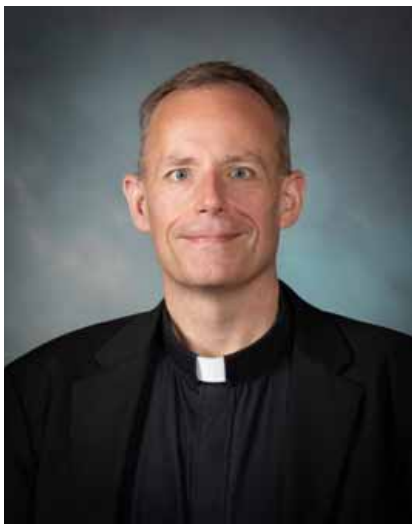


THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Seminarian John Soplinski to be Ordained Deacon



John Soplinski

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has announced that seminarian John Soplinski will be ordained a deacon by Bishop Mark Brennan at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling at 11 a.m. May 27.

“I have watched as John progressed through seminary and seen how the Lord has transformed him into the man to be ordained today,” said Father Brian Crenwelge, director of Vocations for the diocese. “He is a great brother to his fellow seminarians who really look up to him. He has a tremendous love for West Virginia and its people. I am excited to see him give of himself as a deacon this year as he prepares to be ordained a priest next year.”

Upon his ordination, Soplinski will receive an assignment and will spend a year preaching the gospel. In these weeks leading up to this joyful day in his life and in the life of the church in West Virginia, **See “Soplinski” on Page 2**

Eucharistic Congress Gathers Faithful from across Diocese’s Northern Region



Colleen Rowan Photo

Four-year-old Jeremiah Takats presents a book of prayer intentions from the faithful to Bishop Mark Brennan at the Eucharistic Congress in Wheeling. With Jeremiah is his father, Jeff Takats, a religion teacher at Madonna High School in Weirton.

By Colleen Rowan

“It’s important that we understand what the Eucharist is. It is nothing less than Jesus Christ in person,” Bishop Mark Brennan said in his homily for the closing Mass of Wheeling’s Eucharistic Congress April 29 at the Cathedral of St. Jo-

seph in Wheeling.

Catholic faithful, priests, and religious from throughout the northern region of the diocese participated in the two-day congress to celebrate Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist. Wheeling’s was the second of three congresses being held in West Virginia in con-

junction with the U.S. bishop’s three-year National Eucharistic Revival. The first congress was held the weekend before at St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town for the eastern region of the diocese, and the third will be held in Charleston for the southern region **See “Congress” on Page 3**

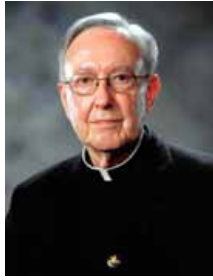
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Fairmont State’s Newman Center Chapel Rededicated, Page 9

Obituary—Father Robert G. Park

Father Robert G. Park died May 3, 2023, in Wheeling at the age of 93. He was born in Parkersburg, W.Va., on July 25, 1929, the son of Rollie Park and Mary Hendershot Park. He graduated from Parkersburg High School in 1947. He attended Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio; LaSalette College in Hartford, Conn.; St. Mary University in Baltimore, where he received his A.B. and Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology Degree; Ohio University, where he received a master's in education; and West Virginia University College of Graduate Studies, where he received a Master of Arts.



Father Park was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 1957, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Parkersburg by Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell. His first assignment was as associate pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Parkersburg from 1957-1963. During that time, he was also a teacher at Parkersburg Catholic High School and then became principal of the school. In 1963, he was appointed assistant spiritual director at St. Joseph Preparatory Seminary in Vienna, W.Va., and then as principal in 1966, as vice rector in 1969, and as rector in 1972. He then served as pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Ravenswood, W.Va., from 1978-1982 and was in residence at St. Francis Xavier in Parkersburg in 1982.

Father Park opened the Center for Behavioral Counseling and Ministry (which was lat-

er named Behavioral Counseling and Ministry) for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in 1982. He was appointed the director that same year and served in the position for 41 years until his death. He also was Delegate of the Bishop for Clergy and later the Ministry Delegate for Clergy for the diocese, a position he served in for the last 36 years until his death.

Father Park assisted Kay Wharton in conducting 12-step retreats and Lou Tesconi in conducting retreats for persons living with AIDS. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Father Park would have celebrated his 66th anniversary of priesthood on June 1, 2023.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday, May 10, at 11:30 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier Church in Parkersburg with Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, presiding. Father John Finnell will be the homilist for the Mass. Additionally, a Memorial Mass will be celebrated on May 18 at noon at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling, W.Va., with Bishop Brennan presiding. Both Masses will be broadcast on the diocesan website (www.dwc.org).

Memorial donations may be made to Damien Ministries, 2200 Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, DC 20018-0202; or St. Francis Xavier Church, 532 Market St., Parkersburg, WV 26101.

Soplinski...

Cont'd from Page 1
Soplinski feels grateful.

"I could not have made it this far without the prayers and support of the faithful of West Virginia," he shared. "I am grateful to be given the opportunity to serve them on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The faithful can continue their prayers for Soplinski by gathering with him at an hour of Eucharistic Adoration the night before the ordination on May 26 at 7 p.m. at St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling. "All are invited to attend to pray for John as he prepares to be ordained a deacon," Father Crenwelge said.

Soplinski's home parish is Sacred Heart of Mary in Weirton. He attended Sacred Heart of Mary Grade School and Madonna High School in Weirton, as well as St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa., where he received a Bachelor of Science in public policy analysis. He is the son of Gary E. Soplinski and the late Mary Patricia Soplinski. His stepmother is Susan Soplinski. He also has a brother, Matthew, and sister-

in-law Loraine, nephew Parker, and niece Zoe; and a second brother, Todd and sister-in-law, Jessica. He previously worked for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources from 1997-2001, and then Pittsburgh public schools from 2001-2017. He has attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., since 2018.

In his ordination as deacon, Soplinski will promise obedience to the bishop and his successors and take on the vow of celibacy. He will be vested with the stole and dalmatic (vestments of a deacon) by his uncle, Msgr. Robert J. Saly, Jr., who serves as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

Once ordained a deacon, Bishop Brennan will present the Book of the Gospels to Soplinski so that he may proclaim the Good News and model his life after Christ. The bishop will say to him: "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach."

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:

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


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

To Report to Diocesan Authorities:

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



To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:

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



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Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with

children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, please go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

304-232-0330



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Make Plans to Come into His Presence - Then out to the World

Final West Virginia Eucharistic Congress set for June 2-3 in Charleston

By Joyce Bibey

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's final Spring Eucharistic Congress will be held in Charleston on June 2-3. Christ will be present! Will you be?

The faithful of all ages from around the diocese are invited to join Bishop Mark Brennan to celebrate Christ's True Presence in the Eucharist.

Hundreds of faithful have already experienced the previous two Spring Congresses held in Charles Town and Wheeling as part of the diocesan year for the Eucharistic Revival, enjoying breathtaking Taizé prayer services, fellowship, dynamic speakers, inspirational break out presenters, Adoration, Mass, and more.

