



# A Pastoral Letter on Politics and How Catholics Can Respond from Bishop Brennan

“What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” In the ancient Mediterranean world this question was posed to highlight the relationship between reason or philosophy, symbolized by Athens, renowned for its philosophical traditions, and religious faith, symbolized by Jerusalem, sacred to Judaism and Christianity (and now to Islam). In our

present American context Athens and Jerusalem may stand for the relationship between politics and religion.

We Catholics know that Jesus taught that our love of God has to be joined to love of our neighbor. That command prompts us to foster the good of the communities in which we live: our town or city, our state

and nation and our world. Our civic involvement might lead us to coach a children’s soccer team or contribute to an organization that provides sheltered workshops for persons with special needs or join an international group that works for peace. Our service fulfills the Lord’s command, for all people are in some degree our neighbor.

It is said that, after the constitutional convention in 1787 in Philadelphia, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin what kind of government the framers had given the country. He reportedly said: “A republic, Madam, if you can keep it.” Love of country is a form of love of neighbor. Do we not all want to keep  
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## National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Coming to Weirton and Wheeling

By Colleen Rowan

**WEIRTON**—The Catholic communities in Weirton and Wheeling are preparing to host the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage which will process across the United States on four separate routes beginning May 17 and ending July 16 in Indianapolis before the National Eucharistic Congress.

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route will pass through the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia June 20-23. This will be the eastern arm of the pilgrimage that will begin in New Haven, Conn.

Having the pilgrimage pass through West Virginia is tremendous for the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, said Mark Tirona, director of religious education at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Weirton, which will be the pilgrimage’s first stop in the Mountain State.

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## More Than 265 Will Enter the Church in West Virginia at Easter

By Colleen Rowan

**M**ore than 265 faithful across West Virginia have come closer to full communion with the Catholic Church following the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

Bishop Mark Brennan presided over the three celebrations held in Charleston at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart for parishes of the southern region of the diocese Feb. 18, and the following weekend in Charles Town at St. James the Greater Church for the parishes of the Eastern Panhandle Feb. 24 and in Wheeling at the Cathedral of St. Joseph Feb. 25 for the parishes of the Northern Panhandle and central region of the state.

In his homily, Bishop Brennan encouraged the catechumens and candidates at the three celebrations in their journey to the Catholic Church.

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John Sherwood Photo

Dina Titus signs the Book of the Elect at the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town Feb. 24. With her is her godparent Carol Dindinger.

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# Church...

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"Those of us who have been Catholic before you — some of us for many years, some for fewer years — rejoice that you wish to call us your brothers and sisters," Bishop Brennan said. "May this season of Lent be one of growth in faith, in hope, and in charity for you and for all of us. We look forward to welcoming you as fully initiated Catholics at Easter."

The Celebration of Election followed the bishop's homily as catechumens were called by name and stood with their godparents. After affirmation from godparents and the assembly, the bishop said the church, in the name of Christ, accepts their judgment and calls the catechumens to the Easter sacraments. They affirmed their intent to enter fully into the life of the church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist and Bishop Brennan invited them to come forward and offer

their names for enrollment by signing the Book of the Elect.

Bishop Brennan then joyfully declared them to be members of the elect to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil.

The Call to Continuing Conversion followed with the names of the candidates from each parish announced. They stood with their sponsors and were affirmed by their sponsors and the assembly. Bishop Brennan then said the church recognizes their desire to be

sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to have a place at Christ's Eucharistic table.

The celebrations at all three churches ended with Bishop Brennan praying over the elect and candidates, who represent 48 parishes in the diocese.

Their journey will culminate at the Easter Vigil as they receive the sacraments — baptism, first Communion, and confirmation for the elect and first Communion and confirmation for candidates — at their parish churches.

## Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

### CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Spring 2024

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

**Sunday, March 17:** St. Margaret Mary, Parkersburg; 2:00 p.m.

**Saturday, April 6:** St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown; 5:15 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 10:** Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling; 6:00 p.m.

**Thursday, April 11:** St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton; 7:00 p.m.

**Sunday, April 14:** SS Peter and Paul, Oak Hill; 10:30 a.m.

**Monday, April 15:** Corpus Christi, Wheeling; 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday, April 20:** St. Sebastian, Kingwood; 6:00 p.m.

**Sunday, April 21:** Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Stonewood; 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, April 28:** St. Jude, Glen Dale; 9:00 a.m.

**Sunday, May 5:** St. Brendan, Elkins; 11:00 a.m.

**Saturday, May 11:** St. John the Evangelist, Wellsburg; 11:00 a.m.

**Saturday, May 11:** St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, May 12:** Immaculate

Conception, New Cumberland; 8:30 a.m.

**Monday, May 13:** St. Michael, Wheeling; 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 19:** St. Agnes, Charleston; 10:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 22:** Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg; 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday, May 25:** St. James, Charles Town; 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, May 25:** St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs; 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, May 26:** St. Joseph, Martinsburg; 4:00 p.m.

**Saturday, June 1:** St. Francis Xavier, Moundsville; 4:00 p.m.

**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.

## 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."

**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.reportbishop-abuse.org](http://www.reportbishop-abuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishop-abuse.org](http://www.reportbishop-abuse.org). **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or 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.

## Diocesan Official Appointment

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointment:

**Father Anthony Thurston** is appointed as temporary administrator of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Weirton and Sacred Heart of Mary Parish in Weirton, effective February 18, 2024. This appointment is in addition to his current responsibilities as parochial vicar of these same parishes. His place of residence will remain the same.

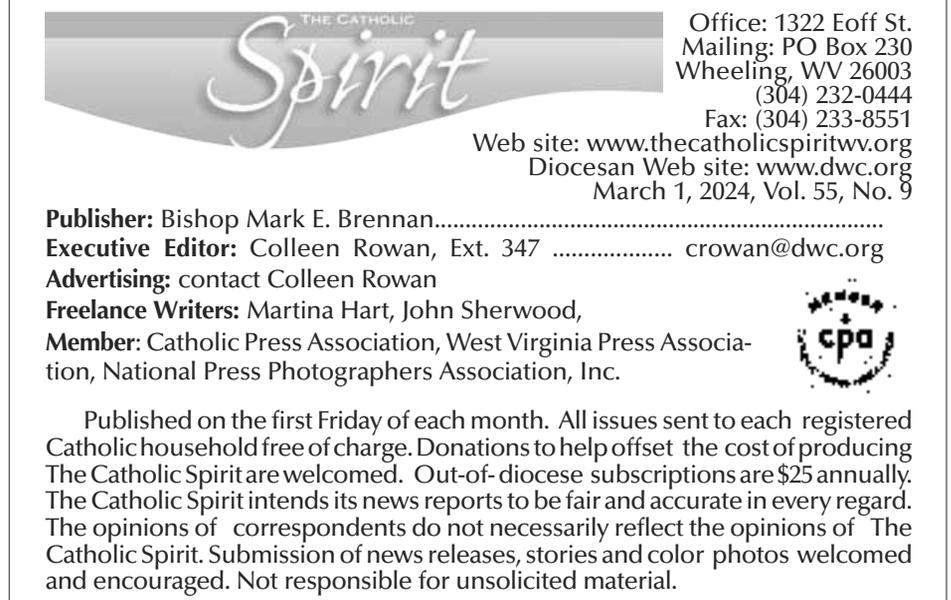


**Daily Living**  
with Fr. Chapin

**Sunday Mornings**

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- 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
- 9:30 WVVA NBC 6 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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## Letter...

