

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Pittsburgh Auxiliary Bishop Waltersheid Closes Infant Jesus of Prague Novena in Wheeling



Colleen Rowan Photo

Auxiliary Bishop William J. Waltersheid of the Diocese of Pittsburgh blesses the faithful at the end of the closing of the Novena to the Most Blessed Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Nov. 6.

By Colleen Rowan

“May the heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time. Amen.” This is the prayer the Catholic faithful of the Wheeling area prayed for the last nine consec-

utive Mondays for the Novena to the Most Blessed Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. On the last night, they prayed with Auxiliary Bishop William J. Waltersheid of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, who presided over the closing of the novena Nov. 6.

Joining the bishop were clergy who also presided over evenings of the novena including

Father Sateesh Narisetti, vice rector of the cathedral; Deacon Paul C. Lim, vice president for Mission Integration at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital; Deacon Douglas Breiding, permanent deacon at the cathedral; and Father Chester Pabin of the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio.

Bishop Waltersheid said it was a great joy for

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Three Catholic Schools in W.Va. Named to AP School Honor Roll

By Joyce Bibey

WEST VIRGINIA—Three of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s Catholic high schools are among only seven in the state to earn The AP (Advanced Placement) School Honor Roll Award, a recognition for the best of the best in outstanding achievements for col-

lege readiness.

Interim Superintendent Jennifer Hornyak said the accolade is a significant testament to academic excellence, student work ethic, accountability, and mission of the Catholic Schools in West Virginia.

“We are so proud of this distinction not only for our Catholic

schools, but also for our students, their families, and our teachers,” Hornyak said. “When you are a member of our Catholic schools you are an important part of our team that works hard to remain focused on living our united mission, ‘accompany families in challenging children to recognize, develop,

and share their God-given gifts and talents.”

Charleston Catholic High School (Charleston), Notre Dame High School (Clarksburg), and Central Catholic High School (Wheeling), were recognized along with four other W.Va. high schools.

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Blessed Encounter with NFL Great, Franco Harris, Page 10

Pope Prays for 'Just Peace' in Middle East and Ukraine

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As the wars, violence and deaths continue in Ukraine and in the Holy Land, Pope Francis again urged people to pray for peace.

"Let us think about and pray for populations suffering from war," he said Nov. 8 at the end of his weekly general audience. "Do not forget the tormented Ukraine and think of the Palestinian and Israeli people. May the Lord bring about a just peace."

The pope then paused for silent prayer.

"They are suffering so much," he said. "Children are suffering. The sick are suffering. The elderly suffer. And many young people are dying."

"War is always a defeat," the pope repeated. "Don't forget this: It is always a defeat."

After giving his main talk in Italian and greeting groups of people from various countries present at the audience in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis turned to his aide, Msgr. Luis Maria Rodrigo Ewart, and asked if there was a text of an appeal for him to read. When

there was not, the pope closed his eyes and made the appeal for prayers spontaneously.

The day before the audience, Vatican News and the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, published an interview with Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.

"The war will end sooner or later, but the consequences of this war will be terrible," the cardinal said. "You see, there are two issues that seem particularly worrisome to me. The first is that both sides seem to lack a strategic vision that goes beyond the annihilation of the other. Even the land itself appears to have taken a back seat in respect to the desire for mutual destruction. There is no exit strategy."

The second issue, he said, is the dif-

ficulty Israelis and Palestinians have of "distancing themselves, even emotionally, from the heavy past of both peoples, the Holocaust and the Nakba, which was evoked on October 7th," when Hamas militants entered Israel and went on their killing and kidnapping rampage. "Nakba" refers to the mass displacement of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

"Something has broken. I hope not irreparably. But it will take a long time and a lot of effort to rebuild," the cardinal said, according to Vatican News in English. "The scaffolding was certainly shaky" before Oct. 7, "and we worked on it with great difficulty. Every now and then, a plank would fall. Now the entire scaffolding has come down. We will have to start all over again."

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. In accordance with these requirements, 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; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement: numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call 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: please call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional 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 West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform 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.



