

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit



Welcoming Bishop Menjivar

By **Colleen Rowan**

After concelebrating the noon Mass with Bishop Mark Brennan at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on May 1, Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala told the congregation “it is wonderful to be here.” Just two hours before, at a press conference at the chancery next door, he was introduced as bishop-

designate of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Introducing him to the Church in West Virginia that morning was Bishop Brennan, who helped bring him into the priesthood and served with him as a brother priest in the Archdiocese of Washington.

“I’m very happy that the holy father has chosen
See “Bishop” on Page 3

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Statement from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on the Death of Michael J. Bransfield, Page 2

Photo: Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala is greeted by area Catholics following the May 1 noon Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling.
Colleen Rowan photo

Statement from the Diocese of Wheeling- Charleston on the Death of Michael J. Bransfield


Thursday, May 7, 2026

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has received word that our former Bishop, Michael Bransfield, passed away peacefully today. As it is the tradition in our Church to pray for the dead as well as for the living, we pray for the repose of his soul, asking God's mercy upon him. His funeral and burial will not take place in West Virginia, but we invite all the faithful to pray at this time for his family, friends, and caregivers.



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To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.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.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 Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other concerns such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in WV. EthicsPoint can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx> West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.



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The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

There are 10 print editions in 2026. At right are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org.

2026 Print Dates:

Month of Mary, Mother of God, May 15
Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, July 2
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 14
Triumph of the Cross, September 11
Month of the Rosary, October 9
Advent, November 20
Christmas, December 18

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 1

someone with the integrity, the intelligence, the zeal, and the love of God's people that I know Bishop Menjivar possesses," Bishop Brennan said.

Bishop Menjivar, 56, an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Washington since 2023, was appointed by Pope Leo XIV as Wheeling-Charleston's 10th bishop. He was born Aug. 14, 1970, in Chalatenango, El Salvador. He migrated to the United States in 1990 and is the first Salvadoran bishop in the country.

Bishop Menjivar began his remarks at the press conference by giving thanks to Almighty God, "for the many ways he has revealed his love and mercy in my life, in ways beyond imagining." He also thanked Pope Leo and Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, "for their trust and confidence in calling me to shepherd this beautiful Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston."

Bishop Menjivar thanked Bishop Brennan for opening the door when he arrived in Wheeling "and you have done this not only last night but ... you opened the door at the Archdiocese of Washington while you were the vocations director. You welcomed me into the Priest Formation Program. Little did we know what the Lord had in store for both of us. So, thank you for being part of this journey from the very beginning and I hope you will continue mentoring me as I learn and adjust to this new mission."

Bishop Menjivar said he is grateful to all who have welcomed him with great affection and hopes that the Lord wills many years of work together.

"I received the news of my appointment as the 10th bishop of this diocese with great joy and humility," he said. "... I come to you first and foremost as your brother in faith. I hope that you will allow this stranger to walk with you on the journey of faith and, together, share in our joys and hopes, in our griefs and anxieties. May we discover our common humanity and our shared dignity as children of God.

"Then, I come to you as your bishop, that is as your servant. Deep in my heart I feel that the Lord is sending me here to love you and to serve you. This is the only agenda that I bring — to love you and to serve you the best that I can, to grow in faith and in fidelity to Christ together,



Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Mark Brennan and Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala are pictured at the May 1 press conference announcing Bishop Menjivar as bishop-designate of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

and then to witness to the love of Christ here, in the heart of Appalachia, in this land of striking beauty, rich in diversity and in natural resources."

At the same time, he said, it is a place where many people continue to endure hardship, marginalization, and inequality but moving to a better and brighter future through the faith, resilience, and creativity of the people.

"Let me tell you," he said, "I will be deeply proud and honored if, with time, you accept me as a fellow West Virginian."

Bishop Menjivar knows the Mountain State well. Early in his priesthood, he helped with Spanish Masses at St. Joseph Church in Martinsburg. During Covid, he engaged in his favorite sport of hiking in George Washington & Jefferson National Forests. Loving the area so much, he bought a cabin in Hardy County's Lost River. "And since then, I have been spending my days off there," he said. "The people of the holler welcomed me and I feel very much part of that community."

Though there are only less than 20 cabins

there, he said it is a diverse community with residents being the decents of Hungarian and Italian immigrants—the backbone of labor for mining in the state, Bishop Menjivar said.

Bishop Menjivar's Ministry in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Bishop Menjivar wants to begin his ministry in the diocese by getting to know the people. And the best way to do that, he said, is by listening.

"I want to listen to the priests and the religious men and women who will be my closest collaborators in ministry," he said. "I want to listen to the faithful because as members of the Body of Christ, you have a voice in the church."

Listening as well, he said, to leaders of diocesan offices, "we are partners in mission"; to young people because "you are not only the future of the church, you are the present of the church"; and above all to the poor, those on the margins of the church and society, to workers, to immigrants, "Because as Matthew

See "Bishop" on Page 4

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Clockwise from top left: Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the May 1 noon Mass with Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala (left) and priests concelebrating and deacons serving at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling; Bishop Menjivar blesses a child following the Mass; one of the many faithful at Mass warmly greets Bishop Menjivar following the celebration; and Bishop Menjivar blesses a child during Communion.

Colleen Rowan photos

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 3

25 says, the way we treat the least is the way we treat Jesus."

He also wants to reach out beyond the church to the

wider community, to public officials as well as faith and business leaders. "I believe that together we can make a difference here in Almost Heaven, West Virginia," he said.

"I have much to learn, but

my heart is ready and wide open," he continued, adding that he hopes to spend much of his time out among the people visiting communities and families.

See "Bishop" on Page 5

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Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 4

Bishop Menjivar then offered a few words in Spanish to the Hispanic community of West Virginia.

The press conference was led by Tim Bishop, director of Marketing and Communications for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and attended by heads of diocesan institutions and diocesan employees who welcomed Bishop Menjivar.

Bishop Menjivar's Mass of Installation will be celebrated on July 2 at 2 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling.

Bishop Brennan will remain as apostolic administrator of the diocese through July 1.



