



Bishop Brennan Announces Plan That Forgives \$7.9 Million in Parish Debt

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA — For the Jubilee Year of Hope, Bishop Mark Brennan announced debt forgiveness for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s parishes totaling \$7.9 million along with a reduction of some diocesan financial obligations for 2025.

“It’s one of the things that he’ll be remembered for,” Patrick Henry, the diocese’s chief financial officer, said of Bishop Brennan. “How he helped a lot of these parishes get on solid ground again and be able to go forward.”

The bishop made the announcement in a May 29 letter sent to pas-

tors in which he stated that “Although operating debt should in justice be repaid, regardless of its date of origin, parish operating debt owed to the Diocese and incurred prior to July 1, 2020, will be forgiven.”

WesBanco and in-house diocesan loans to parishes, however, will

remain in force, he said.

The bishop said the plan was initiated after consultation with various diocesan bodies and additionally includes no Cathedralium assessment, the tax forwarded to the diocese on parish income, in calendar year 2025. Also, the

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A Letter from Bishop Brennan on the Diocese’s Evangelization Plan

June 7, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As we approach Pentecost, I wish to reflect with you on the profound connection between evangelization and the Holy Spirit, a connection that lies at the very heart of our mission as Catholics. Pentecost marks the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, an event that transformed them from fearful disciples into bold proclaimers of the Gospel. This same Spirit empowers us today as we continue to bear witness to Christ in our world.

In this regard, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston entered into a partnership last year with the Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI), a distinguished national apostolate that has dedicated more than 30 years to nurturing and supporting the Church’s leaders. The goal of this collaboration is to create a three-year evangelization plan for our diocese.

Catholic Leadership Institute has engaged our Diocese in a number of ways, from the Disciple Maker Index

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Father Moger’s Ordination Completes Joyful Journey to Priesthood



John Sherwood photo

Newly ordained Father Jourden Travis Moger stands with Bishop Mark Brennan at St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg May 30.

By Colleen Rowan

Moments before ordaining Father Jourden Travis Moger, Bishop Mark Brennan encouraged him to, “Take up your priesthood with joy and confidence.” It was at St. Joseph Church in Martinsburg on the Friday evening of May 30 that the bishop celebrated Father Moger’s ordination to priesthood with more than 20 priests concelebrating the Mass and more than 10 deacons participating. And it was with joy, the bishop said, that his family and diocesan faithful gathered at the church for his ordination. The celebration completed his joyful journey to priesthood.

“To say that his has been an unusual path to Holy Orders would be an understatement,” Bishop Brennan said of Father Moger, who is married and was an ordained Baptist minister who converted to Catholicism six years ago. Bishop Brennan ordained him a transitional deacon on Dec. 21, 2024, on path to ordination to the priesthood, having been approved by the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and personally dispensed from the promise of celibacy by the late Pope Francis.

“With his wife Amelia by his side and assisted, I’m sure, by the

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Inside: Deacon Talbott will Lead Hike to Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage Site - St. Patrick Church, Weston, Page 7

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Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate Church that lives out the Gospel in word and deed. I humbly invite you



to join me in this mission.

-Bishop Mark Brennan



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 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://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Dioceses/Eparchies have a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. 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; sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Training may be completed online or via live workshop. For information, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

There are 10 print editions in 2025. Below 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.


2025 Print Issues and Dates: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15; Triumph of the Cross, September 12; Month of the Rosary, October 3; Advent, November 21; Christmas, December 19



Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Vol. 56, No. 23

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Diocese Announces New Evangelization Plan

WEST VIRGINIA — The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has completed a comprehensive envisioning process which led to the development of a new Evangelization Plan that leads our diocesan vision of commitment to Christ's Great Commission to go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Using our core values of faith, hope, and charity, this plan has three priorities:

- Formation defined as the intentional

and ongoing process of educating, equipping, and spiritually developing individuals — both clergy and laity — who can effectively live out, effectively witness to, and proclaim the Gospel.

- Infrastructure which means to equip the entire Diocese including the chancery, priests, deacons, parishes, and faithful with the tools they need to spread the Gospel.
- Parish renewal which is to maintain the Church's relevance in an increasingly

secular society through vision and strategy to revitalize our Parish Community.

Each priority has two goals that will be a guide for living out the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's purpose: Empowered by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Diocesan purpose is to serve and evangelize, transforming us and our world into one joyful, united people who share divine communion.

The following link will offer more information and will be available on June 7: [Click here.](#)

Letter ...

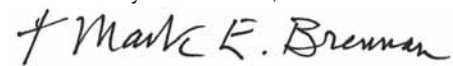
Cont'd from Page 1

survey that thousands of our parishioners completed during the winter months and also a Priest Leadership Inventory. Catholic Leadership Institute also gathered additional insights through one-on-one interviews with a small number of parishioners and led convened numerous focus groups from around the Diocese.

The results and information gleaned from these touchpoints were provided to an Envisioning Team, a group of representatives from all walks of Catholic life in West Virginia. The Envisioning Team recently completed several months of work to create, or "envision," what Evangelization priorities we should focus on in our Diocese. I'm pleased to announce that the results of this work are provided in the attached Evangelization Plan (Link will be available on June 7: [Click here.](#))

I call on our Diocesan Church to now unite and answer our call to evangelize all people. Let us strive to grow as a vibrant and active community of disciples, living out our call to evangelize and serve our world.

May God bless you abundantly.
Sincerely in Christ,



+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Plan ...

Cont'd from Page 1

Priests' Health and Retirement Board has approved a reduction of the PHRA assessment on parishes from six percent to four percent for calendar year 2025.

The parishes carrying qualifying debt will receive a letter from Henry detailing the amounts that will be written off.

All of this, Henry said, will make a positive impact on the many parishes that have been suffering from debt caused by a number of factors out of their control. The covid-19 pandemic caused a loss of population in the pews. State population loss in many areas has affected parish population as well. Henry said many parishes experienced more deaths than births, people moving out of the area, and not many young people coming into the church.

Bishop Brennan's goal is to revive the parish communities.

"The bishop wants the par-

ishes open and with his big evangelization (initiative) hopefully we can bring more people back to the church," Henry said. "And that's what the bishop is pushing toward—evangelization and trying to make all the parishes vibrant again."

Henry said the parish debt forgiveness initiative has been a long-time goal of Bishop Brennan's, one that the Diocesan Finance Council has been working on for more than five years.

With the debt forgiveness, Henry said, many parishes will be able to now move forward to "formulate good business plans." And the diocese's Finance Department is available to work with them. Temporalities, which offer guidance on parish financial operations, are available on the diocese's website (www.dwc.org) for registered members of the site by scrolling to "Diocese" on the main menu bar, then to "Parish Resources," then clicking "For Parishes," then "Financial Forms and Files," and then "Diocese

of Wheeling-Charleston Temporalities." Henry said this is a great educational tool for parish finance councils, bookkeepers, and other staff.

Bishop Brennan's letter announcing this gift to parishes was read to congregations at Masses in all parishes and missions in West Virginia the weekend of May 31 and June 1.