Bishop Mark Brennan hopes to see people from all over the diocese gather in Charleston for the last of the regional congresses before the Eucharistic Revival's Diocesan Year becomes the Parish Year for Revival. There will be something for attendees from school age on up. The whole family is encouraged to attend along with our seminarians, clergy, religious, Catholic organi-

zations, PSR programs, and schools.

The Charleston event is sure to inspire the whole family. Count on inspiring prayer as a community, celebratory music, an impressive display of Blessed Carlo Acutis' Miracles of the Eucharist, Adoration, the sacrament of reconciliation, and the opportunity to get closer to Christ!

The Congress will conclude with Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Brennan at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Admission is free. Registration is required in order to prepare for our reception, morning coffee/donuts, lunch, and materials.

Go to our dwc.org homepage and click on the Regional Eucharistic Congresses banner.

Parishes, Schools, and organizations to be part of the Procession of Vicariates

While Friday evening at the congress will feature a Taizé evening of music and prayer before a reception, Saturday morning will open with a Welcome Prayer Serv-

ice that celebrates our six vicariates uniting to strengthen our encounter with Christ in the Eucharist. Parishes, schools, and other Catholic organizations will bring their prayer intentions in a special Eucharistic Congress Book of Prayer. Each group will be announced as their Book of Prayer is formally presented to Bishop Brennan who will offer them in prayer throughout the Congress and the remainder of the Diocesan Year of the National Eucharistic Revival.

Who is the Charleston Keynote Speaker?

Father Joe Freedy will inspire us to recognize the Eucharist as Christ in person, wanting to be united with us. Father Joe is no stranger to faithful in WV. He was a featured presenter at our first regional Congress in Charles Town April 21-22; and has also inspired us at events sponsored by Mountaineer Catholic in Morgantown.

Father Joe grew up in Pitts-

burgh. He was the starting quarterback for the University at Buffalo for three years. After college he entered the seminary and was assigned to study in Rome at the Gregorian University and the John Paul II Institute.

He was ordained a priest in 2008 and served as the vocation director for eight years for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He is currently the assistant director of Evangelization for his diocese and the senior assistant at Divine Mercy Parish. He is president of Dry Bones Ministries, a grassroots evangelization ministry in the Pittsburgh diocese that re-evangelizes God's people with an emphasis on the treasures of the church like Holy Mass, the Holy Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and prayers for healing (<https://www.drybonespgh.org>).

For more details and to go directly to the registration, go to: <https://dwc.org/eucharistic-congresses/>

Congress...

Cont'd from Page 1

at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart June 2-3 (see story on this page).

Continuing his homily at the Mass in Wheeling, Bishop Brennan said, "Do not let the appearances of bread and wine deceive you. They do not change physically, but they do change in another way. In a mysterious way that I think we can describe but never explain, the Lord appropriates those physical elements—material elements of bread and wine—to his risen body so that when we receive holy Communion we are receiving his true body and blood, soul, and divinity."


Concelebrants for the Mass in Wheeling were Father Carlos L. Melocoton, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Wheeling; Msgr. Paul Hudock; Msgr. Joseph Peterson, V.G.; and Father L.J. Asantha Jude Perera, TOR, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee.

The congress opened with a candle-lit Evening of Prayer... in the spirit of Taizé at the cathedral April 28. As the service began, the faithful lit their candles from the Paschal candle. Music was led by Chad Carter, chancellor of the diocese, the St. Michael Parish Handbell Choir, the Cathedral Choir, and musicians and choir members from parishes of the northern region.

A morning prayer service at the cathedral marked the start of the second day of the congress. Faithful processed into the church carrying banners for the six vicariates of the diocese—Wheeling, Beckley, Charleston, Clarksburg, Martinsburg, and Parkersburg—as well as books of prayer intentions submitted by members of parishes.

Following the service, a talk on the Eucharist was offered

See "Congress" on Page 5




NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Christ is Present! Will you be?

June 2-3 at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston




Friday:
7 pm - Taizé Prayer Service & Reception

Saturday:
9 am - Registration/Coffee and Donuts
10 am - Morning Prayer Service


- Keynote Address (immediately following prayer service)
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament begins (concludes before closing Mass)
- Tours of the church
- Lunch and Q/A session with Keynote

Afternoon - Two Breakout Presentations (10-12 sessions to choose from all to inspire our recognition of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist and our lives)
5:30 pm Closing Mass with Bishop Mark Brennan as presider

KEYNOTE SPEAKER




Fr. Joe Freedy




DIocese OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

www.dwc.org

f @



RSVP & more info:



‘Jesus Christ Wants to be Held by You,’ Priest Tells Faithful at Wheeling’s Eucharistic Congress

By Colleen Rowan

Father Timothy Anastos of the Archdiocese of Chicago began his talk at the Eucharistic Congress in Wheeling by sharing a story that made his heart sink. He has been a priest for five years now, he told those gathered for his talk at the Cathedral of St. Joseph April 29. He recalled his first assignment in a parish, and preparing second graders to receive first holy Communion. On their big day, Father Anastos walked into the room where the kids were waiting before Mass. The girls were all dressed up in their little white dresses and the boys in their little suits. They were joined by their proud parents. Father Anastos asked the kids, “What are you most excited about in your first Communion today?”

A little boy raised his hand and joyfully said, “We get to eat God!”

This was profound, Father Anastos thought to himself. “Here’s this little boy realizing what we do at Communion,” he said. “It was great to hear him say that with excitement.”

However, the boy’s mother placed her hand on her son’s shoulder and said, “Father, I’m sorry. He didn’t really mean that. I know we don’t actually eat God.”

Father Anastos’ heart sank. “My heart sank because here is this mom who loves her kid, loves the Lord, and wants her kid to receive Communion,” he said, “but there’s something in her own heart that she doesn’t have a true understanding of the Eucharist.”

This, he said, is exactly why the U.S. bishops are having the Eucharistic Revival—“to help Catholics realize that the Eucharist is Jesus. That it is truly his flesh, truly his blood.”

Continuing his talk, Father Anastos pointed to John 10:10, “A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

dantly.”

Christ is the abundant life, Father Anastos said. “The Eucharist is the life we are seeking,” he said. “The closer we get to Christ in the Eucharist, the more we become alive.”

In his own prayer and reflection on the revival, three things have come to Father Anastos’s heart on what Jesus shares in the Eucharist, three different intimacies the Lord wants from us.

“The first is the Eucharist reveals that Jesus wants to be close to you,” Father Anastos said.

So often the faithful think that God is just really far away, he said, that Jesus is in heaven, he cares about us, but he is at a distance. But what the Incarnation reveals, Father Anastos said, is that he actually wants to be close.

“The closer we get to Christ in the Eucharist, the more we become alive.”

—Father Timothy Anastos, keynote speaker at Wheeling’s Eucharistic Congress

“Jesus Christ, in the Incarnation... he walked the walk,” Father Anastos said. “He died our death, he experienced everything that we experience.”