A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

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Convocation Brings Bishop Brennan and Priests Together in Charleston



Martina Hart photo

Bishop Mark Brennan and priests are pictured following the Jubilee Eucharistic Liturgy at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

By Colleen Rowan

CHARLESTON—The priests of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston gathered with Bishop Mark Brennan for their annual Convocation at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston May 5-7. Attendees enjoyed comradery and time for personal meditation and recognized priests celebrating anniversaries and heading to retirement from active ministry.

In his letter to the priests in the convocation booklet, the bishop encouraged the priests to enjoy their time together and reach out to priests they don't know. "May you be strengthened in mind, body, and spirit to return to serve your people with joy!" he wrote.

Msgr. Rick Hilgartner, a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, gave three presentations throughout the gathering on *The Eucharist: The Heart of Priestly Identity*; *The Priest and the Ars Celebrandi*; *Ars Celebrandi: Rubrics, Norms, and Liturgical Adaptation*; and *Liturgical Environment*. Msgr. Hilgartner was also the homilist for the Jubilee Eucharistic Liturgy at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart which



Martina Hart photos

Bishop Mark Brennan and priests are pictured during the Jubilee Eucharistic Liturgy at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

was celebrated by Bishop Brennan.

Priests also heard a presentation on the "Canonization of Fr. Charles R. Carroll," a long-

serving and beloved priest of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston who died in 1989.

See "Convocation" on Page 7



Martina Hart photos

Very Rev. Sebastian Devasya, V.E., speaks at the convocation as Bishop Mark Brennan looks on.

Convocation ...

Cont'd from Page 6

The following priests

were honored as they are celebrating anniversaries of their ordinations to priesthood this year:

60th Anniversary

Msgr. Samuel S. Sacus

50th Anniversary

Bishop Mark E. Brennan
Rev. David Griffin,
O.S.B.
Rev. Robert Perriello

25th Anniversary

Rev. Aloysius N. Boh
Rev. Joseph Kutty K.
Sebastian
Rev. Edward A. Tetteh,
S.V.D.

45th Anniversary

Msgr. Dean G. Borgmeyer

40th Anniversary

Rev. Paul M. Cabrita,
S.M.

35th Anniversary

Rev. Daniel A. Oppenheimer,
C.R.N.J.

30th Anniversary

Rev. William K. Matheny
Rev. Shaji J. Thomas

20th Anniversary

Rev. Charles E. McGinnis
Rev. Dennis R.
Schuelkens, Jr.
Rev. Dominikus Baok,
S.V.D.

15th Anniversary

Rev. Jose Manuel Escalante
Rev. Andrew M. Switzer
Rev. Dominic Huynh
Pham, S.V.D.

10th Anniversary

Rev. Brian J. Crenwelge
Rev. Daniel M. Price
Rev. Kotaiah Thomas
Dharelli, H.G.N.

5th Anniversary

Rev. Phillip R. Szabo
Rev. Lusius Mite, S.V.D.

Retiring from active ministry this year are:

Rev. William K. Matheny
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Rev. James E. O'Connor



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'Truly Blessed to Celebrate a Beautiful May Crowning'



“We were truly blessed to celebrate a beautiful May Crowning at Mass today” officials at St. Joseph the Worker School in Weirton said May 3 in a post on the school’s Facebook page. “Our hearts were filled with joy as we honored Mary in such a special way, with our Main Queen and Junior Queen leading us in this cherished tradition. Their grace and reverence made the celebration even more meaningful for our entire school community.” They are pictured above. Courtesy photo

Join a World at Prayer in Martinsburg on June 12

MARTINSBURG—The Annual Global Rosary Relay for the Sanctification of our priests will again take place on June 12, the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court #392, Martinsburg.

Each of the participating prayer location countries prays a particular mystery of the Rosary at a specific time on the day in thanksgiving to God for our priests and to implore the protection and loving care of Our Lady, Mother of all priests, for all her priestly sons.

The aim is to encircle the world in prayer for the priesthood.

You are encouraged to join us as we unite our prayers with millions around the world on Friday, June 12, at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church, 225 S. Queen St. in Martinsburg.

Join Father Alfred Obiudu on a 12-Day Pilgrimage to France & Italy

Father Alfred Obiudu, pastor of St. Leo Parish in Inwood, who is organizing a 12-Day Pilgrimage to France & Italy (beginning October 5, through 16, 2026) will be having a third planning meeting for all those interested in going on a spiritual pilgrimage to the European cities of Paris, Lourdes, Milan, Pisa, Florence, Assisi & Rome on Wednesday, June 24, at St. Leo Parish Conference Room from 5-6:30 p.m. Those unable to attend in-person, can join the meeting via the zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2354307963?pwd=UWt5RmtINVFrjZaUmRwUVIDK0dsQT09&omn=87352566938>. Registration is still open for anyone (Catholic & non-Catholic) who is interested in going on the pilgrimage until June 26 and can be done via any of the following media: (a) contact Nativity Pilgrimage (832-406-7050, ext.126) to talk to Meloney Miller; (b) use the link for the pilgrimage website (<https://nativitypilgrimage.com/trip-5738>) or (c) click on the QR CODE on the poster at the parish and you will be taken directly to the webpage to register for the pilgrimage. Should you have any questions or concerns, contact Father Alfred by e-mail to fralfred@stleo.com or call (304) 229-8945.

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8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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Pope Leo and the U.S. Bishops (Videos)

Part Two

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(Small Group Interaction)

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The 7 Principles of Catholic Social Teaching plus Examples

Part Four

Moving Forward: Summarizing the Situation and Possible Actions

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U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Pope Leo XIV Discuss Iran War at Vatican Meeting

By Courtney Mares

(OSV News) — U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican on May 7, discussing the war in Iran, humanitarian aid and what the Vatican described as “the need to work tirelessly to promote peace,” amid ongoing tension between President Donald Trump and the pope.

Rubio, who is Catholic, spoke with the American pope for over 45 minutes in a private meeting in the Apostolic Palace before also sitting down with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican’s foreign minister, for talks that reaffirmed “the shared commitment to fostering good bilateral relations between the Holy See and the United States of America,” according to the Vatican.

