

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Synod Calls for Quick Steps to Involve More People in Church Life

By **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Parishes and dioceses must move quickly to give life to the consultative bodies and broad participation in mission and ministry already foreseen by church law if the Catholic Church is to have any hope of becoming a more “synodal” church, members of the Synod of Bishops said.

“Without concrete changes in

the short term, the vision of a synodal Church will not be credible and this will alienate those members of the People of God who have drawn strength and hope from the synodal journey,” the members said in the final document they approved Oct. 26.

Pope Francis convoked the synod in 2021 and called on parishes, dioceses and bishops’ conferences to hold listening sessions before the first synod assembly in

Rome in 2023. The current assembly, including most of the same members, began with a Mass at the Vatican Oct. 2.

Members voted on each of the 155 paragraphs of the document, which made suggestions and requests to Pope Francis that included long-term projects, such as continuing discernment about the possibility of women deacons, the need to reform seminary training and the hope that more lay people

would be involved in the selection of bishops.

But they also included actions that could and should be implemented immediately, including hiring more women and laymen to teach in seminaries or having bishops make pastoral councils mandatory for every parish and pastors ensuring those bodies are truly representative of the parish members and that he listens to

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Faithful Pray for Our Lady’s Intercession in Rosary Procession through Benwood



Courtesy photo

Carrying a statue of Our Lady is Father Doney Chacko, RCJ, parochial vicar of St. John Parish in Benwood, as he leads the rosary procession through Benwood with parishioners on a sunny day last month. October was the Month of the Rosary.

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Obituary—Norma Jean Dorsch

Norma Jean Dorsch, 95, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at the Weirton Geriatric Center. Born on January 7, 1929, she was a beloved daughter of Henry E. and Catherine Kuntz Grob.

A proud 1946 graduate of St. Joseph Academy High School in Wheeling, Norma Jean cherished her role as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She was married to the love of her life, Frank Charles Dorsch, on August 7, 1948, and together they shared sixty-five beautiful years of marriage. Their love was an inspiration to all who knew them.

A woman of deep faith, Norma Jean was a devout member of St. Joseph and St. Paul parishes in Weirton and an active member of the Christian Mothers. Her faith guided her life and was the foundation of her commitment to her family and community. She lovingly volunteered at both the Weirton Medical Center and the Weirton Geriatric Center, giving her time and energy to care for others.

Norma Jean had a passion for travel, especially to warm, sunny destinations. She loved the beach and found joy in watching the sunsets over the ocean with Frank by her side. She was also known for her culinary talents, particularly her exceptional baking skills. Her pies and famous chocolate chip cookies were treasured by all who had the pleasure of tasting them.

In addition to her parents, Norma Jean was preceded in death by her husband Frank Charles Dorsch, son Eu-

gene Dorsch, brother Ronald Grob, and sisters Jaqueline Hunter and Vivian Shutler.

Left to cherish her memory with profound admiration are her sons, Rev. Fr. Larry Dorsch of Weirton, Michael (Deborah) Dorsch of Wheeling, Joseph (Pamela) Dorsch of Houston, TX., daughters, Carol Vuckovich (Michael) of Dayton, OH., Karen Sue (William) Vogel of Seattle, WA., Mary Ellen (Douglas) Mack of Winston-Salem, NC., Sally Jo (Edward) Scherling of Pittsburgh, PA., Nancy Castle of Canal Fulton, OH., brother Henry Grob of Westerville, OH., and sister Lillian Payne of Wheeling, twenty-four grand and twenty-nine great-grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial was held October 26 at St. Paul Church in Weirton.

Her son Father Larry Dorsch presided, assisted by Father Binu Sebastian and other priests of the diocese.

Burial followed immediately in St. Paul's Cemetery.

Norma Jean's family would like to thank the incredible staff on the Enchanted Garden Floor at the Weirton Geriatric Center for taking excellent care of their mom.

Norma Jean Dorsch's life was a testament to love, faith, and family. She will be deeply missed by all who were blessed to know her.

Memorial contributions may be made in Norma Jean's memory to St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Weirton or Catholic Relief Services.

Share online tributes at www.grecohertnick.com.

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.report-bishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other concerns such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in WV. EthicsPoint can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires all Dioceses/Eparchies have a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer, directly or indirectly, with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Training may be completed online or via live workshop. For information, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

Diocesan Official Appointment

Bishop Mark Brennan has made public the following appointment:

Deacon Michael A. Kawash is appointed chaplain of the Serra Club of Charleston for the year 2024, effective immediately. This is in addition to his current assignment as permanent deacon at Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2024

(Digital issues will continue to be published by date every Friday, delivered by e-mail and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org)

This is the new print publication schedule for The Catholic Spirit. Each print issue is named for a memorial, feast day, or celebration of the Church within the month of publication. The following provides the name of the issue; the date of the memorial, feast day, or celebration; and

Advent

First Sunday of Advent, December 1

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is **November 22**

Christmas

Feast Day, December 25

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is **December 20**



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Synod...

