THE CATHOLIC Spirit

During Respect Life Month, Catholics Urged to Pray, Take Action to Stop Use of Abortion Pill

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, urged the faithful to mark Respect Life Month with prayer, deeper reflection and action.

Respect Life Month is observed every October by the U.S. Catholic Church. This year, the theme chosen is Mary, Mother of Life.

"Our Blessed Mother is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life in every stage and circumstance. We entrust all our efforts to protect mothers and babies to her motherly care, which we greatly need at this time," Bishop Thomas said in a Sept. 29 statement.

"Today, with easier access to abortion pills, the abortion rate is tragically climbing, along with increased health risks," he said.

The Trump administration has sought to pause multiple state lawsuits seeking to roll back Biden administration-era eased restrictions

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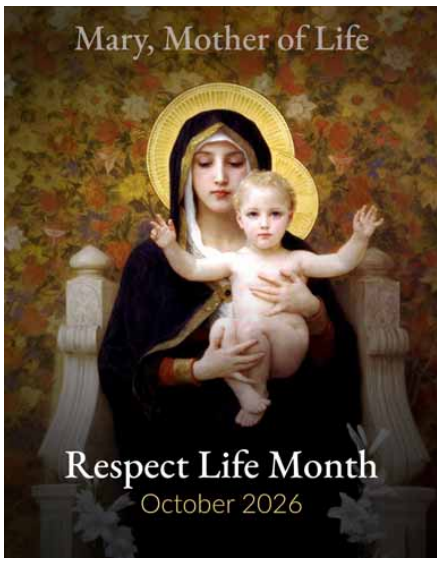
Weirton-Area Catholics Remind Community of the Truth

Colleen Rowan photo

Weirton-area Catholics remind their community of the truth—abortion kills children—in the life chain they formed on WV Route 2 through downtown Weirton on Respect Life Sunday (Oct. 4). From right are Janet McClintock of St. Paul Parish in Weirton and Margie Gaudio and Dorene Wilkerson of St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee. October is Respect Life Month and the Month of the Rosary.

Inside: Bishop Menjívar Celebrates Mass of Appreciation for Sisters, Brothers, and Consecrated Persons, Page 3 | St. Albans Catholics Mark Anniversaries of Parish and Patron Saint's Death, Page 4



OSV News photo/USCCB

This illustration is included in the materials for the 2026 U.S. bishops' Respect Life Month, observed every October by the U.S. Catholic Church.

Life ...

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on mifepristone, a drug commonly used for first trimester abortion, but which is also used in some miscarriage care protocols.

Thus far the administration has left that regulation in effect while seeking to block those challenges, pending a promised FDA safety review, resulting in frustration from pro-life advocates.

"The Food and Drug Administration has enabled a nationwide mail-order abortion industry by allowing the abortion pill to be prescribed in telehealth appointments, sold both at neighborhood pharmacies and online, and often shipped in the mail, circumventing state laws that protect life in the womb," Bishop Thomas said.

"This means that more women, many of whom have been misinformed about the nature and risks of the abortion pill, will have an abortion alone at home, without any medical supervision," he continued. "It also sets up additional opportunities for exploitation by violent partners or human traffickers. These affronts to human dignity demand our response."

Bishop Thomas' statement echoed joint remarks he and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, USCCB president, made in early August ahead of the Aug. 18 launch of a nationwide call to prayer and action to mobilize Catholics to address the rising abortion rate and the increased availability of an abortion-inducing drug.

"Every abortion involves the death of a child and harm to the mother. Now with easier access to abortion pills, the abortion rate is tragically climbing, along with increased health risks," the prelates said.

In his Sept. 29 statement, Bishop Thomas thanked "the many thousands of Catholics across the country who have embraced the nationwide invitation to prayer and action on abortion pills."

He said he wanted to ask the faithful to "continue our prayers and advocacy throughout the month of October" and invited them to visit the Respect Life Prayer and Action website, https://www.respectlife.org/abortion-pills.

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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."

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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 remaining issues and the publishing dates for the year. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday and delivered by e-mail free to subscribers. View issues and subscribe at thecatholicspiritwv.org.

Remaining 2026 Print Dates:
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Bishop Menjívar Celebrates Mass of Appreciation for Sisters, Brothers, and Consecrated

Bishop Evelio Menjívar (center) is pictured with women religious and consecrated following the Mass of Appreciation he celebrated for religious sisters, brothers, and consecrated at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling Oct. 3. At far left is Father Jeeson Stephan, MCBS, pastor of St. Vincent's. At far right is Sister Martha Gomez, delegate for Consecrated Life for the diocese.
Colleen Rowan photo

By Colleen Rowan

The story of the Church, particularly the story of the Church in the United States and in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, cannot be told without telling the story of religious sisters, brothers, and consecrated persons, Bishop Evelio Menjívar said during the evening Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling Oct. 3. It was a Mass of Appreciation for their lifetime of ministry and service to God's people in West Virginia.

This was also Bishop Menjívar's first Mass at the parish and he expressed his joy at being with the people of St. Vincent's for the celebration.

Seated in the front of the church were 24 women religious and consecrated representing eight congregations across the diocese. Four of the honorees are celebrating jubilees this year. Present were Sister Virginia Yeager, CSJ, who is celebrating her 65th anniversary, and Sister Rachel Blais, SC, who is celebrating her 40th anniversary. Unable to attend were Sister Jane Cain, CSJ, a 70-year jubilarian, and Sister Mary Ann Rosenbaum, CSJ, a 40-year Jubilarian.

In his homily, Bishop Menjívar spoke of their invaluable service.

"You have built churches, schools, hospitals. You have educated generations of children, including children of the poor, immigrants, and immigrant families that otherwise would not have access to good Catholic education," the bishop said to them. "So, thank you."

He spoke of the hospitals they have established, noting Wheeling Hospital, located not far from the church; their care for orphans, noting the St. John's Home for Children, next to the church; and their service to immigrants, miners, workers, prisoners, and people with disabilities. They have promoted justice and human dignity in the Church and in society, the bishop said; prepared people for the sacraments; accompanied young people in discovering their vocations; and cared for the elderly, noting the Welty Home and Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Wheeling.

"You brought the presence of Christ to places where, sometimes, priests could not always be present," the bishop said. "And, here is our diocese, religious women and men have contributed to the growth and to the holiness ... of the Church." This, he said, is a beautiful aspect of religious life.

"Thank you for caring for the Lord's Vineyard with so much love, sacrifice, and competence," he said.

Bishop Menjívar said that religious sisters are part of his vocation story. At the parish of his youth in El Salvadore, he recalled that the sisters kept the parish vibrant. As a teenager, he got involved in youth ministry and catechesis, both led by a sister.

He was 10 years old in 1980 when three American sisters and one lay missionary were killed not long after St. Oscar Romero was killed. The people admired them, Bishop Menjívar said, because they left the safety and comfort of the United States to serve the people there—the poor, especially those being displaced by the civil conflict, those who were persecuted.

Sister Martha Gomez, delegate for Consecrated Life for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, thanked the bishop for celebrating the Mass; Father Jeeson Stephan, MCBS, pastor of St. Vincent's, who concelebrated; and the parish for hosting the celebration. She also thanked the women religious and consecrated for their years of service.

Following the Mass, the bishop gathered with the sisters and consecrated for a dinner in Marist Hall.