“There was then an exchange of views on the regional and international situation, with particular attention to countries affected by war, political tensions and difficult humanitarian situations, as well as the need to work tirelessly to promote peace,” the Holy See Press Office said in a statement released after the meeting.

Secretary Rubio wrote on social media that he met the pope “to underscore our shared commitment to promoting peace and human dignity.”

In a separate statement, the State Department said Rubio’s meeting with Cardinal Parolin covered mutual cooperation and pressing international issues, including humanitarian efforts in the Western Hemisphere and efforts to achieve a durable peace in the Middle East. Rubio also welcomed the recent arrival of Archbishop Gabriele Caccia as the new apostolic nuncio to the United States.

It was Rubio’s second substantive meeting with Pope Leo. On May 19, 2025, the day after the pope’s inauguration Mass, Rubio and Vice President JD Vance also held a bilateral meeting with the pope, according to Vatican News.

On the eve of the May 7 audience, Cardinal Parolin told journalists that the U.S. government had requested the meeting and that the pope remained open to continued dialogue with

Washington.

“We cannot ignore the United States,” Cardinal Parolin said. “Despite some difficulties, they certainly remain a key partner for the Holy See, not least because they play a role in almost every situation we face today.”

Cardinal Parolin said that he was expecting to discuss “themes of international politics and above all conflicts,” including issues in Latin America and Cuba — “all those that are the most pressing issues.” On Iran, he said the Holy See would offer no new proposals beyond its longstanding call for dialogue.

“These conflicts,” he said, “cannot be resolved by force, but must be addressed and resolved through negotiation,” adding, “Let it be a negotiation of good will, sincere, so that all parties can express their point of view and find points of convergence.”

The visit of the U.S. secretary of state comes days after Trump reignited tensions by repeating his claim that the pope “thinks it’s just fine for Iran to have a nuclear weapon” in an interview that aired May 5, an assertion that Pope Leo swiftly rejected.

“If anyone wishes to criticize me for proclaiming the Gospel, let them do so with the truth,” Pope Leo told journalists outside Castel Gandolfo that evening.

“The Church has spoken out for years against all nuclear weapons, so there is no doubt about this,” the pope added. “I simply hope to be heard for the sake of the Word of God.”

Cardinal Parolin weighed in on recent public clashes between Pope Leo and Trump, calling the president’s repeated attacks on the pope “a bit strange to me, to say the least.”

At a White House briefing the same day, Rubio disputed suggestions that his Vatican visit was an attempt to “smooth things over with the pope,” saying the two sides have “shared concerns” including religious freedom in Africa and the distribution of humanitarian aid to Cuba.

“We gave Cuba \$6 million of humanitarian aid, but obviously, they won’t let us distribute it,” said Rubio, who is the son of Cuban immigrants. “We distribute it through the Church.



OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media
Pope Leo XIV greets U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a private audience at the Vatican May 7.

We’d like to do more. We’re willing to give more humanitarian aid to Cuba, by the way, distributed through the Church, but the Cuban regime has to allow us to do it.”

On the question of a possible phone call between Trump and Pope Leo, Cardinal Parolin said May 6 it was “premature” to say whether one would take place, but indicated the pope would be receptive.

“The Holy Father is open to all options,” Cardinal Parolin said. “If there were an offer or a request for a direct dialogue with President Trump, I imagine that he would have no difficulty in accepting it.”

The meeting with Rubio was one of several audiences on the pope’s schedule that day. Pope Leo also met with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, bishops from Burkina Faso and Niger, German Cardinal Reinhard Marx, and members of the Pontifical Swiss Guard.

Rubio is scheduled to meet Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani on May 8.

(Courtney Mares is Vatican editor for OSV News.)

Americans Disapprove of Trump's Comments about Pope Leo XIV, Poll Shows

By **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — A new poll published the day after President Donald Trump renewed his series of social media and verbal attacks on Pope Leo XIV, showed Americans broadly disapprove.

According to a Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll published May 6, most Americans disapprove of the president's comments about the pope, with even more disapproving of the recently posted and deleted AI-generated image on the president's social media account appearing to depict himself as Jesus.

The poll, conducted April 24-28, found that Pope Leo has a 25-point net favorable margin among Americans overall, with 41% favorable, 16% unfavorable and 43% saying they have no opinion of the pontiff.

Meanwhile, Trump's approval rating has dropped to 37%, down from 45% in February 2025.

Two-thirds of Americans, 66%, said they had a positive reaction to Pope Leo asking Americans on April 7 to contact their congressional lawmakers to work for peace and to reject war, while 57% had a negative reaction to Trump posting "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon."

Among American Catholics, 70% said they had a positive reaction to Pope Leo asking Americans to contact Congress, and 61% said they had a negative reaction to Trump's post about the pope and nuclear weapons.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that Pope Leo, the first U.S.-born pontiff, supports Iran having

nuclear weapons; however, the pontiff never made any such statement and has consistently called for the rejection of nuclear weapons.

By an even larger margin, 76% said they disapprove of Trump's social media post threatening that "a whole civilization will die tonight" if Iran did not make an agreement with the U.S. That threat prompted criticism from Pope Leo, who has been a staunch critic of war generally, including the one initiated by the U.S. and Israel against Iran on Feb. 28.

In defense of their combat operations, the Trump administration has argued the Iranian regime presented grave nuclear threats.

U.S. Catholic bishops, in defending the pope's position, have pointed to the Church's just war doctrine, which as stated in the Church's catechism on "safeguarding peace," says legitimate defense by military force is only morally permissible under strict conditions that are all present at one and the same time. Those conditions are the "lasting, grave and certain" damage from the aggressor; the exhaustion of all other efforts to end such damage; "serious prospects of success"; and the use of arms such that graver evils and disorders are not produced.