Cont'd from Page 1
their advice.

Synod officials said all the paragraphs were approved by the necessary two-thirds of synod members present and voting; 355 members were present and voting, so passage required 237 votes. A paragraph devoted to increasing women's profile in the church received, by far, the most negative votes of any paragraph with 97 members voting no and 258 voting yes. The paragraph, which required 66% of the votes, passed with 72%.

"In simple and concise terms," members said, "synodality is a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the Church to be more participatory and missionary, so that it can walk with every man and woman, radiating the light of Christ."

In a synodal church, the document said, members have different roles, but they work together for the good of all members and for the mission of the church.

Like the synthesis report from the first assembly of the synod in 2023, the final document did not use the term "LGBTQ" or even "homosexuality" and spoke only briefly about the need to reach out to people who "experience the pain of feeling excluded or judged because of their marital situation, identity or sexuality."

The document repeatedly referred to the "equal dignity" of men and women by virtue of their baptism and insisted the Catholic Church needed to do more to recognize women's contributions to the life and mission of the church and their potential to offer more.

"Women continue to encounter obstacles in obtaining a fuller recognition of their charisms, vocation and roles in all the various areas of the Church's life," it said. "This is to the detriment of serving the Church's shared mission."

Members of the synod called for the "full implementation of all the opportunities already provided for in Canon Law with regard to the role of women," and said, "there is



Pope Francis and members of the Synod of Bishops on synodality attend the synod's final working session Oct. 26 in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican. CNS photo/Vatican Media

no reason or impediment that should prevent women from carrying out leadership roles in the Church. What comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped."

"Additionally, the question of women's access to diaconal ministry remains open," they said. "This discernment needs to continue."

The question of women deacons was among several questions Pope Francis assigned to study groups last spring. Synod members asked the General Secretariat of the Synod "to continue to watch over the synodal quality of the working method of the study groups," which are supposed to report to the pope in June.

The synod process, members said, was a "call to joy and renewal of the Church in following the Lord, in committing to service of His mission and in searching for ways to be faithful."

But the document repeatedly acknowledged the crime and sin of clerical sexual abuse and abuse of power, and

insisted that a commitment to synodality, particularly to learning to listen and to necessary forms of transparency and accountability, were essential to preventing abuse.

Synodality, members said, "will also help to overcome clericalism, understood as use of power to one's own advantage and the distortion of the authority of the Church which is at the service of the People of God. This expresses itself above all in forms of abuse, be they sexual or economic, the abuse of conscience and of power, by ministers of the Church."

Lay men and women have many talents that can and should assist bishops and parish priests in the smooth functioning of their dioceses or parishes, synod members said. Tapping into those talents can help bishops and priests, who often feel overworked.

Where church law requires the bishops to consult their priests' or pastoral council or pastors to consult the parish council, the document said,

they "may not act as if the consultation had not taken place."

"As in any community that lives according to justice," it said, "the exercise of authority does not consist in an arbitrary imposition of will."

Synod members also said listening, consulting, praying and discerning before making a decision is not the end of the process. "It must be accompanied and followed by practices of accountability and evaluation in a spirit of transparency inspired by evangelical criteria."

Ensuring accountability and regularly evaluating all those who minister in the church's name "is not a bu-

reaucratic task for its own sake. It is rather a communication effort that proves to be a powerful educational tool for bringing about a change in culture," synod members said.

One issue that prompted debate during the synod involved the authority of national bishops' conference, particularly when it came to doctrinal matters.

The synod members, in the final document, called for a study of the theological and juridical status of bishops' conferences and for a clear definition of "precisely the domain of the doctrinal and disciplinary competence" of the conferences.

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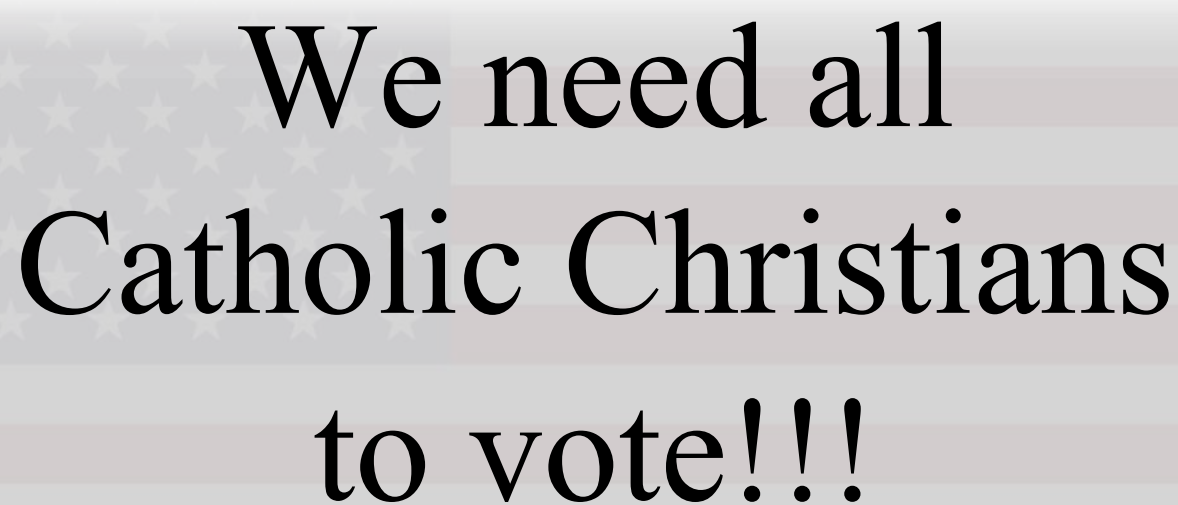
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We need all Catholic Christians to vote!!!