"I trust that this debt forgiveness and reduction of some diocesan financial obligations for 2025 will afford all parishes the ability to remain current with their just debts going forward," the bishop wrote. "It also gives parishes the opportunity to eliminate or reduce other just debts and to fund sustaining investments, such as with the West Virginia Catholic Foundation, where funds deposited can help solidify a parish's financial position for years to come."


The letter was met with gratitude from parishes and their congregations. Father Rey Landicho, administrator of St. Peter Parish

in Welch, Sacred Heart Mission in Powhatan, Our Lady of Victory Chapel in Gary, and Holy Cross Chapel in Pineville, said the bishop's intention in the letter reflects the spirit of the Jubilee Year and its concrete expression of the celebration based from the scriptures and tradition.

"The context of forgiveness is rooted both in mercy and charity," Father Landicho said. "This creates a bridge of reconciliation and provides an opportunity of new beginning and renewal in the life of the parish, diocese, and the church."

Father Landicho continued by saying that it is "with gratitude and admiration to this noble intention of our diocese and the pastoral heart of the bishop to offer this opportunity in our diocese during this time and celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope."

For any questions, contact Cindy Prascik in the diocese's Finance Department by e-mail to cprascik@dwc.org.



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John Sherwood photo
Bishop Mark Brennan ordains Father Jourden Travis Moger to the priesthood at St. Joseph Church in Martinsburg May 30.

Ordained ...

Cont'd from Page 1

prayers of his son and daughters and his mother, he has done all that the Holy See in Rome and I have asked him to do and even more," Bishop Brennan said of Father Moger in his homily. Turning to him, the bishop spoke of Father Moger's many years of service as a Baptist minister. For reasons of faith and conscience, he gave up a secure career as a Navy chaplain to become Catholic, the bishop said.

"No promise was given to you that you could be a priest," the bishop said. "Building on the desire to serve God's people that you have had since your teenage years, you did request consideration as a candidate for the priesthood. Today that petition will be granted as I ordain you a priest."

While he could and did preach the word of God and guide men and women to right living as a Baptist minister, the bishop said, Father Moger was not able to do some things that Catholic priests do.

"But now you will be Christ's agent in bringing about that marvelous transformation of bread and wine into the Lord's body and blood so that he may feed his people personally and build them up in faith and love," Bishop Brennan said to him. "Now, you will be able, in Christ's

name and by his power, to forgive sins and welcome penitents even if they strayed far from the fold. Now you will have the power to bring forth spiritual and bodily healing to the sick and injured through the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. And all the while, you will continue to preach God's word. With your understanding of that word, enlightened by the fullness of Catholic teaching, you will continue to counsel and guide the young and old, drawing on the rich moral and spiritual heritage of the Catholic faith. You will act in the person of Christ, the head of the church, as a true servant of the people he has redeemed."

Catholics in the Latin Rite may wonder why the church, in this instance, chooses to ordain a married man to the priesthood, Bishop Brennan said, as the rule in the Latin Rite is celibate priests. Yet, when the church sees in a man — raised in a Christian tradition in which married clergy are the rule — qualities that make him suitable for the Catholic priesthood it can make an exception to the rule of celibacy, Bishop Brennan said.

"As I said at Travis' diaconate ordination, many Catholics, both clergy and laity, I myself and our late Pope Francis have seen those priestly qualities in Travis Moger," the bishop said. "And so, the church

has judged this exception appropriate. Travis, I pray that God may fill you, your wife, your children, and your mother with many blessings and, through your priestly ministry, bring many blessings to his people. Take up your priesthood with joy and confidence."

After the homily, Father Moger stood before the bishop and promised to serve the people of God as a priest. The congregation then joined the bishop in praying for him as he prostrated himself before the altar for the Litany of Supplication.

Father Moger then knelt before the bishop, who laid his hands upon his head and called upon the Holy Spirit to make him an ordained priest. Each of the priests gathered came forward to lay their hands upon his head as well. Father Moger was then vested with the stole and chasuble by Father Thomas Falkenthal and Father John Soplinski. He then again knelt before the bishop, who anointed his palms with holy chrism. The bishop then presented the paten of bread and chalice of wine to him. The bishop, followed by his fellow priests, then offered him the Kiss of Peace.

At the end of the Mass, Bishop Brennan announced he has appointed Father Moger parochial vicar of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town and St. Peter Chapel in Harpers Ferry with a par-



John Sherwood photo
Father Moger is vested with the stole and the chasuble by Father Thomas Falkenthal. Also vesting him was Father John Soplinski, left.

ticular focus in Hispanic ministry and as chaplain to Shepherd University in Shepherdstown. His assignments begin on June 18.

Father Moger and his wife have four children: Natalie Hynes (32), Nadine Klein (29), Madeline Cordle (27), and Mark Moger (25); and four grandchildren: Boaz Hynes (6), Ezra Hynes (5), Lydia Hynes (3), and Ada Klein (1).

He is originally from Ocala, Fla., and was ordained at Brassfield Baptist Church (Southern Baptist) in Creedmoor, N.C., in 1991. He received a master's in theology from Christendom College Graduate School of Theology in 2024; and a Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) in 2011. He was a Fulbright Scholar, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universi-

tät, Germany in 2005-2006; received his master of divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1993; and received a Bachelor of Arts from Dallas Baptist University (summa cum laude) in 1988.

Deacon Moger also has extensive military service. He has a 26-year military career as a U.S. Navy chaplain and retired from the U.S. Navy Reserve with the rank of captain in 2018. He served in combat in Iraq as chaplain for the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment (infantry) in 2003. In federal civil service from July 2017 to December 2023, he worked as a full-time historian for the U.S. Army Center of Military History and for the Naval History and Heritage Command, both in Washington, D.C.



John Sherwood photo
Father Moger prostrates himself before the altar during his ordination Mass.

Diocese's Priests Gather for Retreat



Courtesy Photo

Priests of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston attended their Priest Retreat at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke June 2-5. They are gathered following the retreat Mass with Bishop Mark Brennan and Bishop William D. Byrne of the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., (center) on June 4.

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A Pastoral Letter on Personal Liberty and the Common Good by Bishop Brennan

The Catholic faith is the sanest religion in the world. It holds in a dynamic balance opposite tendencies that, if left unchecked, would lead to the dominance of one tendency and the elimination or crippling of the other, with the result of severe harm to human beings.

A prime example of Catholic sanity is its balance between affirming the right to personal liberty and insisting on the obligation to promote the common good. This balance is possible because Catholic anthropology – the Church's understanding of human nature – recognizes the dignity of the human person as a creature made in God's image and likeness and situated firmly within the human community. No dimension of the person's being is left out.

As an example of how this balance is achieved within the liturgy of the Mass, all Catholics must accept that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. That faith fosters the common good of Catholic believers, for it expresses and builds up their unity of faith in the Lord's promise to give himself personally to them as food. But the Church also affirms the individual Catholic's right to freely choose how to receive the Eucharist, either on the tongue or in the hand, in both cases reverently. Every Catholic should respect how others receive the Eucharist. In this way St. Augustine's formula is fulfilled: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Another example is from daily life. We enjoy our right to get in our cars and drive where we want. We relish our personal liberty to do so. But we also know we should obey the traffic laws, stopping at red lights, observing speed limits and pulling over to allow emergency vehicles to pass. Those laws reflect a concern for the common good. They create order on our streets and prevent accidents. Catholic sanity says: drive your car but obey the traffic laws.

