

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## Pope Asks Everyone to Pray the Rosary for Peace in October

**By Catholic News Service**  
**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Leo XIV asked Catholics to pray the rosary each day in October for peace.

The pope made his request at the end of his weekly general audience Sept. 24 and the day after he said he had spoken again with the pastor of Holy Family Church in Gaza City, the only Latin-rite Catholic parish in Gaza.

"Thanks be to God everyone in the parish is fine," but the Israeli strikes "are a little closer," the pope told reporters in Castel Gandolfo Sept. 23 before heading back to the Vatican after a day's rest. The parish is offering refuge and assistance to hundreds of Gaza residents.

Britain, Canada and Australia formally recognized Palestinian statehood Sept. 21, joining the Holy See and more than 150 countries that already had done so. Asked if that could help the situation, Pope Leo told reporters it "could help, but at this moment there really is no willingness to listen on the other side, so dialogue is currently broken."

Regarding Russia's continued attacks on Ukraine, Pope Leo said that "someone is seeking an escalation, and it is continually becoming more dangerous."

What is needed, he said, is to "halt military advances" and come to the negotiating table.

At the end of his audience Sept. 24, Pope Leo noted that October was approaching and that with the Oct. 7 feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Catholic Church traditionally dedicates

**See "Rosary" on Page 2**

## Respect Life Month Takes on New Meaning during Jubilee Year, Says Chair of Bishops' Pro-Life Committee

**By Gina Christian, OSV News (OSV News)** — The annual observance of Respect Life Month by the nation's Catholics takes on new meaning amid the Jubilee Year of Hope, said the chair of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee.

"The gift of human life exists as a sign of hope to our world today, defying the powers of darkness and the culture of death," said Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in a statement included in a Sept. 18 USCCB press release.

Since 1973 — the year in which the Supreme Court rulings in *Roe*

*v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* legalized abortion nationwide — the Catholic Church in the U.S. has designated October as Respect Life Month, with the first Sunday of October as Respect Life Sunday.

The USCCB's Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities provides a range of resources to help further an understanding of Catholic teaching, which holds that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and therefore must be respected and protected absolutely.

Since the first century, the Catholic Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. Catholic teaching also states that "intentional euthanasia,

whatever its forms or motives, is murder," with the Second Vatican Council condemning "euthanasia or willful self-destruction" among the moral "infamies" that "poison human society" and are a "supreme dishonor to the Creator."

In his full statement — which was dated October 2025 and posted to the USCCB's website — Bishop Thomas stressed that "the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of our hope."

"Through Christ, our sins are forgiven, death is overcome, and life is victorious," he said.

However, he noted, "the daily headlines remind us of how desperately our world is thirsting for

**See "Life" on Page 3**



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**Inside:** Possible Cause for Sainthood of Father Charles R. Carroll, Page 3

Event Will Celebrate 10th Anniversary of 'Laudato Si' and 50th Anniversary of 'This Land Is Home To Me,' Page 4

# Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointments:

**Msgr. Anthony Cincinnati, V.F.**, is appointed Interim Vicar Forane of the Clarksburg Vicariate, effective immediately. This appointment is made in addition to his current assignment as pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish, Morgantown.

**Very Rev. B.K. Akila Rodrigo, T.O.R., Assoc. V.F.**, is appointed Associate Vicar Forane of the Clarksburg Vicariate, effective immediately. This appointment will expire in June 2026. This appointment is made in addition to his current assignment as pastor of St. James the Apostle Parish, Clarksburg.

## Rosary ...

Cont'd from Page 1

the whole month to praying the rosary.

"I invite everyone to pray the rosary every day during the coming month — for peace — personally, with your families and in your communities," he said.

The pope also invited Vatican officials and employees to pray the rosary together every October evening at 7 p.m. in St. Peter's Basilica.

And he invited everyone to St. Peter's Square Oct. 11 to pray the rosary together "during the vigil of the Jubilee of Marian Spirituality, also remembering the anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council," which began Oct. 11, 1962.

**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](http://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](http://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.

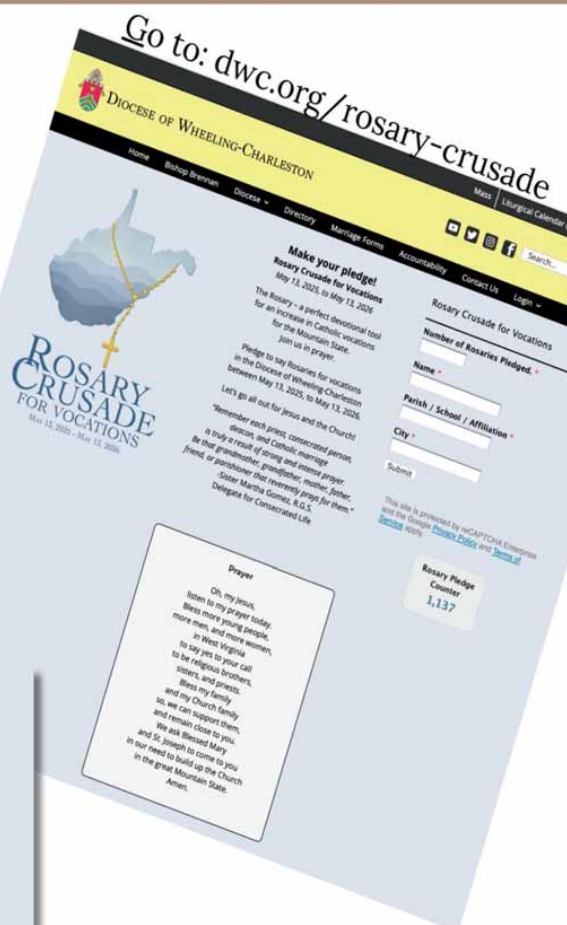
You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** 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](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx> West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-

## 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](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

## ROSARY CRUSADE FOR VOCATIONS IN WV

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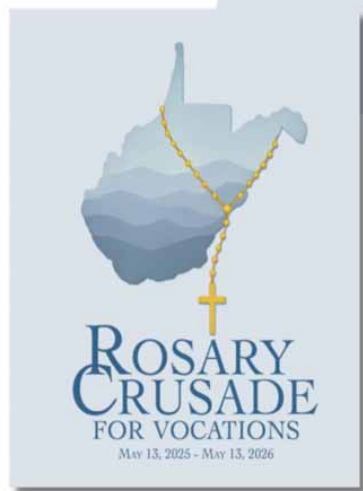


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## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

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](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org).

**2025 Print Issues and Dates:** Advent, November 21; Christmas, December 19

# Possible Cause for Sainthood of Father Charles R. Carroll

A group of people consisting of some members of All Saints Parish, Bridgeport, and former members of All Saints and its Mission Churches is exploring the possible Cause for Sainthood for Father Charles R. Carroll, the first pastor of All Saints Parish and founder of the former school. Father Carroll served the faithful in West Virginia from 1933-1982.

As part of this formal process, the Church seeks signs of his reputation of holiness—devotion and esteem among the faithful. Bishop Mark Brennan has encouraged the group to gather stories and testimonies.

If you knew Father Carroll, you are invited to share a testimony about his life and witness by emailing [revrcarroll@gmail.com](mailto:revrcarroll@gmail.com) or by writing to:

The Cause of Father Charles R. Carroll  
 Attention: Stephen Pishner  
 All Saints Catholic Church  
 317 East Main St.  
 Bridgeport, WV 26330

## Prayer for the Cause of Father Charles R. Carroll

Eternal Father, you alone grant us every blessing in heaven and on earth, through the redemptive mission of your divine Son, Jesus Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. In every age you raise up men and women outstanding in holiness, whose faithful service has contributed significantly to the apostolic mission of the Church.

Among those faithful servants are some priests, one of whom, Father Charles R. Carroll, labored for many years in the North Central region of West Virginia and whose soul we commend to your loving care.

We pray that you may look kindly on this pastor of souls, whose service inspired great numbers of Catholics and other people to grow in faith and virtue and to be of service to

their brothers and sisters in need. We humbly ask that, if it would be for the honor and glory of the Most Holy Trinity and for the salvation of souls, you move the Church to begin the process to investigate Father Carroll's life and ministry so that he might be declared a Servant of God with a possible path toward sainthood.

Meanwhile, we pray for the happy repose of the soul of a priest revered by many Catholics in the parishes and missions where he served. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.