“As Americans, we have a great civic responsibility to vote in our upcoming elections. As Catholics, we are called to form our conscience based on the Gospel teachings before visiting the voting booth. In order to assist us in discernment, The United States Catholic Bishops have created a document, <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-and-peace/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship> to remind us of Catholic social teachings on the issues of War, Abortion, Racism, Immoral Lifestyles, Immigration Conflict, Unemployment, Health Care, Homelessness, and the Environment. We encourage everyone to read the document and spend time in prayer and discernment of all candidates before exercising our right to vote on November 5th.”

This message is brought to you by
the Justice and Peace sub-committee of the Diocesan Pastoral Council

Faithful Invited to Join in Online Prayer Vigil during Prison Ministry Retreat

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA—The faithful are invited to join in an online prayer vigil for those attending and leading the MOCC #37 Kairos Inside Retreat at the Mount Olive Correctional Center, a maximum security prison in Fayette County, Nov. 7-10 (Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon).

Prayer Vigils.net is hosting the free event offering many different times to pray for this important ministry in West Virginia. Faithful are invited to sign up for a 30-minute prayer vigil time slot while the retreat is taking place. To sign up, click here.

“We want the participating inmates to know that many of God’s children are praying for them throughout the entire retreat.”

—Deacon Anthony O’Leary

Deacon Anthony O’Leary, permanent deacon at Blessed Sacrament Parish in South Charleston, is one of three team members representing the Catholic faith in this Christian ecumenical organization.

“The goal of this prayer vigil effort is to have around-the-clock prayer of God’s blessings on the inmates, the Mount Olive staff, and our team,” Deacon O’Leary said.

“We want the participating inmates to know that many of God’s children are praying for them throughout the entire retreat.”

Also on the team representing the Catholic faith is Father Arthur Bufogle, pastor of St. John Neumann Parish in Marlinton, St. Mark the Evangelist Mission in Bartow, and St. Bernard Chapel at Snowshoe; and Dave Haas, also of Blessed Sacrament, who is the retreat music leader.

Participating in this online prayer vigil, Deacon O’Leary said, will do so much for everyone involved.

“There is no denying the immense power of prayer and one individual can contribute so much to this retreat in one, 30-minute prayer slot,” he said. “It is one humble way to act on Jesus’ message of mercy—notably as written in Matthew 25:35-36: ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’”

This will be the first retreat at Mount Olive Correctional Center since March 2020. Kairos, Deacon O’Leary said, conducts two, four-day retreats a year—one in the fall and another in the spring. Kairos Prison Ministry is an international lay-led, interdenominational Christian ministry. The southern West Virginia chapter, he said, is now in its 20th year of conducting Kairos Inside retreats at Mount Olive “where volunteers bring the message of Christ’s love and forgiveness to the inmates and to build up the Christian community inside the prison.”

A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

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Walking with Moms in Need is a nationwide, parish-based initiative to increase support for pregnant and parenting mothers in need. It works to ensure that any woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, or parenting in difficult circumstances, can turn to her local Catholic Church and be connected with the resources she needs. Volunteers walk with moms throughout the motherhood journey, offering them authentic Christian friendship and ongoing support.

To start this ministry in your parish, contact:

Kathleen Barton, Director of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
(304) 3233-0880, Ext. 289; kbarton@dwc.org

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Catholic Charities Announces 2024 Charity in Action Award Recipients in Princeton

PRINCETON—Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) proudly announces the honorees for its 2024 Charity in Action Award in Princeton: Monica Mills, Lori Bishop, and The Mommy Ministry of Princeton Sacred Heart Parish. This marks the inaugural Charity in Action Awards Event in Princeton, celebrating exceptional individuals and groups dedicated to the service of others.