Maintaining the balance between personal liberty and the common good is not easy. This leads some individuals and groups to seek to dissolve the tension between personal freedom and social wellbeing by imposing one or the other on everyone. Totalitarian governments greatly restrict

the exercise of personal freedom. Vietnam is a good example. According to friends who have traveled there, the Communist government requires the Church, like other religions, to be registered and avoid criticism of the government. Catholics may worship and teach their faith but are not allowed to operate schools beyond preschool and kindergarten. Local government officials have to approve applicants to the seminary and the ordination of new priests. The Church may engage in some charitable activities, especially health care, but they are always subject to government supervision. Vietnamese Catholics acting alone or together find their personal liberty of action restricted by a government that wants to maintain power and impose its distorted version of social welfare on the people in contrast to the true common good.

It can also come about that personal liberty can be widened to such an extent that the common good is threatened or truly damaged. In response to the lowering of the voting age in 1971 from 21 to 18, many states lowered the drinking age to 18 as well. The result was a dramatic increase in traffic accidents associated with alcohol consumption in the 18 to 21 age group. Seeing that teenage drinking caused many fatalities and injuries on the road, Congress passed the Minimum Drinking Age Act in 1984, withholding some federal highway funds from states that kept the drinking age at 18. By 1988, all 50 states and the District of Columbia had raised the drinking age to 21 and the number of teenage deaths and injuries owing to drunk driving began to fall significantly. If the pendulum swings too far toward personal liberty, the good not only of individuals but of society as a whole can be seriously harmed.

To avoid allowing either personal liberty or the obligation to promote the common good (especially if wrongly conceived) go to extremes, it is important to remember that freedom is not simply *from* but also *for*. We should be free *from* unreasonable restrictions so that we can use our freedom *for* worthy purposes. That understanding of personal liberty can then contribute to the common good. Because each person is free to choose his or her path in life – what we call a vo-

lition, coming ultimately from God – many people choose to marry and raise families, some in our Church choose to accept a calling to the priesthood or diaconate or consecrated life, while individuals and groups choose to help their neighbor through pantries, pregnancy resource centers, advocacy for justice and a variety of educational and cultural activities that enhance public life. In these ways, the exercise of personal liberty is not only not in conflict with the common good but powerfully promotes it.

Conceiving the common good properly will protect personal liberty, for it recognizes that human beings, while sharing a common nature, are distinct persons with attributes and interests that differ from one another and whose expression should be allowed and encouraged, as long as the exercise of their personal liberty does not injure the common good. This understanding of the common good trusts that, like the bits of glass in a mosaic, the various ways in which human beings pursue their interests and use their talents will result, more often than not, in greater good and beauty than would a monotonous uniformity. Thus, the good order and beauty God put in His creation are

made more manifest. When the balance is endangered, people of good will and good sense will work to restore it, because the good of all matters.

I offer these thoughts to you, believing that they reflect the sanity of the Catholic approach to our common life. There are many issues in our society and in our Church – gun possession and use, school vaccination policies, taxation, personal piety and social justice, the old Latin Mass and the Mass in English – where the inevitable tension between personal liberty and the common good can be felt. We must seek the right balance between the two, so that the good that each of them enshrines is preserved, serving both the individual person and society. We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us to strike that balance, for, as Jesus said: *When he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth* [John 16:13]. While distinguishing essential things from non-essentials, let us observe St. Augustine's last phrase: "in all things, charity."

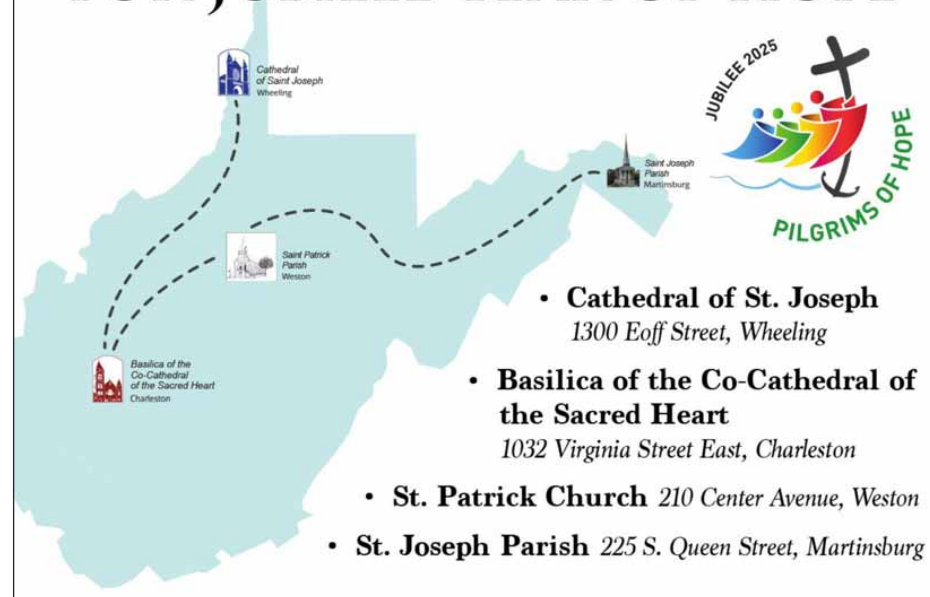
Sincerely in Christ,

Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

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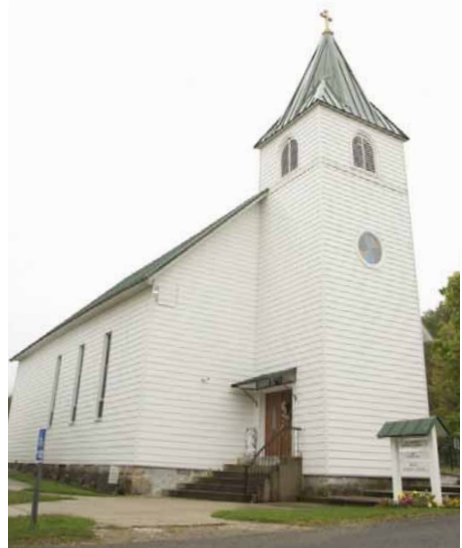
Deacon Talbott will Lead Hike to Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage Site - St. Patrick Church, Weston

By Colleen Rowan

For the Jubilee Year of Hope, Deacon Aaron Talbott wanted to invite Catholic faithful on a journey to visit one of the four designated pilgrimage sites in West Virginia. "I wanted to be able to do it in an interesting way," he said, "to live out the call for pilgrimage."

This led him to the idea of leading a hike from one of the churches he serves to the Pilgrimage Site of St. Patrick Church in Weston. Deacon Talbott, who serves as permanent deacon at St. Brendan Parish in Elkins and St. Patrick Mission in Coalton, wanted the journey to be in the tradition of the "Camino de Santiago" — a pilgrimage also known as the Way of St. James that traverses Spain, Portugal, and other countries with routes that can be up to 500 miles. "That hiking pilgrimage can be for weeks or months for some people," he said.

Deacon Talbott's group will embark on a journey on a smaller scale but just as profound and prayerful.



