

THE CATHOLIC  
*Spirit*

## ‘Preach and Teach the Truth of the Catholic Faith,’ Bishop Says to Newly Ordained Father Soplinski



Colleen Rowan Photo

Newly ordained Father John Soplinski receives applause and congratulations from the faithful as he processes from the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling at the end of his ordination to the priesthood May 31.

### By Colleen Rowan

It was in a standing room only Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling—filled with priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, and the Catholic faithful—that Bishop Mark Brennan ordained Father John Soplinski to the priesthood May 31. This, the first presbyteral ordination in West Virginia in three years, was indeed joyful for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, but even more so for two Wheeling parish communities as the bishop announced he was assigning Father Soplinski as vice rector of the ca-

thedral and parochial vicar of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling. His announcement was met with joyful applause.

Noting that the ordination was being held on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bishop Brennan said that same charity and concern for others in our Blessed Mother when she visited Elizabeth is seen in Father Soplinski. “And we will see that in him as a priest as well, leading others to the Lord and being a source of strength, comfort, and encouragement for them,” he added.

The Rite of Ordination began with the Election of the Candidate.

“Relying on the help of the Lord God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose this our brother for the Order of the Priesthood,” Bishop Brennan said.

In his homily, he spoke of the three main dimensions of priestly ministry—preaching and teaching the word of God; sanctifying parishioners by offering the sacraments of God’s grace; and offering them the guidance

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# Abuse Allegations Down, but Safe Environment 'Fatigue' a Risk, Warns Annual Bishops' Report

By **Gina Christian, OSV News**

**(OSV News)** — The U.S. Catholic bishops' latest annual report on child and youth protection shows abuse allegations are down, while safe environment protocols have taken root in the church — but guarding against complacency about abuse prevention is critical, as is providing ongoing support for survivors.

On May 28, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection released the "2023 Annual Report — Findings and Recommendations on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

The 2023 report is the twenty-first since the charter was established by the U.S. Catholic bishops in 2002 as a number of clerical abuse scandals emerged. Commonly called the Dallas Charter, the document lays out a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy, and includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of abuse.

Data for the report came from audits conducted by StoneBridge Business Partners, a Rochester, New York-based consulting firm that provides forensic and compliance services to a

range of organizations. In addition, the report includes a 2023 survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate on allegations and costs related to the abuse of minors.

For the July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, period, CARA's report found a more than 51% drop in historical allegations from those reported in the same period last year, from 2,704 in 2022 to 1,308 in 2023. The decrease was partly due to the resolution of allegations received as a result of lawsuits, said the report.

Another milestone was the full participation of all 196 dioceses and eparchies in the Charter audit, a 100% response rate that was unprecedented. Of those, 28 were visited on-site by StoneBridge, with another 17 audited remotely by the firm and 131 other dioceses and eparchies submitting data for the report.

At the same time, "the number of new allegations from minors remained similar to the prior year, at 17," wrote Suzanne Healy, chairwoman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Review Board, a lay-led group that advises the bishops on preventing sexual abuse of minors, in a Feb. 21 letter to USCCB president Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio that was included in the report.

Healy — a licensed marriage and family therapist who served as the victim assistance coordinator for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles from 2007 to 2016 — also cautioned against "charter fatigue or complacency" in addressing sexual abuse in the church.

"Even as we move forward with progress, we must acknowledge that without ongoing diligence and commitment, there is the possibility that failures can happen and we must be ready to act if they do. ... We must remain vigilant," wrote Healy. "One new allegation is one too many."

She wrote that 70% of the nation's dioceses and eparchies "conduct their own parish audits on the implementation of safe environment programs and policies," with the data showing "a correlation between parish audits and charter compliance."

Yet Healy warned, "Without monitoring implementation at the parish level, the risk of abuse increases." She noted the National Review Board supported the use of high reliability organization principles — used to maximize safety in complex organizations where error stands to inflict great harm — to examine the 17


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**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org). **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. 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. Additional methods of reporting are available at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. 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](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

## 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. 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, go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2024

(Digital issues will continue to be published by date every Friday, delivered by e-mail and posted on [thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org))

This is the new print publication schedule for The Catholic Spirit. Each print issue is named for a memorial, feast day, or celebration of the Church within the month of publication. The following provides the name of the issue; the date of the memorial, feast day, or celebration; and the publication date of the issue.

### Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Month of June

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is June 28

### Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Feast Day, August 15

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is August 2

### Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Feast Day, September 14

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is September 6

### Our Lady of the Rosary

Memorial, October 7

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is October 4

### Advent

First Sunday of Advent, December 1

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is November 21

### Christmas

Feast Day, December 25

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is December 20

## Ordained...

Cont'd from Page 1

and encouragement and, at times, correction of a faithful shepherd.

The bishop then spoke of the saying, "People die for lack of knowledge." He encouraged Father Soplinski to "Preach and teach the truth of the Catholic faith. For it does far more than fill the head with information. It imparts a wisdom that will enable your people to live sane, virtuous lives meeting their responsibilities and making their communities better places and preparing them for heaven. This is the wisdom that will enable them to take God seriously, to pray and to worship, to care for their neighbor, to stand up for justice, to foster reconciliation and peace. The world needs to hear the truth of the gospel and ... you will have many ways in your ministry to proclaim that truth."

Bishop Brennan continued his homily discussing how people find the strength to live the truth. He stressed that we are not strong enough on our own to live by the teachings of Christ. "... We need the strength that comes from God," he said. "The risen Christ gives it to us, especially through the sacraments."

Bishop Brennan pointed to the words of Pope St. Leo the Great in the 5th century: "All that was visible of our Redeemer has passed into the sacramental rights of the church."

This is a primary way which the Lord Jesus fulfills his promise to be with us until the end of the world, the bishop said.