The honorees will be recognized at the Charity in Action Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, Nov. 13 at the Karen Preservati Center in Princeton. The event promises to be an inspiring occasion, celebrating Catholic Charities' mission and honoring those who wholeheartedly commit their time, passion and resources to enhancing the lives of others.

"Catholic Charities is grateful for the many partners who walk this journey of service with us, and we're honored to recognize this outstanding group," said Matt Atwood, CCWVa Southern Regional director.

2024 Charity in Action Award Recipients:

Monica Mills

Monica Mills, a retired licensed practical nurse and dedicated volunteer at CCWVa, is recognized for her unyielding compassion, hope, and advocacy. As a member of Princeton Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the church choir, and the Mommy Ministry Group, Monica's commitment to the less fortunate and uplifting presence have made a significant impact in the community.

"Monica treats everyone with kindness and respect," said Atwood. "She has a positive and uplifting personality that remains constant, and if anything needs to be done, she's always willing to step up."

Lori Bishop

A lifelong resident of McDowell County and member of Powhatan Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Lori Bishop has made a lasting mark on her community through her roles on the Catholic Charities Board of Directors and the CCWVa Southern Regional Advisory Council.

Lori's commitment to ensuring the food pantry at her church is always stocked and staffed has been invaluable, along with her ongoing support of fundraising and client services.

"Too many times to name, Lori's been willing to step up and help with fundraising, community awareness, and direct service to clients," said Atwood. "We're grateful to know we can count on Lori's faithful support."



Courtesy photo
CCWVa 2024 Charity in Action Award recipient and CCWVa Board member Lori Bishop



Courtesy photo
From left are: Monica Mills, CCWVa Charity in Action Award recipient; Donna Richardson, CCWVa volunteer; and Kevin Richmond, CCWVa Outreach coordinator.

The Mommy Ministry of Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton

The Mommy Ministry is honored for its work in providing essential supplies and resources to new and expectant mothers. In collaboration with CCWVa's Princeton office, the Mommy Ministry offers a baby supply pantry stocked with items like diapers, wipes, formula, and baby food, creating a much-needed support system for families with young children.

"The Mommy Ministry offers hope and seeks to share love and joy through their visits with mothers and participation in community baby showers," said Atwood. "Having access to essential baby items provides comfort and reassur-

ance, helping mothers feel more secure and supported as they anticipate the arrival of their baby."

Proceeds from this event support programs in 11 counties in Catholic Charities' Southern Region, which includes Princeton, Hinton, Beckley, and surrounding communities. As the largest nonprofit provider of social services in West Virginia, Catholic Charities is committed to reducing poverty in West Virginia.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$25 each, and sponsorships are still available. Learn more by visiting <https://www.ccwva.org/event/cia-princeton/> or by calling (304) 905-9860.



Courtesy photo
From left: Michael Farris, CCWVa Board member; Sister Paula Ude, CCWVa volunteer and Regional Advisory Committee chair; and Monica Mills, CCWVa volunteer.

The Wounded Healer: Exploring Compassion for Self and Others in Health Care



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- Describe and identify the impact of Imposter Syndrome in Healthcare Professional and Paraprofessional Well-being
- Develop and assemble a Soul Collage via the use of Mask making
- Develop ways to foster and strengthen you resiliency
- Experience the compassionate support of a healthcare professional and paraprofessional community

**Contact
Anna Marie Troiani**

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Christian Persecution is Increasing Dramatically around the Globe, Report Says

By **Simon Caldwell, OSV News**

(OSV News) — A report on the persecution of Christians globally has found increases in violations in nearly two thirds of countries examined.

The report by Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic pontifical charity, called “Persecuted and Forgotten?” said that between August 2022 and June 2024 persecution of Christians had become worse in 60% of 18 countries investigated.

The remainder were considered to be unchanged with the exception of Vietnam, a communist country that has seen improvements in the treatment of Christians amid the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with the Vatican.

For the first time, the report, which is published every two years, included Nicaragua among those countries where the “faithful are suffering because of state authoritarianism or attacks from extremists.”

“Around the world Christians are finding themselves subject to increased risk of harassment, arrest and violence — churches are burnt, Christian women are abducted and raped, and the faithful are killed for their beliefs,” said the introduction to the report, released in London Oct. 22.

“The increase in religiously-motivated harassment against Christians is higher than it has ever been, reflecting the findings of other organizations, such as the Pew Research Center, which found Chris-

tians suffering harassment — which covers everything from verbal abuse to murder — in 160 countries,” the report added.

A key finding was a shift in the epicenter of militant Islamist violence from the Middle East to Africa, with Christians in countries such as Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Mozambique being terrorized.

The report also said Christians were treated as enemies of the state in countries like China, Eritrea, India and Iran where they were subjected to increasingly repressive measures.

There were increased threats to Christian children especially girls, who suffered abduction, sexual violence, forced marriage and forced conversion, the report said.