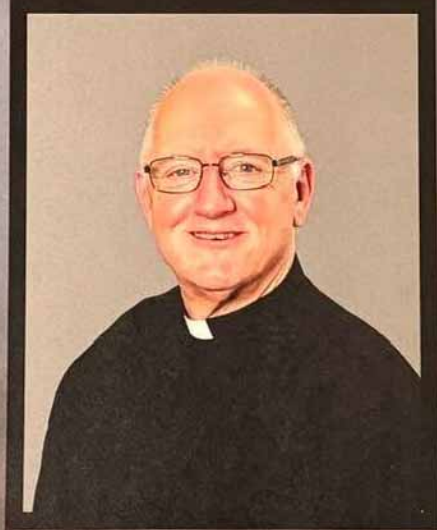
Similarly, 87% said they disapproved of Trump's post of an AI-generated image appearing to depict himself as Jesus. That image was deleted from his social media account after an uproar, with many people from multiple Christian denominations denouncing the depiction as blasphemous. Ninety percent of Catholics disapproved of that post, the poll found.

In the 2024 election, Trump carried white Catholic voters by a more than 20-point margin. But his approval rating with that group dropped to 49% in the new poll, down from 63% in February 2025.

His approval rating among all Catholics is just 38%, similar to Americans generally.

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

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Christian Sites under Attack in Holy Land as Violence and Displacement Intensify

By **Paulina Guzik**

(OSV News) — After May 2 news reports that Israeli bulldozers demolished Holy Savior Christian school in the village of Yaroun, in southern Lebanon, the Israeli Defense Forces said that while some damage was caused, they denied “demolishing” the site with bulldozers.

L'Osservatore Romano, the iconic newspaper of the Holy See, and the NNA Lebanese agency both reported the destruction of the school in the Bent Jbail district.

While OSV News has been unable to independently verify the scale, the damage to Christian property comes amid mounting attacks on Christians in the Holy Land, whether in Lebanon, Jerusalem or the West Bank.

L'Osservatore Romano said the Lebanese school also housed the homes of the nuns who “cared for the spiritual and cultural growth of hundreds of students,” noting that the village of Yaroun had been “uninhabited and in ruins for some time, ever since Israel partially razed it to the ground in the previous 2024 war against the Shiite Islamist armed group Hezbollah.”

The residents of the village, L'Osservatore said, had already been forced to abandon their homes and lands.

Father Ibrahim Faltas, vicar of the Custody of the Holy Land, wrote in Vatican News that the Christian school damaged in the Lebanese village “was the only remaining building, along with the nuns’ convent, that had not yet been bombed, and mechanical means have obliterated a spiritual and educational point of reference for hundreds of children and young people.”

“In whose name and for

what motivation can sacred places be destroyed and outraged, human beings offended and humiliated, religious signs and symbols trampled upon?” he asked.

“What danger can a place of worship, a school, or a convent pose?” he continued. “Is this violence born of ideology, preconceptions, or blind racism? What sparks such hatred toward fellow human beings with different faith and life histories?”

The Israeli foreign ministry said in a May 2 X post that “claims that a monastery in Yaroun in South Lebanon was ‘demolished’ are false. The site is intact and safe.”

Israel claimed “Hezbollah has repeatedly used civilian homes and churches for its terror activities” and that in recent weeks, “it also fired toward Israel from the vicinity of the monastery compound in Yaroun. IDF operations in the area targeted Hezbollah infrastructure while taking measures to ensure the monastery and other religious sites remained unharmed.”

The Holy See newspaper said however that Israeli operations follow a similar script in different villages in southern Lebanon.

“Villagers are ordered to evacuate, and then they bomb. Only then do the bulldozers go into action, leveling every house, every object. All historical memory is erased. Only a ghostly, anonymous landscape remains, devoid of a past,” the newspaper said, adding that 50 villages affected are included in the so-called yellow line, or Israeli buffer zone, in Lebanon.

“Those fortunate enough to live in one of the villages miraculously left standing say that every day they can hear the incessant work of bull-

dozers in the distance,” L'Osservatore Romano reported.

“Here, thank God, many structures are still standing, but we are completely surrounded, besieged. We can't get out,” one witness, who declined to be named and who lives in one of Christian villages in southern Lebanon, told L'Osservatore. “What we're starting to run out of is milk for the children and medicine,” the person said.

“Such violent acts are not responses to the behavior of those who profess the Christian faith, because the Christians of the Holy Land do not react to provocation; they are welcoming, open to forgiveness, and loving toward their neighbors,” Father Faltas said in his Vatican News editorial. “They are proud to belong to Christ and to be born in the Land that has witnessed his earthly works and heard his voice reveal the Father's love and the power of the Holy Spirit.”

The news about damaging the Christian school came amid violent news both from Jerusalem and the West Bank.

In Jerusalem, a Catholic religious sister was brutally attacked April 28 by a religious Jewish man wearing ritual tassels. A video of the attack released by the IDF showed the nun was knocked to the ground, hitting her head against the stone, and while the attacker initially walked away — he returned to kick her as she lay on the ground. The suspect was arrested.

“In Jerusalem, increasingly intolerable situations of violence, insults, and outrage against sacred places, religious figures, and Christians are occurring,” Father Faltas wrote in his Vatican News editorial.

“The physical attack suffered by a French nun walking

along the road leading to the Cenacle was particularly brutal,” he said. “The images document a repeated and increasingly violent assault on a defenseless woman. The attacker was alone on that occasion, whereas often groups of people insult, harass, and commit contempt against religious figures, believers, and Christian places.”

Father Faltas listed words, gestures and graffiti in Jerusalem “that reflect a hatred charged with ferocity and arrogance: these attacks are always unjustifiable, but they are particularly unacceptable when they occur in the Holy City of the three monotheistic religions.”

He said while Jerusalem is divided and contested by believers “who pray differently and dress differently,” the diversity “does not justify the tension that continues to make life unbearable for each and every one of us who meet in the streets and narrow alleys of the Old City,” the vicar of the custody lamented.

“Peaceful coexistence is possible if we respect our own lives and those of others. Peace is possible if we are able to better understand the lives of others, if we create and establish relationships between lives that touch but do not know each other,” Father Faltas said.