In the ancient world, Father Anastos said, this was unfathomable. “But God comes to us,” he said. “He humbles himself to get close to us.”

The second point, Father Anastos said, is “the Eucharist reveals that Jesus actually likes you.”

The faithful hear all the time in the Catechism, he said, and growing up, and in Catholic schools that



Colleen Rowan Photo

Father Timothy Anastos offers his talk at the Eucharistic Congress in Wheeling. He is host of Reel Homilies – minute-long YouTube, Instagram and TikTok reflections on the Sunday Gospel readings. He currently serves as associate chaplain of the St. John Paul II Newman Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Jesus love us.

“Which he does, and that is great,” Father Anastos added. “But Jesus actually likes you. Have you ever thought about that? He actually likes everything about you. And the things that you may not like about you, that you may be ashamed of—especially with college kids, it’s all about body image—Jesus actually likes these things about you. He created you, of course he does.”

In the Eucharist, Father Anastos said, Jesus coming to us, wanting us to receive him at Mass, to be in communion with him, and going to adoration is this beautiful way of Jesus saying, “I enjoy being around you. I delight in you.”

Father Anastos had the great joy of witnessing the marriage of his younger sister, Claire, in November. As she walked down the aisle, everyone was looking at her except for the married women in the congregation, Father Anastos recalled. They were looking at Mark, her husband to be, who had tears in his eyes looking at his bride to be. The women, Father Anastos said, were remembering their wedding days and how their husbands looked at them that way.

“I could see it in his face, he had tears in his eyes looking at Claire,” he said. “There was an adoration going on. There was this gaze of love where Mark was just totally delighted in his future bride. There was this look of awe, amazement, reverence, adoration to his bride.”

“That’s how he (Jesus) is looking at you every time you go to Mass,” Father Anastos said.

The third point is that Jesus wants to be held. “Jesus Christ wants to be held by you,” Father Anastos said. “When you come up to Communion

— whether you receive in the hand or on the tongue — he actually wants you to hold him. That’s how close he wants to be to you.”

Father Anastos shared that in his senior year at the University of Illinois in Champaign, he was offered a job with the FBI. He also had a great girlfriend, he recalled.

“Yet, in my heart, there was complete emptiness,” he said. “Here’s what the world is saying will make you happy—amazing girlfriend, great job, great career. But in my heart, it was completely empty.” There was a restlessness, he said.

At the time, he knew he was being drawn toward the seminary, but he kept saying no. He was putting God at a distance, he said. But then, that moment came.

Every semester, “Mass on the Grass” is celebrated on campus to evangelize to students at the University of Illinois. In his senior year, Father Anastos was an altar server for this Mass. After the celebration ended, he helped the priest take the Eucharist back to the church. He walked with him to his car and when they got there, the priest who was holding the ciborium with Jesus in it, said something that would change everything: “He looks at me and says, ‘Tim, will you hold our Lord for me?’”

That phrase reverberated in his head during the car ride, Father Anastos remembered. An in that moment, everything became clear.

“There was nothing else I wanted to do—not date this one person, not go off to the FBI,” he said. “The only thing I wanted to do was to hold the Lord in the Eucharist. In that moment when he said it, it was almost like Jesus was saying it to me.”

See “Christ” on Page 5



Colleen Rowan Photo

A woman spends time with Jesus at Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during Wheeling’s Eucharistic Congress April 29.

Congress...

Cont'd from Page 3

by Father Timothy Anastos of the Archdiocese of Chicago (see story on Page 4). He also engaged in a question-and-answer session following lunch at the Great Hall at Central Catholic High School.

The faithful also had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions led by Bishop Brennan; Father Anastos; Deacon Thom Trunzo who served at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling; Chris Bayardi, a high school religion teacher and director of campus ministry; Shirley Carter, director of Hilltop Campus Ministry at West Liberty University and Bethany College; Bernadette McMasters Kime, director of the diocese's Office of Worship and Sacraments; Joyce Bibey, manager of Writing and Social Media in the diocese's Office of Communications and Marketing; and John Yelenic, who has more than 40 years of experience in teaching and leading Catholic schools.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the sacrament of penance, tours of the cathedral, and a Eucharistic miracles exhibit were held throughout the afternoon before the closing Mass.

Christ...

Cont'd from Page 4

This is a call to everyone, Father Anastos said. "The intimacy Jesus wants is not only to be close to you, not only that he likes you, but to be held by you," he said.

He encouraged all to allow their hearts to be close to the Lord's.

"It's our Catholic faith," Father Anastos said. "The Eucharist is everything to us. ... If you chose to accept it, you are embarking on the greatest love story the world has ever known. And you will never be the same."



Colleen Rowan Photo

At the closing Mass for Wheeling's Eucharistic Congress at the Cathedral of St. Joseph are, from left: Tyler Greenwood, master of ceremonies; Deacon Doug Breiding of the cathedral; Bishop Mark Brennan, celebrant of the Mass; and concelebrants Father Carlos L. Melocoton, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Wheeling; Msgr. Paul Hudock; Msgr. Joseph Peterson, V.G.; and Father L.J. Asantha Jude Perera, TOR, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee.



Colleen Rowan Photos

At Wheeling's Eucharistic Congress, in the above photos, from left: a woman prays before a relic of St. Therese of Lisieux at the cathedral; a couple looks through displays at Central Catholic High School; and John Yelenic, speaks to congress attendees before his breakout session on the Eucharist for children.



Colleen Rowan Photo

Faithful hold candles at the Evening of Prayer... in the spirit of Taizé at the cathedral to start the Eucharistic Congress.



Joyce Bibey Photo

Sister Agatha Munyanyi, SJI, gives her candle to Tim Bishop, director of Marketing and Communications for the diocese, at the Evening of Prayer... in the spirit of Taizé at the cathedral.



Colleen Rowan Photo

The Schola of St. Michael Parish School in Wheeling sings a prelude at the closing Mass for Wheeling's Eucharistic Congress at the cathedral.

Catholic Distance University to Appoint New President

CHARLES TOWN—The Honorable Maria Sophia Aguirre, Ph.D., a distinguished Ordinary Professor of Economics and researcher in the field of finance, family, and economic development, will be appointed the third President of Catholic Distance University on July 1, 2023. The university's Board of Trustees unanimously elected Dr. Aguirre following a national search launched after longtime President, Dr. Marianne Evans Mount, announced her wish to retire at the end of the 2022–2023 academic year.

A tenured faculty member at The Catholic University of America, Dr. Aguirre has 30 years of teaching and research experience, while holding leadership positions at the academic program level, department and school levels, as well as the university at large. She was a Fulbright scholar in 2012–2013.

After completing Accounting and Business Administration degrees in Argentina, Dr. Aguirre worked in accounting and commodities trading in Chicago for several years before earning an M.A. and then a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Notre Dame with concentrations in monetary and fiscal policies and international financial markets. She has represented countries, including the Holy See, in international organizations, and served the U.S. President and Secretary of State as a presidential ap-

pointee confirmed by Congress in the capacity of Commissioner and Adviser for two presidential terms. Dr. Aguirre has testified before Congress in the U.S. and in several other countries, and has lectured and published extensively both domestically and internationally.