In a foreword to report, Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Iraq, a country in which religious freedom violations have worsened, said a decade after Islamic State group jihadists forced hundreds of thousands of Christians to flee, “the genocide that we suffered continues to cast a long shadow — the migration of Christians continues to the point where the Church is threatened with extinction in towns and cities where our presence dates back almost to the time of Christ.”

There are now fewer than 200,000 Christians in Iraq compared to 1.5 million in 2003, the year of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Archbishop Warda wrote: “Our prayer is that those reading this report, whether governments or

others with influence, will do more than just pay lip service to reports of Christian persecution.

“They must match their words with action — clear and decisive policy commitment — to help those whose only crime is the faith they profess,” he wrote. “It is vital that they act on early warnings — given in reports such as this — to prevent what happened to us in Iraq taking place elsewhere.”

He added: “I still remember the terror caused by the rise of the jihadists — but also the people’s hope, and the charity shown by our brothers and sisters around the world. Please continue to keep all those who suffer in your prayers and in your love.”

The report shows that the Christian community in Syria has also plunged, falling from 1.5 million people at the outbreak of civil war in 2011 to just 250,000 today.

It said that Islamist violence has created 2 million refugees in the West African nation of Burkina Faso alone amid a phenomenon of “trans-national Islamist militant aggression” in the southern Sahara and the rise of “opportunistic caliphates” in areas partly inhabited by Christians.

Burma has meanwhile destroyed 85 churches, China has arrested up to 10,000 Christians and in India there have been 720 incidents of Christian persecution, including the detention of 855 people in Uttar Pradesh under anti-conversion laws.

Emerging data pointing



CNS photo/Justin McLellan

Janada Marcus, a survivor of Christian persecution in Nigeria, speaks to Catholic News Service at the Aid to the Church in Need’s Italian headquarters March 7, 2023.

to a surge in cases of minority faith girls and young women being abducted was reported in Pakistan, and other research showed it was a recurring problem in Egypt.

The report says that in Pakistan, between 1987 and 2022, a total of 2,120 individuals had been accused of blasphemy, an offense which can carry the death penalty.

For the first time in the 18-year history of the report, Nicaragua is included because of extreme oppressive measures targeting Christians, notably the

mass detention and expulsion of clergy, including all members of the apostolic nunciature.

Vietnam, however, is categorized as “slightly improved” thanks to the reduced bureaucratic restrictions on the registration of religious groups.

(Simon Caldwell writes for OSV News from Liverpool, England.)

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Host of New 'The Rosary in a Year' Podcast Hopes People 'Fall in Love' with the Prayer

By **Katie Yoder, OSV News**

(OSV News) — A new podcast about the rosary promises to deepen listeners' love of the Marian devotion and draw them closer to Jesus and his mother, Mary, in the new year.

"I hope people fall in love," Father Mark-Mary Ames, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, the host of "The Rosary in a Year" podcast, said during a virtual press conference Oct. 28. "I hope our listeners and those who make this journey with us ... fall in love with the rosary because they experience it as ... a privileged door for encounter with Our Lord and Our Lady."

The free podcast by Ascension, a Catholic multimedia network, begins Jan. 1, 2025, and continues through the year with a new episode released daily. Listeners can tune in on platforms including the Ascension App, Spotify and Apple Podcasts, for the episodes that run 10 to 15 minutes long. Each one will feature guidance and instruction, a prayer prompt and prayers of the rosary.

Father Mark-Mary, director of communications and director of priestly studies for the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, said he hopes the podcast meets people where they are, from those who pray the rosary regularly to those who are beginners.

"I believe that our journey for 'The Rosary in a Year' is going to be learning how to — and actually being accompanied in — praying with the truths of our faith," he said during the virtual event.

The podcast will walk with



OSV News photo/Bob Roller
A woman prays the rosary during Eucharistic adoration following the opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life Jan. 19, 2023, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

listeners through six phases of deepening prayer by starting small and gradually growing over time. It promises to help people of faith learn how

to build a daily prayer habit, form relationships with Jesus and Mary, discover the biblical foundations of the rosary, realize Mary's influence in one's own life and meditate with sacred art, the writings of the saints and Scripture.

Listeners can follow along with the podcast by signing up online for a free prayer plan at Ascension's website, ascensionpress.com. Other related resources are available there too, including "The Rosary in a Year Prayer Guide," a free parish kit and a package of 50 "How to Pray a Better Rosary" booklets. Ascension also offers rosaries inspired by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and their devotion to their patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe. A new "The Rosary in a Year" YouTube channel will provide video content.

The podcast is the fourth of Ascension's popular "In a Year" podcasts, following "The Bible in a Year," its sister podcast in Spanish, "La Biblia en un Año," and "The Catechism in a Year."

Father Mike Schmitz, host of "The Bible in a Year" and

"The Catechism in a Year" podcasts, will appear on bonus episodes with Father Mark-Mary.