In the West Bank, settler attacks are increasingly violent, which caused the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to repeatedly denounce “attacks against local residents and Patriarchate lands in several locations” — with patriarchate representatives meeting representatives of the Military Authorities and Civil Administration in late April “to discuss the serious effects of the recent settler encroachments on

lands owned by the Latin Patriarchate in the Tayasir area of Tubas Governorate.”

“The Endowment Department of the Latin Patriarchate confirms that protecting Church endowment properties is a red line. It will continue to take all legal and administrative steps needed to protect their sanctity, preserve their Church identity, defend their lawful rights, and continue supporting the local people,” the April 23 statement of the Latin Patriarchate said.

Father Faltas said that “the first Christian communities suffered persecution, the first martyrs bore witness to Christ by offering their lives” and while “times are different” — the sense of “living through difficult and complex times is strong.”

“From the cross, the indelible sign of Our Lord's passion and death, the hope of life through resurrection blossomed. The sign of the cross, the spontaneous and trusting gesture of those who trust in God's mercy, is our strength,” he concluded.

(Paulina Guzik is international editor for OSV News.)



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The Church Must Speak Clearly, Decisively Against All Evil, Pope Says

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

— The Catholic Church is the guardian of hope, whose members are called to speak clearly against all evil and in defense of human life, Pope Leo XIV said.

The Church, as “the pilgrim people of God on earth,” he said during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square May 6, “reads and interprets the dynamics of history through the Gospel, denouncing evil in all its forms and proclaiming, in word and deed, the salvation that Christ wishes to bring about for all humanity and his kingdom of justice, love and peace.”

“As the guardian of a hope that enlightens the path,” he added, the Church is “invested with the mission of speaking clearly to reject everything that mortifies life and prevents its development, and to take a position in favor of the poor, the exploited, the victims of violence and war, and all those who suffer in body and in spirit.”

The pope’s remarks were part of his continuing

series of reflections on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, specifically, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, “Lumen Gentium.” His May 6 catechesis was dedicated to the Church’s eschatological dimension, that is, the transcendent, transtemporal and trans-historical nature of the kingdom of God.

“This is an essential dimension which, however, we often overlook or downplay, because we are too focused on what is immediately visible and on the more concrete dynamics of the life of the Christian community,” the pope said.

“The Church is God’s people journeying through history, which has the kingdom of God as the purpose of all her action,” he said. “We are therefore called to consider the community and cosmic dimension of salvation in Christ and to turn our eyes to this final horizon, to measure and evaluate everything from this perspective.”

The Catholic Church lives in human history at the service of the coming of the kingdom of God in the world, he said. “She pro-

claims the words of this promise to all and always.”

That means the Church is not proclaiming herself, he said. “On the contrary, everything within her must point to salvation in Christ.”

Despite being at the service of the kingdom of God, “the Church is called to recognize humbly the human fragility and transience of her own institutions,” which can never be treated as “absolute,” he said.

“Indeed, since they exist within history and time, they are called to continual conversion, to the renewal of forms and the reform of structures, to the continual regeneration of relationships, so that they may truly fulfil their mission,” Pope Leo said.

As members of the same body, he said in a summary of his remarks in English, “we too are called to renewal. We do this by remaining in communion with Christ and one another. The entire Church is most closely united in our praise of God in the liturgy.”

The Church “does not identify perfectly with the Kingdom of God, but is its



CNS photo/Vatican Media
Pope Leo XIV blesses a baby in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before leading his weekly general audience May 6, 2026.


seed and beginning, for its fulfilment will be granted to humanity and the cosmos only at the end,” he said in his main catechesis.

Those who believe in Christ can walk this pilgrimage on earth, marked by injustices and suffering, without being either deluded or despairing, he said, as “they live guided by the promise received from the One who will ‘make all things new.’”

That is why the church, as a guardian of hope, urges her members to clearly reject evil and promote God’s kingdom of justice, love and peace, he said.

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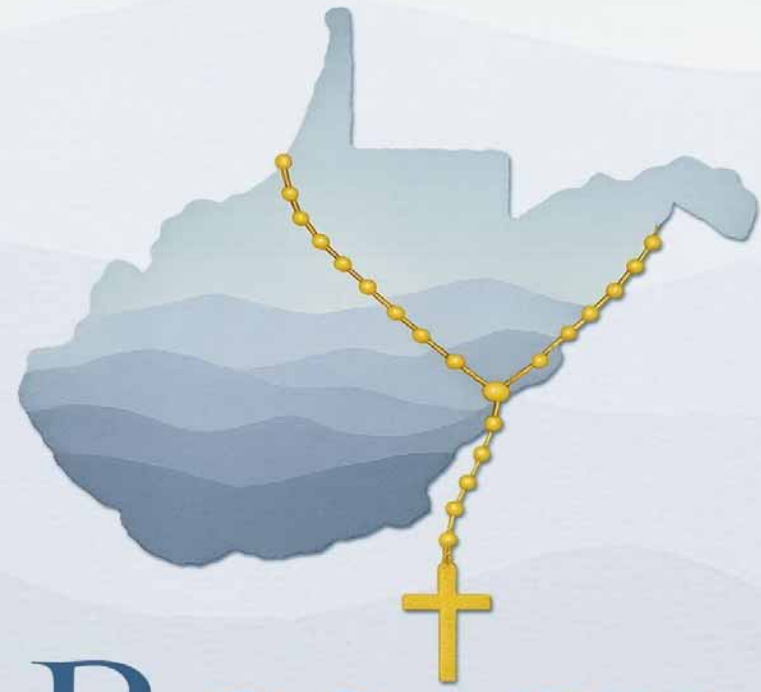
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Wheeling University Announces Class of 2026 Co-Valedictorians and Salutatorian

WHEELING — Wheeling University is proud to announce the Co-Valedictorians of the class of 2026, Andrew Schmidt of St. Clairsville, Ohio, and Cameron Zinn, of McArthur, Ohio. The Salutatorian is Grace Fairman of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Schmidt and Zinn will offer remarks during the Wheeling University 68th Commencement Ceremony. The ceremony will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 9, inside the McDonough Center. Dianna M. Vargo, Ed.D., University President, will present doctoral, graduate, and undergraduate degrees during the ceremony.