**Cont'd from Page 1**

our republic strong? Then we must dedicate ourselves to its wellbeing, which demands that we be involved in political affairs. Jesus has joined Athens and Jerusalem and what God has joined we have no right to separate. As Pope Francis has said: "Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader may govern."

In some countries religion is banned from public expression. In Vietnam religious believers may gather for worship and to study their faith but they are not allowed to engage in public activities or criticize the government. Catholics in Nicaragua are now experiencing government restrictions on their free speech. Such governments tolerate Jerusalem but not its relationship with Athens.

Our American situation is different but not benign. Powerful groups wish to curtail our right to the free exercise of our religion. Federal agencies' regulations and decisions by government officials and courts are increasingly hostile to the values we try to live by, often seeking to force compliance to values alien to our faith – even in Catholic institutions. Our concern, however, is not only with our internal Church life but with the effect of unjust policies on the common good. It is incumbent, then, on us Catholics, to take part in the political process and raise our voices in the public square.

Our Catholic faith is a great help to us in seeing our way forward. With centuries of experience with many forms of government, certain basic principles have emerged in our Catholic tradition to guide our efforts to do good for our communities. The most fundamental one is our respect for the human person in community. That means that we consider both what affects individuals and what affects the common good (which includes families and marginalized groups).

This fundamental principle is why we oppose abortion and assisted suicide and favor efforts to lift people out of poverty and end unjust discrimination. Both the individual and the group deserve our support. Concern for the common good, however, is not limited to sub-groups but must respect the needs, rights and obligations of all people. It is why we must all obey traffic laws, pay taxes and ensure the right of every citizen 18 or older to vote.

We are well aware of the serious divisions among Americans today. Some disagreements are over matters so essential to our common life – the nature of marriage and gender, hard-won civil rights for African Americans, our historic welcoming of refugees – that one view or the other must prevail through persuasion and conversion of minds and hearts and, finally, by law. In other matters – and often regarding the specific ways in which more fundamental concerns are resolved – compromise is appropriate to achieve social peace. No one gets the whole loaf but everyone gets a part of it.

In dealing with societal divisions, can our experience as Catholics be helpful? It can be, if we remain united ourselves. I urge you not to import disagreements over politics into the Church. We must treat one another as the brothers and sisters in faith that our baptism has made us and not primarily as political opponents. We must respect the person even if we firmly disagree with his or her views.

Despite many differences of race and ethnic-



OSV News/Courtesy USCCB

**This is the logo for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' teaching document on political engagement, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," and related materials. The document provides guidance to Catholic voters during a presidential election year. "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" can be found on the US Bishops' Conference website ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org), then click on Issues and Actions, then Topics, and then Faithful Citizenship).**

ity, socioeconomic status, education and political persuasion, we Catholics enjoy a unity of faith, charity and governance that are the envy of many other groups. We must all learn to respect one another, remembering Jesus' words: *Judge not lest you be judged. The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you* [Matthew 7:1-2]. Our unity comes from staying within the parameters of the faith that comes to us from the Lord Jesus through his Apostles. Analogously, we Americans can be united, even though we are of many races, levels of income and education and political leanings, if we all hold to the ideals of liberty, justice and equality for which past generations strove. We must call our fellow citizens back to those ideals. Our unity as Catholics gives them good example.

In the current political climate, how can the faithful Catholic respond? First, if you are capable and so inclined, you might offer yourself for political office. Bring your Catholic conscience with you: respect for the dignity of the individual and service to the common good. Running for office usually means joining a political party. No party fully embodies the fundamental principles of Catholic political life; yet, if you have the fortitude to keep your principles, you may by your integrity and persistence win some people to your side. If running for office is too strong a drink for you, you might help a candidate in whom you have confidence or volunteer to serve at a polling place on election day or simply be willing to share your well-informed point of view in cordial conversations with family and friends.

Second, there are groups working for justice in various areas. They are always looking for new members. The prolife movement was successful in attracting many to its cause, as have been some groups advocating for racial justice. Working with others is usually more effective than going it alone.

Third, vote. But before you vote, consider seriously the candidates. What is the candidate's track record and positions on important issues? What about his or her integrity and sound judgment? Does the office the candidate is seeking

have much impact on issues that affect individuals or the common good? Regarding issues, our Church looks at them through the lens of the dignity of each human being and the common good. Look for the document entitled, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," at the US Bishops' Conference website ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org), then click on Issues and Actions, then Topics, and then Faithful Citizenship). I encourage you to read it because it gives insights from a thoughtful Catholic perspective on many issues facing American voters today.

The most maligned person in the political process is the voter. We are often faced with very difficult choices, forced at times to determine which candidate will do the least harm. I urge you to form your conscience according to the fundamental Catholic values of respect for the individual person's dignity and the promotion of the common good. Because each of you brings your conscience into the voting booth or as you fill out your absentee ballot, the Church's clergy must respect your conscience. I have made it clear to our priests and deacons that, while they should address issues based on the Church's teachings, they are not to endorse or defame particular candidates or parties, whether in the pulpit, in teaching, on social media or in other ministerial settings. They are welcome to their opinions but they should not exploit their ministry to advance them. You deserve that respect.

Jesus was once confronted by his opponents and asked whether or not taxes should be paid to the Roman government which was occupying the Jewish land. His response was: *Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God* [Mark 12:17]. The Lord accepted the legitimate role of government while emphasizing the higher sovereignty of God. In acting on behalf of our republic through political involvement, we fulfill both roles, for the sovereign God has taught us to love our neighbor, leading us into the world of civic life and politics. Athens and Jerusalem are distinct but are not inherently opposed. May God's grace sustain our service to our neighbor through appropriate political activity and participation in the public square, where we both render God praise and benefit our fellow citizens.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Mark E. Brennan*

+Mark E. Brennan

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Synod  
2021  
2024

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

**LENTEEN LISTENING SESSIONS 2024**

The last of six sessions will be:

March 7  
St. Michael Church, Wheeling  
Begins at 6:30 p.m.

## Pilgrimage...

Cont'd from Page 1

"There's never been a better time to be Catholic," Tirona said. "And with that there's never been a better time to worship Jesus in the Eucharist, especially at a national level. This is a once in a lifetime event and all Catholics are encouraged to come—whether they're already fully devoted to the Eucharist or are seeking to develop or deepen that devotion to the Eucharist. This is definitely the place to be."

Mass will be celebrated at St. Joseph the Worker Church at 8 a.m. June 20 to welcome the pilgrims to West Virginia. Weirton-area Catholics are invited to the Mass and all pilgrimage gatherings in the days that follow.

"Meet the pilgrims and gather for Mass, adoration, and praise and worship at St. Joseph the Worker," pilgrimage organizers said.

The faithful will then join a Eucharistic Procession from St. Joseph to Sacred Heart of Mary Church a mile down the road with exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and benediction. The parish will host a meal and a program in the cafeteria with sharing and reflection by pilgrims on their faith experiences and what the Eucharistic pilgrimage means to them.

"As they sojourn from parish to parish, from state to state, what their experience has been, how this has helped to form them in their devotion to the Eucharist, and how they've seen other people's lives changed," Tirona said. A closing reflection will be offered by a priest.

Pilgrims will then head to St. Paul Parish in downtown Weirton for Eucharistic Adoration at 7 p.m.

Tirona said it is fantastic to have all three Weirton parishes involved together in a national effort to revive belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The following day, parishioners will join pilgrims for Mass at 8:30 a.m. at Sacred Heart of Mary Church and then gather for a breakfast. A sharing activity with pilgrims will also be held. The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, will join pilgrims in a game of pickleball.