This latest podcast comes after Father Mark-Mary did a video for Ascension in 2021 about learning to pray the rosary in a year. He has spoken about the rosary for Ascension before, including in a 2019 pray-along rosary video that went viral with more than 5 million views.

At the virtual press conference, Father Mark-Mary revealed that he struggled with the rosary as a teenager and hoped that this podcast serves as the resource he wishes he had as a young man. Pointing to St. John Paul's II apostolic letter on the rosary, which kicked off the "Year of the Rosary" from October 2002 to October 2003, he shared how the rosary has impacted him personally.

At the end of the year, in October 2003, Father Mark-Mary was in his first semester of college and had stopped attending Mass for the first time, he said in response to a question by OSV News. Then, out of nowhere, he found himself speaking with a young woman at a dorm party who identified as an atheist.

"I said like, 'How can you

not believe?'" he remembered. "I started to defend the faith and all of a sudden like all of the lights went on. It's like, I believe and it needs to affect my whole life."

"The timing of it — it just can't be coincidental," he said of the event, adding that he believes that the grace of his own conversion came from all of the prayers said during the rosary year.

Today, he said, he prays the rosary every day and wears a rosary as a part of his habit.

For those who want a preview of Father Mark-Mary's podcast, a bonus introduction episode is available.

"In a difficult world and a difficult time where it's so easy for us to turn our attention towards everything going wrong, brothers and sisters, here is the response," Father Mark-Mary says toward the end of that episode. "Let's go to the Lord, let's pray, let's focus on him, let's focus on the great mysteries of our salvation, let's turn back to Our Lady, let's remember that we have a mother who loves us, who is also powerful, who is queen of heaven and earth."

(Katie Yoder is a contributing editor for Our Sunday Visitor magazine.)

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We All Want to Believe That We Love God

By Daniel Maul, director of the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

We think, “Of course, I love God! I’ve been Catholic, all these years. I want and try to be a good person. I say my prayers. I go to Mass. Of course, I love God!” But, do we?

Before we can answer that question, we have to come to understand what it really means to love someone. What does it look like? What does it include? What does it require? What are the implications

of loving someone? Is there “proof” or “evidence” that one really loves another?

We know the differences between love and lust, obsession, or infatuation. We know that love is not being highly attracted to someone. We know that love is not just wanting to be around someone all the time and have them to ourselves. And we know that love is not just thinking that someone is so great and amazing – being enamored by someone. Love is qualitatively different than all of that.

So, what, then, are the qualities

of love? What should we look for, to determine if we truly love God?

First, love is free. Love is freely chosen and freely given. So, if you feel that you HAVE to love God, that you must or are obligated to love God, then you can’t truly love God. If you are forced and manipulated into having a relationship with someone, you aren’t free to love that person. You don’t have the opportunity or ability. In order to love God, you must feel that you don’t have to love Him. That is why God has given us free will, because God wants us to have the ability to love Him, truly.

Next, love listens. Love cares enough to find out who the other person is and what the other person needs. Love seeks to realize what is special, blessed, and beautiful in and about the other person. Love makes itself available to the other. Love gives time and attention. Love walks with. Love joins.

Love is humble. Love doesn’t think it knows everything and doesn’t look to change people. Love hopes for what’s right and believes in what’s true, but love doesn’t have an agenda of its own. Love doesn’t get disappointed in people when they don’t listen or obey. Love respects differences. This is because love doesn’t expect anything in return. Love is not out for itself; love is out for the other.

Next, love responds. Love is act. Love is dynamic. Love is alive and has energy. Love gives of itself,

until it hurts. Love gets broken for others. Love gets poured out for others. Love hurts, suffers, and is weak and vulnerable for others. Love goes out and hunts for others, in order to help and serve them.

In a particular way, love obeys. To the best of our abilities, we have to try to show love in the ways that others most likely will feel loved. That is, we can’t just tell people that they ought to feel loved in the ways in which we like to show love. Love meets others where they are and provides for them.

Love appears not as it is, in this world. Love looks weak. Love looks defeated. Love looks unhealthy. Love looks like it’s being taken advantage of. Love looks like the loser. Love appears to die. Not true.

When we go to Mass, read Scripture, pray, receive the Eucharist, or have faith, we are not, at those times, necessarily showing God our love for Him. Rather, we are, in fact, receiving God’s love, allowing God to gift us with His presence – His grace. We’re thankful and grateful for what God gives us, of course. But, we’re not doing the loving, in those moments.

Jesus tells us how, in fact, to love him: care for the suffering, vulnerable, needy, rejected people of the world (Matthew 25:31-46). Keep His Commandments. Make and keep God first in our lives, and call upon Him, in our times of need. That’s it. That’s loving Him. So, do we?