Imprimatur  
 + Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan, D.D.  
 Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

For more information and to share testimony for the cause, send e-mail to [revrcarroll@gmail.com](mailto:revrcarroll@gmail.com)

# Annual Pro-Life Convention to be Held Oct. 4 in Fairmont

**FAIRMONT**—West Virginians for Life invites young and old alike to attend its Annual State Pro-Life Convention on Saturday, Oct. 4, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Trinity Assembly of God in Fairmont. Doors open at 9 a.m. The theme is “Every Voice Matters”.

Cost: \$35 per person, a buffet lunch is included. College students and teens pay only \$15. Groups of 10 or more pay only \$25 per person (adults) or \$10 per person (college students/teens).

Keynote Speaker Dr. Stephen Sammut, Professor of Psychology,

Franciscan University of Steubenville. Sammut is a behavioral neuroscientist whose primary interest and expertise lie in investigating brain function in psychopathology, including depression, schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease and drug abuse, at the preclinical level. He

has authored and co-authored several papers in leading scientific journals, including his groundbreaking studies describing an animal model that addresses the behavioral and physiological impact of drug-induced abortion and abortion-pill reversal.

## Life ...

**Cont'd from Page 1**  
 the hope that only God can provide.”

Bishop Thomas lamented that “every day we witness the overwhelming disregard for human life,” noting among other indicators “rising rates of abortion and assisted suicide.” According to data from the Guttmacher Institute, which supports legalized abortion, the nation saw a surge in abortions during the 1970s and 1980s, with the latter decade seeing annual averages around 1.6 million. Abortion rates steadily declined since 1990, but have increased slightly in recent years, even after the Supreme Court reversed its Roe and Doe rulings in 2022. In 2024, there were 15.4 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44, down 1% from 2023, but still a 7% increase from 2020. Guttmacher

said the count “includes medication abortions” provided via telemedicine” by U.S. clinicians, with mifepristone and misoprostol pills mailed to patients in states without total bans or bans on telemedicine.

Currently, assisted suicide is legal in 11 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, with a number of other states considering legalization.

Bishop Thomas also pointed to other recent examples of disregard for the sanctity of life, such as “the killing of innocent school children, even at prayer” — an apparent reference to the Aug. 27 mass shooting at a Minnesota Catholic school liturgy — “the mistreatment of our immigrant sisters and brothers as they endure an environment of aggression; and political and ideological violence inflicted against unsuspecting victims.”

“These attacks threaten life

precisely when it is most vulnerable and in need of protection,” he said.

For that reason, he said, “it is of the utmost importance that we work to ensure that every life, in every stage and circumstance, is protected in law.” Those efforts have already achieved some success, said Bishop Thomas.

“Earlier this year, history was made when Planned Parenthood and other big abortion businesses were banned from receiving federal Medicaid dollars for one year,” he said. “I thank Catholics across the country who have embraced a nationwide call to prayer for the end of all tax-

payer funding of abortion centers, and I ask that we continue those prayers throughout the month of October.”

Respect Life Month dovetails perfectly with the call of the Jubilee Year, in which “we are challenged to be agents of hope to those whose hearts are burdened by trial, difficulty, or suffering, offering them the hope that comes from Christ Jesus alone.”

He highlighted two examples of such outreach: Walking with Moms in Need, a USCCB-led initiative that helps parishes and communities to befriend and support pregnant and newly parenting women; and the Project Rachel Mini-

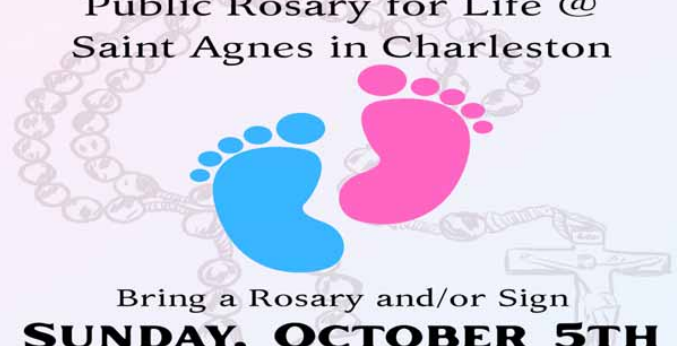
stry, which provides post-abortion healing.

Both ministries “are just two examples of how the Church continuously reaches out with love, compassion, and mercy to those most in need of a message of hope,” said Bishop Thomas.

Quoting impromptu remarks Pope Leo XIV made to Jubilee pilgrims May 26, Bishop Thomas added, “How important it is that each and every baptized person feel himself or herself called by God to be a sign of hope in the world today.”

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

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# PACE Conference's Musical Prayer & Praise Event Will Celebrate 10th Anniversary of 'Laudato Si' and 50th Anniversary of 'This Land Is Home To Me'

By Colleen Rowan

**CHARLESTON**—The diocese's annual PACE (Pastoral Administration & Collaborative Education) Conference will be held Oct. 15-16 at Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston.

A feature this year will be "A Celebration of the Season of Creation Through Musical Prayer & Praise" with musicians Stephen Pishner and Meredith Dean Augustin. The event will honor the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' document, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home," and the 50th anniversary of "This Land Is Home To Me" by the Appalachian bishops. The gathering will be held

Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. at the pastoral center.

"It's a great prayer opportunity to bring together: the gifts of music, faith, spoken word, the presence of one another and two very strong foundational writings, 'This Land Is Home To Me' and 'Laudato Si.'" All of these are woven together and remind us of God's presence within creation, in every moment, time, and place," Pishner said. "It is filled with words, spoken and sung, that can move the heart, increase faith and let hope be reborn. It's also a great reminder that with God, all things are possible."

Diocesan Chancellor Chad Carter

said that while this is part of the PACE Conference, the evening event is open to all.

The PACE Conference will feature a session on "This Land Is Home To Me" presented by Shirley Carter, director of the diocesan Department of Faith Formation and Youth, Young Adult, & Campus Ministry.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's 175th anniversary is also a feature of this year's PACE with Jon-Erik Gilot, director of the diocese's Archives & Records, presenting a session on diocesan history.

PACE will offer 32 sessions pre-

sented by diocesan employees on a variety of topics. A few of these include Flocknote: Data Management Made Simple, Make AI Work For You, Women of the Way: Walking Together in Faith and Purpose, Catholic Charities and Catholic Social Teaching, Getting Started with Online Giving, and Understanding DWC Finance Office Forms...and More! These are just a few of the sessions to be offered.

There is still time to register. Visit the following address to register, for more information and updates, and full listing of sessions: [dwc.org/2025pace/](http://dwc.org/2025pace/)

## Choir Members Invited to Participate in 'Songs of Jubilee & Hope' Concert with Monongalia Symphony Orchestra

By Colleen Rowan

**MORGANTOWN**— The "Songs of Jubilee & Hope" concert with the Monongalia Symphony Orchestra will be held at St. Francis de Sales Church in Morgantown on Nov. 16 at 6 p.m.

The concert will be directed by Conductor Shaun Hancher, music director of the Monongalia Symphony Orchestra. He is also music director and conductor of the Wheeling Symphony Youth Orchestra and music director at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Wheeling.

"We are looking forward to a great evening with musicians of the Diocese of Wheeling - Charleston," Hancher said. "The Monongalia Symphony has been fortunate enough to perform several concerts at St.

### Upcoming Events in the Diocese

Wheeling Vicariate Celebration Mass for the diocese's 175th anniversary at St. Paul Church in Weirton with Bishop Mark Brennan as celebrant on Oct. 28 at 6 p.m.

John Angotti and Friends Concert at St. Joseph Cathedral in Wheeling Dec. 18. Time to be announced.

All Souls' Day Mass (Nov. 2) at the Bishop's Chapel at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling at 10 a.m. with Bishop Brennan as celebrant; Evening Prayer will be at 5 p.m. at the Bishop's Chapel that day.

Francis de Sales, and we thought this would be a great way to give back to that community. This will also be MSO's first concert with choir, and it promises to be an exciting evening of music!"

The Jubilee Year of Hope and the 175th anniversary of the diocese serves as the perfect setting for the concert, Diocesan Chancellor

Chad Carter said in an e-mail to parishes inviting members of their music ministries to participate.

"We look forward to celebrating the rich history of our Appalachian diocese in collaboration with the Monongalia Symphony Orchestra and memorializing this occasion through song," he wrote. "Come experience music of the

Church's liturgical year by singing through the seasons with us! Choir members and handbell ringers are welcome and encouraged to come!"