### A Eucharistic Procession down the Ohio River

A historic event for both the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio, will be part of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage called "Put Out into the Deep" on the Ohio River on June 23. Bishop Mark Brennan and Bishop Paul J. Bradley, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Steubenville, will board a sternwheeler that day and lead a Eucharistic Procession down the Ohio River. Boater-cade 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. The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage website lists West Virginia blessing sites at the Steubenville Marina, the Wellsburg

Wharf, the Wellsburg-Brilliant Bridge, and Heritage Port in Wheeling; and Ohio blessing sites at the Steubenville Marina, the Wellsburg-Brilliant Bridge, Mazeroski Park, and Pike Island Lock and Dam.

Boater-cade's final destination is the Bellaire Marina in Bellaire, Ohio.

Radio connection is also listed on the website: Our Lady's Radio WWGL FM 97.9 Steubenville station reaches Follansbee; FM 90.7 reaches Wellsburg and Wheeling; Bellaire, Ohio, (Sunday, June 23) 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. LoL Radio stream [www.rdo.to/WLOL](http://www.rdo.to/WLOL) reaches wherever there is internet service.

### Wheeling's Welcome for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

Bishop Brennan and the Catholic faithful of Wheeling will welcome the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at the Cathedral of St. Joseph at 7:30 p.m. June 23. The cathedral will host an All-Night Eucharistic Prayer Vigil beginning at 8:30 p.m.

"Come and adore Our Eucharistic Lord! The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on the main altar of the cathedral for quiet prayer and adoration throughout the night," the pilgrimage website states.

The next morning, June 24, Bishop Brennan will celebrate Mass at the cathedral at 8:30 a.m. He will then lead a Eucharistic Procession at 9:30 a.m. from the cathedral through downtown Wheeling to St. Alphonsus Church. A breakfast will follow benediction.

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage presents Wheeling's Catholic faithful with these prayerful opportunities to gather with the pilgrims and deepen their devotion to the Eucharist, said Tyler J. Greenwood, pastoral associate at the cathedral.

"As Catholics, we are called to witness to our faith each day," Greenwood said. "The Eucharistic Revival in our country is very much a time of

witness—first, for us to be inspired by the witness of others who proclaim their faith in the Eucharist, and, that we may give witness by the very pilgrimage itself. This national pilgrimage is going to be witnessing to our brothers and sisters in the Catholic faith, of other Christian faiths, and people of no faith at all, that we have something that is truly life-changing and life-giving and that is Jesus Christ Himself, truly present in the Holy Eucharist.

"The world needs to hear this message," Greenwood continued.

"People in our communities and even our own families and friends need to hear this message. That is what we are going to do as we join countless lay men and women, clergy, and religious from throughout our country in publicly bearing witness to our Eucharistic Lord who can transform us if we welcome Him into our lives."

For more on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, visit [www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org](http://www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org). For more on the National Eucharistic Revival and Congress, visit [dwc.org/year-of-the-eucharist/](http://dwc.org/year-of-the-eucharist/).

Through the Catholic Sharing Appeal the Diocese purchased 250 tickets for the **NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS** July 17-21 in Indianapolis, Indiana so that every parish & mission could be represented.

## Who is your parish sending?



Act now before it's too late!

[dwc.org/year-of-the-eucharist](http://dwc.org/year-of-the-eucharist)



### St. George Camporee

hosted by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Catholic Committee on Scouting

The St. George Camporee will be held at Camp Mountaineer located outside of Morgantown, WV. **All Troops and Crews in Scouts BSA are welcome and encouraged to attend.** The camporee will feature the following activities: climbing, shooting sports, service, and Mass.

**When:** Friday, April 26 - Sunday, April 28, 2024

**Where:** Camp Mountaineer, Morgantown, WV

**Cost:** \$12 | \$25 after April 5

**Includes:** Saturday dinner, patch, and materials. All early-bird registrants will also receive a t-shirt, while supplies last.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
MOUNTAINEER AREA COUNCIL

Register at <https://scoutingevent.com/615-71430>

# West Virginia Catholic Community Takes Msgr. Sadie to His Final Rest

By Colleen Rowan

The Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston was filled with faithful from the community and across West Virginia who came to say goodbye to Msgr. P. Edward Sadie, P.A., S.T.L., the beloved, long-serving former rector of the basilica co-cathedral. His Feb. 16 Mass of Christian Burial that morning was celebrated by Bishop Mark Brennan with 34 of monsignor's brother priests concelebrating. Deacons, religious, seminarians, and so many others from the Catholic community and other faiths attended the Mass.

Msgr. Sadie passed away Feb. 11 at the age of 93. He was a priest for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for more than 66 years. Thirty-six of those years he spent as rector of the basilica co-cathedral. He remained in that role until his retirement from active ministry in 2016.

Very Rev. Casey Mahone, V.F., who early in his priesthood served as associate rector with Msgr. Sadie at Sacred Heart, offered the homily. Father Mahone began by extending condolences to monsignor's family. "Thank you for sharing him with us," Father Mahone said to them. He then offered condolences to the parish, the community, and all who loved him.

Father Mahone remembered Msgr. Sadie as so much more than his accomplishments and titles, noting that there are many. He recalled monsignor's sense of humor, that he was fun to be around, and that he was trustworthy.

"He was all I could aspire to be," an emotional Father Mahone shared.

When Father Sadie was named a monsignor, Father Mahone said he was asked to come to Charleston and say a few words at a reception in his honor. "I still remember my closing words, as true today as they were back then:



Martina Hart Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. P. Edward Sadie, P.A., S.T.L., at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston Feb. 16.

Msgr. Sadie ... nobody is more deserving of that title than you, and I shall try to remember to call you monsignor. But one thing in my life is certain—I have never been prouder to call any man father."

At a vigil service for monsignor the night before, Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, V.F., rector of the basilica co-cathedral, was the presider. Msgr. Paul Hudock, who also previously served as as-

sociate rector at the basilica co-cathedral with Msgr. Sadie, was the homilist for the vigil.

Throughout that day and into the next mourners came to pay their respects at the basilica to the man so many love so much and will surely never forget. Msgr. Sadie was buried with his parents at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Parkersburg.

# Catholic in Recovery Program for Those Suffering from Addiction to be Held Weekly in Parkersburg

By Colleen Rowan

**PARKERSBURG** — The first Catholic in Recovery (CiR) program is set to be held at St. Margaret Mary Parish Hall in Parkersburg at 7 p.m. April 15 and is open to anyone suffering from any kind of addiction and wants help. Meetings will be held weekly at this time and location.

The program will be led by John Bogdan, a parishioner of St. Michael Parish in Vienna. He along with fellow parishioners from St. Michael's and from St. Margaret Mary's and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Parkersburg helped spearhead the effort to bring this program to Parkersburg.

Catholic in Recovery (CiR) is a community of individuals and families seeking recovery from a variety of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments; it is open to all, Bogdan said.

"In CiR I've found support and a home for my healing from un-

healthy habits and feelings of abandonment rooted in childhood bullying and abuse. I am accepted for who I am and can be open about my faith in Jesus and His Catholic Church," he said. "As a result of CiR, I am finding peacefulness and am able to be more open and willing to share with my wife and family."

CiR is a recovery program grounded in the faith and is a lifeline to those suffering from addictions of all kinds and unhealthy attachments. These include alcoholism, drug addiction, pornography addiction, sex and relationship addiction, compulsive overeating and food addictions, gambling addiction, codependency and the impact on family, and general fear, control, and anxiety, the organization's website states.

Kathleen Barton, director of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, said CiR is a step program that addresses recovery from a Catholic and sacramental

perspective.