Annual Investiture Weekend

Members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem who attended the annual Investiture Weekend in Richmond, Va., are pictured. In the front row, from left, are Dominic Massimo, Wanda Franz, and Katie Bell. In the second row, from left, are Matt Bowles, Mark Sadd, and Deacon Jacob Manning. (Courtesy photo)

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El Sínodo pide medidas rápidas para implicar a más personas en la vida de la Iglesia

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Las parroquias y las diócesis deben actuar rápidamente para dar vida a los órganos consultivos y a una amplia participación en la misión y el ministerio ya previstos por la ley eclesiástica si la Iglesia Católica ha de tener alguna esperanza de convertirse en una Iglesia más "sinodal", dijeron los miembros del Sínodo de los Obispos.

"Sin cambios concretos, la visión de una Iglesia sinodal no será creíble y alejará a los miembros del Pueblo de Dios que han recibido aliento y esperanza del camino sinodal", dijeron los miembros en el documento final que aprobaron el 26 de octubre.

El Papa Francisco convocó el sínodo en 2021, pidiendo a parroquias, diócesis y conferencias episcopales que celebraran sesiones de escucha antes de la primera asamblea sinodal en Roma en 2023. La segunda asamblea que tuvo lugar este año e incluye a la mayoría de los mismos miembros, comenzó con una Misa en el Vaticano el 2 de octubre.

Los miembros votaron sobre cada uno de los 155 párrafos del documento, en el que se hacían sugerencias y solicitudes al Papa Francisco que incluían proyectos a largo plazo, como continuar el discernimiento sobre la posibilidad de mujeres diáconos, la necesidad de reformar la formación en los seminarios y la esperanza de que más laicos participen en la selección de obispos.

Pero también incluían acciones que podrían y deberían ponerse en práctica inmediatamente, como contratar a más mujeres y laicos para enseñar en los seminarios o hacer que los obispos hagan obligatorios los consejos pastorales en todas las parroquias y que los párrocos se aseguren de que esos órganos sean realmente representativos de los miembros de la parroquia y de que él escucha sus consejos.

Los funcionarios del Sínodo afirmaron que todos los párrafos fueron aprobados por los dos tercios necesarios de los miembros del Sínodo presentes y votantes; 355 miembros estuvieron presentes y votaron, por lo que la aprobación requirió 237 votos. Un párrafo dedicado a aumentar el perfil de la mujer en la Iglesia recibió, con diferencia, el mayor número de votos negativos de todos los párrafos, con 97 miembros que votaron no y 258 que votaron sí. El apartado, que requería el 66 % de los votos, fue aprobado con el 72 %.

"En términos simples y concisos", dijeron los miembros, "la sinodalidad es un camino de renova-

ción espiritual y de reforma estructural para hacer la Iglesia más participativa y misionera, es decir, para hacerla más capaz de caminar con cada hombre y mujer irradiando la luz de Cristo".

En una Iglesia sinodal, decía el documento, los miembros tienen funciones diferentes, pero trabajan juntos por el bien de todos los miembros y por la misión de la Iglesia.

Al igual que el informe de síntesis de la primera asamblea del sínodo de 2023, el documento final no utilizaba el término "LGBTQ" ni siquiera "homosexualidad" y sólo hablaba brevemente de la necesidad de llegar a las personas que "experimentan el dolor de sentirse excluidas o juzgadas a causa de su situación matrimonial, identidad o sexualidad".

El documento se refería repetidamente a la "igual dignidad" de los hombres y las mujeres en virtud de su bautismo e insistía en que la Iglesia Católica necesitaba hacer más para reconocer las contribuciones de las mujeres a la vida y misión de la Iglesia y su potencial para ofrecer más.

"Las mujeres siguen encontrando obstáculos para obtener un reconocimiento más pleno de sus carismas, de su vocación y de sus funciones en los diversos ámbitos de la vida de la Iglesia", afirmó. "Esto va en detrimento del servicio a la misión compartida de la Iglesia".

Los miembros del sínodo pidieron la "plena aplicación de todas las oportunidades ya previstas en la legislación vigente en relación con el papel de la mujer", y afirmaron que "no hay nada en las mujeres que les impida desempeñar funciones de liderazgo en las Iglesias: lo que viene del Espíritu Santo no debe detenerse".

"Sigue abierta la cuestión del acceso de las mujeres al ministerio diaconal", dijeron. "Este discernimiento debe continuar".

La pregunta sobre el diaconado femenino fue uno de los temas que el Papa Francisco asignó a los grupos de estudio la primavera pasada. Los miembros del Sínodo pidieron a la Secretaría General del Sínodo que siga velando por la calidad sinodal del método de trabajo de los grupos de estudio, que deben informar al Papa en junio de los temas en los que se han enfocado.

El proceso sinodal, decían los miembros, era una "llamada a la alegría y a la renovación del Pueblo de Dios en el seguimiento del Señor y en el compromiso al servicio de su misión y en la búsqueda de caminos de fidelidad".