Courtesy photo St. Patrick Church in Coalton is shown above.



This graphic of the lower region of the Clarksburg Vicariate shows the pilgrimage route from St. Patrick Church in Coalton to St. Patrick Church in Weston. Courtesy graphic

Theirs will be a two-day, 35-mile hike from St. Patrick Church in Coalton to St. Patrick's in Weston.

Their journey will begin with 8 a.m. Mass on Saturday, June 14, at St. Patrick's in Coalton.

"Father Jim O'Connor (pastor) is going to celebrate Mass and then we'll leave from there," Deacon Talbott said, adding that he would love for people in the community who are not going on the hike to join the group at Mass to send them off with prayers.

Along the way, the group will be engaging in prayer and taking in the beauty of God's creation, here, in West Virginia.

"I want to include the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the hike," Deacon Talbott said. "We'll stop for a break, but then also a prayer break. We'll start with morning prayer and, at some point during the hike, we'll do mid-morning

prayer with a break and then do another stop for lunch and midday prayer."

Evening prayer will be in Buckhannon where the hikers will be camping overnight at a spot provided at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Holy Rosary Parish in town was not able to ac-

"...if one person sees us and says, 'Well that's kind of cool. What are the Catholics doing?' then that's worth it."

—Deacon Aaron Talbott

commodate the group as the parish had events already scheduled at the church.

Deacon Talbott said the journey



Courtesy photo St. Patrick Church in Weston is one of the four designated pilgrimage sites in West Virginia for the Jubilee Year.

is also about being a visible sign of the Catholic faith.

"I'm hoping for people to maybe stop us and say, 'Hey, what are you guys doing?'" Deacon Talbott said. "We're going to be sort of missionary pilgrims too. Pilgrims of hope. We're being hopeful out here. Hopeful for a good year. Hopeful for health and for spiritual growth."

The group will hike along U.S. Route 33 or back roads with hikers wearing vests to stand out. As he was planning the hike, Deacon Talbott was overjoyed to learn that one of the individuals who decided to join in the journey is one who has drifted away from the Catholic faith. Deacon Talbott is hoping the hike might be a start to bringing that person back to Mass and maybe evangelize the community.

"If this person comes back to the church because of it; if one person sees us and says, 'Well that's kind of cool. What are the Catholics doing?' then that's worth it."

Those interested in participating, can call Deacon Talbott at (304) 621-3034.

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Camp Carlo Leaders Aim to Help Young Catholics Deepen Their Relationship with Christ

By Colleen Rowan

HUTTONSVILLE — Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Camp in Huttonsville is preparing for another summer of fun with a focus on its core mission — leading young people to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through his church. This year, the camp will be led by diocesan seminarians Reece Lopatka and Michael Tupta, who are serving as co-directors.

Activities include a high ropes course, a giant swing, swimming, a water slide, backpacking, camping, fishing, canoeing, and field games. But Tupta told *The Catholic Spirit* that the program goes beyond these staples of summertime fun.

“Our Catholic faith is what sustains the entire mission of these camps,” he said. “All of the efforts, planning and work is to provide an opportunity for the campers to encounter Jesus Christ through the sacramental life of the Church, through the gift of the great outdoors and relationships with one another.”

Tupta wants campers to realize how loved they are by God and that living a life with Christ is a great adventure. In addition to Holy Mass and Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, he said campers will be able to receive the Sacrament of Confession, pray the Holy Rosary “and really enter

into a culture of prayer at the camp.” He added that, “Having these concrete, intentional ways of experiencing the Lord in prayer will hopefully plant seeds of a greater desire for a relationship with Christ as they grow older.”

The program brings young Catholics to the southern region of the state

“OUR CATHOLIC FAITH IS WHAT SUSTAINS THE ENTIRE MISSION OF THESE CAMPS.”

— SEMINARIAN MICHAEL TUPTA, CO-DIRECTOR OF BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS YOUTH CAMP

in the small town of Huttonsville amid the breathtaking mountains of Randolph County. The camp has offered generations of children and young people the opportunity to grow closer to Christ while enjoying the summer camp experience. And the last four years of this ministry has been presented to young Catholics reflecting the love of and dedication to the Most Blessed Sacrament that Blessed Carlo Acutis, for whom the camp is named, had in his life.

The camp was founded 60 years ago by the late Father Leon Alexander as the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s youth camp with the title Camp Tygart. After a few name changes

throughout the years, the camp was renamed Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Camp in 2021 in honor of the first millennial to be beatified. With the new name came a new motto: “Cum Ipso in monte” (With Him on the Mountain), referencing the Transfiguration, according to the Camp Carlo website. It further notes, “A reflec-

tion of the Transfiguration, life at Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Camp draws young people into direct encounter with the divinity of Christ.”

Although Tupta did not attend the camp under its previous names growing up, his sister Clare did and was a counselor two summers ago.

“I have been able to have great conversations about her experiences,” he said. “And, as a seminarian, I was a counselor for two years for the Quo Vadis retreat.” That program is another diocesan camp for boys interested in learning about the priesthood held on the camp’s grounds.

This will be Tupta’s only year as co-director of Camp Carlo, “yet I am so excited

to become associated with Camp Carlo to come back as a priest in a few years!”

Assisting Tupta and Lopatka this summer will be Joshua Criste, a former camper himself who is excited to return as assistant director of the camp.

“Attending Camp Carlo as a camper, I saw Christ’s joy, passion, and beauty in the mountains of Huttonsville, West Virginia, and knew I needed to return as a counselor,” Joshua said. “I am excited to return this year ... to continue to share Christ’s love and the teachings of His Church.”

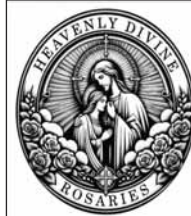
Camp Carlo is the ideal place for Joshua to spread the faith to young people. Growing up, he said his father Dan made the Eucharist a significant part of his life, ensuring that he knew of the importance of Christ, “why we need him in our lives and the depth of intimacy we can only know of him from receiving him in the Eucharist.”

Joshua also spoke of his mother Colleen who led

many retreats and praise and worship groups at his parish while growing up, “showing the importance of the burning love the Holy Spirit has for and within us.” In 2019, he and his family moved to Morgantown and became members of St. John University Parish. Colleen served for a time in campus ministry at West Virginia University.

Dates for this summer’s program are: June 29-July 5 — High School Week; and three “Catch All” weeks for different groups — July 6-12, July 13-19, and July 20-26.

Register and learn more at <https://campcarlowv.org>. At the bottom of this page is a photo collage of camp fun from the past few years.



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Ready to Serve, Lead, Support, and Walk with You!

By Joyce Bibey, courtesy of FaithInWV

As the Church celebrates the ordination to the priesthood of Father Travis Moger, ordained at St. Joseph Church Martinsburg, on Friday, May 30, we pray for him, his family, and praise God for all those discerning the priesthood and religious life.

We are blessed in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to have such an impressive number of seminarians opening their minds and hearts to religious life.

While some have just finished their first year of college, let alone seminary, Seminarian Clifton Mastran is a proud Class of 2025 graduate of the Pope St. John Paul XXIII National Seminary.