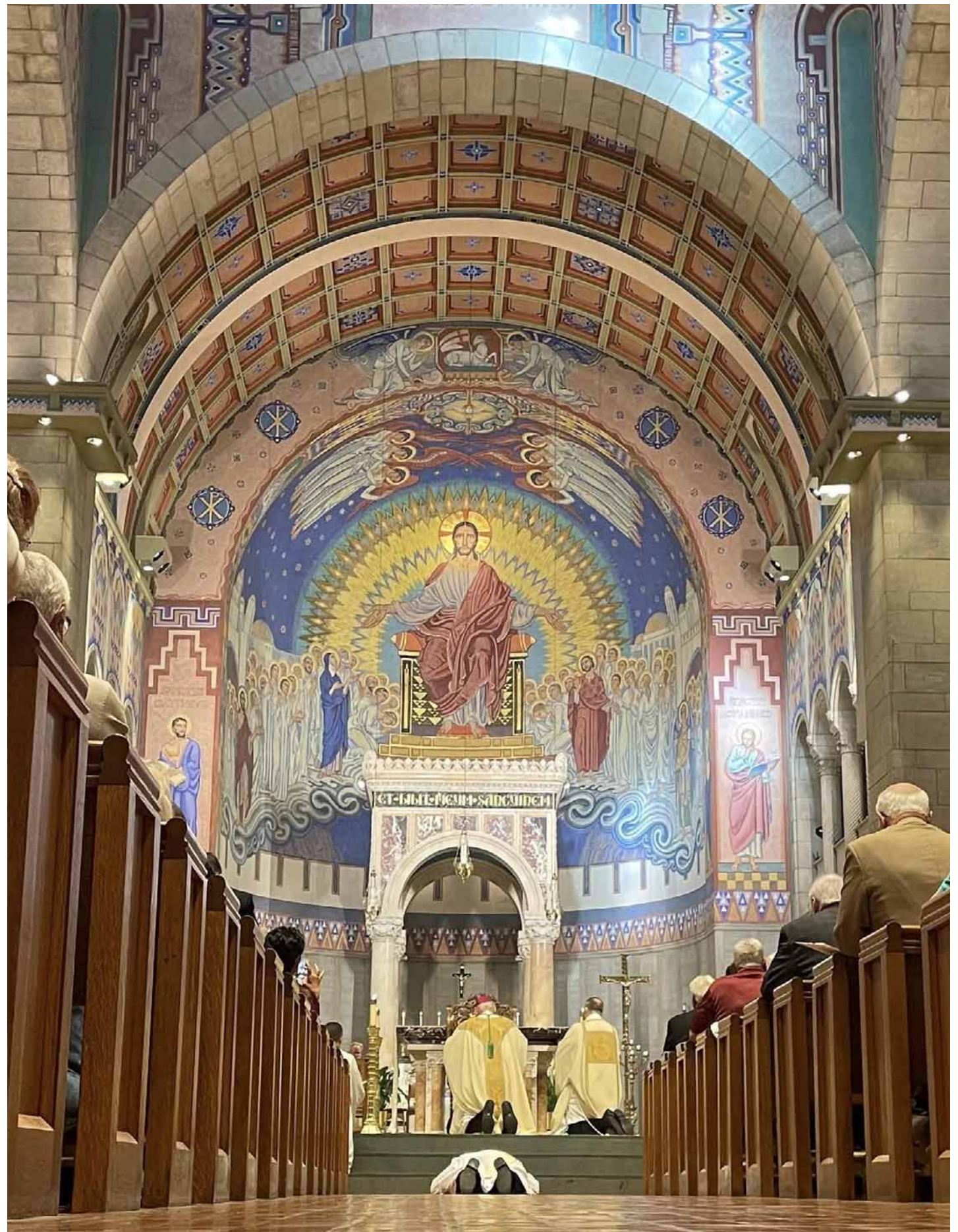
"When you baptize a child or an adult you will be God's agent in joining that person to Jesus Christ to his saving death and resurrection," Bishop Brennan said to Father Soplinski. "You will nourish the Christ life in him or her by the other sacraments especially the holy Eucharist and the sacrament of penance. The Lord will use you in all the sacraments."

Father Soplinski's own sacrament of holy orders, the bishop said, exists precisely to give him the spiritual power to strengthen Christ's disciples in their fidelity to him.

"Rejoice in the Lord's gift and share it with others," the bishop said to Father Soplinski. "You received without cost, without cost you are to give."

In priesthood, the bishop said to Father Soplinski: "People will sometimes seek you out because of troubles that beset them. Lend them a compassionate ear. Some will need guidance for a difficult moral or spiritual dilemma. Pray for the wisdom to guide them well."

Father Soplinski may see a need in his parish or the local commu-



Joyce Bibey Photo

Father John Soplinski prostrates himself before the altar during his ordination to the priesthood at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling May 31.

nity for some work of charity and justice or people may bring that need to his attention, the bishop said, and he encouraged him to rouse the people to meet it.

The bishop also asked Father Soplinski to respect the competence and the faith of the laity and work with them to promote the gospel values.

"And as you go about your priestly work," the bishop said, "re-

member Peter's words which echo the Lord's: 'Do not lord it over those assigned to you but be examples to the flock' (1 Peter 5:3). A priest is a leader in the church, but the best leaders lead by example. Be that good example."

To be the kind of priest the people need him to be, Bishop Brennan told Father Soplinski that he must stay close to the Lord Jesus in his daily prayer, daily Mass, retreats, and spiritual devotions. All

of these, the bishop said, will help him draw even closer to Jesus Christ. The bishop pointed to the gospel reading for the Mass, "It was not you who chose me but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain" (John 15:9-17).

"Seek the Lord's wisdom and strength every day," Bishop Brennan said to Father Soplinski, "trusting that the one who called you

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## Ordained...

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will never abandon you but always uphold you in the good days and the bad. He says to you as he says to us all, 'I have called you friends' (John 15:11). Ask your good friend. As your good friend as well as your Lord and Savior, Jesus will give you the support you need when things do not go according to plan or you just get something wrong. There will be days like that."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta must have had some days like that, the bishop said, for she said God has not called us to be successful, but to be faithful. "In the wry humor of God even our failures can give him glory if we are faithful," the bishop said, "and that is its own kind of success."