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(304) 232-0444
Fax: (304) 233-8551
Web site:
www.thecatholicspiritwv.org
Diocesan Web site: www.dwc.org
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Executive Editor: Colleen Rowan, Ext. 347 crowan@dwc.org
Advertising: contact Colleen Rowan
Freelance Writers: Martina Hart, John Sherwood,
Member: Catholic Press Association, West Virginia Press Association, National Press Photographers Association, Inc.



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6:30 WTOV FOX 9	Wheeling-Steubenville
6:30 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)
9:30 WVVA NBC 6	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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Catholic in Recovery Founder's Visit to West Virginia Has Profound Impact

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA— Catholic in Recovery founder Scott Weeman had a profound impact on many who attended his presentations in West Virginia last month as they plan to start this ministry in their communities.

Weeman's first presentation was Oct. 17 at St. Michael Parish in Wheeling. The next day he traveled to Charleston where he led a breakout session at the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's PACE Conference at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center.

"Scott is preparing to meet via zoom with his team and three to four groups who were inspired to begin a Catholic in Recovery in their area," said Kathleen Barton, director of Social Ministry for the diocese. "As part of the

grant that brought Scott to the area, he has offered up to eight parishes, free resources to begin their own parish-based group."

Barton added that she and Weeman are also looking at the possibility of offering a retreat in West Virginia in the future.

Catholic in Recovery is a nonprofit organization that seeks to serve those suffering from addictions of all kinds and unhealthy attachments (including alcoholism, drug addiction, pornography addiction, sex and relationship addiction, compulsive overeating and food addictions, gambling addiction, codependency and the impact on family, and general fear, control, and anxiety), the organization's website states. Catholic in Recovery was started by Weeman as he found healing and

new life through the help of 12-step recovery and the sacramental love and mercy provided by the Catholic Church, the website states.

Weeman's presentations last month in Wheeling and Charleston offered an in-depth look at Catholic in Recovery for those fighting addiction or who have family members or friends who need help in fighting addiction. The presentations were especially informative for those who want to start this ministry in their parishes.

Barton said that Catholic in Recovery is a parish-based ministry that offers weekly support, via zoom, for those who lead groups in their parish.

Those interested in learning more about Catholic in Recovery, can call Barton at (304) 231-7930.



Joyce Bibey Photo

Catholic in Recovery founder Scott Weeman speaks about his ministry at the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's PACE Conference Oct. 18 at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston.

Novena...

Cont'd from Page 1

him to be there that evening for the solemn closing of the Novena to the Most Blessed Infant Jesus of Prague, and shared that he grew up with the devotion in his family.

In his homily, the bishop pointed to the supreme promise of Jesus in the first reading for the Mass in the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. ... This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26.)

"As we come before the infant's image tonight and as we come before our blessed Lord, exposed in the Blessed Sacrament, we bring all of our prayers, all of our needs... and with confidence we lay them down before him," Bishop Waltersheid said. "For he is true God and true man. He is the almighty king of the ages. And yet he has become small for us because of his love for us. But in his plan, those who are small do the greatest of things."

The bishop encouraged all that evening to bring to the Infant of Prague all of their love and devotion.

"Nothing can destroy his love for us and nothing can rob us of our love for him... Infant Jesus Christ of Prague, have mercy on us and hear our every prayer. Amen."

The theme of this year's novena was "The Eucharist: Gift, Mystery, and Reality." Each week consisted of Exposition and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a homily by guest clergy, music, and prayers to the Infant of Prague. Other presiders of the novena were Father Carlos Melocoton; Father Martin Smay; Father Joseph Augustine; and Father Justin Golna. Bishop Mark Brennan was unable to be present due to scheduling conflicts.



Colleen Rowan Photo

Auxiliary Bishop William J. Waltersheid of the Diocese of Pittsburgh gives the blessing during the closing of the Novena to the Most Blessed Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Nov. 6.

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Schools...

Cont'd from Page 1

Charleston Catholic High School earned top honors designated as a Platinum Award Winner. Notre Dame earned the Silver Award, and Central Catholic High School the Bronze Award. All of these schools are being showcased by AP and the College Board for their commitment to increasing college bound culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness.