Mastran's seminary shared a reflection he wrote about the impact of his formation and pastoral assignments. As featured in the seminary's newsletter "Sparks of Light":

It was the unplanned, unscripted moments that were impactful for me, where you are able to be an instrument of the Lord to the people of God "out in the field." For example, saying or doing the right thing at the right time for exactly what that person or the situation called for, be it in providing spiritual counseling, prayers, a loving presence, etc., in which it is clear that what unfolded was under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is so wonderful and exciting to be allowed to participate as an agent of God's grace! Additionally, I am so grateful for the private Adoration Chapel and the ability to do all of my Holy Hours in Adoration of the Lord! I am also grateful for the relationships with the wonderful people (faculty, staff, and seminarians) that have been a part of my time here, and I look forward to maintaining those relations down the road, even if that will mostly be done remotely!

I cannot wait to be allowed to participate as a minister of God's grace through the Sacrament of Holy Orders as his priest within his priest-

hood. I look forward to bringing the Sacraments to the people in an intimate encounter with Christ and helping everyone I meet to grow closer in understanding and love for our Lord and each other, united in Christ! I will strive to be a good shepherd and one who brings the love and mercy of our Lord out to our wounded world!

Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary has had taught seminarians from more than 150 dioceses and 25 religious communities. More than 750 alumni serve in dioceses and religious communities throughout the world.

New Vocations Director

Recently, Bishop Mark Brennan announced the official appointment of Father John Soplinski as Vocations Director in addition to his assignments as vice rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling and parochial vicar of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling. Father Soplinski was ordained to the priesthood on May 31, 2024.

His homily on Nov. 3 from the Cathedral of St. Joseph is appropriate to reiterate today.

"Right now, we have 17 men in formation for the priesthood for our Diocese—a windfall, no one around can remember when it was so high. In addition, there are two who are in formation for religious orders, one who is in formation for the Fraternal Society of St. Peter, and two who are in formation for the Byzantine Catholic Church.

"And as a recent graduate of a Seminary, I can speak to the enthusiasm, the joyfulness of the young men who are studying to serve you.

"I credit those young men for helping me along my journey—even if there were times, I wanted to knock their heads together for their enthusiasms...that's just the age gap.

"We ask you to pray for them, because there is an attrition factor, not all the young men who go to Seminary stay in Seminary. This is not a

failure—you don't really know if God is calling you until you submit to the process of formation.

"The Church cannot discern whether a man or a woman is called to religious life until they enter into formation. And it takes a number of years, 7 at a minimum, 9 at a maximum, there are no shortcuts to the priesthood.

"Bishop Mark, himself once a vocations director for 10 years in Washington D.C., often ends his vocation talks to the Serra Club or to the various retreats offered for men discerning a vocation by saying: 'The people of God want priests, good holy, healthy, and happy priests.'

"And we need them, as a new priest I can tell you a few extra hands wouldn't hurt a bit.

Keep praying, as one of my professors who speaks often nationally tells his audience—"the cavalry is coming"—the Holy Spirit provides for the Church—especially when you and I play our part."

Summer Assignments

Deepen Discernment for Diocesan Seminarians

Clifton Mastran – Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Oak Hill

Dominic Re – St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg

Michael Aiello – St. John University Parish, Morgantown

Bryan Tedeschi – IPF Summer Program

Nathan Schmidt – Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Huntington

Michael Tupta – Camp Carlo, Huttonsville

Timothy Kawash – St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Berkely Springs

Peter Russman – St. Joseph Parish, Huntington

Reece Lopatka – Camp Carlo, Huttonsville

David Hensler – St. James the Greater Parish, Charles Town

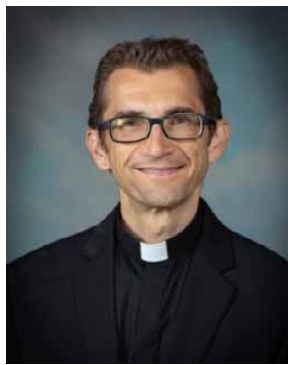
Andrew Dean – St. Patrick Parish, Weston

Joseph Derico – St. John the Evangelist Parish, Wellsburg

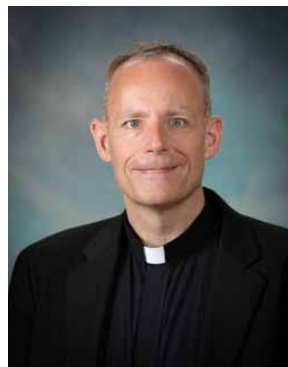
Donvito Cortese – Guatemala Summer Program

Sebastian Lasko – St. James the Greater Parish, Charles Town,

Christopher Nelson – St. Joseph Parish, Weirton



Seminarian Clifton Mastran



Father John Soplinski, Vocations Director



Courtesy photo

From left are diocesan seminarians Timothy Kawash, Michael Tupta, and Peter Russman in Rome in May. Tupta attends the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Kawash and Russman attend the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.



Photo provided by Mount St. Mary's Seminary

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston seminarians Michael Aiello (left), Bryan Tedeschi (fourth from left), and Dominic Re (right) were installed as acolytes at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md., April 5 by Bishop Douglas Lucia of the Diocese of Syracuse (second from left). With them is Msgr. Andrew R. Baker, S.T.D., rector of Mount St. Mary's University (third from left).

CCWVa Receives Catholic Charities USA Grant to Strengthen Long-Term Disaster Recovery Efforts

WEST VIRGINIA — Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) is proud to announce it has received a generous grant from Catholic Charities USA to support outreach and disaster case management efforts for individuals and families affected by Hurricane Helene, primarily in Mercer County, with outreach extending to surrounding areas.

This grant enables Catholic Charities West Virginia to deepen its mission of walking with people in their time of greatest need by providing compassionate and coordinated long-term disaster recovery services. The funding will support direct outreach to impacted individuals and expand training opportunities in Disaster Case Management for individuals across the state.

“We are grateful for the support of Catholic Charities USA, which empowers us to better serve West Virginians who are still struggling after disasters,” said Mark Phillips, President and CEO of Catholic Charities West Virginia. “One of our goals is to accompany people—we want to make sure we are walking alongside people to help them return to lives that are stable, happy, and healthy.”

While West Virginia has a strong and generous network of community and parish-based support for meeting immediate needs—such as muck-out efforts, water distribution, clothing, and food—coordinating long-term recovery remains a significant challenge. Many survivors with severe home damage find themselves displaced, living with relatives or in temporary housing, and struggling to navigate the complex recovery process.

Currently, there are very few trained Disaster Case Managers in

the state. With this grant, CCWVa aims to increase the number of trained case managers, placing them within organizations throughout West Virginia. This will build a strong foundation of preparedness so that, when disasters strike, trained professionals are ready to mobilize immediately and help survivors navigate the long-term path to recovery.

As part of this initiative, CCWVa will hire new case managers and a construction manager to support rebuilding efforts. These positions will be funded through a combination of resources, including this grant, funding from state and federal agencies such as FEMA, and the generous support of parishes throughout West Virginia.

For more information or to learn how you can support or get involved, visit www.ccwva.org.



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Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Wisconsin Catholic Agency over Religious Exemption

By Kate Scanlon, OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The U.S. Supreme Court on June 5 unanimously ruled in favor of the Catholic Charities Bureau of the Diocese of Superior, Wisconsin, which had asked the high court to overturn a decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court the agency argued discounted its religious identity.