In ending his homily, Bishop Brennan shared that it is his hope that Father Soplinski will find great happiness in being a priest.

"When I was ordained 48 years ago, I was frankly a rather timid young man," the bishop recalled. "I began to discover that there is great joy in serving God's people and sharing their blessings and their sorrows. As a priest, you will remind them, simply by your presence, that God is with them at those happy and sad times. Jesus said to his disciples, 'I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete' (John 15:11).



**Bishop Mark Brennan ordains Father John Soplinski to priesthood at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling May 31. Standing are, from left, Deacon Paul Lim, Deacon Doug Breiding, and Deacon John Yaquina.**

Loving the Lord and serving his people faithfully, you will I trust experience that joy. So, welcome to the Catholic priesthood, John. There's much work to do but your hands will make my work and that of your brother priests a little lighter. May the Lord bless you and his people with

many years of joyful and fruitful service."

The Rite of Ordination continued following the homily as Father Soplinski stood before the bishop and promised to serve the people of God as a priest. The congregation then joined the bishop in praying for Father Soplinski as he prostrated himself before the altar for the Litany of Supplication.

Father Soplinski then knelt before the bishop, who laid his hands upon his head and called upon the Holy Spirit to make him an ordained priest. Each of his fellow priests gathered came forward to lay their hands upon his head as well. Father Soplinski was vested with his stole and chasuble by Msgr. Robert Saly, his uncle, and Father Martin Smay, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Thomas and Our Lady of Mercy Mission in Parsons.

Father Soplinski again knelt before the bishop, who anointed his palms with holy chrism. The bishop then presented the paten of bread and chalice of wine to him, saying, "...receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God. Under-

stand what you will do, imitate what you will celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross."

The bishop, followed by his fellow priests, then offered Father Soplinski the Kiss of Peace.



**Father John Soplinski is vested with his stole and chasuble by Msgr. Robert Saly (right) and Father Martin Smay.**



**Father Brian Crenwelge offers the Kiss of Peace to newly ordained Father John Soplinski (left). Waiting to do the same are Very Rev. Sebastian Devasya, V.E. (back, right), and Msgr. Joseph Peterson, V.G.**

Colleen Rowan Photo

Joyce Bibey Photo

## Report...

Cont'd from Page 2

new claims for “any holes or practices that need to be shored up to prevent future abuse.”

One such deficit was highlighted by a recent discovery in the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, that several safe environment clearance documents were missing from the file of a parish staffer who had previous criminal charges flagged in an FBI fingerprint check.

The gap came to light when the employee was arrested May 8 for unrelated alleged sexual assaults against a minor, which were said to have occurred off site from the two parishes at which he had worked. The pastor who oversaw both parishes had attested that he had personally reviewed the clearances and had found them in order. Bishop Larry J. Kulick of Greensburg took swift action, removing the pastor, placing the parish staff involved on leave and ordering an immediate audit of all safe environment clearances throughout the diocese.

StoneBridge wrote in its assessment that “chancery offices (that) maintain regular face-to-face contact with parishes have better results in implementing training and background check procedures than those (that) do not,” and recommended that diocesan officials periodically visit parishes and schools to review safe environment documentation.

Four dioceses and eparchies audited by StoneBridge were found to be noncompliant with various articles of the charter, but subsequently took steps after the audit to address the issues and attain compliance: St. Mary Queen of Peace Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in USA and Canada, the Chaldean Diocese of St. Thomas the Apostle USA and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee initially failed to meet review board requirements. St. Mary Queen of Peace along with the Ukrainian Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago also lacked safe environment training for minors during the 2023 audit period.

StoneBridge also found several issues at more than 25% of the dioceses and eparchies audited:

- A struggle to maintain functioning review boards, which serve as consultative bodies for their bishops, due to lack of meetings, members, bylaw compliance, policy reviews and understanding of member roles.

- A lack of language in child protection policies regarding either child sexual abuse content or “individuals who habitually lack the use of reason.”

- Ineffective monitoring by dioceses and eparchies to ensure compliance with their existing safe

environment programs, with a lack of updated documentation and visitation to parishes and schools.

- Outdated or missing letters of promulgation from bishops on their safe environment programs.

Among the problems StoneBridge identified in less than 25% of the dioceses and eparchies:

- Some clergy, employees and volunteers were not trained or background checked, but nonetheless had contact with minors.

- Offers by the bishop or his representative to meet with victims and their families were not specified in the policies or were not made on a timely basis.

- Abuse reporting procedures were not consistently displayed at parishes and schools, or were not available in all languages in which liturgies were offered, thereby limiting the ability of non-English speakers to file complaints.

- Documented policies regarding accused clergy were lacking with regard to a presumption of innocence, retention of civil and canonical counsel, steps to restore a cleric’s good name in the case of an unsubstantiated allegation, or clergy transfers.

- Lack of a formal policy on communicating with the public regarding clerical sexual abuse of minors.

The CARA survey included in the 2023 report showed that between July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, reporting dioceses and eparchies paid more than \$260.5 million in allegation-related costs — 99% higher than that paid during the previous fiscal year. Of the 2023 total, 73% represented victim settlements, with 19% dedicated to attorney fees.