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A Joyful Time for St. Albans Catholics

Bishop Menjívar Joins in Celebration of Their Parish's 100th Anniversary and Marks the 800th Anniversary of the Death of Their Patron, St. Francis of Assisi

By Colleen Rowan

The first week of October was a joyful time for Catholics of St. Albans. In a three-day event, they marked the 100th anniversary of their Parish of St. Francis of Assisi and the 800th anniversary of the death of their patron saint.

The celebration began on Oct. 1 with "An Evening of Prayer, Songs, and History Honoring St. Francis." The next day, a memorial Mass was celebrated for members of the parish "who are no longer with us but are now with St. Francis and Jesus."

Bishop Evelio Menjívar celebrated the Sunday Mass, Oct. 4, for the anniversaries with Father Sojan Xavier, pastor, and Father John Finnell concelebrating.

"This is not simply an anniversary. It is a moment to remember, to give thanks, and to look forward with hope. For 100 years, this parish has been a place of faith, prayer, friendship, service, and love for Christ," Father Xavier said at the beginning of the Mass. "And today, we are privileged to celebrate that beautiful history together..."

In his homily, the bishop emphasized the beginning of the Prayer of St. Francis, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." Those words, he said, beautifully capture the spirit of the saint's life and are reflected in the parish's mission statement: "In the spirit of St. Francis, we, the church family, strive to discover Christ's peace in us and in each aspect of creation by welcoming and walking hand in hand with our brothers and sisters on our faith journey.

"What a beautiful mission statement," the bishop said. "What a beautiful way to be a Christian Church ... a Catholic parish."

Bishop Menjívar told the people they have the privilege of belonging to a parish that bears the name of this extraordinary saint and has a beautiful mission. But with that mission, he said, comes responsibility.

"Let us not simply admire St. Francis," the bishop said. "Let us imitate him. And we do all this by accepting the invitation Jesus gives us in today's gospel: 'learn from me, for I am

See "Joyful" on Page 5

Courtesy photos

Clockwise from top left: Bishop Evelio Menjívar (center) celebrates the anniversary Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Church in St. Albans with Father Sojan Xavier, pastor (right), and Father John Finnell concelebrating; Jason and Maria Forrester and their daughters Lucy (left) and Selena carry the gifts; parishioner Shaun Lopez thanks all for attending; Father Xavier takes a selfie with parishioners at the reception; Bishop Menjívar and parishioners sing "Take Me Home, Country Roads"; and Bishop Menjívar and Father Xavier help serve food at the reception.

Deacons Celebrate 10th Anniversary

KEARNEYSVILLE—Permanent deacons ordained in 2016 celebrated their 10th anniversary in conjunction with the ongoing formation weekend at Priest Field Pastoral Center in Kearneysville. In the front row, from left, are Deacon Thomas Soper, Deacon Helgi Nelson, Deacon John Yaquinta, and Deacon Steve Wharton. In the back, from left, are Deacon Harry Evans, Deacon Vince Olenick, Deacon Brian Crim, Deacon Robert Holliday, and Deacon Marcus Pressl. They are pictured at St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town. Not pictured are Deacon Luis Pagano, Deacon James Munuhe, and Deacon John Peter Minogue. *Courtesy photo*

Joyful ...

Cont'd from Page 4

meek and humble of heart.' So, may St. Francis of Assisi, this parish here at St. Albans, always be a community willing to go out and encounter...; a community continually rebuilding itself around the Eucharist; a community that cares for God's creation; and that is known throughout this area as a place of peace, reconciliation, mercy, and belonging. St. Francis of Assisi, pray for us."

The gift bearers for the Mass were Jason and Maria Forrester and their daughters Lucy and Selena. Maria is principal of St. Francis of Assisi School and Lucy and Selena are both students there.

Speaking at the end of the celebration was parishioner Shaun Lopez who thanked the bishop for celebrating the Mass and everyone who attended.

Following the Mass, the parish fed the St. Albans community at a reception. Bishop Menjívar and Father Xavier helped volunteers in serving food and the bishop later joined parishioners in singing "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

According to history provided by the parish, construction of the church was completed in 1926 and placed under the patronage of St. Francis of Assisi, with pastoral care entrusted to the Franciscan community. The parish school was opened by 1948 and was staffed by the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus until 1973. The school continues to operate with a lay staff.

A particularly significant period of renewal took place during the long pastorate of Father Patrick McDonough from 1987 until his death in 2022. The church interior and sanctuary were remodeled over approximately three years. Other major improvements included central air-conditioning for the church and school, a picnic shelter, a Marian shrine, renovation of the parish hall, paving of the parking lot, a new roof, and eight beautiful stained glass windows depicting the life of St. Francis. A parish center was also constructed, providing space for school activities, parish programs, community gatherings, and basketball. It has become an important gathering place for the St. Francis community.

OCTOBER'S INVITATION - PRAY, REFLECT, SERVE

Month of the Rosary

Dear faithful and friends of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston,

October invites us to be more intentional in praying the Rosary. It is not simply a prayer we recite, but a moment to be with Mary and contemplate the life of Jesus.

Make it a priority to give yourself the gift of this special time. Pray alone in a quiet moment, gather with your family, invite a friend, and recite it as a parish community. Let the familiar prayers slow your pace, giving you time for reflection. Bring to Jesus, through Mary, the joys and burdens you carry.

As you pray, consider including intentions beyond your own special needs. Pray for vocations in your parish; pray for our bishops, priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, and all who serve in our parishes, schools, and communities. Remember those who are sick, grieving, lonely, or in need of hope, and pray for peace and the needs of the world.

Here are a few ways to make the month a special one:

- Pray the Rosary during a Holy Hour, offering each decade for a particular intention.
- Place a flower at your parish's Marian altar as a simple expression of love and gratitude.
- Invite someone to pray with you—at home, in church, or over the phone.
- Choose one mystery to reflect on each day, perhaps reading the related Scripture passage before you begin.
- Pray with children or grandchildren, helping them discover the stories of Jesus through the mysteries.
- Let your prayer lead to a small act of kindness for someone who needs encouragement.

May this October bring us closer to Christ, more attentive to one another, and united in prayer across our diocese.

With gratitude and prayers for you and your special intentions,

Sr. Martha Gomez, R.G.S.

Sr. Martha Gomez, R.G.S.

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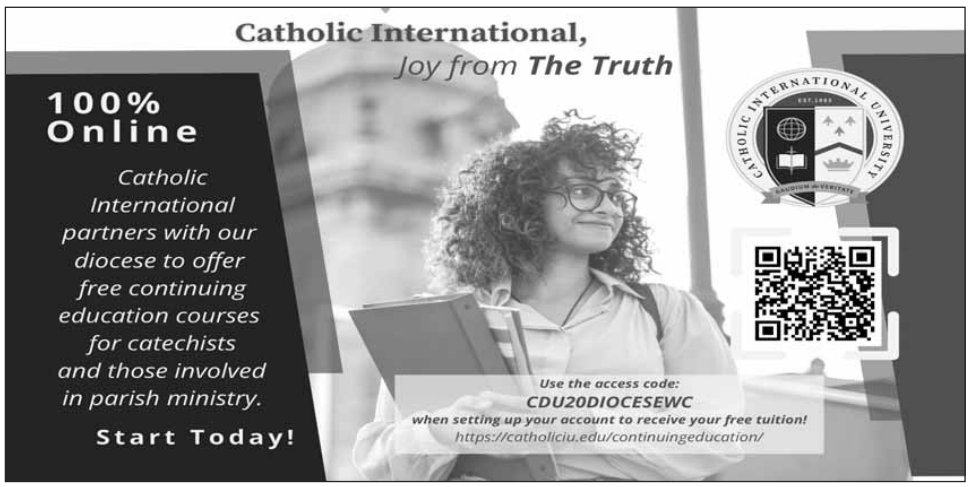

Immigrants and Refugees Share Their Stories at 'Who is My Neighbor?' Series

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — Immigrants and refugees to the U.S. shared their stories at St. Michael Parish School in Wheeling on Sept. 30 for the fifth session of "Who is My Neighbor?"