Since leaving government, Dr. Aguirre has worked to develop and implement Integral Economic Development (IED), an interdisciplinary approach to economic analysis that recognizes the role of social relationships—first manifested by the family—as key drivers of economic activity. Dr. Aguirre's research, and the two master's degree programs in Integral Economic Development she founded, have led to successful collaboration with a variety of business leaders, academicians, technologists, and policy makers on six continents, improving the lives of millions of people in the developing world. She is currently on leave at the University of St. Thomas in Houston conducting research on the application of IED to artificial intelligence and virtual reality.



The Honorable Maria Sophia Aguirre, Ph.D.

“In searching for a successor to our great President, Dr. Marianne Mount, CDU struck gold in recruiting Dr. Aguirre,” said CDU's Board Chair, Stephen Pryor. “Sophia Aguirre is a visionary academic leader with a track record of successful academic innovation, as well as pioneering economic research that is Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in action. As CDU implements its new CST curriculum in the U.S. and Latin

America, her international experience, fluency in Spanish, and research background will be game changers,” Pryor said.

Dr. Marianne Mount Lauded for Leadership

Dr. Marianne Evans Mount has served CDU for 40 years. Under her leadership, CDU has grown from a catechetical institute with a staff of two to the world's only exclusively online Catholic university, with accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and The Association of Theological Schools. Dr. Mount served as education director from 1983 to 1985, executive director from 1985 to 1996, executive vice president from 1997 to 2008, and as president since 2008 after earning her Ph.D. at Virginia Tech.

Under Dr. Mount's leadership,

CDU is implementing an innovative new curriculum in Catholic Social Teaching, enabled by the largest grant received in the university's history, as well as new academic partnerships that will foster enrollment growth and offer students an expanded range of academic programs.

In reflecting on her contributions, Pryor noted that “Marianne Mount has been a remarkable servant leader who has devoted her entire professional career to advancing the mission of CDU. Under her leadership, CDU has built a reputation as a pioneer in online theological education that is completely faithful to the teachings of the church. Dr. Mount was recently appointed as a consultor to the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education in recognition of her many contributions to the innovative realm of Catholic distance education. As she hands over the reins to Dr. Aguirre, the CDU community looks forward to an exciting future as a global trendsetter in online Catholic education.”

Dr. Aguirre's vision for CDU builds on the foundation laid by her predecessor. “Under the leadership of Dr. Mount, the university has forged an impressive path and is now positioned for growth that will include curriculum development in mission-related fields, a larger global footprint, and a new agenda of institutional research through CDU's proven online pedagogy. I am honored, grateful, and humbled by this opportunity to lead CDU on the next stage of its journey,” she said.



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West Virginia Hope Scholarship Application Deadline is May 15

By Joyce Bibey

WEST VIRGINIA—The Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston confirmed its 24 schools across West Virginia are receiving many inquiries about the Hope Scholarship program since the application process opened this spring. They are reminding interested families that the state's deadline for the program is May 15, cautioning that folks cannot wait until the last minute to apply because documentation is needed by the WV Treasure's office in order to process the applications.

The West Virginia Hope Scholarship (WVHS) is run by the WV Treasure Riley Moore's Office and can be used towards tuition and fees for non-public schools and home schools in the state. This scholarship is not run, managed, or determined by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston or the Department of Catholic Schools in the diocese. The website created by the state for the scholarship is: <https://hopescholarshipwv.com>

The site declares, "Hope Scholarship is the state's education savings account program that gives parents

an opportunity to build an individual learning experience that works best for their child. The scholarship allows K-12 students to receive financial assistance that can be used for tuition, fees and other expenses."

According to Moore's office, under the current school aid formula, each eligible student would receive \$4,488.82 for the 2023-2024 school year to use toward private school, alternative instruction programs, or home school. The amount is for each student and is not determined by income.

The state stipulates that money in the Hope Scholarship education savings account will be administered and through a third party and released by the parent/guardian for state approved expenses. All purchases would be pre-approved by the state. Beyond tuition, the funds awarded can be spent on special services, transportation, extracurriculars, tutoring, materials, supplies, textbooks, transportation, etc.

To learn more about the Catholic Schools of West Virginia go to: wvcatholic schools.org.

Teen Leadership for Life Weekend Set for This Summer

By Joyce Bibey

PARSONS—West Virginians for Life have announced the 2023 Leadership for Life weekend for teens.

The second annual WV Teens for Life "Leadership for Life" weekend will be Aug. 25-27 in Parsons.

This event is open to all 13-17-year-olds (high school) Catholic or non-Catholic – and has the minimal fee of \$25.

The program will be led by WVFL Board Member Riley Keaton and his wife Sadie, legislative director for WVFL.

The Leadership for Life weekend will be focused on leadership skills mingled with traditional summer camping activities.

"Our passion for protecting life

from womb to tomb brought Riley and I together," Sadie Keaton said. "I can't wait to share the beauty and purpose of the pro-life movement with young people."

The Keatons have served the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in administrative roles for Camp Carlo Catholic adventure camp. Teens for Life leadership weekend will be held at Horseshoe Run in Parsons. In addition to training and motivating peers to save lives in the pro-life movement, participants will also enjoy summer camping fun like rock climbing, campfires, hiking, swimming, archery, arts, and crafts, and more.

"First of all, we're going to have an awesome time," Riley Keaton said, and added that purpose and

mission will be woven into all activities. "Our real focus is on the pro-life movement. What are the best strategies for changing hearts on abortion? How can we be pro-life every day? How can we contribute our leadership to build the culture of life from womb to tomb? It's going to be an incredible experience for any young person."

The Keatons said last year's leadership camp was a great success.

"In between rock climbing, canoeing, and more, students dove headfirst into four concepts: Effective Education, Industry Impact, Public Policy, and Supportive Services," he said.

Teens who attend the camp will focus on respect for life at all stages,

but will also learn how important their role is, as well as how they can make a difference in their communities.

Like last year, the students will discuss and design projects they can do within their churches, groups, schools, etc. Further they will hear from the Keatons on their unique perspectives. Riley serves as a WV Delegate and Sadie will share her experiences not only as a legislative liaison for WVFL, but also how she got involved years ago with Teens for Life.

For more information and to register go to: <https://www.wvforlife.org/event/leadership-for-life-weekend/> or email questions to Sadie Keaton at sadie@wvforlife.org.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Social Ministry invites West Virginia Catholics to join One Million Rosaries for Unborn Babies

Prayer Event Friday, May 5th – Sunday, May 7th
Month of Mary



This is an international effort to have **1,000,000 Rosaries** said for the following intention:

**FOR AN END TO THE SURGICAL AND
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HUMAN PERSONS**



This is an international event started by the Saint Michael the Archangel Organization in Tennessee.
For more information about this event, see www.saintmichaelthearchangelorganization.org.