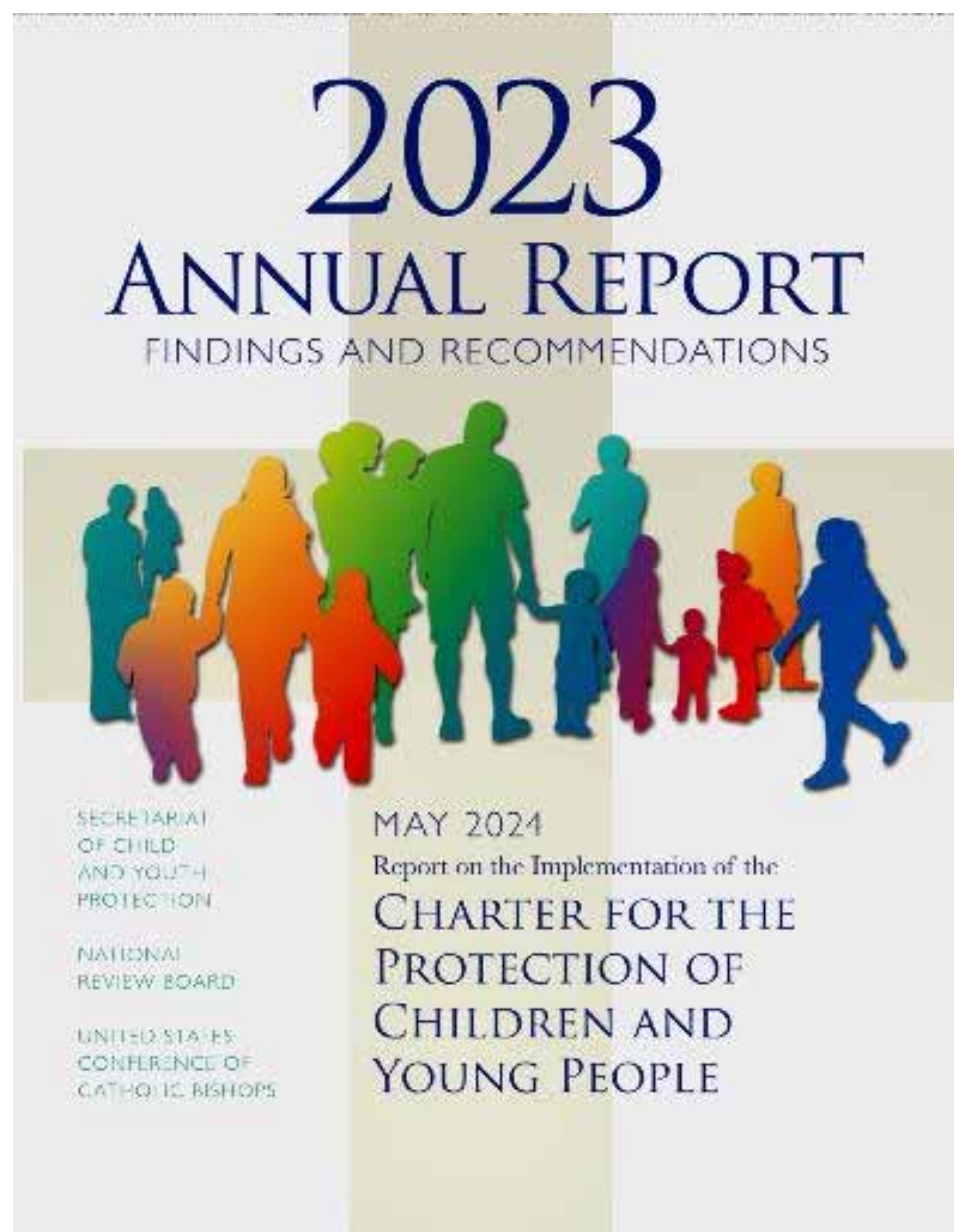
Over the past 10 years, the Catholic dioceses and eparchies in the U.S. alone have paid more than \$2 billion in costs regarding abuse allegations.

But the cost to abuse survivors is far greater, said both Archbishop Broglio and Healy in the report.

“Theirs is a lifelong journey and the mission of the church is a lifelong commitment to accompany them on this healing journey ... to minister, even to those who believe they have lost God along the way and left the church,” wrote Healy, noting that during the audit period, 183 new survivors and their families received pastoral care and 1,662 survivors and their families receive ongoing pastoral care.

“I am deeply sorry for their suffering,” wrote Archbishop Broglio in his preface to the 2023 report. “These numbers are not just numbers. The statistics are the many stories and accounts of the betrayal of trust and the lifelong journey towards recovery.”

The archbishop also wrote that he was “grateful” to victim survi-



OSV News Photo/courtesy USCCB

This is the cover of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection’s 2023 annual report on the “Findings and Recommendations on the Implementation of the ‘Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People’” released May 28.

vors “for holding all of us accountable,” stressing as well the importance of countering abuse amid a landscape “in flux,” given both technological and therapeutic developments.

“I pray that together, we continue working toward the goal of ending the scourge of child sexual abuse, not only in the church but in society,” wrote Archbishop Broglio.

The full text of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection “2023 Annual Report — Findings and Recommendations on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” is available at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/2023%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

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

*Daily Living*  
with Fr. Chapin

**Sunday Mornings**

6:30 WTOV FOX 9	Wheeling-Steubenville
6:30 WOWK CBS 13	Huntington-Charleston
8:00 WBOY NBC 12	Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
6:30 WOAY ABC 4	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
9:30 WVVA NBC 6	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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# Corpus Christi Procession is Not Sign of Pride but Invitation, Pope Says

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

**ROME (CNS)** — When Catholics carry the Eucharist through the streets, “we are not doing this to show off or to flaunt our faith” but to invite others to share in the life that Jesus gives by making himself a gift, Pope Francis said.

“Let’s make the procession in this spirit,” the pope said June 2 in his homily at a Mass for the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Pope Francis presided over the Mass in Rome’s Basilica of St. John Lateran, his cathedral as bishop of Rome. Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, was the main celebrant at the altar.

After Mass, more than 3,000 people — cardinals, bishops, priests, religious, lay members of confraternities and sodalities, Romans and pilgrims — participated in the Corpus Christi procession to the Basilica of St. Mary Major, about a mile away. Rome Auxiliary Bishop Baldo Reina carried the Eucharist under a canopy held aloft by eight men.

Pope Francis, who has difficulty walking and often uses a wheelchair, was driven to St. Mary Major to welcome the procession and lead adoration and Benediction.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Francis said the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist demonstrates that God is “not distant and jealous, but close and in solidarity with humanity; a God who does not abandon us but always seeks, waits for and accompanies us, even to the point of placing himself, helpless, into our hands, subjecting himself to our acceptance or rejection.”

“His real presence also invites us to be close to our brothers and sisters wherever love calls us,” the pope said.

The sign of bread is important, the pope said, because “it is the food of daily life, and with it we bring to the altar all that we are and all that we have: our lives, work, successes and failures too.”