There are four levels of distinction: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. For a school to be recognized on the AP School Honor Roll in a given year, it must meet each of the following criteria for their students in the most recent graduating class (2023); and these criteria are anchored in research-based relationships between AP and college outcomes:

- College Culture: 40% or more of the graduating cohort took

at least 1 AP Exam during high school.

- College Credit: 25% or more of the graduating cohort scored a 3 or higher on at least 1 AP Exam during high school.

- College Optimization: 2% or more of the graduating cohort took 5 or more AP Exams during high school. At least 1 of those exams was taken in 9th or 10th grade, so that students are spreading their AP experience across grades rather than feeling disproportionate pressure in any single year.

"I am proud of our students for choosing challenging academic courses and working hard to complete the coursework with high levels of achievement," Hornyak said. "We expect a lot from our students and encourage them to exceed their own expectations in the classroom, community, and our churches. We want them to think bigger."

The Catholic Schools of West Virginia prioritize not only grade

level aptitude, but also college and career readiness in a strong faith-based environment, Hornyak said. In order to provide the best opportunities for our students, our teachers must also be forward thinking and lifelong learners.

"Our principals and teachers are the cornerstone of our Catholic schools, and their dedication to their students is inspiring," Hornyak said. "Accolades our schools and students receive are a direct reflection of our educators, who demonstrate their own commitment to be high achieving lifelong learners and promoters of a growth mindset."

Wheeling's Central Catholic High School was also awarded the AP Access Award, identifying it as a school with a clear and effective commitment to equitable access to advanced coursework. Schools earn the additional award if the percentage of AP Exam takers who are underrepresented minority and/or low-income students mirrors the school's overall student

demographics. (For example, if 50% of a school's student body is low income, then 50% of the AP Exam takers must also be low income for a school to receive the AP Access Award.)

In the U.S., U.S. Territories, and Canada only 30-percent of eligible schools are recognized for creating elite AP programs. This year 4,570 schools make up that 30-percent. Only seven of those are in W.Va. It is important to note of those top schools:

- 886 schools (6% of eligible schools) received Platinum level AP School Honor Roll recognition.

- 914 schools (6% of eligible schools) received Gold level AP School Honor Roll recognition.

- 1,430 schools (9% of eligible schools) received Silver level AP School Honor Roll recognition.

- 1,340 schools (9% of eligible schools) received Bronze level AP School Honor Roll recognition.

For more information about AP go to: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org>.

Congratulations AP[®] School Honor Roll



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Central Catholic
High School



Central Catholic
High School

Sharing the Joy of Their Vocation



Courtesy Photo

The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist talk to students at St. Joseph the Worker Grade School in Weirton about vocations and specifically about their vocation of sisterhood. Their visit was during National Vocations Awareness Week (Nov. 5-11), and the kids were able to ask questions about what it is like being a sister. "We absolutely love when they visit," school officials posted on Facebook. "We also had some students create the Sacred Heart of Jesus with chalk at recess. Our students love for our God is an amazing thing."

Spring Online Apologetics Courses Available at CDU

WEST VIRGINIA — Pope Francis says our increasingly secular and atheist society runs "the risk of living as if God did not exist." Are you ready to share your faith when it matters most?

With our online course THEO 640 Presenting the Faith in the Modern World: Dealing with Hard Questions, you'll learn to engage thoughtfully with modern

secular and religious perspectives conflicting with Catholicism and gain skills for constructive dialogues with opposing viewpoints.

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Bishop Brennan Blesses New Parish Rectory in St. Albans

Bishop Mark Brennan blesses the newly renovated rectory at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in St. Albans Nov. 5. About 45 parishioners joined Father Sojan Xavier, administrator of the parish, several area priests, and a deacon candidate for the blessing. All gathered enjoyed refreshments following the blessing.
Courtesy Photo



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Beckley Vicariate-40 Hours Devotion

The 40 Hours Devotion dates to 1527 when it was introduced by St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria in the Italian cities of Milan and Vicenza and was later spread by St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus. Originally conceived as 40 hours of continuous prayer before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, either in one parish or in several parishes in successive periods of Eucharistic Adoration, the devotion has taken different forms over the years.