Sister Martha Gomez, delegate for Consecrated Life for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, provided translation in English for the speakers.

"Her husband was taken without notice and she finds herself with her son, not knowing where her husband is," Sister Martha told those gathered, translating for Norma Lopez, the first to speak. "She knows he self-deported to Mexico, but she doesn't know how he's doing."

Norma shared her story in her native language of Spanish becoming emotional as she spoke. When her husband was arrested by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), she obtained a lawyer for help.

"She spent all of her savings to pay the lawyer and, in the end, her husband had to go," Sister Martha said. "There was nothing that they could do."

Worry brings many sleepless nights for Norma and her son because her husband has diabetes. She also worries about her son who has his own health issues, Sister Martha said.

Colleen Rowan photo

Norma Lopez (right) shares her story at the fifth session of "Who is My Neighbor?" at St. Michael Parish School in Wheeling Sept. 30. With her is Sister Martha Gomez who provided translation of Norma's remarks in English.

In addition, her husband was the breadwinner so now Norma is working to take care of her family.

"She is trying very hard," Sister Martha told those gathered. "She is working and trying to keep up with her son. Her life is not easy. The work is very long."

Norma is alone, Sister Martha said. "She doesn't have the support of her family. …She is trying to make it with her son."

Also speaking that night was a young man from Venezuela, who asked that his name not be publicized. He came to the U.S. in 2023 and is now married to a U.S. citizen. And they are the proud parents of a baby girl.

He left his homeland because of turmoil and the authoritarian government. Those who speak out against the government are killed, he said. In translating for him, Sister Martha said he came to the realization that he had to leave as he felt, "I can't take it anymore."

And so he walked from Venezuela to the U.S. He walked over mountains and spent hours crossing the waters of the Panama Canal. Once in Mexico, he had to deal with the nightmare of the cartels, who he had to pay. He recalled encountering the bodies of those who had died along the way and of suffering violence, humiliation, and fear.

The experience has made him a different person, he said, stressing that he is not the only one who has suffered.

"So many have gone through this," he said. "So many families have lost loved ones in this journey in accidents, killed by the cartels."

"I am here because of God, because of my faith," he said. "I believe that he was with me in my journey here and he has blessed me with my beautiful wife," reaching for and taking her hand as he spoke.

He thanked everyone for listening to his story and implored them to support immigrants.

St. Michael's parishioner David Barnett shared the experience of his niece's husband who is currently in an ICE detention center. Although he is enduring many hardships, he has reached out to other detainees translating the rosary, giving a Ukrainian man his tablet to call his family to tell them he is coming home, sharing his food, and providing translation as best he can. He was in a few different centers and is now in one closer to his wife. Even though it is a 7-hour round trip, she visits him weekly. Each morning she sends devotional readings to him which he translates to Spanish for anyone who wants to listen.

Barnett learned of these details just a week before the gathering that evening and pondered whether God had put him there for a reason.

Original plans for the evening included a PowerPoint presentation by Barnett reviewing immigration laws and procedures. However, that has been moved to a future gathering with the date and time to be announced.

Wheeling's St. Michael Parish Establishes Fund to Assist Northern Panhandle's Immigrant/Refugee Community

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — A fundraising campaign has been established at St. Michael Parish in Wheeling to assist the immigrant/refugee community in the Northern Panhandle. "Ayudas Para Amistad" is the name of the campaign which means "Help for a Friend or Brother" in Spanish.

Lou Volpe, who has been coordinating the parish's series "Who is My Neighbor?" spoke about the fund at the fifth session which was held at St. Michael Parish School Sept. 30.

"If you know someone or a family who is having difficulty, has some specific needs you can contact us at St. Michael's," he told attendees. "We have some generous donations from several groups of sisters, individuals, and the parish as well."

Very Rev. Carlos Melocoton, V.F., pastor of St. Michael's, announced large donations that we given that evening. Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, presented a check for $3,000 on behalf of the Congregation of St. Joseph and Sister Barbara Beasley, RGS, presented $2,100 on behalf of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.

Volpe told The Catholic Spirit that specific needs the campaign will help fund are legal services, emergency relief, and educational opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

One family has already received $1,000 for a translator to communicate with their lawyer who does not speak Spanish. "They were very grateful," Volpe said.

"Ayudas Para Amistad" was established after the fourth session of "Who is My Neighbor?" as organizers learned more about the plight of immigrants who work in the community.

"When we listen to their stories, we hear a human person. A person like us," Father Melocoton said. "Regardless of the socio-economic and political situation we are in, our love for our neighbors takes an important concern in our hearts as Catholics."

Colleen Rowan photo

Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, presents a $3,000 check to Lou Volpe and Very Rev. Carlos Melocoton, V.F., for the "Ayudas Para Amistad" Fund.

Donations can be made to St. Michael Parish with "Ayudas Para Amistad" on the check memo line. For more information or how to donate to the fund, send e-mail to Volpe at volpefamwheeling@gmail.com.

Weirton's Blue Mass Gathers Over 500 Faithful

Praying for Police, Firefighters, EMS, and Military and Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

Courtesy photo

Police officers, firefighters, emergency personnel, members of the military, and their families are seated in the front pews at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Weirton for the Blue Mass Sept. 11.

By Colleen Rowan

It is the largest Blue Mass in West Virginia, with bagpipes and Taps played and a 21-gun salute. Celebrated each year in September at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Weirton, Catholics of the region gather with parishioners and students from Weirton's St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, St. Paul School, and Madonna High School to pray for police officers, firefighters, emergency personnel, members of the military, and their families. These honored guests were seated in the front pews of the church which was filled with 516 members of the community who came to pray for them. Celebrated on the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Mass also offered prayers for the almost 3,000 people who were killed in the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa.

Father Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., pastor of St. Joseph the Worker and Sacred Heart of Mary parishes in Weirton and designated pastor St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, was the celebrant and was joined by concelebrants Father Binu Sebastian, MCBS, pastor of St. Paul Parish and School in Weirton, and Father Gerald Muoka, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee and designated pastor of Madonna.

At the beginning of the Mass, St. Joseph's third-grader Scarlet Lounder welcomed all on behalf of the three schools.

"We extend our gratitude to all first responders, active duty and retired military, and our honored guests," she said. "Today we thank you for your service and ask God's blessing upon you, and remember in prayer those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001."

Life is about love, Father Schuelkens said in his homily. He noted the gospel: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

He added, "We hear Jesus in another portion of the gospel saying, 'For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it'" (Matthew 16:25).

"Today, we celebrate the Blue Mass … for first responders—firefighters, law enforcement officers, military, EMS," Father Schuelkens said. "… because of the commitment that you make and how that parallels the gospel. And what God calls each one of us to is to find what gifts he has placed in our heart and then take possession of ourselves and then, whether it's in small ways or it's big ways, we make a sacrifice. And that sacrifice brings forth life in others and in ourselves."

As the Blue Mass was celebrated on 9/11, Father Schuelkens said: "We remember all of those first responders and the many others that lost their lives in that tragedy—eight EMS, 55 military, 72 law enforcement officers, and 343 firefighters along with close to 3,000 civilians," he said. "The majority of the people in this church, weren't even alive during that time and so we come together and we remember. We pray for the repose of their souls, who lost their lives, pray for their families."