In some cultures, he said, if someone drops a piece of bread from the table, they pick it up and kiss it as a sign that “it is too precious to be thrown away, even if it has fallen.”

The Eucharist teaches Catholics “to bless, to gather and to cherish God’s gifts as a sign of thanksgiving”



Courtesy Photo

**The faithful participate in the Morgantown Eucharistic Procession on Sunday, June 2, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord. About 150 area faithful participated.**

ing” by not wasting food or talents, for example, but also by “forgiving and helping raise up those who make mistakes and fall because of weakness or lapses, acknowledging that everything is a gift and nothing should be lost, that no one should be left behind and that everyone deserves a chance to get back on their feet.”

Pope Francis also spoke about the fragrance of bread and how, “every day we see too many streets that were once filled with the smell of freshly baked bread, but are now reduced to rubble by war, selfishness and indifference!”

“We urgently need to bring back to our world the good, fresh aroma of the bread of love, to continue tirelessly to hope and rebuild what hatred destroys,” he said.

Reciting the Angelus prayer earlier in the day with visitors gathered under the rain in St. Peter’s Square, Pope Francis prayed for war-torn countries where finding one’s daily bread is a challenge.

He prayed for Sudan, “where the war that has been going on for over a year still has not found a peaceful solution.”

“And let us not forget tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel

(and) Myanmar,” he said. “I appeal to the wisdom of those who govern to cease the escalation and to put every effort into dialogue and negotiation.”

In his main Angelus address, he called attention to the Gospel’s description of Jesus breaking the bread and sharing it with his disciples.

“In the broken bread and in the chalice offered to the disciples,” the pope said, “it is he who gives himself for all humanity and

offers himself for the life of the world.”

Because of that, he said, partaking of the Eucharist “is not an act of worship detached from life or a mere moment of personal consolation; we must always remember that Jesus took the bread, broke it and gave it to them and, therefore, communion with him makes us also capable of becoming bread broken for others, capable of sharing what we are and what we have.”

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# Pope Preparing Document on Sacred Heart of Jesus to Renew Church, World

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Francis announced that he is preparing a document on the Sacred Heart of Jesus to “illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal, but also to say something significant to a world that seems to have lost its heart.”

The document is expected to be released in September, he said, and will be part of ongoing celebrations marking the 350th anniversary of the first apparition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. The celebrations began Dec. 27 and

are scheduled to end June 27, 2025.

The pope made the announcement during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square June 5. The Catholic Church traditionally dedicates the month of June to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the solemnity of the Sacred Heart is celebrated June 7 this year.

The document will include reflections from “previous magisterial texts” and it will aim to “re-propose to the whole church this devotion laden with spiritual beauty. I believe it will do us much good to meditate on various aspects of

the Lord’s love,” the pope said.

Meanwhile, in his main audience talk, Pope Francis continued a new series on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the church, particularly in how the Holy Spirit leads God’s people to meet Jesus, the source of Christian hope.

The Biblical name of the Holy Spirit is “ruach” in Hebrew, which means breath, wind or spirit, he said.

The image of wind expresses the power of the divine Spirit, he said, and Jesus highlighted its freedom to blow and go where it wants.

“The wind is the only

thing that absolutely cannot be bridled, cannot be ‘bottled up’ or put in a box,” he said. “To pretend to enclose the Holy Spirit in concepts, definitions, theses or treatises, as modern rationalism has sometimes attempted to do, is to lose it, nullify it or reduce it to the human spirit.”

A similar temptation in the church is the attempt “to enclose the Holy Spirit in canons, institutions, definitions. The Spirit creates and animates institutions, but he himself cannot be ‘institutionalized’” or turned into an object, the pope said.

The freedom Jesus offers

with his Spirit is special, he said. It has nothing to do with the selfishness of being free to do what one wants, but it is “the freedom to freely do what God wants! Not freedom to do good or evil, but freedom to do good and do it freely, that is, by attraction, not compulsion. In other words, the freedom of children, not slaves.”

True freedom is choosing to serve “in love and joy,” he said. And it is “a commitment to grow in the truth revealed by Christ and to defend it before the world,” he said in his greeting to Polish-speaking pilgrims.



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# Catholic Charities Receives Significant Donation from Supporter Edward Klash

**WHEELING** — Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) received a donation in the amount of \$89,080 from donor, Edward Klash, which will be used for CCWVa's Hospitality House in Wheeling.

Edward Klash, a long-time resident of Weirton and dedicated electrician at Weirton Steel Company, has left a remarkable legacy of generosity following his passing. Klash, an alumnus of St. Paul's Catholic Grade School and Weir High School, was a devoted member of St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church, where he served faithfully as an usher. His commitment to his church family was a source of great pride and fulfillment for him.

In his lifetime, Edward Klash was known for his compassionate heart and his dedication to helping the less fortunate. Honoring his deep-seated values, he expressed a wish that, upon his passing, contributions be made to various churches and charitable organizations both locally and nationally. These contributions were intended to support the vital work being done to aid those in need.

Klash appointed his trusted companion, Ruth Anne Foutty, to act as Trustee and ensure his charitable wishes were fulfilled. In accordance with his wishes, Foutty recently delivered a generous donation of \$89,080 to Catholic Charities West Virginia. This significant contribution is a testament to Klash's enduring commitment to philanthropy and his desire to make a positive impact on the community.

"He wanted to help other people who were less fortunate than him. He left a great legacy not only for this area and community, but also nationally as well. He was very generous and was a very good man," stated Foutty.

Klash's donation will help to benefit women, children, and families who stay in the Catholic Charities West Virginia Hospitality House. The Catholic Charities Hospitality House provides transitional housing for a family for three to six months. The family is



Left to right: CCWVa Chief Mission Officer, Katie Klug; Trustee of Edward Klash Estate, Ruth Anne Foutty; CCWVa President & CEO, Mark Phillips.