"The effect that addiction has had on our families, neighborhoods, and state is undeniable," Barton said. "The consequences have been devastating for far too many. Pope Francis calls us to be, 'An island of mercy in the midst of indifference.' CiR is just that. It opens the doors of our parishes to those who are suffer-

ing while offering support, hope, and guidance to a renewed life with and for Christ."

For more information about the meeting in Parkersburg, e-mail Bogdan at CatholicInRecoveryMOV12@gmail.com or call (681) 229-7220.

To learn more about the program, visit CatholicInRecovery.com.

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# West Virginia Teens Fired Up, Deepening Their Faith

## *Mount2000 Eucharistic Retreat*

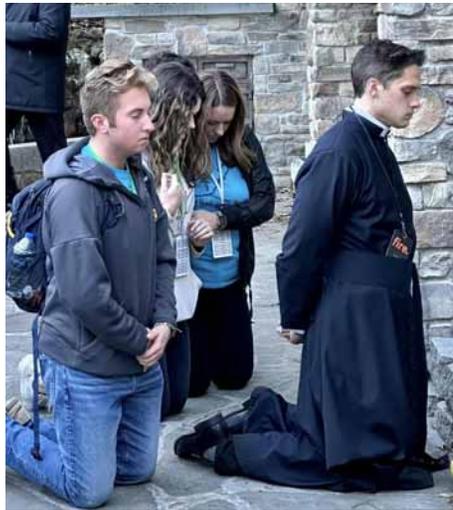
By Joyce Bibey

Ready to fire up your faith? Follow the lead of a few dozen teens in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, who chose to make time to strengthen their faith and personal devotion to Jesus through the Eucharist at Mount2000.

The retreat is hosted annually by Mount Saint Mary's Seminary for more than 1,000 high school students and their youth ministers/chaperones. Set in the beautiful and inspiring Catholic university environment, teens are able to encounter Jesus who is always ALIVE and ACTIVE each day of life.

More than 40 high schoolers and their youth ministry chaperones from the Beckley Vicariate attended the Mount2000 Eucharistic retreat in Emmitsburg, Md., whose message is a reminder that You were made for greatness!

The students were from Bluefield, Charleston, Oak Hill, Princeton, and Summersville. At the retreat the Beckley Vicariate group were able to meet up with teens from other parts of West Virginia, including 10 students from St. John University Parish in Morgan-



Courtesy Photo

From left: Joseph Flanigan, Abby Albin, and Lorin Albin pause for prayer with seminarian Michael Tupta in one of the prayer gardens during their Mount 2000 retreat.

town, traveling with Father Phillip Szabo, who attended St. Mary's Seminary.

The weekend was energized by national speakers, small group breakout sessions led by seminarians, Mass, Adoration, Confession, and both upbeat and sacred music. The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has six seminarians attending Mount St. Mary's Seminary – Deacon John Soplinski of Sacred Heart of Mary, Weirton; Dominic Re of Ss. Peter and Paul, Oak Hill; Bryan Tedeschi of St. James the Greater, Charles Town; Nathan Schmidt of Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling; Michael Tupta of the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston; and Michael Aiello, also of the basilica co-cathedral.

Lorin J. Albin, Youth Ministry coordinator at the Princeton parish, helped to organize the trip for the youth of the southern parishes, after the teens and adults learned about the opportunity through Tupta, whose summer assignment was with Sacred Heart in Princeton with Father Sebastian Devasya.

Seminarian Joe Derico, of St. Patrick Church in Weston and who attends St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C., was able to join the group when they made a stop to see the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

"Our tour of the basilica was a beautiful educational experience through such rich Catholic art and tradition," Albin noted. "As our tour concluded, we met up with seminarian Joe who gave an inspiring talk to the kids encouraging them to take joy in our Catholic truths and to receive what the speakers and seminarians had prepared for them, reminding them that God is going to do amazing things in their lives if they let Him."

The theme for the 2024 retreat was Fire based on Luke 12:49, "I have come to set the world on fire and how I wish it were already ablaze." The purpose is for teens to leave inspired and ready to share their voices in their parishes, communities and those who do not know Christ. Having time to focus on faith was a treasure that was made even more priceless by getting to spend quality time with the West Virginia seminarians and Sister Mary Pietà from the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal in New York.

"We were touched by the common theme among all of them — the greatest blessing of their vocation has been their own constant conversion and growth," Albin noted.

"Our teens are hungry, they are eager for real, honest catechesis," she said and added all the faithful play a role in evangelizing the others. "(Our youth) want to be led and given true examples of how to live a more holy life. I commend our parents and our parishioners for this. I often think that they don't even realize it, but they are inspiring our kids with their love of their faith and dedication to our parish."

Just one of many treasured moments during the Mount 2000 retreat was captured in a photo of Joseph Flanigan, Abby Albin, and Lorin Albin with seminarian Michael Tupta. The group paused for reverent prayer in one of the gardens at the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto.

The two teens shared their thoughts on the retreat that could be echoed by all: "Mount2000 was an absolutely incredible experience," Flanigan, who attends Princeton Senior High School, said. "I was ecstatic that our parish made this possible for our youth group to attend. Coming from a small town



Courtesy Photo

The West Virginia teens and chaperones attending the Mount2000 retreat hosted by Mount St. Mary's Seminary.

in Southern WV, it was amazing to be one of a thousand Catholics there to deepen our faith and connect with others on a similar journey. From the wonderful sights, sounds, smells, and Masses (particularly Adoration), I didn't want it to end. The retreat blew my expectations out of the water.

"Specifically, the beauty of the Latin hymns at Mass on Saturday at the Immaculate Conception Chapel, and the reverence and tranquility during our visit to Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto; were two of my most favorite parts of the weekend. It was affirming to see so many priests, religious sisters, and seminarians gathered in one place for the same purpose. It showed us (the youth) the unity within the Catholic community."

Abby Albin, who attends the same high school, also expressed her insight.

"I was able to learn and experience more with my faith in a short number of days than I have been able to in years," she said. "One of the most beautiful parts was Holy Mass in the Immaculate Conception Chapel. It was just gorgeous. The architecture and stained glass were pretty but even more memorable was the community. I fell in love with what was happening inside. When I looked around at everyone worshipping and loving our Lord in the same way, it was magical. Everyone was so in awe of the miracle that was happening in front of us, it reminded me that this is how we should worship at every Holy Mass."

"Being able to experience this weekend with our seminarians Michael and Joe and Sister Mary Pietà brought a new level of understanding to what we believe and why we believe it. This new appreciation deepened my love for our Catholic faith. Another reason I am so thankful for this experience is the friendships we formed with other Catholic teens from Southern West Virginia. Our faith community is small in

our hometown, so it was so meaningful to be able to share the love and passion I have for our Lord with others my age. I hope that we will have the opportunity to return next year."

Tupta shared his thoughts on the weekend, where it all began, and the vital purpose that we all need to hear and renew.

"Having the responsibility of being the small group leader for the Sacred Heart Youth group was the amazing culmination of some seeds planted over six months, dating back to my time in Princeton and Bluefield on my summer assignment last year," he said. "With a retreat focused on our Lord's Real Presence in the Eucharist and profound mercy in the sacrament of Confession, I tried to just be a mediator to encourage the teens to open up to Christ in a new way."

"Part of maturing in our Catholic faith is stepping out of one's comfort zone and trusting those who have your best interest in mind. So as the group leader and assisted by Sister Mary Pietà from the CFRs and fellow seminarian, Joe Derico, I encouraged everyone to let the Lord in and choose Him. This is vital for those growing up in a culture that is getting further and further away from the Gospel."