Schmidt graduates with Bachelor of Science degrees in Accounting and Sports Management. During his four years, he was a member of the men's soccer team and the Laut Honors Society. Schmidt is also active in his community, serving as the boys' soccer coach at Union Local High School and a volunteer coach at Capstone Soccer Complex.

"My four years at Wheeling University have been instrumental in shaping the person I am today. Not only has this experience pushed me to strive for academic and personal excellence, but it has also allowed me to build strong relationships that will last a lifetime," Schmidt said.

Zinn will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. Throughout her four years at Wheeling University, she has been a

member of the Student Nurses Association. Following graduation, Zinn plans to work as a psychiatric nurse at Adena Health System.

"The past four years have significantly shaped my personal and professional growth," Zinn said. "Through the nursing program, I've gained the knowledge and skills to provide safe, compassionate care, along with the confidence to enter this profession. The strong sense of community and the relationships I built with my classmates and professors will have a lasting impact. I will always be grateful for the experiences and memories that have helped shape who I am today."

Fairman has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education with a minor in Psychology. She will offer remarks during Baccalaureate, which will be held at 5 p.m., on Friday, May 8, in Troy Theater.

During her four years at Wheeling University, Fairman was a member of the women's basketball team, serving as team captain during her senior year. She was the recipient of the 2026 Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston St. Sebastian Award. Also, Fairman was named to the Mountain East Conference All-Academic Team all four years.

"My four years at Wheeling tested me in ways I didn't expect, but they also showed me what I'm capable of. Every challenge became a stepping-stone, and every success reminded me why I started," Fairman said.



Courtesy photo

Wheeling University Co-Valedictorians of the class of 2026—Andrew Schmidt of St. Clairsville, Ohio, and Cameron Zinn, of McArthur, Ohio.



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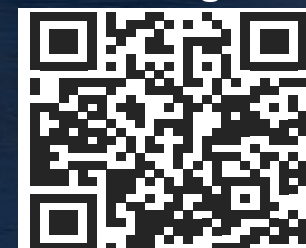
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Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, May 9: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 10: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 7 p.m.

Monday, May 11: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 13: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 6 p.m.

Saturday, May 16: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling, 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 17: St. Jude, Glen Dale, 9 a.m.

Friday, May 22: Epiphany of the Lord, Moorefield, 6 p.m.

Saturday, May 23: St. Leo, Inwood, 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 24: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 11 a.m.

Sunday, May 24: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 4 p.m.

Saturday, June 6: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 14: St. Matthew / Sacred Heart Mission, Point Pleasant, 11:15 a.m.

Saturday, June 20: St. Sebastian, Kingwood, 6 p.m.

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El Papa acepta la renuncia del obispo de West Virginia y nombra al obispo Menjívar-Ayala, obispo auxiliar de Washington, como su sucesor

WASHINGTON (OSV News)

— El Papa León XIV ha aceptado la renuncia del obispo Mark E. Brennan de Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, y ha nombrado como su sucesor al obispo auxiliar Evelio Menjívar-Ayala de Washington.

La renuncia y el nombramiento fueron anunciados en Washington el 1 de mayo por el cardenal Christophe Pierre, nuncio apostólico en Estados Unidos.

Aún no se ha anunciado la fecha de la ceremonia de instalación del obispo Menjívar-Ayala como décimo obispo de la diócesis, que abarca todo el estado de West Virginia (Virginia Occidental).

En una rueda de prensa celebrada por la mañana, el obispo Brennan expresó su gratitud por haber podido servir como "pastor principal" de la diócesis durante casi siete años, y dio la bienvenida a su sucesor y décimo obispo "para servir al pueblo de cara al futuro en este maravilloso estado".

Rezó a Dios para que bendiga al obispo Menjívar-Ayala al asumir sus nuevas responsabilidades y para que "abra los corazones y las mentes de nuestro pueblo al darle la bienvenida". También rezó por "una transición fluida de un obispo a otro" en el servicio a los fieles de "esta maravillosa diócesis".

Dijo que su sucesor posee "integridad, inteligencia y celo por el pueblo de Dios".

El obispo Brennan, de 79 años, también señaló cuánto tiempo lleva conociendo al obispo Menjívar-Ayala, ya que su relación se remonta a antes incluso de que este fuera ordenado sacerdote, cuando



Foto OSV News/cortesía de la Arquidiócesis de Washington
El obispo Evelio Menjívar-Ayala, de Washington, aparece en una fotografía sin fecha. El 1 de mayo de 2026, el Papa León XIV nombró al obispo Menjívar-Ayala obispo de Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, en sustitución del obispo Mark E. Brennan, cuya renuncia aceptó ese mismo día. La diócesis abarca todo el estado de West Virginia.

el entonces padre Brennan era director de vocaciones sacerdotales en la Arquidiócesis de Washington, cargo que ocupó durante 10 años.

Oriundo de El Salvador, el nuevo obispo de West Virginia emigró a Estados Unidos en 1990 y fue ordenado sacerdote para la Arquidiócesis de Washington el 29 de mayo de 2004. Fue ordenado obispo auxiliar de Washington por el cardenal Wilton D. Gregory, entonces arzobispo de Washington, en la catedral de San Mateo Apóstol en febrero de 2023, convirtiéndose en el primer obispo salvadoreño del país.

"Doy gracias a Dios por las muchas formas en que ha revelado su amor y misericordia en mi vida", dijo el obispo Menjívar-Ayala, de 55 años, en la rueda de prensa. Agradeció al "primer papa estadounidense" y al nuncio, el cardenal Pierre, "por su confianza en mí, por llamarme a pastorear esta hermosa diócesis".

Agradeció al obispo Brennan por acogerlo en la formación sacerdotal hace muchos años. "Poco podíamos imaginar lo que el Señor tenía reservado para nosotros. Gracias por formar parte de (mi) camino, y espero que siga usted guiándome mientras me adapto a esta nueva misión".