The Hospitality House provides transitional housing for a family for three to six months. The family is able to stay intact and sleep under one roof while receiving intensive case management services to get back on their feet.

able to stay intact and sleep under one roof while receiving intensive case management services to get back on their feet. Furthermore, case managers work with clients on building financial literacy skills, budgeting, finding child care, finding reliable transportation, obtaining meaningful employment, enrolling in children's services, and continuing or gaining special skills to reach career goals. Lastly, residents of the Hospitality House are welcome to visit the Neighborhood Center next door, where they can receive free hot meals and access the food pantry.

"We're so grateful to

Ruth Anne and to Edward for leaving this legacy. It will help so many people. This support of our Hospitality House will have a profound impact on the vulnerable families we serve through this program," stated CCWVa Chief Mission Officer, Katie Klug.

Catholic Charities West Virginia is the largest private provider of social services in West Virginia. Every year the agency provides help to tens of thousands of vulnerable West Virginians. They serve all 55 counties in West Virginia and all people, regardless of faith,

family or background. To learn more about CCWVa please visit [www.ccwva.org](http://www.ccwva.org).

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# Stephen Pishner of All Saints in Bridgeport Shares Lunchtime Concert

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians has asked Stephen Pishner from All Saints in Bridgeport to do an online 1/2 hour lunchtime concert via YouTube for a second time.

Pishner says: "It's a mini-concert, you could say, almost like a showcase of music, in this case, original songs that I've created."

The concert can be found on the YouTube page for the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. The video will remain available for listeners to enjoy after its June 5 airing. Pishner sings a collection of new songs including: "With Faith The Size of a Mustard Seed", "Peace I Leave With You", "Song of Belief", "To Love and Serve" "Look Into The Eyes", "Take Up Your Cross" and "Let Us Dream" which is based on a writing of Pope Francis.

The video and audio recordings were done at Jamie Peck Productions in Wheeling. All of the "Lunchtime Concert Series" songs in the video are presently landing on most streaming platforms.

Pishner said: "Hopefully, the music will give people a little break from the craziness or heaviness of life they may be dealing with at the moment, at least while the music lasts."

The link for the concert is [https://youtu.be/44Oe1rYLi\\_8?si=HV53oYimKGiEyKGX](https://youtu.be/44Oe1rYLi_8?si=HV53oYimKGiEyKGX)

Screenshot

# Wheeling University to Recognize Alumni at Annual Reunion

**WHEELING**—Wheeling University will recognize alumni for their achievements in business and in service to the institution during its annual Alumni Recognition and Awards Dinner in June.

The awards will be presented as part of the University's annual Alumni Weekend, a time when alumni return to campus to celebrate with classmates and reconnect with their alma mater. The Alumni Recognition and Awards Dinner is at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, June 21, inside Troy Theater.

"The university community looks forward to welcoming alumni back to campus to reconnect with their friends, classmates and faculty," said University Chief Operations Officer Dianna Vargo, Ed.D. "We are excited to present these awards and to thank our

graduates for the impact they are making at our university and in their communities."

Wheeling University presents the St. Ignatius Distinguished Alumni Award to a graduate who exemplifies the ideals of extraordinary competence and personal compassion in their chosen field. John 'Goose' Giese, class of 1974, will receive the award this year for his outstanding career in business. After graduating, Giese began his career as a teacher at a Wheeling area Catholic elementary school, where he excelled both in the classroom and as a basketball coach. He went onto a successful career as a salesman. Giese honed his business talents, which ultimately earned him the position of National Sales Director for John Middleton, Inc., and later he became the vice president of Sales for STG, an international company

headquartered in Denmark. Following retirement, Giese opened his own business and is now the CEO of Goose Enterprises, which operates Goose's Montecristo Lounge in Limerick, Pennsylvania.

The Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Award is the highest honor presented by the Alumni Association. It honors extraordinary service and dedication to Wheeling University in the spirit of Father Lewis. This year, the Lewis Award will be given to a group of men, The Friends of Wheeling Rugby, for their support and promotion of the university's rugby team. This organizational group is made up of Bill Barrett, Mark Fagert, Michael Gormley, Patrick McGrane, Jim Osborne, William Prunka, Tom Roddy, and Jonathan Triandafilou. Since 2021, the Friends of Wheeling Rugby has raised more than \$50,000

to help the program. The group also keeps rugby alumni connected by hosting events at games and sending out updates about the current team.

The final award to be given is the Rev. James O'Brien, S.J. Award which recognizes young alumni who manifest a growing competence in their chosen field and whose personal life reflects Wheeling's mission of 'education of men and women for life, leadership and service.' This year's O'Brien Award will be presented to Valerie (Grimes) Piko, class of 2009. Piko lives a life of service in her professional life. She is the program development manager at the Regional Development Partnership (RED) in Wheeling, where she has merged her commitment to community service with her profession.

Wheeling University's Alumni Weekend kicks off on

Friday, June 21, and ends on Sunday, June 23. The weekend is filled with events and activities that celebrate graduates and the university. Highlighting this year's reunion is the induction of class of 1974 into the 50 Year Club. The classes of 1959, 1964 and 1999 will be honored. The event is open to all alumni. To learn more about Alumni Weekend or to make reservations, go to <https://wheeling.edu/alumni-weekend/> or email [alumni@wheeling.edu](mailto:alumni@wheeling.edu).

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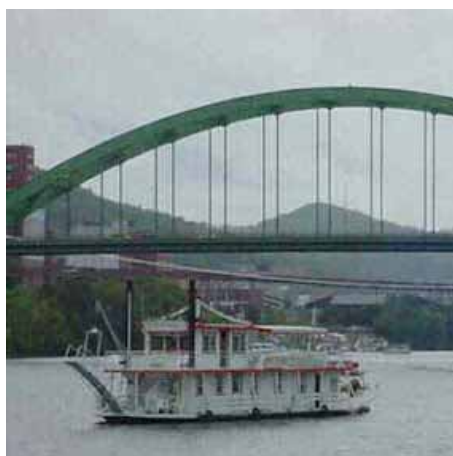
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Sacred Heart of Mary  
St. Paul's

#### *Wheeling:*

Cathedral of St. Joseph  
St. Alphonsus



### Pilgrimage Events

#### Thursday, June 20, National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Kickoff in Weirton

**St. Joseph the Worker Church:** Meet the perpetual pilgrims and gather for Mass, Adoration, and praise and worship—8-9 a.m.