Whether one is a firefighter or a law enforcement officer or a member of the military or EMS, Father Schuelkens said, every single one takes an oath to serve the common good, the community.

"That parallels the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take possession of yourself and to lay yourself down in a good sacrifice," he said. "That's why we're gathering today, praying for you. Praying that you have the strength—that in the craziness when everybody else is running out, you're running in—and you have the clarity of mind; the wisdom to think clearly, to judge rightly, and then to act decisively. To have that courage, not the absence of fear, but the strength that comes from within to do what you need to do even in the face of the fear. And we thank you for it, and we pray for you."

At the end of the Mass, Father Schuelkens asked the police officers, firefighters, military, and EMS to stand and face the congregation, and all present prayed the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel for them.

A reception was held following the celebration. The bagpipes were played by Betsy McFarland and the 21-gun salute was given by the American Legion Post 10 honor guard.

Walking Together: Enlarge the Tent

Father Switzer Explains His New Role as Delegate for Ecumenism and Social Justice and Liaison to the Catholic Committee of Appalachia

By Father Andy Switzer

Father Andy Switzer

I am Father Andy Switzer, the newest member of the diocesan staff. Bishop Evelio has appointed me as Delegate for Ecumenism, Social Justice, and Liaison to the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.

If you are asking yourself, "What does that mean?" that is a very good question.

First, it means that I can do nothing without you and your collaboration as the Church, the People of God in West Virginia.

In this new role, it will be you who continue to teach me. The Church's doctrine reminds us that the ministerial priesthood exists at the service of the People of God, and it is also shaped and formed by them. As Pope Francis and now Pope Leo have emphasized through the concept of synodality, we are called to walk together as a Church. Throughout my years as a pastor, I have often realized that it is better to walk slowly together than to move quickly apart.

This leads to the first important aspect of my ministry: to collaborate with pastors, parishes and leaders, and others throughout the Diocese in order to support the great work that is already taking place. The life and vibrancy of the Church are found first and foremost in the daily life of our parishes. My first task, therefore, is to travel throughout the Diocese, listen, and discover what the Holy Spirit is already accomplishing among the people of God in West Virginia.

Let me also try to explain the title of my new position. Ecumenism is an important part of the Church's teaching, especially since the Second Vatican Council. The Church recognizes that all baptized Christians share a common baptism in Christ. This includes many of our friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members who belong to other Christian communities. The Church calls us to work toward greater unity and to share in the common mission of building a world marked by justice, peace, human dignity, freedom, and love. These realities come from God because we are all born in the image and likeness of God. As Christians, our baptism empowers us to build a world where all God's children are treated with love and respect. As one writer put it, we make a commitment to a person, Jesus; a people, all

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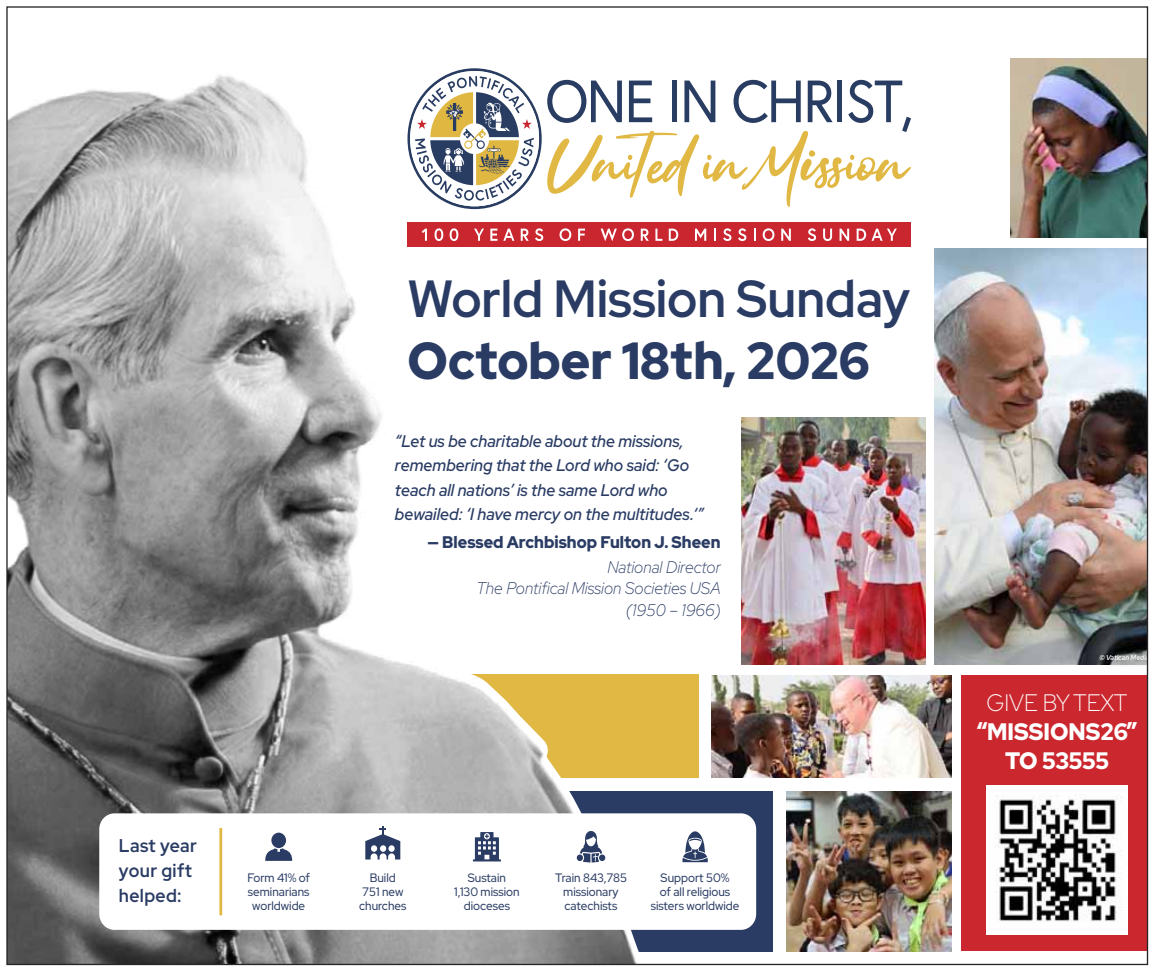

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Episcopal Vicar for the Usus Antiquior

Father Grassi Explains His New Role

Very Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, V.F.

By Very Rev. Timothy J. Grassi, V.F.

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart;" – Isaiah 40:11. These words from the Prophet Isaiah are what I would consider a summary of this position of the Episcopal Vicar for the Usus Antiquior. When Bishop Evelio contacted me to discuss the Extraordinary Form of the Mass I did not know what he was really looking for. As our conversation proceeded those words came to mind, "He tends his flock like a shepherd," because I realized this was about a bishop who cared for the people he had been entrusted to shepherd. I quickly came to understand that this was about the unity of the faith and the oneness of the mystery within the two forms of the Roman Rite of Mass. When we all believe,

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Colleen Rowan photos

Clockwise from left: Very Rev. Justin Golna, J.C.L., J.V., administers Holy Communion at the Tridentine Mass; Father Golna offers his homily; Jacob Coughlan attends the Mass; and a man and woman are shown during the Mass.