Albin said, "Mount2000 was the fruit of many efforts that began and seeds that were planted this summer at Sacred Heart. Under the guidance of our Director of Religious Education, Laura Wyatt, and Father Sebastian, we have been revamping our Youth Ministry Program. Our focus has been to engage our teens more, to help them open their hearts more fully to the beautiful truths of our Catholic faith, and to inspire them to take real ownership of their personal relationships with our Lord."

For more information about the experience to help your youth group contact Albin at: lorinjalbin@gmail.com.

# A Letter from Bishop Brennan on the Audit of Diocesan Finances

March 1, 2024

Dear members of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston,

Each year the Diocese has an opportunity to report to the Faithful a full accounting of the assets and income of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in the electronic and printed issue of *The Catholic Spirit*. The full audit report, including footnotes, is available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), where you can review the highlights of Fiscal Year 2023, which ended on June 30, 2023.

The Diocesan investment portfolio has been on a roller coaster ride for the past four years, with significant unrealized gains and losses alternating each year. In 2023, we recognized a healthy recovery from unrealized losses in 2022, almost enough to fully rebound. Mineral income remained steady in 2023; however, we do anticipate lower mineral royalties in the next several years as one of our main oil wells in Texas is expected to decline in production by 20% this year and could have steeper declines or even go offline in subsequent years. This will require careful review of our Diocesan budgets, and as such, we are migrating to zero based budgeting for all Diocesan operations in preparation for FY 2025. To maintain long-term financial stability, we want to create planned and proportionate responses to fluctuations in market value of investments and decreasing mineral royalties. That is why I am pleased that, overall, total expenses are down by five percent, even when we experienced higher inflation last fiscal year.

You will note in the statements that, while overall expenditures are down, spending on Evangelization and Education has increased. We do plan to continue our focus in these areas in 2024 and 2025. Different proposals to intentionally grow our outreach in Evangelization have been considered, and I look forward to creating a plan with the support and input of our Diocesan Presbyteral and Pastoral Councils this year.

Bequests and contributions received by the Diocese doubled in 2023, and in the Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA), generous parishioners helped us go well over \$3.1 million, which is by far a lofty record for our annual campaign. I want to thank our Stewardship and Development Office for its outstanding work on the CSA, and special recognition certainly goes out to our priests who helped their parishes reach goal in their respective communities. I particularly want to thank the clergy, staff and parishioners at St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town for their support of the Appeal. The generosity of the Church in West Virginia continues to inspire me, and I thank you all for your sacrificial giving. Complete CSA results were published in *The Catholic Spirit* in February.

One theme we have consistently stressed with parishes and schools has been the importance of balancing budgets locally so they might live within their means. I am pleased that parish and school subsidies were lower in 2023, and we continue to reduce Diocesan subsidies on our pastoral center operations and properties. Our insurance programs, however, continue to operate at considerable losses, which will need to be addressed. Parishes and schools must begin paying their own property and health insurance premiums in a timely fashion, which has become a problem for a number of our locations.

I am overjoyed to announce that we have 12 seminarians in our formation program at this time, and I just accepted four more for next year. We have several more men in the application phase. Priestly ministry is the backbone of parish life, and one of the budget line items I love to see increase year after year is our expenditures for Vocations Awareness and Seminarian Education. I also rejoice in the upcoming ordination of 20 new permanent deacons as well as a new class which is currently in dis-

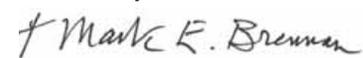
cernment. The laity must also reach out to others with the Gospel, but dedicated clergy are a boon to our evangelizing efforts. Let us pray for more laborers in Christ's vineyard here in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

For my final comments on this year's financial report, please know that of the many blessings I experience as your Bishop, working with a talented and dedicated Finance staff at the Diocese is one that continues to edify this local Church. Once again, our Finance team, supported by our Diocesan Finance Council, received a perfectly clean independent audit report. I am well aware of and impressed by their accomplishments, and I thank them for their professionalism and competence.

As God continues to pour out abundant grace on us during this Lenten season, I pray that we may all respond to the Lord with a stronger faith in God and greater love for our neighbor. Our material resources, discussed in this letter, must be used to help us further our mission as Catholics, that is, to bring Christ to others and others to Christ.

May God bless you, your families, and your friends now and in the days ahead.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

See Information Below  
and Report on Pages 8-9



**RETIREMENT FUND FOR DIOCESAN PRIESTS**  
COLLECTION DATE: March 3, 2024

### PARISH ASSESSMENTS

## 5 Things You Should Know

**What exactly happens to the money you donate at your parish on Sunday?**  
**Where does the money go?**  
**How is it spent?**

Here are five important things you should know about the Diocesan Assessment and what it means at your parish.

#### THE NUMBERS 1

**91 cents of every dollar (or more in many instances) stays right in your parish.** The Diocese does, however, assess some collections in the parish.

**6% of the Diocesan Assessment is used to fund the Priest Health and Retirement Fund (PHRA).** This money does not come to the Diocese but rather is allocated to a separate entity. It is used to support our priests as they age and leave active ministry and enter retirement.

**3% of the assessable income is Cathedraticum.** This is what is used to provide operational support for the Diocese. The assessment in our Diocese is one of the lowest in the country. What we receive in assessments that the Diocese collects is not alone sufficient to sustain Diocesan operations. The 3 percent is returned to parishes in need, such as mission parishes or parishes that have difficulty covering parish operations through their collections. The assessment is also used to support Catholic Charities West Virginia and Catholic Education.

#### DEDUCTIONS 2

Just like with taxes, there are deductions referenced above. Under the current structure, parishes are able to maximize their offertory income by taking advantage of the following deductions:

- The first \$100,000 of offertory and memorial contributions are exempt from the 3% and 6% assessments.

### YOUR OFFERTORY DONATION

**3% - Cathedraticum**  
\*Amount of parish funds assessed annually by the Diocese.\*

**6% - Priest Retirement Fund**  
\*Non-Diocesan Held\*

**91% - Stays with Parish**



- The first \$150,000 of parish support given to the school is deducted from assessable income.
- The first \$50,000 of parish support given to a Catholic high school is deducted from assessable income.
- The first \$100,000 of total bequests received in a calendar year are exempt.
- The first \$750,000 of principal and interest paid on a DWC or bank loan is deducted from assessable income.
- Approved capital campaign donations are exempt from assessment.

These deductions, which total more than \$1 million, are a great benefit to parishes as they reduce the amount parishes are assessed and increase the resources available for parish needs.

#### HOW IT IS SPENT 3

Cathedraticum is given right back to parishes. Currently, only about 75% of parishes across the Diocese are able to pay Cathedraticum. As noted in the recently released audit report, the Diocese collected \$485,839 in Cathedraticum for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023. The receipts from cathedraticum combined with Diocesan Funds subsidized parishes and schools at an expense of \$4,641,966. None of the Cathedraticum collected by the Diocese is used to fund Chancery operations. Cathedraticum is also not used to pay legal fees or settlements.

#### 2ND COLLECTIONS 4

Second collections are not assessed. These funds are collected for specific agencies outside the Diocese and the parish. Unless conducted by the parish for debt reduction, building funds, etc., the second collection is strictly a pass through the funds are not retained by the parish or the Diocese, but forwarded to the appropriate agency.

#### SCHOOLS 5

School funds and fundraisers are NOT assessed by the Diocese. Tuition payments, donations to schools and school fundraising revenues are not assessed by the Diocese in any form. Any Catholic Schools donation goes directly to the school and is used solely by the school for the benefit of students.