The group previously appealed a ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court that Catholic Charities is not exempt from paying into the state's unemployment insurance system because its operations aren't

primarily religious under the definition in the statute requiring certain employers to do so.

Wisconsin law states religious employers in the Badger State are eligible for an exemption from paying into its unemployment benefit program if they operate primarily for religious purposes. The state argued, however, that the Catholic Charities Bureau does not meet that standard since it employs non-Catholics and does not make its service to the less fortunate contingent on Catholic religious practice, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court previously sided with the state, drawing a

distinction between its mission or purpose and its "activities."

However, in an opinion written by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously found the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling violated the First Amendment by creating a preference for some religious practices over others.

"It is fundamental to our constitutional order that the government maintain 'neutrality between religion and religion,'" Sotomayor wrote, quoting previous Supreme Court precedent in *Epperson v. Arkansas*. "There may be hard calls to make in policing

that rule, but this is not one."

Bishop James P. Powers of Superior celebrated the ruling in a statement.

"At the heart of Catholic Charities' ministry is Christ's call to care for the least of our brothers and sisters, without condition and without exception," Bishop Powers said. "We're grateful the Court unanimously recognized that improving the human condition by serving the poor is part of our religious exercise and has allowed us to continue serving those in need throughout our diocese and beyond."

Eric Rassbach, vice president and senior counsel at

Becket, a religious liberty law firm that represented the Catholic Charities bureau, said, "Wisconsin shouldn't have picked this fight in the first place."

"It was always absurd to claim that Catholic Charities wasn't religious because it helps everyone, no matter their religion," Rassbach said. "Today, the Court resoundingly reaffirmed a fundamental truth of our constitutional order: the First Amendment protects all religious beliefs, not just those the government favors."

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

Trump Administration Revokes Biden-Era Abortion Directive for Emergency Rooms

By Kate Scanlon, OSV News
WASHINGTON (OSV News)

— The Trump administration announced June 3 that it would revoke Biden-era guidance to the nation's hospitals directing them to perform abortions in emergency circumstances even in states that banned the procedure.

In 2022, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the Biden administration issued the directive under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act.

Supporters of the Biden administration's directive argued it would shield doctors and medical staff from legal repercussions in states that restricted abortion if they performed an abortion in an emergency, but opponents argued the 1986 EMTALA law obligates doctors and hospitals to attempt to stabilize both mother and unborn child in an emergency.

The Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said they would rescind the directive, adding that "CMS will continue to enforce EMTALA, which protects all individuals who present to a hospital emergency department seeking examination or treatment,

including for identified emergency medical conditions that place the health of a pregnant woman or her unborn child in serious jeopardy."

"CMS will work to rectify any perceived legal confusion and instability created by the former administration's actions," the announcement said.

Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, R-Miss., chair of the Senate Pro-Life Caucus, argued in a statement that the previous guidance "warped EMTALA obligations and created widespread confusion in emergency rooms nationwide."

"EMTALA is a decades-old statute that was originally designed to protect mother-patients and their unborn children in emergency situations, but the Biden administration manipulated the law's purpose by issuing guidance that forced emergency room doctors to perform abortions, regardless of their states' life-affirming laws," Hyde-Smith said. "Restoring EMTALA to its original purpose brings much-needed clarity to our incredible emergency room doctors across the country and peace of mind to the patients they serve."

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

Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors Tells Pope Universal Safeguarding Guidelines Almost Ready

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors hopes to deliver a "Universal Guidelines Framework for Safeguarding" to Pope Leo XIV later this year, the commission said.

The guidelines "seek to inspire a true conversion of heart in every leader and pastoral agent in the church, ensuring that safeguarding becomes not merely a requirement, but a reflection of the Gospel's call to protect the least among us," the commission said in a press release June 5 after its first meeting with Pope Leo XIV.

Also, "a new 'vademecum' on reparations, informed by the lived experiences of victims and survivors, is in development to guide local

churches in responding with justice and compassion," it added.

The commission updated the pope about its work and "reiterated its commitment to the unity and collegiality of its members," the press release said. Members also informed Pope Leo about the commission's annual report, "a cornerstone of its mandate" that is "designed to evaluate the safeguarding capacity of local churches, offering practical recommendations grounded in the lived realities of each region," it said. This year's annual report will explore "conversional justice through the lens of reparations. This includes a comprehensive pastoral-theological study and the collection of data on current reparations practices across the universal church," it said.



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Pope Speaks by Phone with Russian Leader Putin

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Leo XIV and Russian leader Vladimir Putin held their first telephone conversation June 4 with the pope encouraging Putin to make a gesture to show he is serious about peace with Ukraine, the Vatican press office said.

"I confirm that this afternoon there was a telephone conversation between Pope Leo XIV and President Putin," said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

While they spoke of several "matters of mutual interest," Bruni said that "special attention was paid to the situation in Ukraine and peace."

"The pope made an appeal for Russia to make a gesture that would promote peace, stressed the importance of dialogue for the realization of positive contacts between the parties and seeking solutions to the conflict," Bruni said.

The pope and president also discussed the humanitarian situation, the need to facilitate the delivery of aid and ongoing negotiations over the exchange of prisoners of war, an effort Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna is involved with, he said.

Bruni also said Pope Leo spoke about Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, an ally of Putin.

The pope thanked the patriarch for sending his best wishes at the start of the pope's pontificate, Bruni said, and the pope "emphasized how common Christian values can be a light to help seek peace, defend life and seek genuine religious freedom."

In a post on Telegram, the Russian news agency Tass, citing the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, said that "Putin drew the pope's attention to the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict by the Kiev (Kyiv) regime," apparently referred to Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian war planes June 1.

Tass also reported that "Putin expressed his hope that the Holy See would step up its efforts to promote religious freedom in Ukraine," a reference to the Ukrainian parliament's decision in 2024 to ban the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine and to outlaw ties with Russian-based religious organizations.

Putin "thanked the Pope for his readiness to assist in resolving the conflict in Ukraine," Tass reported. Pope Leo had offered the Vatican as a neutral site for peace talks, but Russia declined the invitation.

"The Russian leader reiterated his interest in achieving peace in Ukraine through political and diplomatic means," Tass said.

National Pilgrimage Leaders Urge Large Procession Turnouts to Counter Anti-Catholic Protesters

By Maria Wiering, OSV News

(OSV News) — Catholics are encouraged to turn out in strong numbers for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's Eucharistic processions to counter the growing number of anti-Catholic protesters who have afflicted the route's public events from the first week.

"We need to be there. We need to show up for Jesus," said Jason Shanks, president of National Eucharistic Congress Inc. "This is the Way-of-the-Cross type of pilgrimage. This is walking with our Lord against attacks."

With megaphones and speakers, the protesters have been preaching against Catholic beliefs, including that Jesus is truly and fully present in the Eucharist. A few protesters have been present at public events since the end of the pilgrimage's first week in late May, but an estimated 40 to 50 protesters, including families with children, met the pilgrimage at May 30-June 2 events in Oklahoma.