**Eucharistic Procession** from St. Joseph the Worker to Sacred Heart of Mary Church with Adoration and Benediction to follow—begins at 9:30 a.m.

**Sharing Session & Reflection by Perpetual Pilgrims** at Sacred Heart of Mary—11 a.m.-noon

**Eucharistic Adoration** with praise and worship at St. Paul Church—7-8 p.m.

#### Friday, June 21

**Morning Mass** with the perpetual pilgrims at Sacred Heart of Mary—8:30-9 a.m.

**Breakfast with Perpetual Pilgrims** at Sacred Heart of Mary—9:30-10:30 a.m.

#### Sunday, June 23

#### "Put Out into the Deep" on the Ohio River!"

Bishop Mark Brennan and Bishop Paul Bradley, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Steubenville, will board a sternwheeler and lead a Eucharistic Procession down the Ohio River. Boatercade with the two bishops leaves the Steubenville Marina at noon and will stop at four sites on both sides of the river where faithful can receive a blessing. Blessing sites: Steubenville Marina, Wellsburg Wharf, Wellsburg-Brilliant Bridge, Mazeroski Park (Ohio), Pike Island Lock and Dam, and Heritage Port in Wheeling. Final destination is Bellaire Marina in Bellaire, Ohio.

**Arrival of National Eucharistic Pilgrimage in Wheeling**—7:30-8:30 p.m. Cathedral of St. Joseph. Bishop Brennan and the faithful of Wheeling will welcome the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at the cathedral.

**All-Night Eucharistic Prayer Vigil**—8:30 p.m. (June 23) -8 a.m. (June 24) at the cathedral.

#### Monday, June 24

**Mass at the cathedral** celebrated by Bishop Brennan—8:30-9:30 a.m.

**Solemn Eucharistic Procession** through the streets of Wheeling from the cathedral to St. Alphonsus Church—9:30-10 a.m.

For more information, visit:

[www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org/st-elizabeth-ann-seton-route](http://www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org/st-elizabeth-ann-seton-route)

# U.S. Catholics Encounter Fraternity, Healing in Annual Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes



OSV News Photo/Tamino Petelinsek, courtesy Knights of Columbus

U.S. military members of the Warriors to Lourdes program in an undated photo pose on the steps of the Rosary Basilica at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France with Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, center, and Bishop Scott McCaig, head of the Military Ordinariate of Canada (with beard).

**By Jack Figge, OSV News**

**(OSV News)** — Surrounded by almost 15,000 military personnel from around the world, Airman 1st Class Quenton Cooper felt a deep sense of fraternity during a May 24-26 pilgrimage to Lourdes, France.

Cooper was one of 183 American pilgrims who journeyed to Lourdes for the annual International Military Pilgrimage.

Every year since 1958, the French army has invited soldiers from across the world to come together for three days of festivities, prayer, and fraternity in Lourdes, the frequented pilgrimage site where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858.

“This trip has bolstered my spiritual life because it has reminded me that I’m not alone in my prayer life and that the church is not just located in one country, but it’s a community that extends all over the world,” Cooper told OSV News. “It is this reminder that no matter who we are, we need to thrive, and God will put us in. He

will always put us where he needs us to help others grow in their faith.”

Known for its healing miracles, Lourdes is often frequented by pilgrims seeking either physical, spiritual or mental healing. Thus, the weekend pilgrimage places a special emphasis on healing, military chaplain Father Philip O’Neill told OSV News.

“The message of Our Lady of Lourdes is to come for the sake of healing, which is a message that resonated in the assembly,” said Father O’Neill, a U.S. Air Force chaplain with the rank of captain who is currently based in Germany. “We have so many of our veterans who bear the historic scars of war, and to have them all brought together at the foot of the altar to have them brought to the healing waters of Lourdes really was profound.”

For over 20 years, the Knights of Columbus and the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services have co-sponsored the Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage, bringing both active-duty service

members and veterans from across the world to seek healing through the pilgrimage.

Retired U.S. Col. Paul Zeternick made his first Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage in 2013. Moved by the experience, he has returned year after year and now serves as a team leader, helping to organize the trip.

“Lourdes is a great place of peace, and this pilgrimage is a time to reflect on who you are, what you’re doing, and where you need to grow,” Zeternick said. “Every time I have attended the pilgrimage, I have experienced growth both as a pilgrim and now as a team leader.”

Now, as a team leader, the most impactful moments of each pilgrimage are witnessing the participants encounter the Lord’s healing touch and experience his merciful love.

“We’ve been offering a special program addressing moral injury, where we talk about post-traumatic stress disorder and how there are different techniques and methods towards

**See “Lourdes” on Page 14**

# Lourdes...

**Cont'd from Page 13**

healing," Zeternick said. "We also emphasize how the Catholic faith, through the sacrament of reconciliation, is so important in moving forward with the healing process."

But the pilgrimage offers more than healing and a spiritual encounter; it provides the opportunity for participants to experience fraternity with the global church.

"In my experience, when military personnel come together with soldiers from other nations, which we do frequently, it is when we are training for war. We engage in the shared practice of warfare, shared strategies, and growth in our abilities," said Father O'Neill.

He said, "As far as I know, this is the only event of its kind where members from so many different countries come together in the name of peace, prayer and healing."

These fraternal moments were daily occurrences as service members from different countries would sit at cafes and drink coffee or have a meal together, sharing their military and faith experiences.

"What you see on the streets of Lourdes over the course of this week is an incredible fraternity," Father O'Neill said. "We not only gather to pray and go through the liturgies and the rituals, but we are also there to be together. You'll see service members from every country having coffee or dinner together, sharing a beer or wine. It is a wonderful, incredibly uplifting sight."