Catholics Faithful to the Tridentine Mass Grateful for Celebrations in Wheeling Area

By Colleen Rowan

"The Church is not one because all Catholics have the same personality, the same preferences, the same temperament, or even the same way of seeing every prudential question," Very Rev. Justin Golna, J.C.L., J.V., said in his homily for the Tridentine Mass he celebrated at Our Lady of Seven Dolors Mission in Triadelphia on Sept. 20. "The Church is one because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

This was the first Tridentine Mass in the Wheeling area since Bishop Evelio Menjívar expanded the celebration in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. In an Aug. 24 announcement, the bishop appointed Father Golna as the Episcopal Delegate in Wheeling for the Usus Antiquior — the celebration of the Eucharist according to the Missale Romanum promulgated by Saint John XXIII in 1962, otherwise known as the Tridentine Mass or Traditional Latin Mass.

Father Golna, who also serves as judicial vicar of the diocese and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg, continued his homily by saying that Christian unity is not invisible and that Christ has given His Church a visible communion. The successor of Peter is a principle of unity for the universal Church and the bishop is a principle of unity in the particular Church entrusted to his care, he said.

"That unity is being clearly established here in a very concrete way," Father Golna said. "Bishop Evelio is providing a priest so that this community may worship God according to this venerable form of the Roman Rite while remaining fully within the communion of the Catholic Church: in communion with our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, and in communion with our own bishop."

The celebration that day was a Low Mass. Father Golna is now celebrating Sung Mass every Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Seven Dolors which is the designated location in the Wheeling area.

Those who attended the Mass that day expressed their gratitude that Bishop Menjívar has made the celebration available for the area.

"It's great," said Jacob Coughlan of Wheeling. "This is something that the faithful of the diocese have been wanting for a long time going back decades, even before our community existed here. We see a lot of involvement with young people, young families, high schoolers, college students. It definitely contributes to a lot of renewal of the faith and renewal of vocations. It's great to see it offered every Sunday."

Lauren and Mason McClung and their young family live just 45 minutes from Wheeling in Steubenville, Ohio. They attended the Mass with their three young children Remy, Zoe, and Monica. In the past, they traveled to Pittsburgh to attend Sung Masses but are now attending the celebrations at Our Lady of Seven Dolors. Lauren is especially happy to have Sung Masses closer to home as she is pregnant with her fourth child and travel to Wheeling is much easier.

"We're very happy and very grateful," she said. "We really enjoy a small church. This seems more intimate here."

Another young family there that day was James and Christina Wallace and their four children. James appreciated Father Golna speaking about Christian unity and feels that having this Mass available only strengthens it.

"Having this for people who want to stay faithful to the Church and faithful to the tradition is

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Switzer ...

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of God's children; and a project, the Kingdom of God, which seeks to build a world of love, peace, and justice for all people.

In recent years, the Church has often asked not only what we can offer one another, but also what we can receive and learn from one another. The late deceased Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once observed that God loves diversity. This insight reminds us of another important aspect of our faith: we are called to work not only with our Christian brothers and sisters, but also with our Jewish and Muslim neighbors. Indeed, Catholic teaching challenges us to work with all people of good will to build stronger communities here in West Virginia. Pope Francis said, "Enlarge the tent," so that we might make our common home better for everyone.

As Bishop Evelio often reminds us, West Virginia is "Almost Heaven" when we welcome everyone. Pope Saint John Paul II often spoke of a "practical ecumenism," meaning that people of faith come together in service of social justice and the common good.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that social justice concerns how society is organized so that it respects the dignity of every human person, protects fundamental rights, promotes the common good, and honors the poor and vulnerable. It reminds us of Jesus' words in Matthew 25: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, said that we should strive to build a society that makes it easier for people to be good. Our own West Virginia history offers us an opportunity to reflect on that vision. As West Virginians, we stand on the shoulders of giants. Many of us are descendants of immigrants who came to these hills seeking opportunity and hope. At their best, they recognized that they were all children of God. Our coal miners provide a powerful example. They understood that there could be no discrimination in their unions because they had to stand together in order to secure what was rightfully due to workers: fair wages, safe working conditions, reasonable work hours, and respect for the dignity of labor.

Let me give you a brief background on my role as Liaison to the Catholic Committee of Appalachia. This role is really about collaboration with a prophetic group that has written three pastoral letters: This Land Is Home to Me, At Home in the Web of Life, and The Telling Takes Us Home.

These letters were born from listening to the people of Appalachia, honoring our local culture, gifts, and traditions, while also naming the structures of oppression that work against our common home.

I have learned over the years as a pastor that there can be groups in our parishes and communities that we overlook or simply do not recognize. This is where the Holy Spirit wants to shake us up a bit, because oftentimes these are the very voices we need to hear in order to find our way home.

This is true of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It leads us to unexpected people and unexpected places. Pope Francis called it the "unruly Word of God." The pastoral letters of Appalachia are about honoring that Word of God, which seeks to liberate structures so that all of God's voices in our common home may be lifted up.

This will also be the spirit of my role: to listen to parishes, communities, and cultures, and to collaborate and walk together so that we together might lift up the voices of West Virginia and the Church here. In this way, we can respond to Bishop Evelio's invitation to walk and sing together, honoring the diversity of our voices as we journey toward "Almost Heaven," where country roads take us home.

Grassi ...

Cont'd from Page 9

live and act with these intentions, we come to the realization that the presence of the Old Liturgy is a gift destined to build up the Body of Christ.

With this in mind, Bishop Evelio asked if I would be something of a "liaison" for the Latin Mass Communities in our Diocese. What this means is that I am overseeing the different places that offer the Extraordinary Form of the Mass and offer support to them in making sure they are following all the necessary guidelines that the Holy Father has given us and seeking whatever permissions may be necessary. All of this would be done in consultation with the bishop and at his direction. Bishop Evelio was also very interested in making sure that it was reasonably accessible in all parts of this vast Diocese of ours and that those Masses be staffed by our clergy, not from neighboring clergy. Letters requesting the Extraordinary Form of the Mass in the Charleston area came to the bishop's attention. Hence, Fr. Phillip Szabo, of St. Agnes Parish in Charleston was entrusted with caring for those attached to the Extraordinary Form of the Mass in the southern part of the state. Further, in Wheeling, the Extraordinary Form of the Mass was being offered at the Our Lady of Seven Dolors Mission one Sunday a month and a priest was brought in from Steubenville to offer the Mass. Now, Fr. Justin Golna will offer that Mass each week. The other two places in the Diocese where the Extraordinary Form of the Mass is offered is in Morgantown at St. John University Parish, by Fr. Brian Crenwelge, and in Charles Town at the Annunciation Priory by the Canons Regular of the New Jerusalem. This makes access to the Extraordinary Form of the Mass in more regions of the Diocese.

Bishop Evelio sat in choir during the Extraordinary Form of the Mass at the Priory of the Annunciation in Charles Town, which means that he was on the altar and participating in the Mass, not as the celebrant, but as one who is praying with the faithful in the Mass. He addressed the congregation, informing them of his care and concern for the salvation of all the souls entrusted to him in the Diocese and that included all of them. His message was exceedingly pastoral and very genuine. He expressed that the presence of the Usus Antiquior in the Diocese meets a genuine pastoral need, drawing on a similar spirit of care and hospitality that causes our Diocese to provide Mass in Spanish.

I am hopeful that Bishop Evelio's pastoral solicitude will grow the spiritual life of the Diocese and encourage all the faithful by making reasonable accommodations for the needs of each. It is very sad when I read about many Dioceses across the country that are closing parishes and consequently eliminating Masses for the faithful. It warms my heart to think that in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, we are adding Masses and giving the faithful more opportunities to participate in the ancient rite of the Mass. This can only be a win-win for everyone. May God be glorified!