Think of the impact 1,000,000 rosaries said all over the world the same weekend can have! YOU can make a difference!

More Than \$420,000 Raised for W.Va. Catholic Schools

By Joyce Bibey

Thank you to each of our One Mission One Day to Make a Difference donors! We applaud our school advancement directors and principals for their fun and creative online fundraising antics on May 2 that generated a lot of buzz and more than \$420,000 for our 24 Catholic schools.

“One Mission One Day to Make a Difference isn’t only about raising money, it’s also about showcasing the greatness in our awesome Catholic schools in West Virginia,” said Assistant Director of Stewardship and Development Heidi Sforza.

All 24 schools participated, and more than 2,220 people donated to the school of their choice during the giving window. “This is the most donors we’ve ever had participate,” Sforza said proudly.

Each school announced before the event how the money would help them – for some it was tuition assistance and technology; for others it was security upgrades, and program en-

hancements.

“To watch the leaderboard and see so many social media posts from students, faculty, alumni and friends sharing what they love about their school and read about why it was so important for them to give was extremely heartwarming and exciting,” Sforza said.

The online giving day was created by our individual school advancement directors and principals with the help of diocesan stewardship, communications, technology, and finance teams.

The first state-wide, Catholic Schools Giving Day was held in May of 2020 and was a big success for our schools who had to cancel so many of their end of the year fundraisers and events due to the Covid 19 pandemic. We raised \$244,000 the first year and have grown each year since.

Students, principals, pastors, and alumni had fun rolling out videos on their social media, many of which were then shared on the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Facebook, Insta-

gram, and Twitter platforms. Sforza said that St. Paul’s “wiggled out” and powdered their principal when they hit their midday goal, and students at St. Francis of Assisi in St. Albans are looking forward to dunking their principal at their field day after reaching their OMOD goal!

Sacred Heart Grade School in Charleston raised the most money in the 24-hour event with \$70,510, followed by St. Joseph Catholic School in Huntington with \$49,389 and St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling with \$45,077, according to online leaderboards Wednesday morning.

For the fourth year in a row St. Paul Parish School in Weirton had the most donors (574), which shows a great community effort, Sforza said. They will receive an additional \$500 from the West Virginia Catholic Foundation as well as Sacred Heart Grade School for raising the most money.

Since launching the statewide giving day 4 years

ago, we’ve raised more than \$1.6 million for Catholic schools across the state, she added, “So, in just four indi-

vidual days - that’s a huge investment into the purpose and mission of our Catholic schools.”





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Fairmont State's Newman Center Chapel Rededicated



Courtesy Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan, center, gathers with Catholic students after rededicating the chapel at Fairmont State University's Newman Center to St. Gemma Galgani April 11. Also with the students are, at far left, Campus Minister Dan Thele and his wife, Carolyn; at far right, Deacon David Lester, pastoral associate at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish in Fairmont; and Father Kishore Babu Varaparla, HGN, administrator of Immaculate Conception Parish in Fairmont.

By Colleen Rowan

FAIRMONT — Bishop Mark Brennan gathered with Catholic students attending Fairmont State University April 11 to rededicate their chapel at the Newman Center on campus to St. Gemma Galgani, patron saint of students, on her feast day.

"Our chapel dedication to St. Gemma Galgani was such an amazing event that promoted fellowship as well as an opportunity to find faith and connection in an inspiring saint," said Shelby Reed, an FSU student. "It was amazing to have the bishop there at the dedication to help us celebrate a great step for our campus ministry."

She went on to say that the support from the bishop and the community at the dedication meant so much to the FSU Catholic Student Union.

"It was such an amazing display of fellowship and community in our church," she said.

Father Kishore Babu Varaparla, HGN, administrator of Immaculate Conception Parish in Fairmont, who is one of the priests who celebrate Masses for the students and minister to them, concelebrated the Mass with the bishop. The deacon for the Mass was Deacon David Lester, pastoral associate at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish in Fairmont. They all gathered with the students for a dinner in the Newman Center following the Mass.

"It was a good time with good people," said FSU student Elizabeth O'Neill. "Truly a special and blessed

time that won't be forgotten."

Dan Thele, campus minister at the FSU Newman Center, said students chose to dedicate their chapel to St. Gemma because she was a young woman of strong faith and diligent in her studies. "They found her to be both relatable and inspiring," he said.

St. Gemma was born Maria Gemma Umberta Pia Galgani on March 12, 1878. According to Newmanministry.com: She was one of eight children. She was called to the religious life at an early age but was rejected due to poor health. She was orphaned after tuberculosis took her parents and some siblings, being left with the responsibility to raise the rest. She had many ecstasies, including levitation to a large cross, embracing the Crucified Jesus. She also had the stigmata, and a supernatural closeness to the Blessed Eucharist. She felt totally consumed by Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and had many writings in her journal about this. She eventually came down with tuberculosis and died at the age of 25.

Along with the rededication, new elements have been added to the chapel. Father Leonard Smith, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley, donated a first-class relic of St. Gemma that had been given by Sister Marie Teresa Tellier, CH (Consecrated Hermit), after she passed away Sept. 19, 2022.

Cynthia García donated a San Damiano cross in memory of her late husband, Xavier García, and

her parents, Ed and Helen Dykhoff.

"We chose a San Damiano crucifix because the center's founder, Father Jude Molnar, was a Franciscan, and the San Damiano was the cross St. Francis was praying before when God told him to rebuild his church," Thele said. "In this time of post-covid rebuilding, it felt especially appropriate. There's also the connection of both St. Francis and St. Gemma receiving the stigmata."

Lastly, he said, a portrait of St. Gemma that emphasizes her devotion to the Passion of Christ has been placed outside the chapel.

Thele added that joining them in prayer for the rededication Mass were Sister Mary Grace, CP, and the Passionist sisters in Pittsburgh. He added that the Passionists were the order St. Gemma had

wanted to join.

Newman Centers are Catholic ministry centers present on college campuses to keep young people connected to their Catholic faith. At the FSU Newman Center's St. Gemma Galgani Chapel, Mass is celebrated Sundays at 5 p.m. during the fall and spring semesters. A free dinner is offered to the students after the celebration.

In addition to Father Varaparla, priests who minister to the FSU students and celebrate Masses for them on campus are FSU Chaplain Father Binu Emmanuel, CST, who also serves as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Mannington and St. Peter Parish in Farmington; and Father Romeo Bacalso, SVD, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Fairmont and Holy Spirit Parish in Monongah.

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Memorial Mass for Babies Who Died before Birth to be Held in Weirton

WEIRTON — The FertilityCare Center of the Upper Ohio Valley, Inc. and the Weirton Catholic Pro-Life Group will be sponsoring a Memorial Mass for Babies Who Died before Birth whether by miscarriage, abortion, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy (no

distinction will be made) and whether occurring recently or years ago.

The Mass will be celebrated on Friday, May 12, at 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Mary Parish in Weirton.

Confession will be available at

5:30 p.m.

“So that we may best honor your child,” organizers said, please call (304) 723-0478 or (304) 748-0688 to RSVP.