Regional choir rehearsals to review the music prior to the concert to prepare choir members appropriately for the performance are being planned, Carter said.

The concert is free and

open to the public with a reception to follow (free will donations will be accepted).

Those who plan to participate must complete an online form and should contact his or her parish music director or Matthew Berher at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling by e-mail to [mberher@dwc.org](mailto:mberher@dwc.org).

**DO YOU WANT TO CELEBRATE THE DIOCESE'S 175th ANNIVERSARY IN A BIG WAY??!!**

**DO YOU WANT TO SING WITH A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA??!! +**

***WE WANT YOU...to be a choir member for this event***

**Sunday, November 16, 2025 @ 6pm**

*St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church Morgantown WV*

**"Songs of Jubilee & Hope:"**

**Concert Event with the Monongalia Symphony Orchestra & Massed Choir from around the Diocese**

**\*Regional rehearsals will be scheduled\***

**Please scan the QR code below to register:**



**DO YOU WANT TO CELEBRATE THE DIOCESE'S 175th ANNIVERSARY IN A BIG WAY??!!**

**DO YOU WANT TO SING WITH A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA??!! +**

***WE WANT YOU...to be a choir member for this event***

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# Decades of Love, Service, & Dedication Honored



Courtesy photo

Sisters, brothers, and consecrated persons of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are gathered with Bishop Mark Brennan following the Sept. 27 Mass and appreciation dinner at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling.

**WHEELING**—Sisters, brothers, and consecrated persons of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston were honored at a Sept. 27 Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling celebrated by Bishop Mark Brennan. Nine orders were represented at the celebration by 25 men and women religious who serve or who have served the church in West Virginia.

Bishop Brennan prayed for them and then gathered with them for dinner at the parish's Marist Center. Carrying the gifts at the Mass were Missionary Sisters Servants of the

Word Sister Jennifer Lopez and Eudist Servants of the Eleventh Hour Sister Dolores Keyser.

Also present for the celebration was Sister Martha Teresa Gomez, RGS, delegate for Consecrated Life for the diocese. Her office organizes and presents the celebration annually.

Sister Martha also recognized the efforts of Karen Muenze, secretary of the diocese's Delegate for Consecrated Life Office and the Office of Worship & Sacraments.

The following is a list of the honorees present for the Mass and

dinner—Sisters of the Child Jesus: Sister Ida Chikara, SJI; Sister Blessing Katina, SJI (Guest); Sister Beritha Mashu, SJI; Sister Placxedece Mugore, SJI; Sister Agatha Munyanyi, SJI; Sister Maria Rukwishuro, SJI; and Sister Marita Sithole, SJI. Sisters of the Good Shepherd: Sister Martha Teresa Gomez, RGS. Congregation of St. Joseph: Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ; Sister Joan Kreyenbuhl, CSJ; Sister Mary Alice McMaster, CSJ (75th Jubilarian); Sister Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ (65th Jubilarian); Sister Alicia Weiskircher, CSJ; and Sister Nancy

White, CSJ. Ursuline Franciscan Congregation: Sister Neetha D'Souza, UFS; Sister Shalma D'Souza, UFS; Sister Setsulu Mary Kezo, UFS; Sister Reeta Lopis, UFS; and Sister Rita Miranda, UFS. The Sisters of Jesus the Saviour: Sister Paula Ugochukwu Ude, SJS. Eudist Servants of the Eleventh Hour: Sister Dolores Keyser, ESEH. Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word: Sister Jennifer Lopez, HMSP. Order of Consecrated Virgins: Miss Catherine Leahy. Marist Brothers of the Schools: Brother John Byrd, FMS; and Brother John McDonagh, FMS.

## A Letter from the Delegate for Consecrated Life

On behalf of all our sisters, brothers, and consecrated virgins, we joyfully and gratefully congratulate the Jubilarians of 2025. Their years of faithful service, prayer, and love have been a radiant witness of God's presence among us, and today we pause to honor you.

This year, we give special recognition to:

75 Years of Service: Sister Joan Hartlaub, CSJ; Sister Mary Alice McMaster, CSJ; Sister Eva Marie Schlag, CSJ

70 Years of Service: Sister Karen Lester, SAC

65 Years of Service: Sister Barbara Kupchack, CSJ; Sister Francesca Lewis, SAC; Sister Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ

60 Years of Service: Sister Molly Bauer, CSJ;

Sister Rose Ann Hefner, CSJ

Your commitment, lived so generously across decades, is a true inspiration. Through your love, tender care, and steadfast devotion, you have touched countless lives and left a lasting legacy that will be remembered for generations. We are profoundly grateful for each of you, and we pray God's continued blessings upon your journey in the years ahead.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to Mrs. Karen Muenze, whose dedication made our annual Appreciation Dinner for the Sisters, Brothers, and Consecrated Virgins such a beautiful celebration of all who continue to serve in

our Diocese. Karen lovingly gave countless hours to ensure every detail was in place: gathering information, sending invitations, preparing decorations, overseeing the food, and making sure that every guest felt seen, valued, and celebrated.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you, Karen. May the Lord bless you abundantly with good health, happiness, and joy for the generous love you have shown us through the years.

With gratitude and joy,

Forever in Christ

Sister Martha Teresa Gomez, RGS  
Delegate for Consecrated Life Office  
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

# Summersville's St. John Food Pantry Receives 5,000-Pound Food Donation from Mid-State Ford

**SUMMERSVILLE** — St. John the Evangelist Parish and its Food Pantry ministry in Summersville are deeply grateful to Mid-State Ford of Summersville “for their extraordinary donation of 5,000 pounds of food to support local families in need,” parish officials said.

The pantry, which currently serves 124 families in Nicholas County, relies on the generosity of community partners to keep its shelves stocked and doors open. Mid-State Ford’s contribution comes at a crucial time and will make an immediate and tangible impact on the lives of countless neighbors.

“Our food pantry is more than a program — it is a lifeline for families who struggle to put meals on the table,” said

Father Rene Gerona, pastor of St. John’s. “The generosity of Mid-State Ford is a powerful reminder that when local businesses and the church work together, we can build a stronger, more compassionate community. We are incredibly thankful for their support.”

The St. John Food Pantry operates year-round and depends on donations and volunteers to continue serving the growing needs of the community. Mid-State Ford’s gift of 5,000 pounds of food ensures that the pantry can continue to serve families with dignity, compassion, and hope.

For more information about the St. John Food Pantry or to learn how to help, please contact St. John the Evangelist Parish at (304) 872-2554.



Courtesy photo

From left are Shawn Huffman of Mid-State Ford; Evan Prendergast, parishioner of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Summersville; St. John Food Pantry Managers Tom and Cathy Girondo; Stevie LeRose of Mid-State Ford; and Dominic LeRose and Doug McClung, parishioners of St. John’s. Not pictured is Hunter Willis.



Courtesy photo

Above is the 5,000 pounds of food donated by Mid-State Ford.

# Catholic Charities Announces 2025 Charity in Action Award Honoree in Martinsburg

**MARTINSBURG**—Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) announced Toni Wiesberg as the recipient of its 2025 Charity in Action Award in Martinsburg. CCWVa will recognize Wiesberg at its Charity in Action Award Luncheon on Wednesday, Oct. 22, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Martinsburg from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“Our Charity in Action Award celebrates individuals and groups who dedicate themselves to serving others,” said CCWVa President & CEO Mark Phillips. “These honorees, like Toni Wiesberg, show how compassion and commitment can transform lives and strengthen our communities.”

Wiesberg is the founder of Faith Feeding Freedom, a nonprofit serving the homeless and hungry in Martinsburg. In 2018, while searching for her best friend’s missing granddaughter, Toni was inspired by a woman feeding people experiencing homelessness. She began volunteering and soon felt called to bring this mission to Martinsburg. Since founding Faith Feeding Freedom on Nov. 30, 2018, Toni and her volunteers have served over 75 people every week, providing meals, clothing, hygiene items, and winter essentials, along with fellowship and prayer. Under her leadership, the organization has helped reunite families, secure housing, assist with treatment, and provide medications, all while remaining entirely volunteer-run.

“Catholic Charities West Virginia is proud to celebrate people who give so selflessly in service to others,” said Phillips. “Their work embodies the heart of our mission and the impact we can make when we care for one another.”

Tickets for the Luncheon are \$50 per person and can be purchased at <https://www.ccwva.org/event/cia-martinsburg-2025/> or by calling (304) 905-9860.

Funds raised through the event support CCWVa’s programs and services in eastern West Virginia.