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage organizers expect the protests to grow as the 36-day pilgrimage enters Texas and the Diocese of Dallas June 3, and to continue until the pilgrimage culminates in Los Angeles for the feast of Corpus Christi June 22.

The pilgrimage's 2025 St. Katharine Drexel Route covers 3,340 miles over 10 states in 20 dioceses. Its eight perpetual pilgrims — young adults who are traveling the full distance — began in Indianapolis May 18 and have so far stopped at parishes, shrines and other Catholic sites in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. After stops in Texas June 3-11, they will cross New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California.

The pilgrims' stops include Mass, Eucharistic adoration and charitable service, and also public processions, which is where they have encountered the majority of the protesters.

Last year's inaugural National Eucharistic Pilgrimage — an eight-week, four-route endeavor that culminated in Indianapolis ahead of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024 — did not encounter similar protests, Shanks said.

He encouraged Catholics who attend the 2025 pilgrimage's processions to show charity and humility, and he discouraged them from interacting with the protesters. He said that Catholics should be aware that efforts to debate or challenge the protesters may appear on social media.

"We don't need to engage with these folks," he said. "We need to keep our eyes focused on the Lord in prayer and adoration. We need to be courageous and steadfast."

Catholics should also be prepared to hear insults against the faith, he advised.

But attending the pilgrimage's processions — especially as part of a large crowd — is a way for Catholics to demonstrate their faith, he said. "We as Catholics have been talking about how do we evangelize and catechize — and getting out there, this is our public witness," he said.

Shanks said that the National Eucharistic Congress Inc. is addressing potential security factors but that the protesters have not yet caused the pilgrimage to alter its public schedule. However, he encouraged people planning to attend the pilgrimage's events to register, so that pilgrimage organizers can directly communicate any schedule changes.

Shanks also asked for prayers for the perpetual



OSV News photo/Avery Holt, courtesy Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City carries the monstrance as pilgrims from the archdiocese process June 1 from Christ the King Catholic Church to St. Eugene Catholic Church, during the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Pilgrimage organizers are encouraging Catholics to turn out in strong numbers for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's Eucharistic processions to counter the growing number of anti-Catholic protesters who consistently have been present at the route's public events.

pilgrims and any spiritual battles they might encounter. He said that the pilgrims are being cared for by their chaplains from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and their team leader, that the NEC's leaders are also checking in with them regularly, and that there are mental health professionals ready to assist if needed.

"This is going right at their interior life," he said. Drawing a parallel to Jesus' journey on the Via Dolorosa, the route he took while carrying the cross in Jerusalem to his crucifixion and death, Shanks said, "They're (walking) the Way of the Cross."

"Pilgrimage is suffering, and they're suffering for our Lord," he said. "They're walking with Jesus. They're hearing this. And it's not just one time. ... It's traveling with them."

(Maria Wiering is senior writer for OSV News.)



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Pope's Prayer Intention for June: That the World Grow in Compassion

By **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention for June, a month devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is "that the world might grow in compassion."

"Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his heart, learn to have compassion on the world," the pope prays in English in his first contribution to "The Pope Video," a monthly reflection published by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network.

The video, released June 3, also includes an original prayer people can recite daily during the month.

"You showed us the Father's love by loving us without measure with Your divine and human Heart," the prayer said.

"Grant all Your children the grace of encountering You. Change, shape and transform our plans, so that we seek only You in every circumstance: in prayer, in work, in encounters and in our daily routine," the prayer continued. "From this encounter, send us out on mission, a mission of compassion for the world in which You are the source from which all consolation flows."

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, formerly known as the Apostleship of Prayer, is a global movement of people who make a commitment each day to pray for the pope's intentions.

Jesuit Father Cristóbal Fones, director of the prayer network, said Pope Leo's intention "focuses on growing in compassion for the world through a personal relationship with Jesus."

"By cultivating this truly close relationship, our hearts are more conformed to His. We grow in love and mercy, and we better learn what compassion is," Father Fones said. "Jesus manifested an unconditional love for everyone, especially for the poor, the sick and those who were suffering. The pope encourages us to imitate this compassionate love by extending a hand to those in need."

In a statement accompanying the video, Father Fones also pointed out that during the Holy Year 2025, "The Pope Video acquires special relevance since through it we know the prayer intentions the pope holds in his heart. To properly receive the graces of the Jubilee indulgence, it is necessary to pray for the pope's intentions."

The prayer network also noted how four popes have devoted encyclicals to Catholics' devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Pope Leo XIII, whose name the current pope took, wrote 'Annum Sacrum' in 1899, in which he consecrated all of humanity to the Heart of Jesus. In 1928, Pope Pius XI, in 'Misericordissimus Redemptor,' invited us to make reparation through acts of love for the wounds our sins inflict on the Heart of Christ," the network said.

"For his part, Pope Pius XII published 'Haurietis Aquas' in 1956, in which he explores the theological basis for devotion to the Sacred Heart," it said. And "lastly, Pope Francis wrote 'Dilexit Nos' in 2024, and proposed devotion to the Heart of Christ as a response to the throwaway culture and the culture of indifference."

CNS photo/courtesy Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
A photo illustrates Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention for June, "That the world might grow in compassion." A video with the pope's prayer was released at the Vatican June 3.

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 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - Retreat Begins / Session 1
 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - Break/Book Signing
 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. - Session 2/7 Sorrows Rosary

Saturday, July 26, 2025

8:00 a.m. - Mass
 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Session 3/Procession to Mary
(Bring Flower from Home for Consecration to Mary)
 10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Break/Book Signing
 11:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Session 4
 12:30 p.m. - Retreat Ends

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Líderes de la peregrinación nacional animan a acudir a las procesiones para contrarrestar protestas anti-católicas

Por Maria Wiering, OSV News (OSV News) — Se anima a los católicos a acudir en gran número a las procesiones eucarísticas de la Peregrinación Eucarística Nacional para contrarrestar el creciente número de manifestantes anti-católicos que han afligido los actos públicos de la ruta desde la primera semana.

"Tenemos que estar ahí. Tenemos que hacerlo por Jesús", dijo Jason Shanks, presidente del National Eucharistic Congress Inc. "Este es el tipo de peregrinación del Camino de la Cruz. Esto es caminar con nuestro Señor contra los ataques".

Con megáfonos y altavoces, los manifestantes han estado predicando contra las creencias católicas, incluyendo que Jesús está verdadera y plenamente presente en la Eucaristía. Unos pocos manifestantes habían estado presentes en eventos públicos desde el final de la primera semana de la peregrinación, a finales de mayo, pero se calcula que, entre 40 y 50 manifestantes, incluidas familias con niños, se reunieron con la peregrinación en los actos celebrados en Oklahoma del 30 de mayo al 2 de junio.

Los organizadores de la Peregrinación Eucarística Nacional esperan que las protestas aumenten cuando la peregrinación de 36 días entre a Texas el 3 de junio, y que continúen hasta que la peregrinación culmine en Los Ángeles para la festividad del Corpus Christi el 22 de junio.

La Ruta de Santa Catalina Drexel

2025 recorre 3.340 millas en 10 estados y 20 diócesis. Sus ocho peregrinos perpetuos — jóvenes adultos que recorren toda la distancia de esta peregrinación con el Santísimo — comenzaron en Indianápolis el 18 de mayo y hasta ahora se han detenido en parroquias, santuarios y otros lugares católicos de Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas y Oklahoma. Tras detenerse en Texas del 3 al 11 de junio, atravesarán Nuevo México, Arizona y el sur de California.