All family members and friends are welcome to attend.



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Catholic Charities: A Safe Space

Brian Swoze lives in Wheeling without housing. To meet many of his basic needs, he comes to the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center.

“I come here because it’s a safe space,” said Brian. “There’s no judgment – just people here to help.”

The Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center provides comprehensive social services, including: food and hygiene pantry services; meal delivery services to homebound persons; emergency assistance for rent, mortgage and utilities; and case management services.

The Neighborhood Center also provides a day shelter and on-site breakfast and dinner service, which have been crucial for Brian. He speaks fondly of his relationship with Betty Simeth, Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center Food Program Manager.

“She’s [Betty] firm but nice. She doesn’t judge. A lot of people don’t do that for people like me,” said Brian.

Betty and our entire team at Catholic Charities are committed to meeting our clients where they are and walking alongside them in their journeys, living our Gospel call to serve one another.

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

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

Courtesy Photo

Brian Swoze (left) says he appreciates the care and compassion he is shown from Betty Simeth (right) at Catholic Charities.




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Confirmation at St. Patrick Parish in Weston April 25

Confirmation Schedule

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, May 6: St. Mary, Star City, 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, May 6: St. John University, Morgantown, 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, May 11: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Albans, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 13: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 14: Our Lady of Fatima, Huntington, 11:00 a.m.
Sunday, May 14: St. Joseph, Huntington, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 17: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 6:30 p.m.
Friday, May 19: St. Leo, Inwood, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 20: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 20: St. James, Charles Town, 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 21: St. Vincent de Paul, Berkeley Springs, 9:00 a.m.
Sunday, May 21: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 4:00 p.m.
Monday, May 22: Assumption, Keyser, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 28: St. Paul, Weirton, 2:00 p.m.
Thursday, June 1: St. Agnes, Charleston, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 10: Sacred Heart, Princeton, 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, June 10: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley, 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 18: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, June 24: Mater Dolorosa, Paden City, 5:00 p.m.

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'God is with us' Amid Evil of Mass Shooting, Says Texas Deacon

By **Gina Christian**

(OSV News) — As a small Texas community grapples with a mass shooting, a Catholic parish is turning to prayer and trust in God. "God is with us amid evil," Deacon Larry Terrell of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Cleveland, Texas, told OSV News May 1.

The small town, located some 45 miles northeast of Houston, was the scene of an April 28 execution-style murder of four adults and one child at a residence.

The victims were Sonia Argentina Guzman, 25; Diana Velazquez Alvarado, 21; Julisa Molina Rivera, 31; Jose Jonathan Casarez, 18; and Daniel Enrique Laso, 9. All were shot at point-blank range with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle. Two of the victims were found covering two unharmed children, according to San Jacinto County Sheriff Greg Capers.

Neighbor Francisco Oropesa, 38, is believed to have targeted the victims, who lived next door, after they asked him to stop firing rounds in his backyard late that evening.

Oropesa was apprehended May 2 at a residence near the Texas town of Cut and Shoot, about 20 miles from the murder scene, following a manhunt including over 250 law enforcement officers from more than a dozen agencies and a combined reward of some \$80,000. The Mexican national, who had been deported four times, has been charged with five counts of murder and is being held on \$5 million bond.

St. Mary's Masses April 29 and 30 were offered for the victims and their loved ones, who were not known to be parishioners, said Deacon Terrell.

A number of parishioners also attended an April 30 evening prayer vigil organized by the Cleveland Independent School District at Northside Elementary School, where Laso had been a student, added Deacon Terrell.

The tragedy followed an April 23 mass shooting north of Jasper, Texas, some 90 miles from Cleveland. In that incident, 11 teens ranging in age from 15 to 19 were wounded by gunfire at an after-prom party. Four teens were charged in the attack and in a second shooting that took place minutes later in downtown Jasper.

In an April 29 message posted on the Diocese of Beaumont's Facebook page, Bishop David L. Toups said the Cleveland shooting was "another act of senseless gun violence" that had struck the diocese "for the second time in a week."

"It saddens me for the communities of Jasper and Cleveland that they now have to heal the wounds of doubt and fear in the hearts of all of our citizens," said Bishop Toups. "It should deeply upset all of our sensibilities that a thousand violent crimes occur every year in Beaumont alone."

The bishop pointed to the "need to work together and pray as a community to build a civilization of peace and hope with greater respect for the sanctity of all life."

"May we as a nation experience a conversion of heart respecting the rights and the dignity of all persons," he said.

The first step in that conversion is trusting God, said Deacon Terrell, noting that Scripture repeatedly encourages the faithful not to fear.

"God is in control, and he will be with these families," said the deacon. "God is for justice, and we'll let God handle this. God is going to combat this gun violence in our country now. He is with us all the way to the end. ... We have to keep (these families) in our prayers, and pray for our country."

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

World Youth Day Helps Inspire Young People to Serve Others, Pope Says

By **Carol Glatz**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — World Youth Day is an antidote against indifference, isolation and lethargy, Pope Francis said.

Since World Youth Days were established by St. John Paul II in 1985, "they have involved, moved, stirred and challenged generations of women and men," he said in the preface of a new book, "A Long Journey to Lisbon," by Aura Miguel, a Portuguese journalist for Rádio Renascença. Vatican News published the preface May 2.

The initial intuition that inspired St. John Paul "has not faded," Pope Francis wrote, as today's world, especially its young people, is facing enormous changes and challenges.

Young people, he wrote, "risk self-isolation every day, living in a virtual environment much of their life, ending up as prey to an aggressive market that creates false needs."

"Getting out of the house, heading out with fellow travelers, having important experiences of listening and prayer combined with moments of celebration, and doing it together, makes these moments precious for everybody's life," he wrote.

"We really need young people who are at the ready, eager to respond to God's dream, to care about others, young people who discover the joy and beauty of a life spent for Christ in service to others, to the poorest, to the suffering," the pope said.

Pope Francis repeated his call to young people not to live life "standing on a balcony watching life go by," avoiding getting involved and getting their hands dirty, putting a screen between them and the rest of the world.

"Many times I have told (young people) not to be 'couch potatoes,' not to be 'anesthetized' by people who benefit from having them 'dumb and numb,'" he wrote.

Being young is the time for dreaming, the pope wrote, and for being open to the real world, "discovering what is really worthwhile in life, struggling to conquer it; it is opening oneself to deep and true relationships, it is engaging with others and for others."

But, he wrote, the world is facing so many challenges: the pandemic has shown that "we can only save ourselves together"; there is "the vortex of war and rearmament"; the arms race "seems unstoppable and threatens to lead us to self-destruction"; there is the war in Ukraine; and many wars and conflicts continue to be forgotten, "so much unspeakable violence continues to be perpetrated."

How are young people to respond, the pope asked? "What are they being called to do with their energy, their vision of the future, their enthusiasm?"