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# Sister Dolores Keyser Aims to Increase Outreach in Prison Ministry

By Colleen Rowan

**WHEELING** — At the annual West Virginia Prison Chaplains Retreat at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston in August, participants were introduced to the newest addition to the Diocese of Wheeling - Charleston's prison ministry team—Sister Dolores A. Keyser, ESEH. She officially took on the title of Social Ministry Project coordinator, Prison Ministry Support, on Aug. 4 and she is based at the chancery in Wheeling. Her aim is to increase this ministry, amplifying its reach into the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation's 34 adult facilities.

Kathy Barton, director of the diocese's Social Ministries Office who also serves as interim director of the diocese's Prison Ministry Office, said she is pleased to welcome Sister Dolores in this new role.

"Her heart and experience for the incarcerated and vulnerable is such a blessing to us and those that she will serve," Barton said, adding that Sister Dolores will also be serving the homeless.

Sister Dolores has been involved in prison ministry since 2016 in Mexico, Georgia, and Martinsburg and is committed to being present to inmates and helping them prepare to return to society.

"Re-entry," Sister Dolores said. "That's what lays on my heart."

In order for individuals leaving prison to have success in their re-entry into society, she said, chaplains and volunteers must reach them while they are serving their sentences, preparing

them "to go back to their families or to reestablish a relationship with their families, but also to prepare them to go back to work, to find housing, to have a spiritual affiliation with whatever denomination they want," she said. "It's really letting them know that they are a child of God and they're worth something."

Sister Dolores was glad to see the retreat feature Keith Roys, executive director for Gatekeepers in Hagerstown, Md., who gave a presentation on the organization whose mission is to motivate, empower, and encourage returning citizens. Gatekeepers has great success, Sister Dolores said, because officials establish a relationship with inmates in prison and then meet weekly with them after they have re-entered society. Because of this, she said, Gatekeepers has a recidivism rate of less than 5 percent.

"They go through the program while they're in prison but then after they get out, they go to resource meetings," she said. "And it's amazing."

She has seen judges and state representatives come in and talk to those served by Gatekeepers and business leaders work with them to help them find employment. More information about this ministry can be found on its website: [www.gatekeepersmd.org](http://www.gatekeepersmd.org).

Another goal Sister Dolores has is to reach out to clergy to get involved in prison ministry, which is something one has to have a heart for.

"Not everyone wants to go into the prisons, but it would be beautiful if we

could get more deacons and priests," she said. "And I know they're all busy with their parishes. Some are overwhelmed with the amount of work they have to do." She also understands that many of the deacons work full time, "but if we could just get more of a presence, because there are Catholics in the prisons."

She recalled one young man in prison she met with in West Virginia who told her, "I'd really like to see a priest. I'd like to go to confession."

Sister Dolores hopes that a few priests and deacons in each vicariate would be willing to visit a prison in their area if they have extra time, maybe on a weekend or in an afternoon.

Sister Dolores is planning to get back into the prisons as well. In Martinsburg, she conducted a Sunday morning, non-denominational service a few times a month using materials from the USCCB (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops), Rev. Dr. Billy Graham, and Dr. Scott Hahn.

"I was told you can't try to convert anyone," Sister Dolores recalled. "I said, I'm not but if they ask a question about Catholicism we'll stop and talk about it unless someone objects to us having the discussion; and no one ever did. So, we've talked about confession, the Eucharist,



Courtesy photo

Sister Dolores A. Keyser, ESEH, Social Ministry Project coordinator, Prison Ministry Support for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, is pictured with Keith Roys, executive director for Gatekeepers in Hagerstown, Md., at the annual West Virginia Prison Chaplains Retreat at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston in August.

purgatory. I said to the men if I don't have the right answer ... I will go back and find it from a priest or deacon and tell you next week."

In this ministry, Sister Dolores said that one should not be afraid to go into a prison, "because if the Holy Spirit wants you in there, he's going to take care of you."

In her experience, inmates want that time with someone from this ministry and want to have prayer services. They also need someone to talk to about what's happening in their lives, those they want to pray for.

"They're no different than us," Sister Dolores said. "We ask people to pray and help us. Yes, they're incarcerated, but they have families, parents on the outside that are sick, someone has died and they can't necessarily get to that funeral, they have family that they're separated from and they may find out that their wife or child is sick. So, you take time to be compassionate enough to say, 'I'm listening. I'm not going to preach to you.' Listen to what they're really suffering or hurting from. And a lot of times when you just listen, the answer comes to them."



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# Migrants, Refugees Bravely Embody the Belief That Joy is Possible, Pope Leo Says

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — With their courage and tenacity in the pursuit of happiness, migrants and refugees are “messengers of hope,” Pope Leo XIV said. “Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes,” the pope wrote in his message for the celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees Oct. 4-5, which will coincide with the Jubilee of Migrants.

Migrants and refugees also remind the Catholic Church that she, too, is on a journey, and true citizenship is in heaven, he wrote.

“Each time the church gives in to the temptation of ‘sedentarization’ and ceases to be a ‘civitas peregrina,’ God’s people journeying towards the heavenly homeland, she ceases to be ‘in the world’ and becomes ‘of the world,’” the pope wrote, citing the founder of his religious order, St. Augustine.

Pope Leo’s message, which focused on the theme “Migrants, missionaries of hope,” was released at the Vatican July 25, the feast of St. James, the apostle. “The current global context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which force millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere,” his message said.

“The widespread tendency to look after the interests of limited communities poses a serious threat to the sharing of responsibility, multilateral cooperation, the pursuit of the common good and global solidarity for the benefit of our entire human family,” it said.

“The prospect of a renewed arms race and the development of new armaments, including nuclear weapons, the lack of consideration for the harmful effects of the ongoing climate crisis, and the impact of profound economic inequalities make the challenges of the present and the future increasingly demanding,” the pope wrote.

“Faced with frightening scenarios and the possibility of global devasta-

tion,” he wrote, more people must yearn for a future of peace and respect for the dignity of everyone. “Such a future is essential to God’s plan for humanity and the rest of creation.”

God has placed the desire for happiness in the heart of every human being, he wrote.

In fact, he wrote, “the search for happiness, and the prospect of finding it beyond one’s place of origin, is certainly one of the main motivations for the movement of people today.”

“Many migrants, refugees and displaced persons are privileged witnesses of hope,” he wrote. “Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible.”

“In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope,” he wrote.

“In a special way, Catholic migrants and refugees can become missionaries of hope in the countries that welcome

them,” Pope Leo wrote.

“With their spiritual enthusiasm and vitality, they can help revitalize ecclesial communities that have become rigid and weighed down, where spiritual desertification is advancing at an alarming rate,” he wrote.

The presence of Catholic migrants and refugees “should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing,” he wrote. Quoting from the New Testament’s Letter to the Hebrews, he reminded the faithful not to neglect showing hospitality to strangers since, “through it, some have unknowingly entertained angels.”

Looking ahead to the jubilee celebrations and day of prayer in October, Pope Leo wrote he was entrusting all those who are on the move, as well as those who accompany them, “to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, comfort of migrants, so that she may keep hope alive in their hearts and sustain them in their commitment to building a world that increasingly resembles the Kingdom of God, the true homeland that awaits us at the end of our journey.”

## World Must Come Together to Fight Climate Change, Pope Leo Says

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

**CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy (CNS)** — People of faith cannot love God while despising his creatures, and people cannot call themselves Christians without caring for everything fragile and wounded, including the earth, Pope Leo XIV told climate activists and political and religious leaders. “There is no room for indifference or resignation,” he said, inaugurating an international conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato Si’ on Care for Our Common Home.”

Seated behind a slowly melting chunk of ice from a glacier in Greenland, the pope said, “God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created, for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters.”

“What will be our answer?” he asked.

Pope Leo spoke Oct. 1 during the opening session of a three-day conference titled, “Raising Hope for Climate Justice.” Organized by the Lau-

dato Si’ Movement and with the support of the Vatican dicasteries for Promoting Integral Human Development and Communication, the event was held at the Focolare Movement’s Mariapoli Center near the papal summer villa in Castel Gandolfo.

The conference brought together some 500 delegates representing global leaders, faith-based organizations, governments and NGOs active in climate justice in order to celebrate what has been achieved since Pope Francis’ landmark encyclical was published in 2015 and to hammer out new strategies for expanded partnerships and concrete action. “We are one family, with one Father,” Pope Leo said, and “we inhabit the same planet and must care for it together.”