Las paradas de los peregrinos incluyen misas, adoración eucarística y servicio caritativo, y también procesiones públicas, que es donde se han encontrado con la mayoría de los manifestantes.

La Peregrinación Eucarística Nacional inaugural del año pasado — un esfuerzo de ocho semanas y cuatro rutas que culminó en Indianápolis antes del 10º Congreso Eucarístico Nacional en julio de 2024 — no se encontró con protestas similares, dijo Shanks.

Animó a los católicos que asistan a las procesiones de la peregrinación de 2025 a que muestren caridad y humildad, y les disuadió de interactuar con los manifestantes. Dijo que los católicos deben ser conscientes de que en las redes sociales pueden aparecer esfuerzos para debatir o desafiar a los manifestantes.

"No necesitamos hacerle frente a esta gente", dijo. "Necesitamos mantener nuestros ojos enfocados en el Señor en oración y adoración. Tenemos que ser valientes y firmes".

Los católicos también deben

estar preparados para oír insultos contra la fe, aconsejó.

Pero asistir a las procesiones de la peregrinación — especialmente como parte de una gran multitud — es una forma de que los católicos demuestran su fe, dijo. "Nosotros, como católicos, hemos estado hablando de cómo evangelizar y catequizar, y salir ahí fuera es nuestro testimonio público", dijo.

Shanks dijo que el National Eucharistic Congress Inc. está abordando posibles factores de seguridad, pero que los manifestantes aún no han provocado que la peregrinación altere su programa público. No obstante, animó a las personas que tengan previsto asistir a los actos de la peregrinación a que se inscriban, para que los organizadores de la peregrinación puedan comunicar directamente cualquier cambio de horario.

Shanks también pidió oraciones por los peregrinos perpetuos y por las batallas espirituales que puedan encontrar. Dijo que los peregrinos están siendo atendidos por sus capellanes de los Frailes Franciscanos de la Renovación y el líder de su equipo, y añadió que los líderes del NEC también se comunican con ellos con regularidad, y que hay profesionales de la salud mental listos para ayudar si es necesario.

"Esto va directo a su vida interior", afirmó. Haciendo un paralelismo con el viaje de Jesús por la Vía Dolorosa, la ruta que siguió mientras cargaba con la cruz en Jerusalén

hasta su crucifixión y muerte, Shanks dijo: "Están (caminando) por el Camino de la Cruz".

"Peregrinar es sufrir, y ellos están sufriendo por nuestro Señor", dijo. "Están caminando con Jesús. Lo están escuchando. Y no es sólo una vez. ... Es viajar con ellos".



Foto CNS/cortesía de la Red Mundial de Oración del Papa
Una foto ilustra la intención de oración del Papa León XIV para junio: "Para crecer en la compasión por el mundo". Un video con la oración del Papa fue lanzado en el Vaticano el 3 de junio de 2025.

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.repostbishopabuse.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 eclesásticas 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, Diocese 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.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule, Spring 2025

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, June 7: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Albans; 5 p.m.

Sunday, June 8: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 11 a.m.

Sunday, June 8: Sacred Heart, Bluefield, 4:30 p.m.



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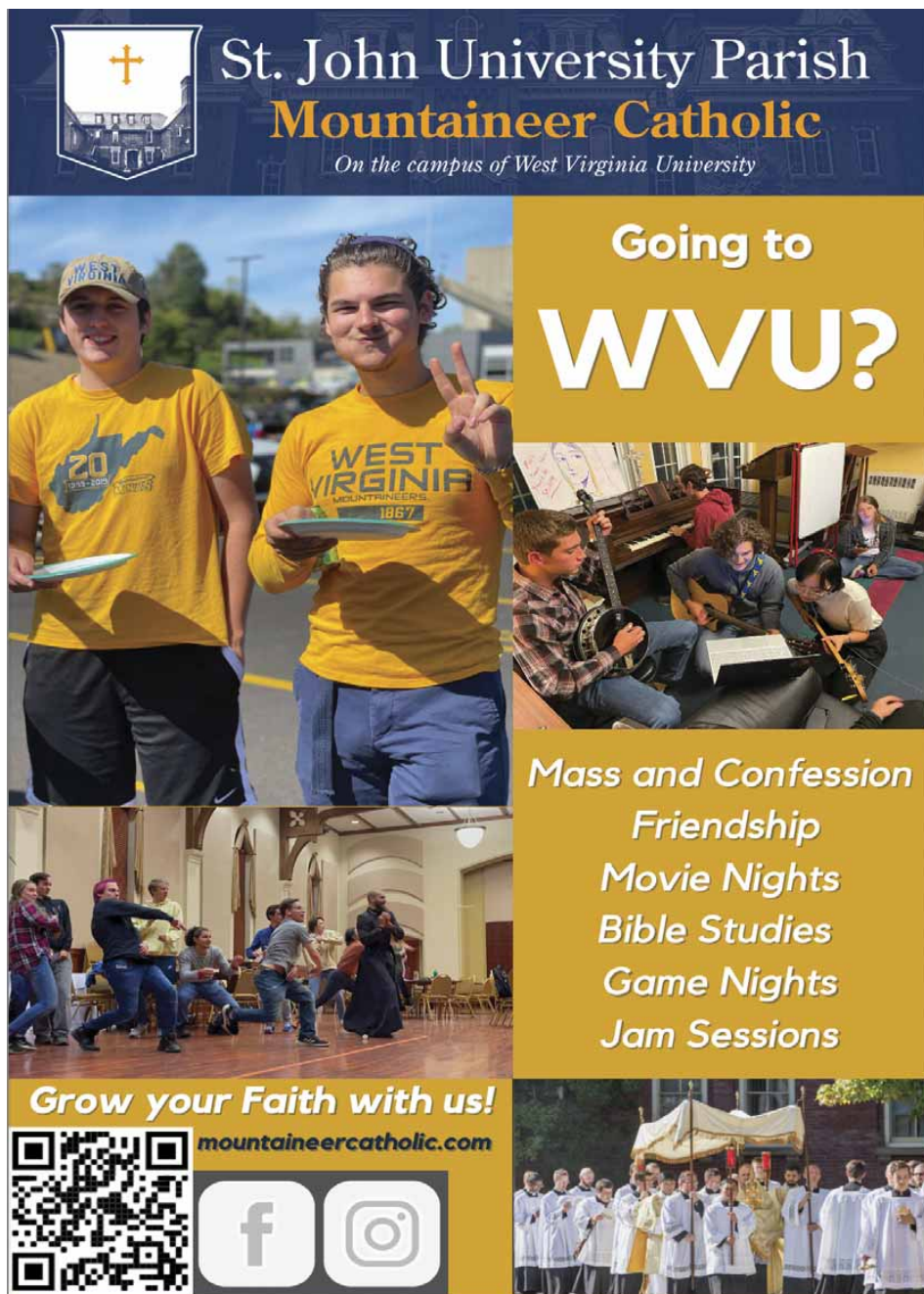
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