Pero el documento reconocía repetidamente el crimen y el pecado del abuso sexual clerical y del abuso de poder, e insistía en que el compromiso con la sinodalidad -- en particular con aprender a escuchar y con las formas necesarias de transparencia y responsabilidad -- eran esenciales para prevenir los abusos.

La sinodalidad, dijeron los miembros, "ayudará a superar el clericalismo entendido como el uso del poder en beneficio propio y la distorsión de la autoridad de la Iglesia que está al servicio del Pueblo de Dios. Esto se expresa especialmente en los abusos sexuales, económicos, de conciencia y de poder por parte de los ministros de la Iglesia".

Las mujeres y los hombres laicos tienen muchos talentos que pueden y deben ayudar a los obispos y párrocos en el buen funcionamiento de sus diócesis o parroquias, expresaron los miembros del Sínodo. Aprovechar esos talentos puede ayudar a obispos y a sacerdotes, quienes a menudo se sienten sobrecargados de trabajo.

Cuando las leyes de la Iglesia exijan a los obispos que consulten a su consejo sacerdotal o pastoral, o a los párrocos que consulten al consejo parroquial, decía el documento, "no pueden proceder como si no hubiera tenido lugar".

"Como en cualquier comunidad que vive según la justicia", decía, "el ejercicio de la autoridad no consiste en la imposición arbitraria de una voluntad".

Los miembros del Sínodo también dijeron que escuchar, consultar, orar y discernir antes de tomar una decisión no es el final del proceso. "Debe ir acompañado y seguido de prácticas de rendición de cuentas y evaluación en un espíritu de transparencia inspirado en criterios evangélicos".

Garantizar la rendición de cuentas y la evaluación periódica del desempeño de todos los que ejercen el ministerio en nombre de la Iglesia "no es una tarea burocrática porque sí. Es más bien un esfuerzo comunicativo que se revela como una poderosa herramienta educativa para provocar un cambio en la cultura", afirmaron los miembros del sínodo.

Un tema que suscitó debate durante el sínodo fue el de la autoridad de las conferencias episcopales nacionales, sobre todo en temas doctrinales.

Los miembros del Sínodo, en el documento final, pidieron que se estudiara el estatuto teológico y jurídico de las conferencias episcopales y que se definiera con claridad "el ámbito de la competencia doctrinal y disciplinar" de dichas conferencias.

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:

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

Para informar a las autoridades civiles: comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anonimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas: La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

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

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Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, November 9: St. Peter the Fisherman, Fairmont; 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, November 16: Sacred Heart, Williamson; 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 19: St. Anthony, Follansbee; 6 p.m.

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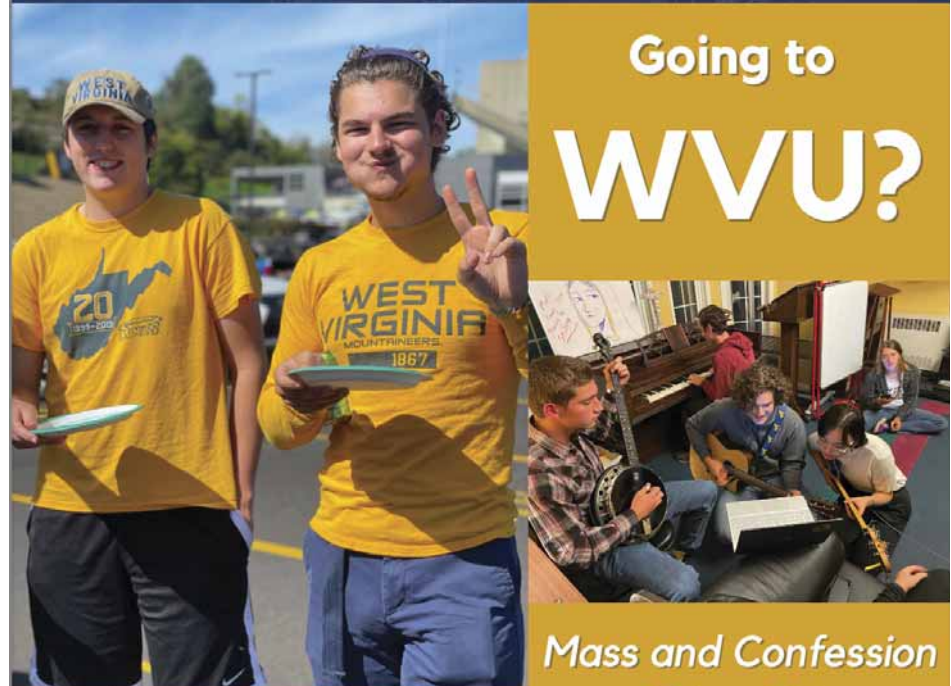
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 - 7:30 WOWK CBS 13 Huntington-Charleston
 - 8:00 WBOY NBC 12 Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
 - 6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
 - 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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