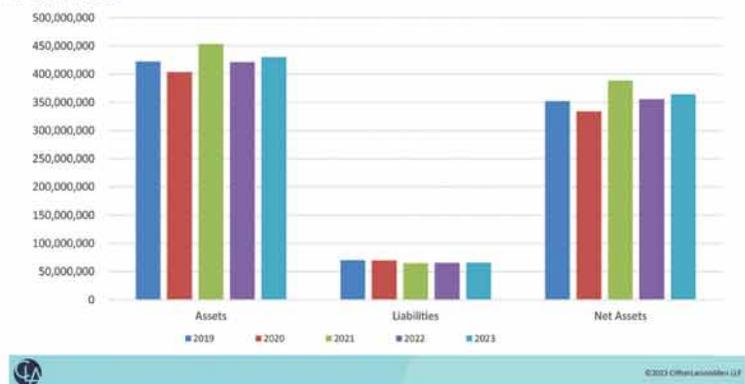
**To review the Independent Auditors' Report, Audited Financial Statements, and Notes to Financial Statements please visit [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org)**

**Statements of Financial Position - June 30, 2023 and 2022**

	2023	2022
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 4,217,759	\$ 1,468,001
<b>Investments</b>		
Securities, at Fair Value	264,699,898	241,940,327
Mineral Rights, at Fair Value	52,362,000	64,948,000
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>317,061,898</b>	<b>306,888,327</b>
<b>Receivables, Net of Allowances for Uncollectible Amounts</b>		
Mineral Rights	1,740,858	2,770,278
Investment Income	537,769	553,561
Procees from Sale of Securities	88,770	
Promised to Give and Bequests	986,449	142,585
Accounts	188,235	173,846
Premiums, Reimbursements, and Assessment	2,895,285	3,300,377
Notes Receivable	12,299,094	11,673,979
Prepaid Expenses and Other	477,097	337,064
Property, Buildings, and Equipment Net of Accumalated Depreciation	61,077,973	64,368,918
Interest in Net Assets of Diocesan Real Estate, Inc	27,621,013	28,403,988
Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts	1,027,979	1,003,622
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>430,220,179</b>	<b>421,084,546</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	3,009,797	5,270,952
Payable for Securities Purchased	81,001	9,014
Catholic Sharing Appeal Grants Payable	287,927	262,563
Amounts Payable for Collections to Other Organizations	135,946	228,516
Promise to Give Payable	1,125,000	1,687,500
Deferred Revenue	604,573	580,731
Certificates of Deposit Payable	37,271,057	32,981,060
Lines of Credit Payable	23,347,792	24,532,446
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>65,863,093</b>	<b>65,552,782</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions		
Undesignated	299,171,170	287,861,286
Designated - Victim Outreach	1,681,306	1,594,808
Invested in Property and Equipment	61,007,137	64,298,082
Total Without Donor Restrictions	<u>361,859,613</u>	<u>353,754,176</u>
With Donor Restrictions	2,497,473	1,777,588
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>364,357,086</b>	<b>355,531,764</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 430,220,179</b>	<b>\$ 421,084,546</b>

**Statements of Financial Position**  
is represented in the following graphs

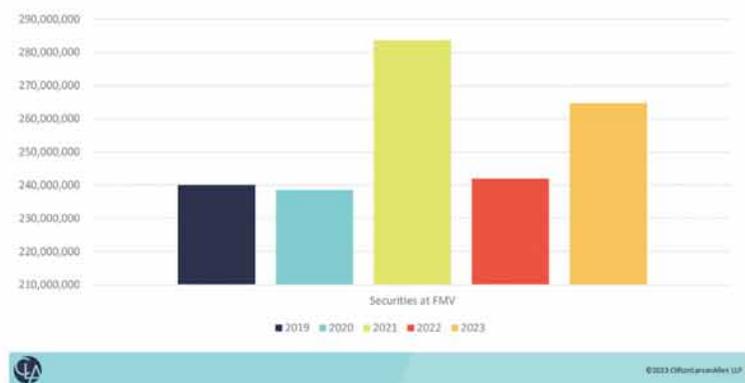
Financial Statement Highlights: Statement of Financial Position



Financial Statement Highlights: Net Asset Composition



Financial Statement Highlights: Securities at FMV



Entire audit with footnotes  
can be viewed online at  
[www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org)

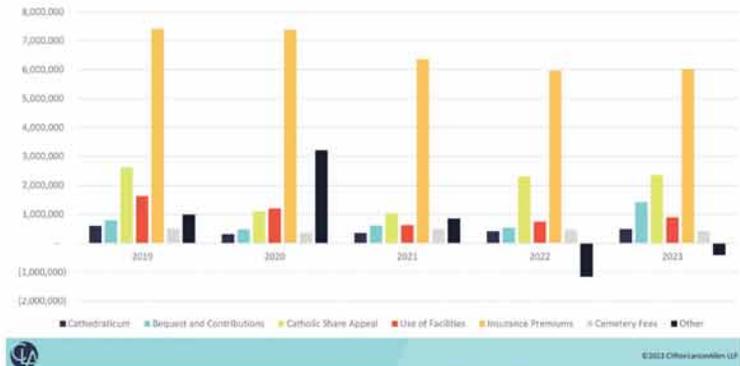
**Statements of Activities - June 30, 2023 and 2022**

\* Does Not Reflect Donor Restrictions

	<u>2023 Totals</u>	<u>2022 Totals</u>
<b>Revenues</b>		
Cathedralicum	\$ 485,839	\$ 405,010
Bequests and Contributions	1,411,682	533,576
Catholic Sharing Appeal	2,349,780	2,301,013
Use of Facilities	889,158	744,058
Insurance Premiums	6,013,152	5,958,734
Cemetery Fees	414,280	460,540
Gain (loss) on Disposal of Assets	157,326	(654,604)
Gain (loss) of Diocesan Real Estate, Inc	(782,975)	(777,536)
Other Income	214,873	276,552
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>11,153,115</u></b>	<b><u>9,247,343</u></b>
<b>Income from investments</b>		
Investment Income, Net	28,363,440	(36,158,659)
Mineral Rights Royalties and Lease	16,751,530	17,823,740
Bonus Revenue, Net	(12,586,000)	12,750,000
<b>Total Income from Investments</b>	<b><u>32,528,970</u></b>	<b><u>(5,584,919)</u></b>
<b>Total Revenues and Income from Investments</b>	<b><u>43,682,085</u></b>	<b><u>3,662,424</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Program Services</b>		
Insurance Programs	8,591,406	9,764,210
Parish and School Deposit and Loan Program	(576,455)	(856,717)
Pastoral Centers	1,570,837	1,825,857
Parish and School Subsidies	4,641,966	5,294,703
Parish Catholic Sharing Appeal Grants	1,427,039	1,490,311
Vocations and Seminarians	1,251,773	1,077,817
Catholic Charities Subsidy	1,424,867	1,452,240
Evangelization and Education	3,208,149	2,868,358
Communications and Technology	1,382,398	1,394,336
Mt Calvary Cemetery	794,631	812,972
Outside Entity Support	750,999	1,010,074
Wheeling University	553,194	--
<b>Total Program Services Expense</b>	<b><u>25,020,804</u></b>	<b><u>26,134,161</u></b>
<b>Support Services</b>		
Management and General	\$ 6,702,948	\$ 5,302,125
Mineral Management	1,300,263	1,158,941
Diocesan Properties	1,190,480	1,155,426
Investigations, Suits, and Related	124,532	2,411,798
Fundraising and Development	517,736	542,146
<b>Total Supporting Services Expense</b>	<b><u>9,835,959</u></b>	<b><u>10,570,436</u></b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>34,856,763</u></b>	<b><u>36,704,597</u></b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>8,825,322</b>	<b>(33,042,173)</b>
<b>Net Assets, June 30, 2022</b>		<b>\$ 355,531,764</b>
<b>Net Assets, June 30, 2023</b>	<b><u>\$ 364,357,086</u></b>	