Perhaps the greatest sign of fraternity and unity was the reaction toward Ukrainian troops present at the pilgrimage. Throughout the week, the pilgrims encountered soldiers who traveled from the front lines in Ukraine to seek healing and pray for peace at Lourdes.

"We had many Ukrainian troops at the pilgrimage as well," said Father O'Neill, who is also a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut.

"They received special sympathy and support and became something like minor celebrities. I think everybody was greeting and saluting the Ukrainians throughout the three days, and during the opening and closing ceremonies. When all the flags were marched through the basilica, everybody was clapping and cheering as the Ukrainian flag was processed in."

Witnessing the Ukrainian soldiers' faith and devotion left an impression on the other pilgrims, such as Cooper, reminding them that God triumphs over evil.

"I wasn't expecting to see Ukrainian troops, but their presence at the pilgrimage reminded me that no matter what you're experiencing, God is the ultimate defender and peacekeeper, and without him we cannot triumph over evil," Cooper said.

Opportunities for Catholic fraternity are often hard to come by in the military, yet they are essential to developing a healthy spiritual life. This reality makes the trip an important opportunity for Catholics serving in the military to go on pilgrimage together.

"As warriors, we go into dangerous places and experience things together, and it creates a very tight bond among us, and it is always painful for us to see another brother in arms or sister in arms suffering," Zeternick said. "Being able to come together as one body, one universal church, is absolutely tremendous. To have military members from so many nations in the world all bending their knees to God together and worshipping him is truly inspiring."

As Cooper returns to Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany, he hopes to rely on the fraternity he formed during the trip and seeks to be a living witness to faith in Jesus Christ.

"The fraternity here has been a great reminder to live out my faith in my workplace by setting a good example of what it means to be a Catholic man through my actions and how I treat people," Cooper said. "As I return, I hope to set a better, more visible example of what it means to be a

Catholic."

Zeternick hopes that participants will remember the peace and charity they witnessed throughout the pilgrimage and remember that the Lord is capable of healing all wounds.

"This pilgrimage is a beautiful opportunity for different countries to come together in peace, to celebrate our Lord together, to celebrate the miracles of the Lord, and to pass on that opportunity of healing to our soldiers that are suffering," Zeternick said. "It's an absolutely important and critical event for these men and women to come together as a church in prayer."

(Jack Figge writes for OSV News from Kansas.)



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## *Fairmont Catholic Students Honor Our Lady and Ask for Her Intercession*

Fairmont Catholic Grade School's First Holy Communion students (pictured above) crown a statue of the Blessed Mother at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish in Fairmont. The school also had the annual Rosary Prayer Walk May 20. Students and their families (pictured below) started at St. Peter's and walked through downtown Fairmont praying the rosary. *Courtesy Photos*



## En Español

# El Papa está preparando un documento sobre el Sagrado Corazón de Jesús para renovar la Iglesia y el mundo

Por Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)** — El Papa Francisco anunció que está preparando un documento sobre el Sagrado Corazón de Jesús para "iluminar el camino de la renovación eclesial; y que también digan algo significativo a un mundo que parece haber perdido el corazón".

Se espera que el documento se publique en septiembre, dijo, y formará parte de las celebraciones en curso que marcan el 350 aniversario de la primera aparición del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús a Santa Margarita María Alacoque. Las celebraciones comenzaron el 27 de diciembre y está previsto que concluyan el 27 de junio de 2025.

El Papa anunció esto durante su audiencia general en la Plaza de San Pedro el 5 de junio. La Iglesia Católica dedica tradicionalmente el mes de junio al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús y la solemnidad del Sagrado Corazón se celebrará el 7 de junio de este año.

El documento incluirá reflexiones de "textos magisteriales anteriores" y tendrá como objetivo "volver a proponer hoy, a toda la Iglesia, este culto lleno de belleza espiritual. Creo que nos hará muy bien meditar sobre diversos aspectos del amor del Señor", dijo el Papa.

Mientras tanto, en su discurso de la audiencia principal, el Papa Francisco continuó una nueva serie sobre la relación entre el Es-

píritu Santo y la Iglesia, en particular sobre cómo el Espíritu Santo conduce al pueblo de Dios al encuentro con Jesús, la fuente de la esperanza cristiana.

El nombre bíblico del Espíritu Santo es "Ruah" en hebreo, que significa aliento, viento o espíritu, dijo.

La imagen del viento expresa el poder del Espíritu divino, dijo, y Jesús destacó su libertad para soplar e ir donde quiera.

"El viento es la única cosa que no se puede embridar, no se puede 'embotellar' ni encerrar", dijo. "Prender encerrar al Espíritu Santo en conceptos, definiciones, tesis o tratados, como a veces ha intentado hacer el racionalismo moderno, significa perderlo, anularlo, reducirlo al espíritu puramente humano".

Una tentación similar en la Iglesia es el intento de "querer encerrar al Espíritu Santo en cánones, instituciones, definiciones. El Espíritu crea y anima las instituciones, pero Él mismo no puede ser 'institucionalizado' o convertido en un objeto, dijo el Papa.

La libertad que Jesús ofrece con su Espíritu es especial, dijo. No tiene nada que ver con el egoísmo de ser libre para hacer lo que uno quiere, sino que es "¡libertad para hacer libremente lo que Dios quiera! No libertad para hacer el bien o el mal, sino libertad para hacer el bien y hacerlo libremente, es decir, por atracción, no por constricción. En otras palabras, libertad de hijos,

no de esclavos".

La verdadera libertad es elegir servir "en el amor y la alegría", dijo. Y es "el compromiso de crecer en la

verdad revelada por Cristo y de defenderla ante el mundo", dijo en su saludo a los peregrinos de lengua polaca.



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

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

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

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



# Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule; Bishop Brennan, Celebrant

**Saturday, June 8:** Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston; 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday, June 9:** Sacred Heart, Princeton; 11:00 a.m.

**Saturday, June 15:** St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, June 16:** St. John the Evangelist, Summersville; 9:00 a.m.



The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’s teaching document on political engagement, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” provides guidance to Catholic voters during a presidential election year.

(OSV News/Courtesy USCCB)

[Click here to read the document](#)

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