“I, therefore, renew my strong appeal for unity around integral ecology and for peace!” he said.

Pope Leo noted, as Pope Francis did in his follow-up exhortation “Laudate Deum,” that “some have chosen to deride the increasingly evident signs of climate change, to ridicule those who speak of

global warming and even to blame the poor for the very thing that affects them the most.”

“What must be done now to ensure that caring for our common home and listening to the cry of the earth and the poor do not appear as mere passing trends or, worse still, are seen and felt as divisive issues?” he asked.

“Everyone in society, through nongovernmental organizations and advocacy groups, must put pressure on governments to develop and implement more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls,” the pope said.

“Citizens need to take an active role in political decision-making at national, regional and local levels,” he said. “Only then will it be possible to mitigate the damage done to the environment.” Pope Leo asked the audience to “give thanks to our Father in heaven for this gift we have inherited from Pope Francis!” which was followed by enthusiastic applause.

“The challenges identified in Laudato Si’ are in fact even more relevant today than they were 10 years ago,” he said,

and these challenges, which are social, political and spiritual, “call for conversion.”

“It is only by returning to the heart that a true ecological conversion can take place,” Pope Leo said, saying, “We must shift from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles.”

For believers, he said, “we cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded.”

Integral ecology thrives on four relationships: with God, with others, with nature and with ourselves, he said. “Through our commitment to them, we can grow in hope by living out the interdisciplinary approach of Laudato Si’ and the call to unity and collaboration that flows from it.”

Pope Leo also expressed his hope that a number of upcoming U.N. summits, including the 2025 Climate Change Conference being held in Bra-

zil in November, “will listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, families, Indigenous peoples, involuntary migrants and believers throughout the world.”

“I encourage everyone, especially young people, parents and those who work in local and national administrations and institutions, to play their part in finding solutions for today’s cultural, spiritual and educational challenges, always striving tenaciously for the common good,” he added.



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# U.S. Bishops' President Begs Americans to see Christ 'in Every Person,' Reject Political Violence

By **Gina Christian, OSV News**

**(OSV News)** — Five years after the release of Pope Francis' encyclical on fraternal love, and amid a rise in political violence, the leader of the U.S. Catholic bishops is pleading for a rediscovery of — and respect for — a common humanity.

"I ask every American to reflect on the value of every human life. I beg you to see Christ in every person, even those whose politics you oppose," said Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The archbishop, who also leads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, shared his thoughts in an Oct. 1 pastoral invitation for reflection ahead of the fifth anniversary of "Fratelli Tutti." Pope Francis penned the encyclical and released it Oct. 3, 2020, as an exploration and exhortation on the issues of human fraternity and social friendship.

The late pope noted that his encyclical — which focused on a topic about which he had

frequently spoken — was partly inspired by his own fraternal encounters with leaders of other faith traditions: Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, one of the pre-eminent Sunni Muslim scholars in the world.

Quoting the late pope, Archbishop Broglio said the encyclical "prophetically" observed that the world must rebuild its sense of communion, and that the erosion of social communion leads to humans being manipulated by the powerful. He referenced the late pope's warning in the encyclical on how great words — the pontiff gave "democracy, freedom, justice or unity" as examples — have been emptied of their meaning, bent and shaped "to serve as tools for domination, as meaningless tags that can be used to justify any action."

"We have seen the manifestation of this notion in the perverse idea that one can serve the common good by becoming an instrument of violence," he said. "This happens

when we refuse to see the face of Christ in the other person and only see an enemy that must be dominated or destroyed."

He said, "Tragically, decent people of every political persuasion continue to fall victim to this deadly trend."

Archbishop Broglio pointed to his experience ministering to military members and their families, saying, "I have known the pain that the violence of war inflicts on men and women and those closest to them."

Now, he said, "grievous acts of violence have intruded into the daily lives of too many Americans — an experience that, tragically, many civilians around the world have long endured.

"Places once regarded as safe harbors to grow and learn — our schools, universities, and churches — have become sites of heartbreaking tragedy and bloodshed," said Archbishop Broglio.

While he did not name any specific incidents, the archbishop's reflection was released just days after several high-profile killings, including deadly targeted attacks on a Latter-day Saints church in Michigan and a Catholic church in Minnesota, and the assassination of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk at a Utah university campus.

Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative, a research and policy development effort to mitigate political violence, predicted that 2025 would be "a bellwether year for political violence" in the U.S., with rising threats against local officials and communities, and a deepening "climate of hostility in American politics."

International online research firm YouGov, which since 2022 has polled on how

extensive a problem respondents perceive political violence to be in the U.S., has found that levels of concern depend "to some degree" on "whether someone from their side or from the other side is the most recent to be attacked."

Archbishop Broglio, quoting from "Fratelli Tutti," said that "authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation."

As Pope Francis wrote in the encyclical, said the archbishop, "the path to social unity always entails acknowledging the possibility that others have, at least in part, a legitimate point of view, something worthwhile to contribute, even if they were in error or acted badly."

The late pope stressed that peace "requires us to place at the center of all political, social, and economic activity the human person from conception to natural death, who enjoys the highest dignity, and respect for the common good."

"Each of us should examine our hearts, our thoughts, and our actions and ask ourselves how we contribute to the polarization and animosity plaguing our nation," Archbishop Broglio said.

That self-reflection should be accompanied by concrete actions to mend a wounded society, he said. "We should also put into practice those behaviors that can help us begin to heal the rifts between us," said Archbishop Broglio, recommending in particular the corporal works of mercy, which along with their spiritual counterparts are described in Catholic teaching as "charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spir-

itual and bodily necessities."

The corporal works of mercy listed by Archbishop Broglio in his reflection included "feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead."

Along with such outreach, said the archbishop, "Consider fasting from social media for one day a week or in the evening."

In addition, he said, "Pray for your enemies," referencing a command given by Jesus Christ to his followers during both the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:38-48) and the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6:27-35).

"Listen and talk with those with whom you disagree — especially within your own family," said Archbishop Broglio. "Disagree, debate civilly, stand for your rights, but always remember in your heart that we are all children of God and deserve dignity and life."

The archbishop concluded his reflection with a call to pray "that we may discover anew that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. Amen."

The USCCB is also providing Catholics with a variety of resources to help implement the vision of "Fratelli Tutti" on its fifth anniversary. These include information on its Civiltà initiative, the "Fratelli Tutti Study Guide," resources on Catholic social teaching and the corporal works of mercy, all of which can be found on its website, usccb.org.

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

## Cardinal Cupich: Sen. Durbin 'Has Decided Not to Receive' Controversial Lifetime Achievement Award

**CHICAGO (OSV News)** — Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., has decided not to receive a "Lifetime Achievement Award," scheduled to be presented in November at the archdiocese's "Keep Hope Alive" celebration, according to a statement by Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich Sept. 30.

The award, scheduled to be given to Durbin for his work on immigration issues, had met with significant opposition from several Catholic bishops due to the Catholic senator's longstanding public position in favor of abortion.

"While I am saddened by this news, I respect his decision," Cardinal Cupich said in his statement. "But I want to make clear that the decision to present him an award was specifically in recognition of his singular contribution to immigration reform and his unwavering support of immigrants, which is so needed in our day."

The decision came only hours after Pope Leo XIV commented on Cardinal Cupich's decision to give Durbin the award, saying he was "not terribly familiar with the particular case" but asking for Catholics to have respect for one another when they "look closely at all of these ethical issues," adding "The church teaching on each one of these issues is very clear."

In comments posted Oct. 1 to his Facebook page, Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, in whose diocese Durbin resides, said he was "grateful Sen. Durbin has declined this Lifetime Achievement Award. As we begin Respect Life Month, I ask that all Catholics continue to pray for our Church, our country, and for the human dignity of all people to be respected in all stages of life including the unborn and immigrants."



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# Cursillo Movement: A ‘Short Course’ with Lasting Impact ‘De Colores!!!’

**By Joe Pangilinan**

Help revive Cursillo in West Virginia. What is Cursillo?

The Cursillo movement—formally known as Cursillos in Christianity—offers parishioners a concentrated spiritual experience, one designed not merely as a weekend retreat but as a lifelong method for living and sharing Christian faith. Rooted in the National Cursillo framework in the U.S., the movement continues to foster committed lay leadership, evangelization, and small group fellowship across dioceses.