Dijo que aceptaba su nuevo nombramiento "con gran alegría y humildad".

"Me presento ante ustedes, ante todo, como un hermano en la fe", dijo el obispo Menjívar-Ayala. "Espero que permitan que este forastero les acompañe en el camino

El obispo en la página 20

El obispo ...

de la fe".

"Que podamos descubrir nuestra humanidad y dignidad compartidas como hijos de Dios. Llego a ustedes como su obispo, su servidor, para amarles y servirles. Este es el único propósito que traigo, amarles y servirles lo mejor que pueda en la fe y en la fidelidad a Cristo", añadió.

Describió West Virginia como una tierra de impresionante belleza, rica en diversidad y en recursos naturales y, al mismo tiempo, dijo, muchos de sus habitantes "siguen soportando penurias, marginación y desigualdad". Elogió a los habitantes de West Virginia por su fe y su resiliencia.

Dijo que se sentiría profundamente orgulloso si, con el tiempo, "me aceptaran como un compañero de West Virginia".

Pero West Virginia "no es una tierra extraña para mí", afirmó. Cuando fue ordenado sacerdote, colaboró en la Misa en español de la parroquia de San José en Martinsburg. Durante la pandemia de COVID, recordó, solía buscar lugares para hacer senderismo --"mi deporte favorito"-- y empezó a prac-

ticar senderismo y a acampar en los bosques nacionales George Washington y Jefferson, que abarcan 1.8 millones de acres a lo largo de la frontera entre Virginia y West Virginia.

Más tarde compró una pequeña cabaña donde ha pasado sus días libres y se ha sentido muy bien acogido por "la gente del valle". "Me siento muy integrado en esa comunidad", que, a pesar de su reducido tamaño, es muy diversa, según explicó, con estadounidenses de origen húngaro e italiano, entre otros, que han constituido "la columna vertebral de la mano de obra minera del estado".

El obispo Menjívar-Ayala dijo a los católicos de la diócesis que quiere comenzar su ministerio "conociéndolos a ustedes", y que "la mejor manera de hacerlo es escuchando atentamente" a los sacerdotes y diáconos, a los religiosos y religiosas, a los líderes de las oficinas diocesanas y del laicado.

"Somos socios en la misión", dijo, y añadió que también quiere escuchar a los jóvenes --"no solo son el futuro de la Iglesia"-- y a los pobres, los trabajadores y los inmi-

grantes. También se dirigirá más allá de la Iglesia a la comunidad en general, escuchando a los funcionarios públicos, a otros líderes religiosos y a los líderes empresariales.

"Creo que juntos podemos marcar la diferencia aquí, en el 'casi paraíso' de West Virginia", añadió, citando una popular canción de John Denver. "Mi oficina estará siempre abierta, si yo estoy allí. Espero pasar mi tiempo entre la gente, acompañándolos en su vida cotidiana, en lugar de permanecer detrás del escritorio o en el santuario".

Concluyó su discurso con unas palabras en su español natal. Además del inglés y el español, el obispo también habla italiano.

Nacido el 14 de agosto de 1970 en Chalatenango, El Salvador, el obispo Menjívar-Ayala estudió filosofía en el Seminario Universitario San Juan Vianney de Miami y teología en la Pontificia Universidad de Santo Tomás de Aquino (el Angelicum) de Roma. Obtuvo su licenciatura en el Pontificio Instituto Scalabrini de Teología Pastoral para la Movilidad Humana, de Roma, antes de su ordenación sacerdotal para la Arquidiócesis de Washington.

Ejerció como vicario parroquial en las parroquias de Germantown (2004-2008) y Bethesda (2009), en Maryland, y en la Catedral de San Mateo Apóstol, en Washington (2009-2013). Fue párroco de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora Reina de las Américas en Washington (2013-2017) y de la parroquia de Santa María en Landover Hills, Maryland (2017-2023), antes de ser nombrado obispo auxiliar.

El obispo Brennan, nacido el 6 de febrero de 1947 en Boston, fue ordenado sacerdote para la Arquidiócesis de Washington por el arzobispo William Baum en la Catedral de San Mateo Apóstol en Washington el 15 de mayo de 1976.

Ha dirigido la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston como su noveno obispo desde su instalación el 22 de agosto de 2019. Anteriormente, fue obispo auxiliar de la Arquidiócesis de Baltimore (2017-2019), tras haber ejercido como director vocacional de la Arquidiócesis de Washington. Forma parte de múltiples comités de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos, entre ellos el Comité Consultivo Nacional, el comité de migración y el comité provida.

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores:

La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estados Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web www.repostbishopsabuse.org. Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea

directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web www.dwc.org, favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrece la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está protegida. **Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de crímenes contra a menores: 304-293-6400.



**Catholic
Charities**
WEST VIRGINIA

Essentials for Disaster Case Managers 2-Day Training

Training Details

DATE:
May 18 & 19, 2026

LOCATION:
Catholic Charities WV
2000 Main Street
Wheeling, WV 26003

TIME:
9:00am - 4:00pm

QUESTIONS:
lpierce@ccwva.org
idyer@ccwva.org

Training Description

CCUSA's copyrighted and accredited Essentials for Disaster Case Managers two-day training provides the 10 essential topics a disaster case manager needs to know about in order to ensure success.

The training provides opportunities to apply and practice this knowledge with in-class activities.

- Attendees are required to attend both days to receive a CCUSA Disaster Case Management Certification.
- Lunch is provided.
- The training is limited at 35 participants (Limit 3 participants per agency).
- Priority will be given to nonprofits providing case management to disaster victims.
- CEC's eligible

Who Should Attend?