Statements of Activities is represented in the following graphs

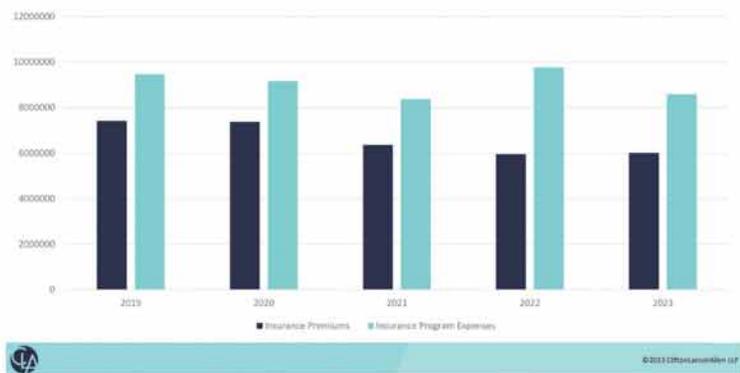
Financial Statement Highlights: Composition of Operating Revenue



Financial Highlights: Support Expenses and Fundraising



Financial Statement Highlights: Insurance Premium vs. Expense



Entire audit with footnotes can be viewed online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org)

# Summersville Lenten Mission Will Center around St. Jude

**SUMMERSVILLE** — Traveling Apostle Relic of St. Jude will be featured as part of a special event at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Summersville March 4-6. Father Michail Ford, OP, director of the Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus in Chicago, will lead the Lenten mission event.

Father Mike travels the country, sharing this relic of St. Jude's arm, spreading a spirit of faith, hope, and devotion. The mission will include

presentations on March 4 and 5, and will culminate on March 6 with a St. Jude Mass at 7 p.m.

Father Mike will conduct St. Jude oil blessings and provide time for veneration of the relic. Blessings and veneration will be March 4 and 5 at 7 p.m.

Under the theme "Preparing a Fantastic Holy Day Menu for Easter," the mission aims to impart spiritual guidance and inspire joy

and celebration. Father Mike will encourage attendees to embrace the Lenten and Easter seasons with a focus on preparing a holy and joyous menu.

Father Mike is the director of the Dominican Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus. The shrine, a worldwide ministry located at St. Pius V Church in Chicago, has united faithful believers in prayer since 1929. St. Jude Thaddeus, the patron saint of des-

perate causes, holds widespread popular devotion among Catholics. Shrine ministries include Masses and an internet prayer ministry, providing an opportunity for the homebound and those in distant places to join in prayer during times of need. The Shrine features the cherished arm relic of St. Jude.

For more information go to: <https://the-shrine.org>.

## Hurricane Knights Honor Financial Secretary for 30 Years of Service



Courtesy Photo

Gary Bonnett (left) was honored for 30 years of service as financial secretary of the Knights of Columbus Council #9483 in Hurricane. He is shown receiving a plaque from Father Vincent Joseph, pastor of Ascension Parish in Hurricane, and Grand Knight Will Dempsey who is holding his sons, Ryan (left) and Daniel.



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# Bridgeport Parish Invites All to Three-Night Parish Mission and Community Mural Painting Project

**BRIDGEPORT**—All Saints Parish in Bridgeport will hold a three-night parish mission and community mural painting project March 11-13. “I Want to be in That Number” is open to all, with artist, writer and storyteller, Brother Mickey McGrath.

“Everyone is welcome to join Brother Mickey. Every day, pick up a brush, and help in the creation of

a colorful All Saints Mural!!!” promotional materials state.

The themes of the three-night mission are—Monday, March 11: Silver-Haired Saints and Wisdom Figures. Tuesday, March 12: Wise and Holy Women. Wednesday, March 13: Saintly Servants of God. Mission talks will be 7-8:30 p.m. Mural painting will be 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Stop by at your leisure.

# Mother of Six and Catechist Will be Featured Speaker at Morgantown Magnificat Prayer Breakfast

**MORGANTOWN**—The next Morgantown Magnificat Inspirational Prayer Breakfast will be Saturday, March 2, at St. John University Parish Hall in Morgantown from 9:15-11:45 a.m. (doors open at 8:45 a.m.).

The featured speaker is Emily Concannon, mother of six and a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd catechist. Concannon will share her story of how the Lord helped her grow in love, trust, and compassion, through blessed friendships, losses, elusive diagnoses, motherhood, and chronic pain. A buffet breakfast will be served.

For more information, e-mail Claire Mey at CLRPL09@gmail.com, or call Mary Paul at (304) 319-2747. Register online at <https://giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/morgantownwvmagnificat>, and click on the home tab. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$12 for students.

# PSR Students at Holy Spirit Parish in Monongah Compete in Knowledge Bowl



Courtesy Photo

On Feb. 11, students in the PSR program at Holy Spirit Parish in Monongah competed in their Third Annual PSR Knowledge Bowl competition. They are pictured above with their medals and trophies.

# St. Peter’s in Farmington Honors Alice Priester on Her 104th Birthday



Courtesy Photo

Alice Priester, a member of St. Peter Parish in Farmington, celebrated her 104th birthday recently. She was honored with a birthday luncheon hosted by the ladies of the parish. She is pictured holding her cake with Father Binu Emmanuel, CST, (left) pastor of the parish, and Father Shinu Lukose, who was visiting the parish.



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# Pope Francis Bestows Apostolic Blessing upon Principal of St. Joseph School in Martinsburg

By Colleen Rowan

**MARTINSBURG**—Pope Francis has bestowed an Apostolic Blessing upon Maria Byrd, principal of St. Joseph School in Martinsburg. She was surprised with the honor when she was presented with the framed certificate of the blessing from the Holy Father at an assembly last month during Catholic Schools Week.

“I was surprised by the unexpected kind gesture and overwhelmed by the appreciation shown for the work that administrators do,” Byrd said. “I was filled with deep thanksgiving to God for allowing this blessing to be bestowed upon me. It brought tears to my eyes.”

The certificate states in part: The Holy Father Francis cordially imparts the requested Apostolic Blessing to Maria Byrd ... invoking



Meg Partington Photo  
**Maria Byrd, principal of St. Joseph School in Martinsburg, has received an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis. She is pictured holding the framed certificate.**

through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary an abundance of Divine Graces...

Byrd was nominated for

the blessing by a family (who wished to remain anonymous) with two children at the school as a token of appreciation for her one-year anniversary as principal. The certificate is dated July 2023.

Father Thomas Gallagher, pastor of the school and St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg, had the certificate framed and was happy to present it to her at the assembly.

“It was a pleasant surprise to hear that His Holiness, Pope Francis, imparted his Apostolic Blessing upon our principal, Mrs. Maria Byrd. One of our school families sought this blessing for Mrs. Byrd in recognition of all her hard work and the good that she has done for St. Joseph School,” Father Gallagher said, adding that he felt the assembly was the perfect place for the surprise as stu-

dents from kindergarten through eighth grades were gathered.

“The children were excited for Mrs. Byrd and the blessing bestowed upon her,” Father Gallagher recalled. “We are grateful to His Holiness for giving his blessing to Mrs. Byrd, and to Maria for her presence and the joy of the Catholic faith she has brought to our school.”