**Origins and Purpose**

Cursillo traces its roots to Mallorca, Spain, in the 1940s, when Eduardo Bonín Aguiló and other lay collaborators devised a three day “short course” in Christianity as a way to encourage spiritual renewal

and apostolic commitment. Over time, the movement spread globally, arriving in the United States around 1957, where it has been adapted in numerous dioceses.

On its national website, the mission of National Cursillo USA states that the movement seeks “to communicate the best news of the best reality: that God, in Jesus Christ, loves us; ... communicated by the best means which is friendship.” Its vision rests on three fundamental encounters: with oneself, with Christ, and with others.

**The Three Day Weekend: Catalyst for Transformation**

At the heart of Cursillo is a guided weekend experience (often three days) featuring a series of talks given by clergy and laity, interwoven with meditative

times, prayer, worship, and fellowship. Participants are challenged to reflect on their identity in Christ, their vocation, and how to be active Christian leaven in their environments.

Yet the weekend is not an end in itself. Rather, it serves as a launching point—the “Fourth Day”—into daily Christian living, supported by two crucial post weekend practices: Group Reunion and Ultreya.

- Group Reunion involves small clusters of participants who gather regularly to share spiritual growth, support accountability, and encourage one another’s efforts to bring Christ into everyday settings.

- Ultreya is a larger gathering of multiple small groups for fellowship, witness, and encouragement in their apostolic mission.

**Structure and Support**

While Cursillo is a movement rather than a rigid organization, the National Cursillo Center (sometimes called the National Secretariat) offers coordination, resources, and oversight for diocesan movements. The Center’s “Resource Center” provides downloadable content in audio, video, and text formats to assist leaders in formation and ongoing support.

Within the Catholic Church’s structure, the movement has achieved ca-

nonical recognition and is embraced as one way lay faithful can fulfill their baptismal call to evangelization.

**Impact and Contemporary Renewal**

Across numerous dioceses, Cursillo continues to shape lay leadership, invigorate parish life, and provide spiritual support networks. In the Diocese of Youngstown, for instance, the movement celebrated 60 years of retreats in 2024, noting how it has expanded its reach beyond young men to encompass all seeking spiritual renewal. In Western North Carolina, one clergy writer described Cursillo as an “invitation to live intentionally,” where the weekend opens doors and the follow up groups sustain growth.

As the world changes, Cursillo’s model remains relevant: its emphasis on friendship, witness, small group discipleship, and lay apostolate resonates in contemporary parish life. Its challenge is to adapt wisely—to keep the core charism alive while responding to shifting demographics, new communication methods, and the pastoral needs of younger generations.

In West Virginia, we are

reviving the Cursillo movement with upcoming events. We will be having Ultreya weekends in various Vicariates starting Saturday, October 11 from 10-11:30 a.m. in Fairmont at St. Peter’s, then Sunday, October 12 from 4:30-6 p.m. in Wheeling at St. Vincent Parish center. Cursillo weekends are scheduled for 2026 in Charleston at Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center. The men’s weekend is July 23-26 and the women’s weekend is August 6-9.

Bishop Mark Brennan and Pope Leo are both Cursillistas. Our diocese has been looking for ways to evangelize and encourage small groups. Cursillo is a way to not only maintain small groups but grow small groups.

**Conclusion**

The Cursillo movement is a remarkable example of a lay led, Church rooted tool for evangelization. Far more than a weekend retreat, it aspires to transform environments by equipping ordinary people with spiritual depth, mutual support, and missionary momentum. In the words of its national mission: to bring alive the reality that God, in Jesus Christ, loves us—through friendship, conviction, and constancy.

## Join NAMI and St. Michael Parish, Wheeling, for the Annual Interfaith Prayer Service on Mental Illness

**WHEELING**—St. Michael Parish will again join NAMI Greater Wheeling in hosting an interfaith service to pray for individuals and families living with mental illness. The event will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7, in the church at 1225 National Road in Wheeling.

Nic Cochran, a prominent advocate for people with mental health and substance abuse issues, will be the keynote speaker. Cochran serves on the NAMI Greater Wheeling Board of Directors. He is the director of Youth Services System, Inc. - Recovery Homes. He is a passionate advocate for people with mental health issues in general and substance use disorders in particular.

The annual prayer service has been a part of St. Michael Parish’s stewardship activities for more than 20 years. Everyone who attends the vigil will have the opportunity to light a prayer candle in honor of a friend or loved one with mental illness. All are invited.

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# Losing & Restoring My Spiritual Footing

By **Kathleen M. Jacobs & Jessica Manriquez**

A few months before my mother died of pulmonary embolism, I was recovering from a near-fatal car accident. One day, I called her in tears as I took my walk along the riverbank, asking her if she ever doubted if what we believed was truly real. I had, since the accident, begun to doubt most everything on a spiritual level. Without missing a beat, she said, "It's healthy to question, but I never for one minute wonder if what we believe, what we've been taught, is real." I exhaled deeply, knowing that I would find a way back from my questioning, holding tight to her solid words.

And when, a few years later, my faith had once again been shaken to its core, I talked with my parish priest who shared with me a story of his own spiritual journey, mentioning to his spiritual adviser that he was frustrated that he was not progressing along his path as quickly as he would have liked. The 92-year-old nun responded, as she let emit a slight chuckle, "Father, you are progressing as you should; even I, at my age, am still taking baby steps." Again, those words resonated with me on a level that encouraged me to keep putting one foot in front of the other, knowing that there are no shortcuts, knowing that our respective spiritual journeys have their own unique trajectories.

My journey began with God and will end with God. I was baptized in the Catholic Church, taught the Lord's Prayer as a child, and went to mass at an early age. As a teen and adult, I fell away from the Church and from God.

On a different road of knowledge, I was still far away from the light of God and His word. But I have come to realize that I have had people praying for me to regain my faith; God had his plan in place for me all along.

And when, a year or so before a close priest friend passed away, he told me a story that helped me clearly see his humanity. He admitted that at one time in his ministry he had given absolution to someone he should not have and that he had received absolution when it should not have been given. That story made me feel less alone in my own personal and spiritual struggles.

Not participating in my own faith journey for over twenty years did not seem debilitating to me at first, but grew into a real problem for me physically and emotionally. As my physical health became challenging in 2023 and 2024, with days spent in the hospital and bedridden for months, I was alone and in pain. Prior to the health issues I encountered, I was a social creature, enjoying meeting and talking with hundreds of people every week through my work; that number was reduced to a handful. Managing pain for doing the simplest tasks led me to

reaching out to God. I was surprised that the channel of communication was open, so it was easy to pray for help, cry, and surrender because I was still so weak and afraid.

And most recently, a young woman making the decision to join the Catholic Church asked me to explain the Holy Spirit to her. As a Cradle Catholic and someone who attended Catholic schools, taught at a Catholic high school, and led Bible study programs, I was not just caught off-guard, but pointedly responded that I did not know how to explain the Holy Spirit to her. Later that evening, as I spent some time researching the burning question, what I found enlightened me to the point that when I met her a few weeks later, I could share that the Holy Spirit is not only the third person of the Trinity, but is understood as God's active presence in the world and in the lives of those who believe. He guides us, empowers us, and comforts us. He is a divine person with intellect and emotions. Once again, with every misstep, every doubt, every question, I was gifted words that mattered from those who mattered. So, while losing my footing repeatedly, restoring it was always following closely on my heels; I just did not recognize it until I did.

When friends asked me if I wanted to join them at Sunday mass, I felt or heard what I now know to have been the Holy Spirit helping me accept that invitation. Within a couple of months, the OCIA program was to begin and again that same certain voice reminded me that this was also a part of my path. As I put one foot in front of the other, my faith has grown. My joy in reading and getting to know many of the gospels and the people in the Bible has been illuminating spiritually and intellectually. I look forward to my faith continuing to grow as I grow in my readings and discussions, feeling humbled by God and His love for me. My bones have healed, and I move forward without fear to walk in His grace.

And when I became parched and yearned for refreshment, this same new-found friend who had just joined the Church reminded me of the Biblical story of the woman at the well, who becomes an evangelist after her encounter with Jesus. It is about sharing our experiences with others and leading each other to faith. As the well is seen as a symbol of thirst, both physical and spiritual, Jesus's offer of "living water" satisfies both our physical thirst and our spiritual thirst. As a result, it connects us one to the other.

(Kathleen M. Jacobs holds an M.A. in Humanistic Studies. She and Jessica Manriquez live in Charleston and are parishioners of the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. They often engage in spiritual discussions, finding clarity in their shared stories.)