*As part of our observance of the **Parish Year of the Eucharistic Revival**, the parishes of the Beckley Vicariate will be hosting 40 Hours Devotion during the month of November, beginning with an opening Mass of Exposition on Friday, November 3 at 4:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield, and concluding with a Mass of Reposition on Monday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley. **Please join us as you are able as together we witness to our faith in Our Lord's presence in the Eucharist!***

Schedule of Devotions

Fri., Nov. 3	Sacred Heart Parish, Bluefield	4:00 Mass of Exposition; 5:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Tue., Nov. 7	St. John Parish, Summersville	3:00-8:00 p.m. Adoration
Wed., Nov. 8	St. Peter Parish, Welch	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Adoration
Thu., Nov. 9	St. John Neumann Parish, Marlinton	6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Fri., Nov. 10	Sacred Heart Parish, Princeton	4:00 p.m. Mass; 5:00-7:00 Adoration
Sat., Nov. 11	Holy Family Parish, Richwood	1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration
Sun., Nov. 12	Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan	11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Adoration
Tue., Nov. 14	St. Mark Mission, Bartow	6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Wed., Nov. 15	St. Patrick Parish, Hinton	3:00 p.m. Mass; 4:00-7:00 Adoration
Thu., Nov. 16	SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Oak Hill	1:00-6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 Mass
Fri., Nov. 17	St. Peter Parish, Welch	9:00-11:00 a.m. Adoration
Sat., Nov. 18	St. Charles Borromeo Parish, White Sulphur Springs	1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration; 4:00 Mass
Sun., Nov. 19	St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ronceverte	11:00 a.m. Mass; 12:00-3:00 p.m. Adoration
Mon., Nov. 20	St. Francis de Sales Parish, Beckley	9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 p.m. Mass of Reposition

Public Invited to Join U.S. Military Archbishop in Online Rosary on Veterans Day

By Julie Asher

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services will lead an early morning rosary online on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, and the public is invited to join him.

“What better way to start Veterans Day than to kneel and pray the rosary, invoking the intercession of Mary the Mother of God?” the archdiocese said in a Nov. 8 announcement inviting people to take part in the prayer via a livestream broadcast on the YouTube site “Many Hail Marys at a Time” — <https://www.youtube.com/@Manyhailmarysatatime> — at 7:45 a.m. EST.

Archbishop Broglio, who also is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will lead participants in praying all five decades of the joyful mysteries: The Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary; The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth; The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea; The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple; and The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

Father Peter Pomposello, a U.S. Army priest recruiter based in Columbia, Maryland, will join Archbishop Broglio for the livestreamed prayer in the main chapel of the Edwin Cardinal O’Brien Pastoral Center in Washington, home base of the military archdiocese. After the rosary, Father Pomposello, who holds the rank of captain, will do a brief interview with the archbishop about Veterans Day and its significance both for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and the public at large.

In a Nov. 9 statement, Archbishop Broglio urged everyone to “stop, remember and say a prayer” for the nation’s veterans on Veterans Day. “Especially, we cannot forget those who continue to suffer the effects of their wounds either in mind or in body. They carry the reminders of their commitment and their past with them always. We ask the Lord to give them consolation and healing.”

He noted that Veterans Day originated as “Armistice Day” on Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 making it an annual observance, and it became a national holiday in 1938. Sixteen years later, then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation changing the name to Veterans Day to honor all those who served their country during war or peacetime.

Pope Benedict XV called World War I a “useless slaughter,” Archbishop Broglio said. “War results from the failure of dialogue and announces the last resort. Unfortunately, it is still the reality for millions of people in our world today. We need only to think of Ukraine, the Holy Land, Syria, Africa and so many other places.”