Mass ...

Cont'd from Page 9

wonderful and very wise," he said. "I love it."

"I'm very thankful for it," Christina said of the Mass. "This is what really brought us into the Church, the traditional Masses. ... We wanted to be able to have easy access to one like this and we're really grateful that it's actually happening now."

Monthly Mass in Spanish Begins at the Cathedral

By Andrea Acosta

WHEELING—Bishop Evelio Menjívar celebrated the first Mass in Spanish on September 13 at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Wheeling, thus launching a monthly Mass that will be held on the second Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m. It was an exciting Mass that made history in a historic cathedral celebrating its centennial this year.

"Hispanics are a treasure, a gift to the Church in the United States and to society. Although they are a minority in West Virginia, they are an important part of our Church," said the bishop.

"It is important for people to celebrate Mass in their own language, for them to realize how important Hispanics are to the bishop and to the diocese, and also to maintain a close relationship with the community so that they can live out their faith in their own language," said the bishop, who is pleased that this Mass is beginning precisely during Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15).

The need for this liturgy was evident to the diocese. "Many Hispanic families have been expressing their desire to have a Mass in Spanish at the cathedral, since there are no opportunities to attend Mass in that language in the area, and they attended," he said.

Mass will be celebrated each month by Bishop Evelio, depending on his availability; otherwise, it will be celebrated by priests in the area.

Given the attendance, the availability of Spanish-speaking priests, and the need for a regular Sunday Mass in Spanish, it is expected that the Mass will become a weekly event in the future.

About 70 parishioners attended the Mass, feeling not just happy but deeply moved by what this occasion means for the Hispanic community.

"It was an incredibly moving, special, and emotional experience," said Flor Prianti. "Hearing the hymns, readings, and prayers in my own language gave me incredible peace and an immediate sense of connection to my roots."

She admitted that being far from Mexico and her family isn't easy, but in that moment, surrounded by the Hispanic community, she felt at home. "It was a beautiful reminder that, no matter the distance, our faith and our culture keep us united," she said.

Courtesy photo

Bishop Evelio Menjívar greets a man and his daughter following the Mass in Spanish he celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 13.

Vivienne Padilla (57) left her native Puerto Rico four decades ago, but not her love for her Hispanic-American culture. For the past 24 years, the cathedral has been the special place where she actively lives out her faith.

She is currently the president of the parish council and was the main organizer of the Mass and the reception that followed.

She is familiar with the details of the emerging Hispanic ministry, which is why she says, "We're starting from zero." So she took the initiative to create a WhatsApp chat group titled "Mass in Spanish at the Cathedral" to invite the Spanish-speaking community to this important occasion. The invitation was very well received, and immigrants from Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, Costa Rica, and other countries attended.

"It's the first time we've all been able to gather together!" she exclaimed happily.

While it's true that the cathedral had already been offering an annual bilingual Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe every December, Vivienne says that the new monthly Mass in Spanish "is a necessity."

The Hispanic congregation has been expressing this need for some time, and Bishop Evelio heard their call, paid attention to it, and made it a reality.

"There's nothing more exciting, nothing that fills one's soul more than hearing the Eucharist in one's mother tongue," she said.

Furthermore, she believes it is important for the faithful in general to realize that "having Latin American immigrants as part of the congregation adds value to the faith community."

Sister Martha Gómez, of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, states that "hearing Mass in our native language is an honor."

As the diocesan delegate for consecrated life, she said she felt overwhelmed by the joyful participation of everyone present. "Everyone was responding to the parts of the Mass and singing with all their hearts. There was a deep spirit of unity in the air, and no one felt left out," she said.

"We weren't just present—we felt more than happy to be there. People seemed to realize they were witnessing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and in response, a deep sense of belonging that drew them closer to one another with sincere love," according to the sister.

She felt that the homily was appropriate for Hispanics and that the words were understandable to everyone. In his reflection on the Gospel, the homilist urged forgiveness, because otherwise, one harms oneself. The bishop compared resentment to a burning ember in one's hand, ready to be thrown when a brother passes by—and since he doesn't pass by, we burn ourselves.

"It was exactly what we needed to hear," said the nun.

She believes the leadership within the group was remarkable, and she saw enormous potential for the future. "There are Latinos here; now we hope they will respond," said the sister, who was born in Mexico.

"It was a blessing to celebrate Mass in Spanish at our cathedral. It was truly an unforgettable day, and I cannot wait for our next Mass in Spanish," said the sister.

It will be on Sunday, October 11, at 2:30 p.m., and the Fall Festival will be held that same day from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The event has been held for the past five years, and more than 200 people are expected to attend this iconic venue.

For more details, visit https://saintjosephcathedral.com.

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All Invited to Join in Walk for Life in White Sulphur Springs Oct. 17

By Colleen Rowan

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS — Two Greenbrier County parishioners are spearheading a Walk for Life to raise awareness of the pro-life cause and of the dangers of the abortion pill.

The 2-mile walk is being sponsored by the Greenbrier Chapter of West Virginians for Life in recognition of Respect Life Month and will begin at St. Charles Borromeo Church in White Sulphur Springs on Saturday, Oct. 17, at 10:30 a.m. (registration is at 10 a.m.)

"This is our first attempt of a public walk to raise awareness of the WV for Life Greenbrier Chapter," said Ann Turly, a member of St. Charles Borromeo who co-leads the chapter with Angela Malo of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Ronceverte. "We are few in number since the majority of our active members became very involved with the formation of our pregnancy resource center."

Turly said they are "loosely asking" for sponsorship for the walk with donations funding educational materials and public displays "warning of the dangers of the abortion pill still being sought across state lines with adverse effects."

Turly said the Greenbrier Chapter of West Virginians for Life is dedicated to life-affirming education on pro-life issues and helping women. She and Malo invite all to join the Walk for Life to help raise awareness in the community. Refreshments will be available after the walk.

For more information, send e-mail to Greenbrierwv4life@gmail.com

AI is Generating a Mental Health Crisis, Warns Divine Mercy University President

By Kimberley Heatherington, OSV News

WASHINGTON — The ever-increasing presence of artificial intelligence, with AI in every sphere of daily life, is generating a mental health crisis that threatens adults and children alike, according to Father Charles Sikorsky, president of Divine Mercy University, a private Catholic graduate school of psychology and counseling in Sterling, Va.

It's a particularly timely message as Mental Health Sunday — part of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Catholic Mental Health Campaign — approaches on Oct. 11, when the faithful are invited to pause and reflect on mental health in their local parish community. The bishops have encouraged all Americans to respond to what they term "the ongoing mental health crisis across the United States."

Father Sikorsky, a member of the Legionaries of Christ, shared his insights with an audience gathered Sept. 5 at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington. It was the second installment in a series of shrine dialogues exploring Pope Leo XIV's landmark encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity): On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence."

The subtitle of Pope Leo's encyclical, said Father Sikorsky, "kind of identifies what it's about — but the deeper concern really is anthropological: Who are we? What does it mean to be human? What understanding of the person should guide technological and social development?"

These questions, Father Sikorsky continued, are "of tremendous importance" to the field of mental health and the practice of psychology.

Using a framework developed by David Rosmarin, director of the Spirituality and Mental Health Laboratory at Harvard Medical School's McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts, Father Sikorsky examined AI's impact upon identity, connection and meaning.

"There's a crisis of identity in general in our culture — people don't have the same roots they used to have," explained Father Sikorsky. Globalization; domestic and international migration; the decline in religious adherence; fractured families; frequent job changes — all of these can profoundly impact an individual's sense of self, he suggested.