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Others include:  
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Fr. Carlos Melocoton, V.F.  
Donna Niggemeyer, M.Ed., LPC, of Christian Counseling Associates

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DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

# Faith, Heritage, and Hope

## *The Living Legacy of Catholic Education in the Mountain State*

**By Joyce Bibey (Courtesy of FaithInWV)**

Catholic education in West Virginia began four years before the diocese was founded in 1850. Schools were established to serve the growing Catholic immigrant population.

Nine schools were established during the tenure of the Diocese of Wheeling's first shepherd, Bishop Richard V. Whelan. When Bishop Whelan's leadership began there were an estimated 5,000 Catholics in the region. At the end of his tenure, in 1874, there were 18,000. From the nine schools he opened to today's 25 Catholic schools under the guidance of Superintendent Jenn Hornyak and Bishop Mark E. Brennan, each have consistently provided a values-based education in a Christ-centered environment. The diocesan and parochial schools have always been the largest private school system in the state.

In the early years, Catholic immigrants faced religious persecution, so, parochial schools became a crucial safe haven for learning while preserving their cultural and religious identity.

When Wheeling, Virginia, was still the Diocese of Richmond, the first official Catholic school in what would be the Diocese of Wheeling was opened in 1846, known as the "German" school (later known as St. Alphonsus Parish School). Then Father Richard Whelan staffed the school with lay teachers.

In 1848, Bishop Whelan successfully petitioned the Visitation Sisters from Baltimore to open an academy for young women – the Wheeling Female Academy (later named Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy) with 30 students enrolled. It was the first of three academies established by the order in the diocese [De Sales Heights Academy, Parkersburg, and Villa Maria Academy, Abingdon (later Wytheville, Va.)]. Originally located near the cathedral, the academy and convent relocated outside of Wheeling in 1865 (where it operated until its closure in 2008). The Visitation Nuns also established St. Joseph's Benevolent School for the children of St. James Parish in 1848. In 1865, The Sisters of



**In the fall of 1917, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Grade School in Wellsburg was established with the Sisters of Divine Providence as teachers. The order taught the students for two years until the Franciscan Sisters of Charity of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, came to staff the school. Pictured with the students of the school is their teacher Sister Modesta Bill, c.1920.**

St. Joseph ran the school and renamed it Cathedral Parish School in 1896, and then Wheeling Catholic Elementary School before it closed in 2011.

Bishop Whelan's successor, West Virginia born, Bishop John J. Kain saw the Catholic population jump to 20,000 (1875-1893). Bishop Kain established six schools, expanding Catholic education to the central and southern parts of West Virginia.

Bishop Patrick J. Donahue (1894-1922) saw the Catholic population triple to 62,000. The diocese had 21 schools at the time of his death.

Significantly of those is St. Francis Central Catholic School, in Morgantown, founded by its pastor Father Peter Flynn and the Ursuline Sisters in 1915. The building was actually a private home and provided elementary and later high school education. Its first graduating high school class was in 1923, when the school was on Beechurst Avenue. The school moved its campus to Evansdale and served grades K-12 until 1990. In 2006, the pre-K to grade 8 school moved to its current location on

Guthrie Lane).

Also, during Bishop Donahue's tenure, Saints Peter and Paul Church in Oak Hill opened its grade school in its parish hall in Scarbro in 1913.

Bishop John J. Swint, who served from 1922 to 1962, was nicknamed "God's Bricklayer" he oversaw the growth of the Catholic school system which operated as many as 52 schools and one college—Wheeling College (now Wheeling University).

As Catholic population peaked in the mid 20th century to about 110,000 in 1960, it began a steady decline to 100,000 in 2000, and less than 61,500 in 2024.

This has taken a toll on the Catholic schools. Over time, changes in demographics, including the movement of Catholics to more suburban settings, led to shifts in school enrollment and the need for tough and emotional decisions — mergers and closures.

Bishop Joseph H. Hodges who succeeded Bishop Swint, began his tenure with 43 Catholic schools and at the time of his death in 1985 there were 38 diocesan/parochial schools. It is important to note that in 1974 the boundaries and name of the diocese changed from the Diocese of Wheeling to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. From 1974 on the diocese was inclusive of all of the state of West Virginia. Therefore, the diocese gained its eastern region (from the

Diocese of Richmond), and lost the south-western most part of Virginia which extended to the Tennessee border.

During the era of Bishop Francis Schulte, the 6th bishop of the diocese from 1985-1989, there were 37 diocesan/parochial schools.

**See "Heritage" on Page 13**



**Photo courtesy of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Archives**  
**On Oct. 26, 1869, Sister Mary Charles and Sister Cecelia opened St. Mary's School in what was then known as Richie Town in Wheeling. In 1897, the present school building was erected. Pictured is St. Mary's Baseball Team, c.1910s.**

# Heritage ...

Cont'd from Page 12

Wheeling native Bishop Bernard Schmitt served the diocese as its seventh bishop from 1989-2005. He was the overseer of much diocesan reorganization, which included the 32 diocesan/parochial schools within its territory.

When Bishop Michael J. Bransfield, the 8th bishop diocese resigned his position in 2018 (ultimately a disciplinary measure was issued by Pope Francis, banning him from public ministry and residing in the diocese in 2019) there were 25 schools.

When Bishop Brennan was installed as our ninth bishop within his first week he put boots on the ground. His first school stop was Our Lady of Peace School in Marshall County, where he arrived before the students so he could greet them personally. The school's Facebook post that day (Aug. 26, 2019) said, "We honestly don't know who enjoyed the morning more! Bishop Mark Brennan was at OLP bright and early to greet our students and some of our parents and grandparents who dropped off today. It was obvious that OLP was eager and excited to have our new bishop here, but what was so impressive was his genuine happiness to be present with us. We pray for Bishop Brennan as he works hard to keep all of us in our beautiful Mountain State ANCHORED IN CHRIST."

Because of his dedication to the Church and the faithful in West Virginia, he became known as an "on the road again" bishop, prioritizing being among the schools and parishes.

Further cementing his reputation as a bishop who values Catholic education and schools with strong Catholic identity, he announced in May 2025 that he was forgiving more



Photo courtesy of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Archives  
Dressed in their school uniforms and assembled in front of their school are the students of St. Alphonsus School in Wheeling c. late 1890s.

than \$9.3 million in Catholic school debt.

Superintendent Hornyak said, "This is a blessing to the faithful of the diocese who work, volunteer, and support our parishes and Catholic schools in this Jubilee Year of Hope. Many of our principals and current school pastors had inherited the debt that has now been forgiven."

"Since his arrival in August of 2019, Bishop Brennan has always been a strong supporter and promoter of Catholic education and its importance for the children of West Virginia," she said.

The West Virginia Catholic schools today at a glance include – 18 elemen-

tary schools, 6 high schools, plus, the newly opened St. Joseph High School with ninth grade only for 2025-2026). All of the schools are nationally accredited by COGNIA. The students are 47% Catholic and 43% non-Catholic.

The schools office reported that in the last three years Catholic school enrollment has continually increased. In 2022-2023 there were 4,370 students in May 2025 there were 4,673.





Courtesy photo

Bishop Mark Brennan visits Pre-K-3 students at Parkersburg Catholic Elementary School Sept. 26.

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## El Papa León pide a todos que recen el rosario por la paz durante el mes de octubre

Por Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)

— El Papa León XIV pidió a los católicos que recen el rosario todos los días de octubre por la paz.

El Papa hizo esta petición al final de su audiencia general del 24 de septiembre, un día después de haber hablado de nuevo con el párroco de la Iglesia de la Sagrada Familia en la ciudad de Gaza, la única parroquia católica de rito latino en Gaza.

"Gracias a Dios, todos en la parroquia están bien, aunque cada vez las incursiones se acercan más", dijo el

Papa a los periodistas en Castel Gandolfo el 23 de septiembre, antes de regresar al Vaticano tras un día de descanso. La parroquia está ofreciendo refugio y asistencia a cientos de residentes de Gaza.

El Reino Unido, Canadá y Australia reconocieron oficialmente la condición de Estado palestino el 21 de septiembre, sumándose a la Santa Sede y a más de 150 países que ya lo habían hecho. Cuando se le preguntó si eso podría ayudar a la situación, el Papa León respondió a los periodistas que "podría ayudar, pero en este momento

realmente no hay voluntad de escuchar al otro bando, entonces el diálogo está roto".