He praised the men and women of this country who have donned uniforms and put the nation “before them-



Colleen Rowan Photo

A few days before Veterans Day last November, members of the American Legion Post #3 of Moundville, Veterans Honor Guard, fold the American flag at the Flags and Flowers service at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services will lead an early morning rosary online on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, and the public is invited to join him.

selves.” “They risk their lives, sacrifice time with family and friends, set aside jobs, and often suffer the effects of their service into old age. ... We pause to thank them, to say a prayer for them, and to recognize their commitment to our freedom,” he said.

“In an age when the focus is always on the idol in the mirror, they raise their right hands to defend the Constitution, undergo training, keep watch and risk everything for us,” Archbishop Broglio added. “The occasion is also propitious to remember the families who mourn the loss of a loved one or who support a disabled Veteran. We pray and offer them our support.”

Across the Potomac River from Washington, in the neighboring Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, home to the Pentagon and other military installations, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge called it “a great privilege” to honor those who have served in the U.S. military. “While we are always grateful for their allegiance to our country, we thank our veterans, pay tribute to their sacrifices and pray for them in a special way this week,” he said Nov. 6 on his “Walk Humbly” podcast. “Throughout our history, men and women in uniform secured our freedom, protected us from aggressors and defended our Constitution and way of life.”

He suggested people take time to attend a Veterans Day event or display the U.S. flag. “You could call a veteran and thank them for their service,” he added. “May we learn from their sacrifices and their courage. May God’s abundant blessings always be upon them and may he fill our world with the precious gift of his peace.”

In 2022, about 16.2 million adults in the U.S. were veterans, representing 6.2% of the total civilian population

age 18 and over, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Of that number, 0.8% served in World War II. Additionally, 4.1% of veterans served in the Korean War, 33.6% in the Vietnam War, and 24.4% in the first Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, from August 1990 to July 1991).

Of the number of veterans, 26.3% served in the Iraq War (Operation Iraqi Freedom), also termed the second Gulf War (2003-2011). The latter group includes those who, beginning September 2001, served in the war in Afghanistan, known as Operation Enduring Freedom. Other census data show that in 2022 1.7 million veterans, or 10.3%, were female. Statistics on veterans’ race/ethnicity show that 8.6% were Hispanic or Latino (of any race); 72.3% white (not Hispanic or Latino); 12.4% African American; 2.1% Asian American; 0.8% American Indian or Alaska Native; 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and 2.8% other races (as respondents to census identified themselves).

On any given night, 40,056 veterans are homeless, according to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, citing U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates. “Over the course of a year, approximately twice that many experience homelessness,” the coalition said. “Only 7% of the general population can claim veteran status, but nearly 13% of the homeless adult population are veterans.”

The number of homeless veterans has decreased by about 50% since 2009, according to HUD’s Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, but the needs of those who are currently homeless remain, among them health care. In one effort to address this

need, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced Aug. 3 of this year that it had begun deploying 25 mobile medical units, or MMUs; over the next six months sites in nearly 20 states will receive a unit to provide health care and support to homeless and at-risk veterans. The first unit was delivered Aug. 1 to Orlando, Fla., and the last unit will be delivered Feb. 26 to San Francisco.

One recipient is the Minneapolis VA. The mobile unit is a van containing medical equipment and supplies that can travel to various locations. It will help support the VA’s Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams — staff who offer care in community settings, providing services such as health assessments, health education, preventative care and referrals to other programs and resources in the area.

On Oct. 3, Minneapolis VA representatives announced a partnership with Catholic Charities Twin Cities in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, so that the MMU can be on the campus of the Catholic agency’s Dorothy Day Place in St. Paul. It will be onsite every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering care to veterans.

“I appreciate the asset that this vehicle is, but more so I appreciate the mindset of service that this vehicle represents,” St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter said at the partnership launch event at the campus. “We’re excited to see this vehicle out and about in our community, and we’re excited for our continued partnership with both Catholic Charities and the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

(Julie Asher is senior editor for OSV News. Contributing to this story was Rebecca Omastiak, news editor for The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.)