"They are called to say, 'We care.' We care about what is happening in the world" and about "the fate of millions of people, of so many children, who have no water, no food, no medical care, while the rulers seem to be competing to see who can spend the most on the most sophisticated armaments," he wrote. "We care about everything," including all of creation and the digital world, "which we are challenged to change and make more and more humane."

"World Youth Days have been an antidote to life on a balcony, to the anesthesia that makes people prefer the couch, to disinterest," Pope Francis said in the preface.

"WYD is an event of grace that awakens, broadens horizons, strengthens the heart's aspirations, helps people dream, to look ahead," he wrote. "It is a planted seed that can bear good fruit."

World Youth Day 2023 is scheduled to take place in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 1-6, and the motto for this year's event is a passage from the Luke's Gospel: "Mary arose and went with haste."

In his formal message for WYD 2023, published in last year, Pope Francis said that the figure of Mary shows young people "the path of closeness and encounter" at a time when "our human family, already tested by the trauma of the pandemic, is racked by the tragedy of war."

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‘Dios está con nosotros’ en medio del mal, dice un diácono de Texas después de un tiroteo masivo

Por Gina Christian

(OSV News) — Mientras una pequeña comunidad de Texas se enfrenta a un tiroteo masivo, una parroquia católica está recurriendo a la oración y a la confianza en Dios.

"Dios está con nosotros en medio del mal", dijo a OSV News el Diácono Larry Terrell de la Iglesia Católica de Santa María en Cleveland, Texas, el 1 de mayo.

La pequeña ciudad, situada a unas 45 millas al noreste de Houston, fue escenario el 28 de abril de un asesinato estilo ejecución de cuatro adultos y un niño en una residencia.

Las víctimas fueron Sonia Argentina Guzmán, de 25 años; Diana Velázquez Alvarado, de 21 años; Julisa Molina Rivera, de 31 años; José Jonathan Casarez, de 18 años; y Daniel Enrique Laso, de 9 años. A todos les dispararon a quemarropa con un rifle semi-automático AR-15. Dos de las víctimas fueron encontradas cubriendo a dos niños ilesos, según el sheriff del condado de San Ja-

cinto, Greg Capers.

Oropesa fue detenido el 2 de mayo en una residencia cercana a la localidad tejana de Cut and Shoot, a unas 20 millas del lugar del asesinato, tras una persecución en la que participaron más de 250 agentes de las fuerzas del orden de más de una docena de organismos y una recompensa combinada de alrededor de 80.000 dólares. El ciudadano mexicano, que había sido deportado cuatro veces, ha sido acusado de cinco cargos de asesinato y está detenido bajo fianza de 5 millones de dólares.

Las Misas del 29 y 30 de abril en St. Mary's se ofrecieron por las víctimas y sus seres queridos, que no eran feligreses conocidos, dijo el diácono Terrell.

Varios feligreses también asistieron el 30 de abril a una vigilia de oración organizada por el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Cleveland en la Escuela Primaria Northside, donde Laso había sido alumno, añadió el diácono Terrell.

La tragedia se produjo des-

pués de un tiroteo masivo ocurrido el 23 de abril al norte de Jasper, Texas, a unas 90 millas de Cleveland. En ese incidente, 11 adolescentes de edades comprendidas entre los 15 y los 19 años resultaron heridos de bala en una fiesta después del baile de graduación. Cuatro adolescentes fueron acusados del ataque y de un segundo tiroteo que tuvo lugar minutos después en el centro de Jasper.

En un mensaje publicado el 29 de abril en la página de Facebook de la Diócesis de Beaumont, el obispo David L. Toups dijo que el tiroteo de Cleveland era "otro acto de violencia armada sin sentido" que había golpeado a la diócesis "por segunda vez en una semana".

"Me entristece por las comunidades de Jasper y Cleveland que ahora tienen que sanar las heridas de la duda y el miedo en los corazones de todos nuestros ciudadanos", dijo el obispo Toups. "Debería herir profundamente la sensibilidad de todos nosotros que cada año se produz-

can mil crímenes violentos sólo en Beaumont".

El obispo señaló la "necesidad de trabajar juntos y rezar como comunidad para construir una civilización de paz y esperanza con un mayor respeto por la santidad de toda vida".

"Que como nación experimentemos una conversión del corazón respetando los derechos y la dignidad de todas las personas", dijo.

El primer paso en esa conversión es confiar en Dios, dijo el diácono Terrell, señalando que las Escrituras animan repetidamente a los fieles a no temer.

"Dios tiene el control y estará con estas familias", dijo el diácono. "Dios está por la justicia, y dejaremos que Dios se encargue de esto. Dios va a combatir esta violencia armada en nuestro país ahora. Él está con nosotros hasta el final. ... Debemos tenerlas (a estas familias) en nuestras oraciones, y rezar por nuestro país".

(Gina Christian es reportera nacional de OSV News.)

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:

La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar www.reportbishopabuse.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite www.reportbishopabuse.org.

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números 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; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al 304.230.1504. También puede lla-

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

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

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

Celebrate Earth Day at Mount St. Joseph

WHEELING—Plans are underway for the second annual Earth Celebration on the grounds of Mount St. Joseph, 137 Mount St. Joseph Road, home to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling. Festivities slated for May 21 from 1-4 p.m. include art installations, demonstrations, garden and nature displays, and exhibits by some of the congregation's partners who support their efforts to "Celebrate Earth, Our Common Home".

This year's festivities showcase the Congregation of St. Joseph as well as their many community partners who share their global vision. The event is open to the public and is free of charge.