"And AI can really feed this identity crisis," noted Father Sikorsky, "when people are looking outside of themselves for that stability; for that identity; for who they are."

In "Magnifica Humanitas" Pope Leo reminds his readers that "human dignity does not depend on a person's abilities, wealth or position in life, nor on the right or wrong choices made; instead, it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person, endowed by God as an expression of his unfailing love."

AI can be highly disruptive to interpersonal connectivity, Father Sikorsky noted — especially in a society already suffering from an epidemic of loneliness. "Fifteen to 20 years ago, the social media companies were saying, 'Hey, we have a solution for loneliness: social media.' And of course, the opposite has happened," shared Father Sikorsky.

A 2023 advisory from the U.S. Surgeon General stated loneliness can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. In 2024, the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common project reported 29% of people between 30-44 years of age said they were "frequently" or "always" lonely. St. John Paul II, said Father Sikorsky, clearly stated in his 1979 encyclical "Redemptor Hominis (Redeemer of Man)" that "Man cannot live without love." Pope Leo dedicates an entire chapter of "Magnifica Humanitas" to "The Culture of Power and the Civilization of Love."

"One of the dangers of AI is it's kind of social media on steroids," Father Sikorsky said. "At least on social media, if you're on Facebook, you're talking to other people — maybe sometimes there are robots behind it — but (AI) is a conversation with a robot."

Nonetheless, Americans are increasingly turning to AI chatbots — computer programs that imitate human conversations — for company. "Character AI" — a platform with more than 20 million monthly users — offers hyperrealistic digital companions; some parents have blamed chatbot behavior for the suicide deaths of their children.

The dangers of AI and loneliness, said Father Sikorsky, are clear — and among the tools to combat them are education for children in the use of AI, and maintaining strong communal bonds through a parish community. Meaning, Father Sikorsky emphasized, can't be determined by technology — a chatbot can't say why a person's life matters or why they are here.

"AI can assist in reflection — but it can't assume moral responsibility. It can't help us discern our path; live out our vocation, our calling. It can't love," he said.

Those answers, Father Sikorsky stressed, are found in the Church.

Attempts to transcend natural human limitations by using technology to enhance human physical, cognitive and emotional capacities — otherwise known as transhumanism — is, Pope Leo says in "Magnifica Humanitas", a mistake.

The pope observes that "humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them." He adds, "To renounce this adventure, both tragic and splendid, in the name of a presumed transcendence of all limits, could mean many things, but it would no longer be human."

Father Sikorsky said Pope Leo's encyclical "gives us a lot of great principles and things to think about when we look at this mental health crisis and how it can help psychology. The crisis is rooted in a crisis of identity, a crisis of loneliness and connection, and a crisis of meaning."

"Ultimately, the real solution is this gift of faith; this gift of grace that gives us an identity — our highest form of identity — in our baptism, as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ," he said. "It also gives us community to help us in that struggle of loneliness and connection. And it obviously gives us meaning. It answers all those existential questions."

(Kimberley Heatherington is an OSV News correspondent. She writes from Virginia.)

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Obispo inaugura misa en español en catedral de Wheeling

Foto/cortesía

La misa en español ha comenzado en la catedral de San José en Wheeling y se celebrará el segundo domingo de cada mes a las 2:30PM. Todos son bienvenidos. En la imagen, el obispo Evelio Menjívar posa con los fieles, luego de celebrar la misa el 13 de septiembre.

Por Andrea Acosta

WHEELING—El obispo Evelio Menjívar celebró la primera misa en español el 13 de septiembre en la catedral de San José en Wheeling, dando inicio así a una misa mensual que será el segundo domingo de cada mes a las 2:30PM. Fue una misa emocionante que hizo historia en una catedral histórica que este año cumple un siglo.

"Los hispanos son un tesoro, un regalo para la Iglesia de Estados Unidos y para la sociedad. Aunque sean una minoría en Virginia Occidental, son parte importante de nuestra Iglesia", dijo el obispo.

"Es importante que las personas celebren misa en su propio idioma, que la gente se dé cuenta lo importante que son los hispanos para el obispo y para la diócesis, y además mantener una cercanía con la comunidad para que viva la fe en su idioma", expresó el obispo, quien está complacido de que esta misa comience precisamente en el Mes de la Herencia Hispana (del 15 de septiembre al 15 de octubre).

La necesidad de esta liturgia fue evidente para la diócesis. "Muchas familias hispanas han venido expresando su deseo de contar con una misa en español en la catedral, ya que no hay oportunidades de escuchar misa en ese idioma en la zona, y se hicieron presentes", dijo.

La misa será oficiada cada mes por el obispo Evelio, dependiendo de su disponibilidad, sino por sacerdotes del área.

Considerando la asistencia, la disponibilidad de sacerdotes que hablen español y la necesidad de una misa estable dominical en español, se prevé que la misma pase a ser semanal en un futuro.

Unos 70 feligreses acudieron a la misa más que contentos, emocionados, por lo que esta ocasión representa para la comunidad hispana.

"Fue una experiencia sumamente conmovedora, especial y llena de emociones", según Flor Prianti. "Escuchar los cantos, las lecturas y las oraciones en mi propia lengua me brindó una paz increíble y una cercanía inmediata con mis raíces".

Confesó que estar lejos de México y de su familia no es fácil, pero en ese momento, rodeada de la comunidad hispana, se sintió en familia. "Fue un recordatorio hermoso de que, sin importar la distancia, la fe y nuestra cultura nos mantienen unidos", expresó.

Vivienne Padilla (57) dejó su natal Puerto Rico hace cuatro décadas, pero no el amor por su cultura hispanoamericana. Desde hace 24 años, la catedral es el lugar especial donde vive su fe de una manera muy activa.

Actualmente, es presidenta del consejo parroquial y fue la organizadora principal de la Misa y del convivio posterior.

Conoce los detalles del incipiente ministerio hispano, por eso afirma: "Estamos en cero". De modo que tomó la iniciativa de crear un chat en WhatsApp que lo tituló "Misa en español en catedral" para convocar a la comunidad de habla hispana para la importante ocasión. La invitación fue muy

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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 Estado 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 eclesiásticas 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, Diocesis 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 ofrecer 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.

En Español

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bien acogida y acudieron inmigrantes oriundos de México, Colombia, Honduras, Costa Rica y de otros países.

¡Es la primera vez que podemos reunirnos todos!, exclamó contenta.

Si bien es cierto que la catedral ya venía ofreciendo una misa bilingüe anual en honor a la Virgen de Guadalupe cada diciembre, Vivienne dice que la nueva misa en español mensual "es una necesidad".

Así lo ha venido manifestando la feligresía hispana desde hace algún tiempo y el obispo Evelio oyó el clamor, le puso atención y lo hizo realidad.

"No hay nada más emocionante, nada que le llene a uno más el alma, que oír la eucaristía en la lengua materna", afirmó.

Además, considera importante que los fieles en general se den cuenta de que "tener a los inmigrantes latinoamericanos como parte de la feligresía, contribuye como un valor agregado a la comunidad de fe".

La hermana Martha Gómez, de la congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Buen Pastor, afirma que "oír la misa en nuestro idioma nativo es un honor".

Quien es delegada de la diócesis para la vida consagrada, dijo sentirse abrumada por la alegre participación de todos los presentes. "Es que todos respondían a las partes de la misa y cantaban con todo el corazón. Se respiraba un profundo espíritu de unidad en el que nadie se sentía excluido", dijo.