Respecto a los continuos ataques de Rusia contra Ucrania, el Papa León afirmó que "alguien busca una escalada. Cada vez es más peligroso". Lo que se necesita, afirmó, es "frenar los avances militares" y sentarse a la mesa de diálogo. Al finalizar su audiencia del 24 de septiembre, el Papa León señaló que octubre se acercaba y que, con la festividad de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, el 7 de octubre, la Iglesia Católica tradicionalmente dedica todo el mes al

rezo del rosario. "Invito a todos, cada día del próximo mes, a rezar el Rosario por la paz, personalmente, en familia y en comunidad", dijo.

El Papa también invitó a los funcionarios y empleados del Vaticano a rezar el rosario juntos cada noche de octubre a las 7 p.m. en la Basílica de San Pedro. Invitó a todos a la Plaza de San Pedro el 11 de octubre para rezar juntos el rosario durante la vigilia del Jubileo de la Espiritualidad Mariana, recordando también el aniversario de la apertura del Concilio Vaticano II, que comenzó el 11 de octubre de 1962.

## El Mes del Respeto por la Vida adquiere un nuevo significado durante el Año Jubilar, afirma el obispo

Por Gina Christian, OSV News

(OSV News) — La próxima celebración anual del Mes del Respeto por la Vida por parte de los católicos de Estados Unidos adquiere un nuevo significado en medio del Jubileo de la Esperanza, afirmó el presidente del comité pro-vida de los obispos estadounidenses.

"El don de la vida humana existe como un signo de esperanza para nuestro mundo actual, desafiando los poderes de las tinieblas y la cultura de la muerte", afirmó el obispo Daniel E. Thomas, de Toledo, Ohio, presidente del Comité de Actividades Pro-Vida de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos, en una declaración incluida en un comunicado de prensa de la USCCB del 18 de septiembre. Desde 1973, año en que las sentencias de la Corte Suprema en los casos Roe vs. Wade y Doe vs. Bolton legalizaron el aborto en todo el país, la Iglesia católica de Estados Unidos ha designado octubre como el Mes del Respeto por la Vida, y el primer domingo de octubre como el Domingo del Respeto a la Vida (Domingo Respetemos la Vida). La Secretaría de Actividades Pro-Vida de la USCCB ofrece una serie de recursos para ayudar a comprender mejor la doctrina católica, que sostiene que toda vida humana es sagrada desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural y, por lo tanto, debe ser respetada y protegida de forma absoluta.

La Iglesia católica ha afirmado la maldad moral de todo aborto provocado. La doctrina católica también afirma que "la eutanasia voluntaria, cualesquiera que sean sus formas y sus motivos, constituye un homicidio", y el Concilio Vaticano II condena "eutanasia y el mismo suicidio deliberado" como una de las infamias morales que "viola la integridad de la persona humana" y "son totalmente contrarias al honor debido al Creador". En su declaración completa, fechada en octubre de 2025 y publicada en el sitio web de la USCCB, el obispo Thomas subrayó que "la vida, muerte y resurrección de nuestro Señor Jesucristo es el fundamento de nuestra esperanza".

"A través de Cristo, nuestros pecados son perdonados, la muerte es vencida y la vida sale victoriosa", afirmó. Sin embargo, señaló, "los titulares nos recuerdan a diario lo desesperadamente que nuestro mundo ansía la esperanza que solo Dios puede proporcionar". El obispo Thomas lamentó que "cada día seamos testigos del abrumador desprecio por la vida humana", señalando, entre otros indicadores, "el aumento de las tasas de aborto y suicidio asistido".

Según datos del Instituto Guttmacher, que apoya la legalización del aborto, el país experimentó un aumento de los abortos durante las décadas de 1970 y 1980, con una media anual de alrededor de 1,6 millones en esta última década. Las tasas de aborto disminuyeron de forma constante desde 1990, pero han aumentado ligeramente en los últimos años, incluso después de que la Corte Suprema revocara sus sentencias Roe y Doe en 2022. En 2024, se produjeron 15,4 abortos por cada 1000 mujeres de entre 15 y 44 años, lo que supone un descenso del 1% con respecto a 2023, pero sigue siendo un aumento del 7% con respecto a 2020. Guttmacher dijo que el recuento "incluye los abortos con medicamentos" proporcionados a través de la telemedicina por médicos estadounidenses, con píldoras de mifepristona y misoprostol enviadas por correo a pacientes en estados sin prohibiciones totales o prohibiciones de la telemedicina.

Actualmente, el suicidio asistido es legal en 11 estados de EE.UU. y en el Distrito de Columbia, y varios otros estados están considerando su legalización.

El obispo Thomas también señaló otros ejemplos recientes de desprecio por la santidad de la vida, como "el asesinato de escolares inocentes, incluso mientras rezaban", en aparente referencia al tiroteo masivo del 27 de agosto en una liturgia de una escuela católica de Minnesota, "el maltrato de nuestras hermanas y hermanos inmigrantes, que soportan un entorno de agresividad, y la violencia política e ideológica infligida a víctimas desprevénidas".

"Estos ataques amenazan la vida precisamente cuando es más vulnerable y necesita protección", afirmó. Por ese motivo, dijo, "es de suma importancia que trabajemos para garantizar que todas las vidas, en todas las etapas y circunstancias, estén protegidas por la ley". Esos esfuerzos ya han logrado cierto éxito, dijo el obispo Thomas.

"A principios de este año, se hizo historia cuando se prohibió a Planned Parenthood y otras grandes empresas abortistas recibir fondos federales de Medicaid durante un año", afirmó. "Agradezco a los católicos de todo el país que han respondido al llamamiento nacional a la oración para que se ponga fin a la financiación con dinero de los contribuyentes de los centros abortivos, y pido que continuemos con esas oraciones durante todo el mes de octubre".

El Mes del Respeto por la Vida encaja perfectamente con el llamamiento del Año Jubilar, en el que "se nos desafía a ser agentes de esperanza para aquellos cuyos corazones están agobiados por las pruebas, las dificultades o el sufrimiento, ofreciéndoles la esperanza que solo proviene de Cristo Jesús".

Destacó dos ejemplos de este tipo de ayuda: Walking with Moms in Need (Caminando con mamás necesitadas), una iniciativa liderada por la USCCB que ayuda a las parroquias y comunidades a entablar amistad y apoyar a las mujeres embarazadas y a las madres primerizas; y el Proyecto Rachel, que ofrece ayuda para la recuperación tras un aborto.

Ambos ministerios "son solo dos ejemplos de cómo la Iglesia tiende continuamente la mano con amor, compasión y misericordia a quienes más necesitan un mensaje de esperanza", afirmó el obispo Thomas. Citando las palabras improvisadas que el Papa León XIV dirigió a peregrinos del Jubileo el 26 de mayo, el obispo Thomas añadió: "Qué importante es que cada persona bautizada se sienta llamada por Dios a ser signo de esperanza en el mundo de hoy".

(Gina Christian es reportera multimedia de OSV News.)

### 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](http://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 eclesiales correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea di-

recta 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](http://www.dwc.org), favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que 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](http://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, Fall 2025 Bishop Mark Brennan, Celebrant

Thursday, Oct. 9: St. Anthony Parish, Fairmont, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 18: St. Anthony Parish, Charleston, 5 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 19: Sacred Heart Parish, Huntington, 9 a.m.

Saturday, Nov. 15: St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 18: St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft, 6 p.m.



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- 8:00 WBOY NBC 12 Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
- 6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
- 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
- 9:30 WVVA NBC 6 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
- 11:00 WDVM 25 Hagerstown-Washington D.C.

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HEART CARE**

**THE MOST ADVANCED TREATMENTS  
IN WEST VIRGINIA**

**The nation-leading cardiologists and surgeons of the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program at Wheeling specialize in problems with the heart's valves, walls, or chambers.**

We have a multidisciplinary team of experts, including interventional cardiologists, **cardiac and vascular surgeons, dedicated nursing staff, and other specialists**, to ensure our patients receive the most comprehensive care available for common and complex structural heart conditions.

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

Our expert team uses the latest catheter-based techniques to treat all forms of structural heart disease, including aortic, mitral, and tricuspid valve diseases and conditions and congenital defects.

**OUR TEAM**



David Michael Campsey MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Deepak Hooda MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Sushant Sharma MD  
Cardiology

Learn more at: [MyWVUHeart.com](http://MyWVUHeart.com)

**Appointments: 304-243-8362**

**WVU Heart & Vascular  
Institute**