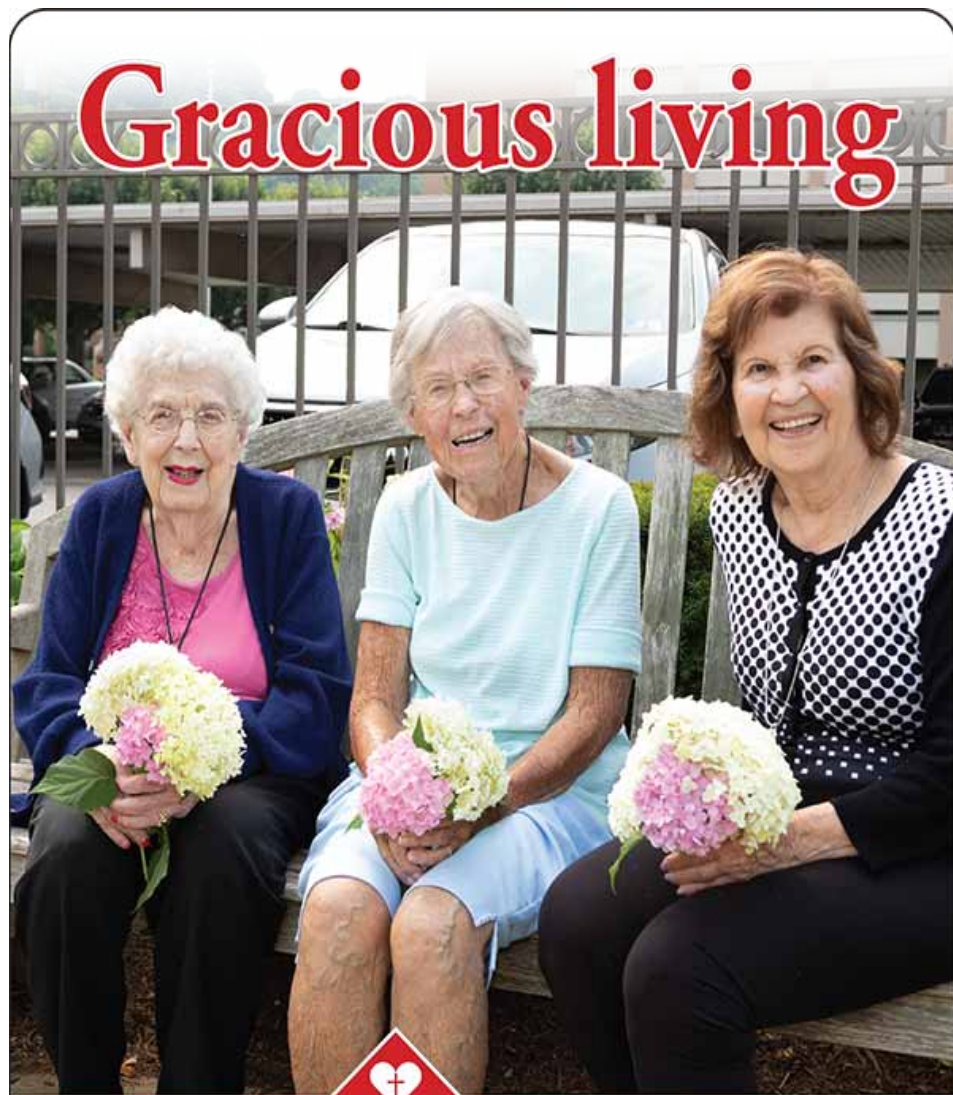
"The Congregation of St. Joseph is dedicated to caring for our common home, including taking steps to strengthen, heal, and renew the face of Earth," said Sister Kathleen Durkin, spiritual and retreat director, St. Joseph Retreat Center. "Our sisters, associates and employees have pledged to participate in the Laudato Si' Action Plan."

The plan, which was inspired by a Pope Francis letter by the same name, has seven actionable goals everyone can work toward to help protect "our

common home": the Cry of Earth, the Cry of the Poor, Ecological Economics, Simple Lifestyles, Ecological Education, Ecological Spirituality, and Community Resilience.

"As part of this pledge, we are developing an ambitious seven-year plan to address these goals. This year, we will address three of the seven – ecological education, ecological spirituality, and community resilience and empowerment," said Sister Kathleen. "We are joined in this initiative by our partners in mission and are working in collaboration with the global Catholic community."

This family-friendly event includes live music by local performers, traveling art installation by Uplift WV and House of Hagar and rain barrel demonstration. Talk with beekeepers, pick up a free packet of pollinator seeds, learn about Monarch butterflies. The kids will enjoy playing at the Fun-Raiser Urban Mobile Playground, petting goats and alpacas. Pictures can be taken with a life-size cutout of Pope Francis.



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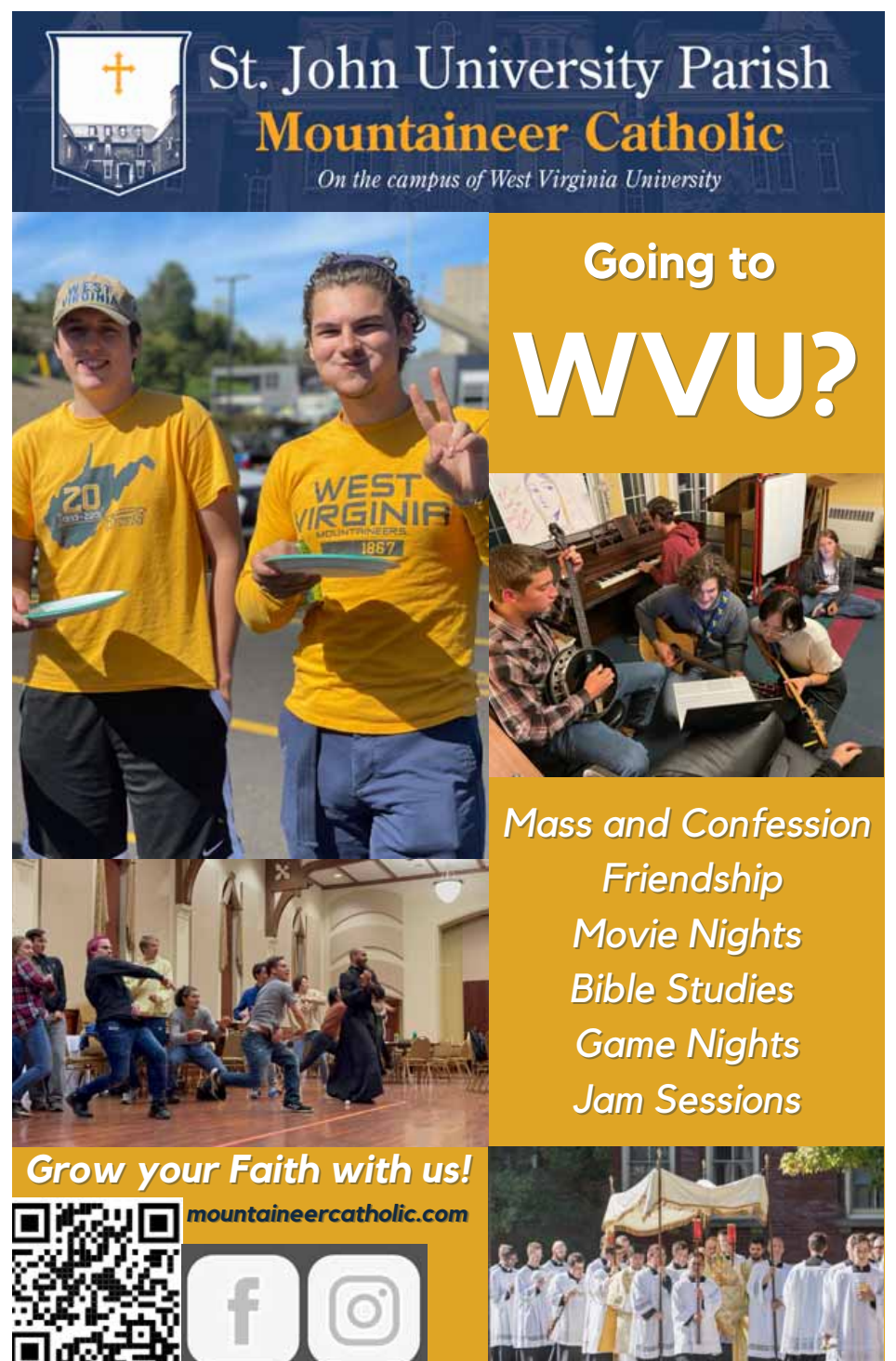
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