. Helena after being moved from the Vatican hillside during anti-Christian persecutions in the third century, according to a paper published recently by three Italian researchers. Labeling their conclusions as "conjecture," the researchers suggested archaeologists could "validate" their findings with "excavation campaigns"; however, a leading expert in Christian archaeology and a member of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology told Vatican News that the researchers' hypothesis was "unacceptable." Emperor Constantine would never have gone through so much logistical trouble building St. Peter's Basilica in the early fourth century "if it had not been contingent upon the presence of the venerated remains" below, where the saint's tomb had been venerated since early Christian times, Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai told Vatican News May 30. "It is clear," he said, "that Peter's remains were found in the place of the original burial site on the Vatican hill when the formidable Constantinian basilica was built, the biggest basilica ever established in the city," he said, adding that if later the remains had been moved "ad catacumbas," then that refers to a cemetery on the Appian Way, later called, the catacombs of St. Sebastian. Fiocchi Nicolai's comments were a response to a paper titled, "The Search of St. Peter's Memory ad catacumbas in the Cemeterial Area ad Duos Lauros in Rome," published in early March in *Heritage*, a journal of cultural and natural heritage science.

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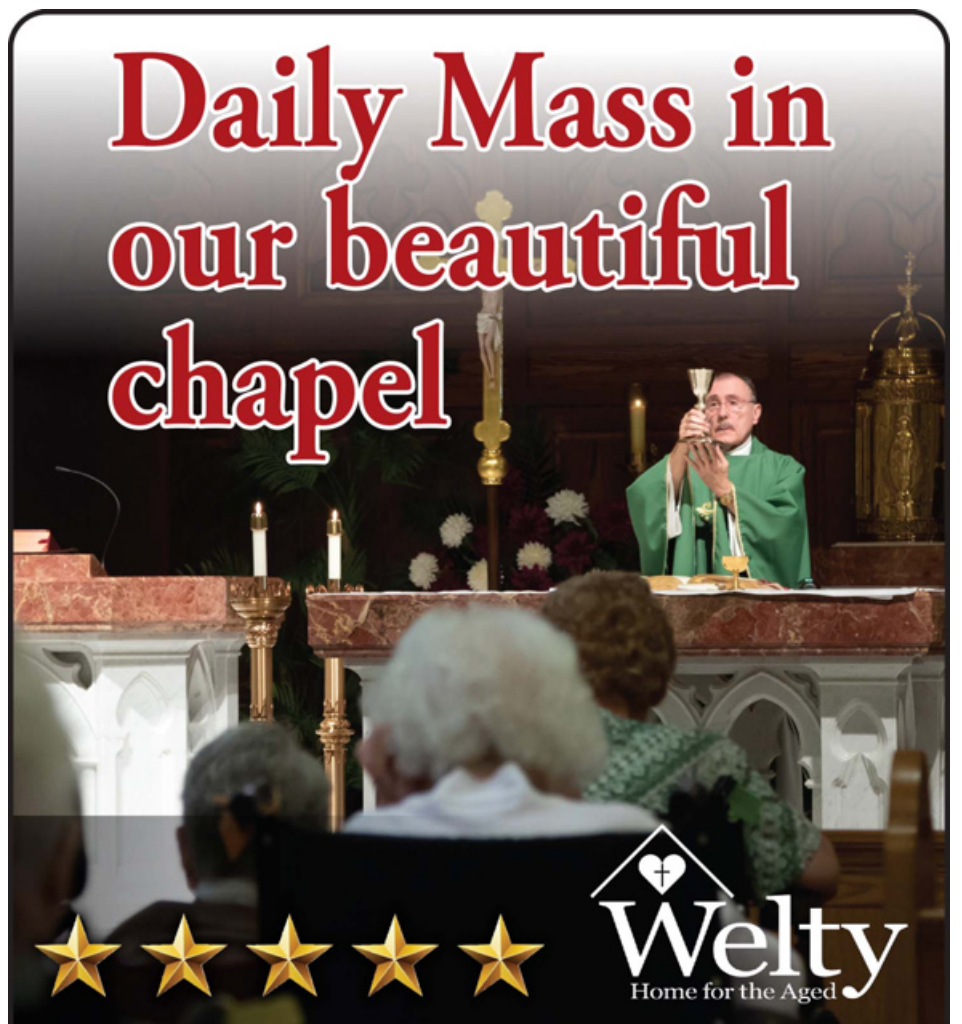
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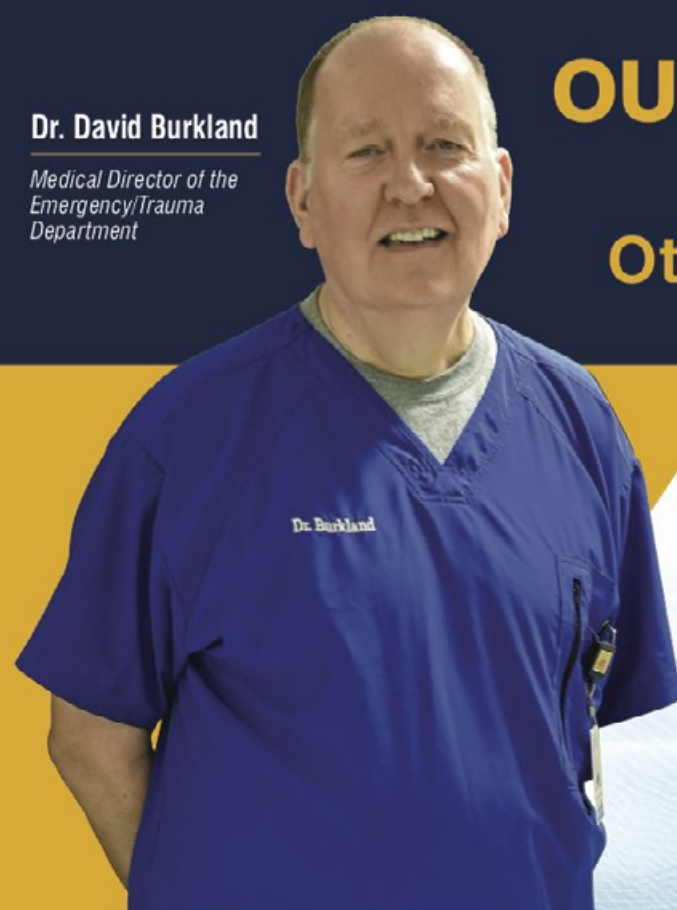
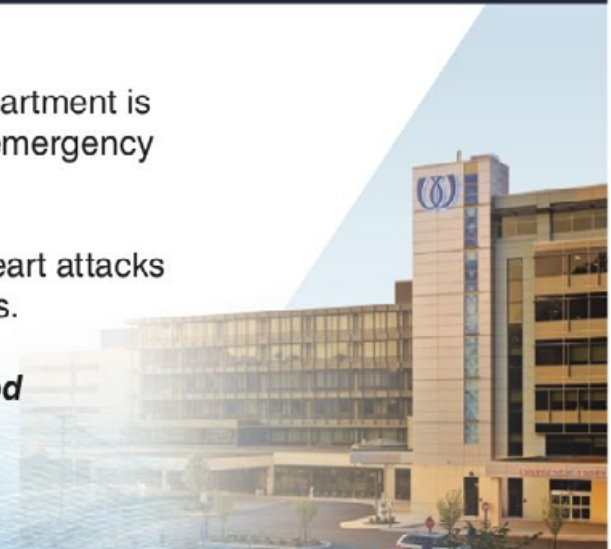
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