- Case Managers who will provide service to disaster victims
- Supervisors of disaster case managers
- Long-term recovery group representatives
- Community members interested in volunteer disaster case management

Thank you to our partner,
Catholic Charities USA



Register via link or QR code below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/qVb4eQS2E3>



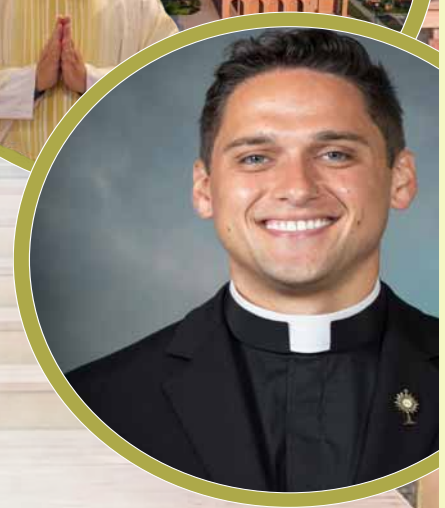
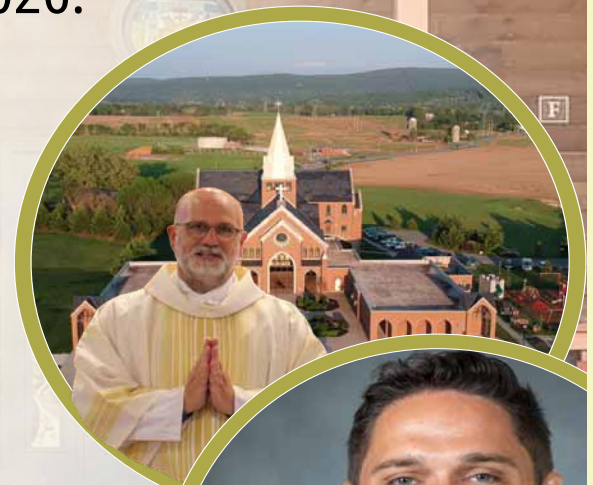
Newest Updates to 2026 QUO VADIS DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Now: Sunday, June 28 - Wednesday, July 1

Date change due to Bishop Menjivar-Ayala's
Installation Mass on July 2, 2026.

Middle School Boys (6th - 8th) will be led by
Deacon Dave Galvin and the trained staff of
St. James the Greater Parish.

High School (9th - 12th) Boys will be led by
Seminarian, Michael Tupta, with his fellow
Seminarian brothers along with our DWC priests.



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Kearnysville, WV

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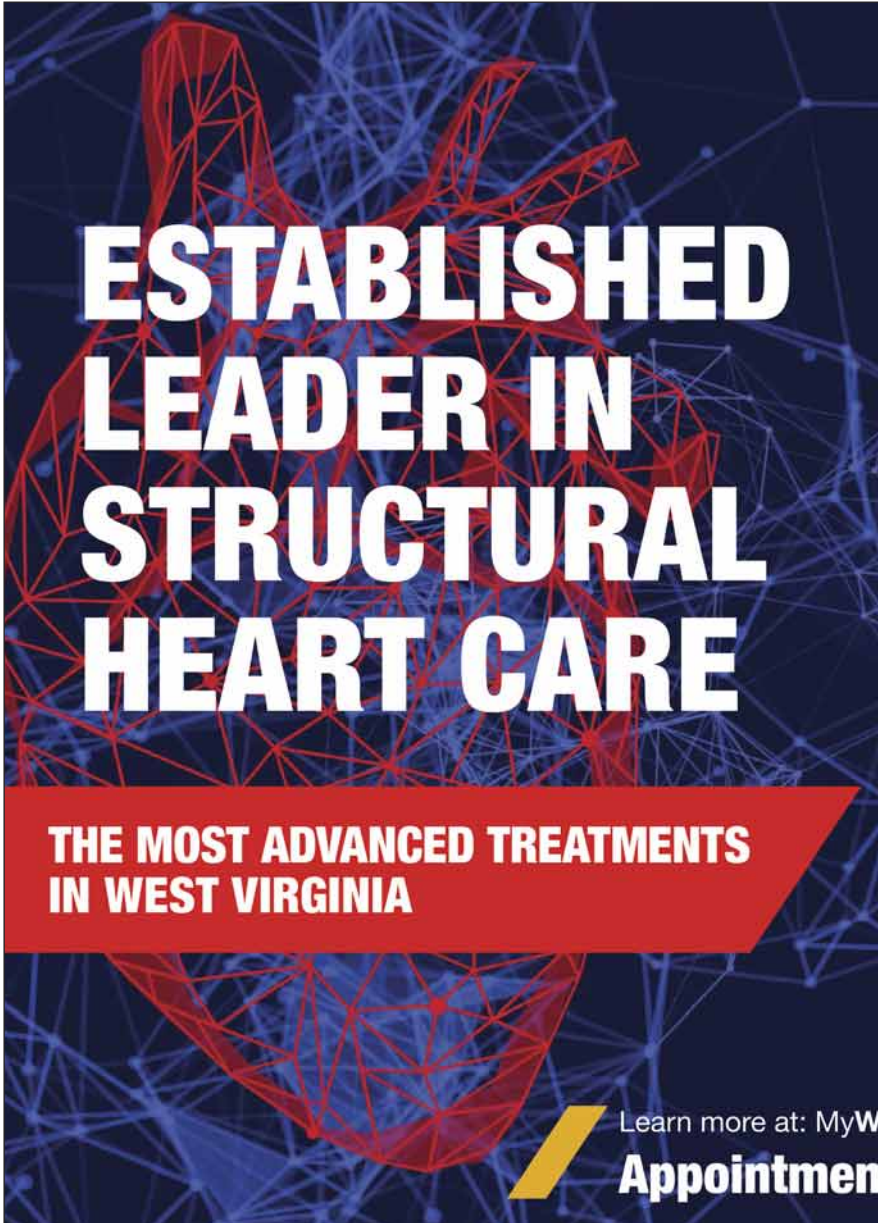


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The WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program is the only program in West Virginia that offers eight specialized, structural heart procedures and is one of the few programs in the United States (and the only one in West Virginia) offering cerebral embolic protection during transcatheter aortic valve replacement (Protected TAVR) and transcatheter mitral valve replacement.

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Interventional Cardiology



Deepak Hooda MD
Interventional Cardiology



Sushant Sharma MD
Cardiology

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