"No solo estábamos presentes, sino que nos sentíamos más que felices de estar allí. La gente parecía darse cuenta de que estaba presenciando el derramamiento del Espíritu Santo y, en respuesta, un profundo sentido de pertenencia que les hacía acercarse unos a otros con amor sincero", según la hermana.

Le pareció que la homilía fue apropiada para los hispanos y las palabras comprensibles para todos. En su reflexión del evangelio, el homilista instó a perdonar, porque de lo contrario, uno se hace daño. El obispo comparó el resentimiento con una brasa en la mano lista para lanzarla cuando el hermano pase y, como no pasa, nos quemamos.

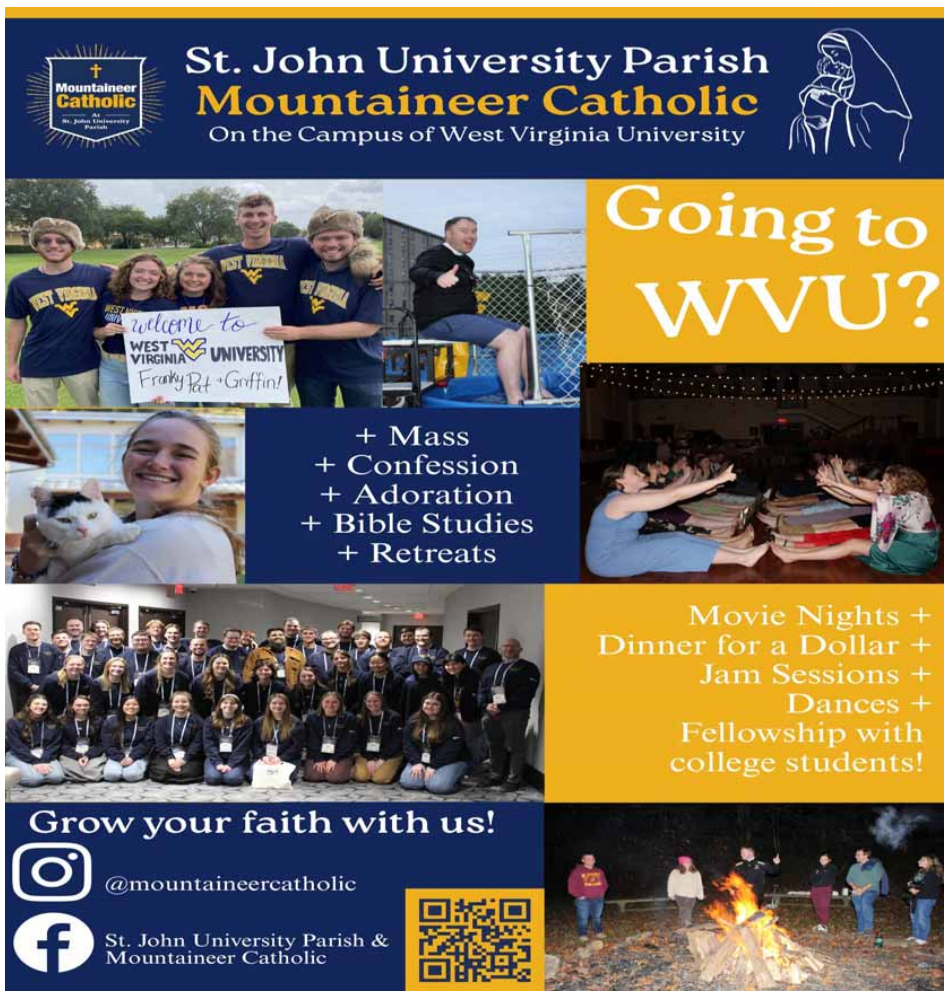
"Era exactamente lo que necesitábamos oír", dijo la religiosa.

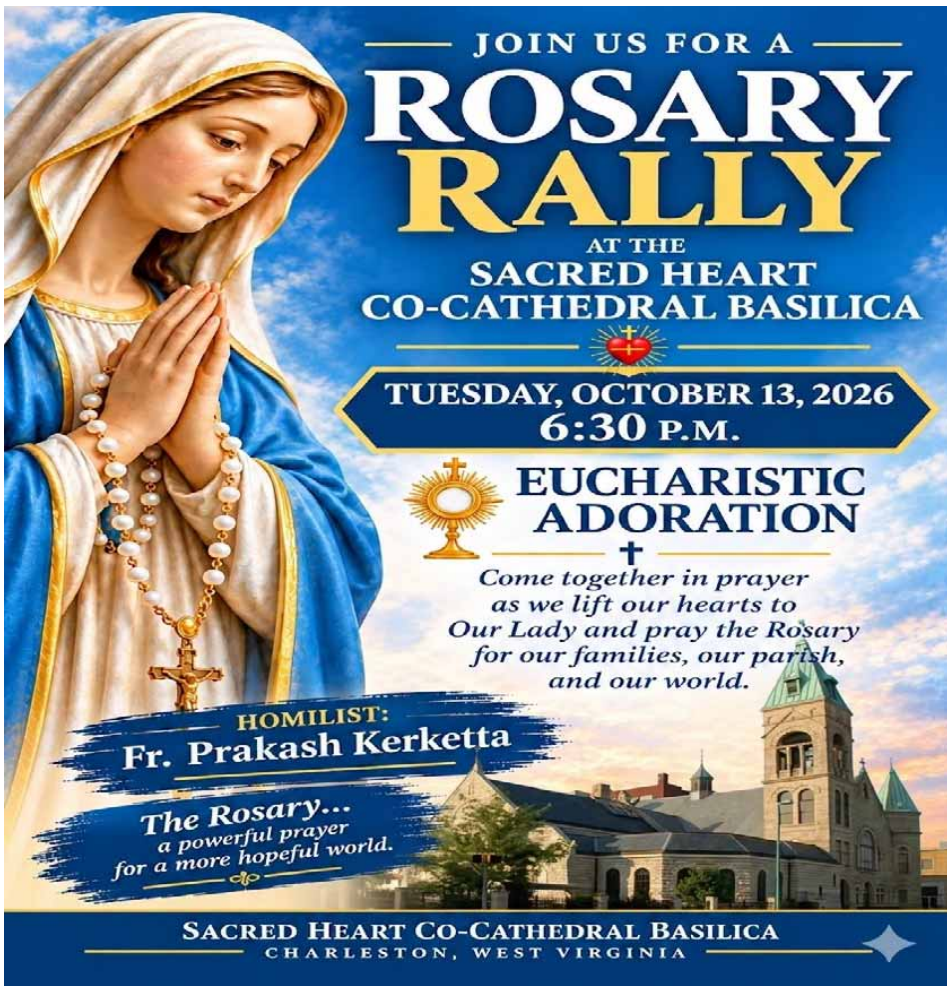
Considera que el liderazgo era notable en el grupo, en el cual vio un enorme potencial de cara al futuro. Latinos hay, ahora esperamos que respondan -dijo la hermana nacida en México.

"Fue una bendición celebrar la misa en español en nuestra catedral. Fue realmente un día inolvidable y estoy deseando que llegue nuestra próxima misa en español", dijo la hermana Martha.

La segunda misa en español en la catedral será el domingo 11 de octubre a las 2:30PM y justamente ese día celebrarán el Festival de Otoño desde las 11:30AM hasta las 4:30PM. El evento se viene realizando desde hace cinco años y se espera que más de 200 personas acudan al emblemático lugar.

Para más detalles, visite: https://saintjosephcathedral.com.

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