To Byrd, receiving an Apostolic Blessing is a reassurance of her vocation. “I pray that, with God’s help, I am able to continue serving our community in this role,” she said.

Now nearing the end of her second year as principal of St. Joseph School, Byrd feels humbled to serve a growing community and considers the school to be “a wonderful ministry, a work of love and sacrifice.”

Her husband, Richard Byrd, is a deacon candidate for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and very supportive of her work, she said. Their children attended Catholic schools in Alabama and Virginia for many years. Their oldest son, Richard, is a senior at Liberty University; and their younger son, Anthony, is a sophomore at West Virginia University.

As she reflected on the honor, Byrd wanted to encourage schools’ administrators in their hard work and sacrifice.

“Being the love of Christ to our staff and students each day is worth the trouble,” she said. Byrd then pointed to John 16:33: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

# Send Ukraine Humanitarian Aid Amid War, Religious Persecution, Says U.S. Bishops’ Committee Chair

By Gina Christian

**(OSV News)** — A U.S. bishop is calling for peace in Ukraine and humanitarian aid for its people as Russia’s full-scale invasion of that nation enters its third year.

“The magnitude of the suffering in the Ukrainian conflict continues to sear the conscience of the faithful,” said Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace.

In a Feb. 23 statement, Bishop Zaidan pointed to the widespread damage inflicted by Russia’s Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine, which continued attacks begun in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and the backing of military separatists in Ukraine’s Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Bishop Zaidan cited in his statement statistics from a United Nations report placing the number of Ukrainian civilians killed and injured above 30,000. The aggression has been declared a genocide in two joint reports from the New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights. Ukraine has reported more than 126,037 war crimes

committed by Russia to date in Ukraine since February 2022. “Schools, hospitals, apartments, and basic infrastructure supplying power have been hit by missiles,” said Bishop Zaidan. “In the face of such destruction and death, people are repeatedly displaced, insecure as to where to find safety.”

“The Catholic Church, including many Catholic welfare organizations are trying to meet these enormous needs both within Ukraine and in other countries impacted by this war which has raged on for two full years,” said Bishop Zaidan, adding that the USCCB’s annual collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe “has been critical in providing much-needed aid to the region.”

At the same time, he said, “Russia’s withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative has greatly heightened global food security concerns, increasing food prices, and jeopardizing the health and lives of poor and vulnerable people dependent on food assistance for survival. “I urge the U.S. government to do all that it can to provide much needed humanitarian assistance quickly,” said Bishop Zaidan. He also expressed concern about Russia’s repressive ac-

tions against various religious communities in Ukraine, which have seen religious leaders arrested, tortured and killed, and more than 600 religious structures destroyed or turned into Russian military bases.

In December, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church revealed Russian authorities had banned the church and ordered its property confiscated in occupied portions of southern Ukraine. The Knights of Columbus and Caritas, the official humanitarian arm of the worldwide Catholic Church, were likewise banned.

Bishop Zaidan pointed to a Jan. 8 address by Pope Francis in which the pope warned against allowing “the persistence of a conflict that continues to metastasize, to the detriment of millions of persons.”

OSV News sat down with Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, recently returned from his latest visit to Ukraine, for his insights on the war. The archbishop told OSV News that “wherever there is Russian occupation, there is genocide,” and that Ukrainians know “if we don’t defend ourselves, we’ll be killed.”

He also warned that failure to stop Russia’s aggression will have dire consequences for geopolitical stability and for religious freedom. “The Ukrainian Catholic Church gets eradicated as a legal, visible entity every time there’s a Russian occupation,” he said, noting this is already happening in parts of Ukraine under Russian occupation. Praying, staying properly informed about the war, and continuing support for Ukraine are vital, said the archbishop. “Ukrainians are very grateful to all who pray, who advocate, and who help. There’s a special respect for America,” he said, adding that Ukrainians are “going to fight

and defend God-given principles, God-given dignity, so that our children and grandchildren don’t have to suffer. ... We have to stop (Russia’s aggression), no matter what the cost.”

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

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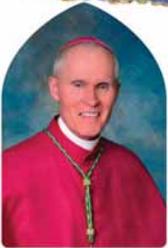
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**Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:** La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org)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

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

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades 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; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

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

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la 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.

### JOB OPENINGS AT ST. JOHN XXIII PASTORAL CENTER IN CHARLESTON

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has the following job openings at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston: **Cook**—The Cook at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, as a member of Diocesan Services, is committed to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ and offering hospitality to our guests. The Cook is responsible for the preparation, service, clean-up and storage of all meals, snacks and food service for special functions. Assures the kitchen/dining room/dish room areas are clean and in good order at the end of a shift or function. Oversees and assists kitchen aides in the preparation, service and storage of food and cleanliness of the kitchen/dining area. Works early mornings, evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays as needed. Covers housekeeping department when needed. Prefer at least one year experience in food service. **Evening Housekeeper**—The Evening Housekeeper at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, as a member of Diocesan Services, is committed to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ and offering hospitality to our guests. The Evening Housekeeper is responsible for cleaning and preparing the facility, laundry and guest relations. Works evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays as needed. Helps in kitchen when needed. **Maintenance Worker**—The Maintenance Worker position at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, as a member of Diocesan Services, is committed to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ and offering hospitality to our guests. The Maintenance position is responsible for assisting in tasks related to the general maintenance of the Center buildings (interior and exterior), grounds, equipment and vehicles. Usually works Monday-Friday day shift. Occasional evenings, weekends and holidays/holydays as needed. Helps in kitchen when needed.

Contact the Director, Gerri Wright at 304.342.0507 or [gwright@dwc.org](mailto:gwright@dwc.org) to schedule an interview or for more information.

### SCHOOL NURSE NEEDED

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is looking to fill the position of School Nurse for its School Based Health Program. This is a Full Time position requiring 40 Hours per week for 40 Weeks. The position is located at St. Paul School and St. Joseph the Worker School (with reach out to Madonna High School as needed) in Weirton, WV.

The school nurse is responsible for planning, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating school health services within the context of the School Based Health Program. The nurse serves in the roles of program manager, case manager, direct care provider, collaborator, advocate, educator and counselor to students, parents, faculty, and the community as appropriate.

The successful candidate will possess a current valid WV Nursing License with a BSN. Pediatric, adolescent or public health experience is desired. The individual must be able to function independently within scope of practice. Interested persons should submit a resume to Erin McFarland, School Based Health Coordinator, at [emcfarland@weirtonstpauls.org](mailto:emcfarland@weirtonstpauls.org)

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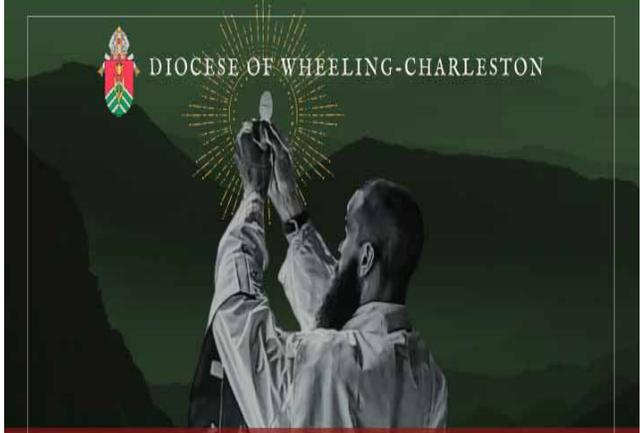
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