Catholic Lawyers Discuss Big Gains for School Choice Nationwide

By Zoey Maraist, courtesy of The Arlington Catholic Herald

Next year, 10 million students in the U.S. will be eligible to use public funds to attend Catholic schools. Fueled by favorable court rulings, legislative victories and the increasingly popular parental rights movement, a growing number of states are embracing greater school choice policies. It's good news for Catholics, said Nicole Stelle Garnett, an associate dean for the University of Notre Dame School of Law, but hurdles still remain.

Garnett addressed lawyers gathered for the Eighth Annual Conference and General Assembly of the Catholic Bar Association at the Antonin Scalia Law School in Arlington Oct. 28. The event was co-hosted by the local Arlington diocese chapter, the St. Thomas More Guild for Legal Professionals.

Recent Supreme Court decisions have strengthened protections for religious liberty by making clear that the government may not exclude religious institutions and schools from publicly available benefits or school choice programs, said Garnett. As Chief Justice John Roberts noted in the 2020 *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue* decision, "A state need not subsidize private education. But once (it does), it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious."

Virginia does not have a state-funded voucher program, but it does have the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credit, which allows individuals and corporations to receive a 65 percent state income tax credit for donations made to an eligible scholarship foundation, such as the Arlington diocese's scholarship programs. In fiscal year 2019,

EISTC accounted for \$10.9 million in tax credits and supported 4,710 scholarships, according to the Virginia Parents Coalition, of which the diocese and the Virginia Catholic Conference are members.

However, nationwide, parental choice programs are growing. Last month, North Carolina became the ninth state in two years to adopt a universal parental choice program, said Garnett. Now, all North Carolina students will be eligible for the program regardless of income, though the scholarship amount will be based on household income, according to the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. Students also do not have to be previously enrolled in public school to be eligible for the scholarship.

"Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Utah and West Virginia now have education saving accounts programs open to all," said Garnett. "Oklahoma has a universal tax credit program, Ohio has a universal voucher program, and in Indiana, the family income ceiling for the voucher is set so high that it's nearly universal."

While these developments are encouraging, challenges remain, said Garnett. "It's important to keep in mind that one reason the court is having to decide religious liberty cases is because the government keeps singling out religious believers for disfavored treatment," she said.

Garnett noted that Colorado recently prohibited religious preschools from receiving public funds that secular private schools were eligible

for as part of a Universal Preschool Program. Religious preschools sued, including two preschools in the Archdiocese of Denver, saying in a press release that, "St. Mary's and St. Bernadette's cannot participate in the program because they prioritize the admission of Catholic families and have religious expectations for the teachers who operate their ministries." Fortunately, just days ago the U.S. District Court in Colorado held that the conditions placed on the religious schools for participation in the program violated the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

There are many things Catholics should do to support Catholic schools in a culture that is increasingly skeptical of religion, said Garnett. "Pray, of course, and redouble our efforts to strengthen and sustain our Catholic institutions, especially our Catholic schools, which began in a spirit of protest and have always served as an alternative to public schools hostile to faith values," she said. "We must evangelize and not apologize for our beliefs.

And as always, we must not lose hope."

Garnett's was one of many sessions at the CBA conference, including sessions on religious freedom after the sexual revolution, the rights of women, and the persecuted church in China and Hong Kong. At the conclusion of the conference, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge celebrated a Red Mass for the community at the Basilica of St. Mary in Alexandria. Luke Lafferre, a civil litigator from West Virginia and the outgoing president of the CBA, said he enjoys the mix of education, fellowship and spirituality at the annual conference.

For years he had been looking for a Catholic lawyers organization, and he was glad to find the CBA online. "I thought there ought to be a way for like-minded lawyers to get together, and to pray together, and to talk about spiritual and social issues. That's something that's kind of hard to find in West Virginia as the Catholic population is very small," he said.

"We've always had

excellent presentations, mainly, but not always, to talk about legal issues," he said. "Praying with other lawyers at Mass and at other liturgical events has been spiritually enriching for me. It's also good to know on an interpersonal level that other people share the same concerns and the same interests that I do."

Amy McNerny, director of the diocesan Office of Respect Life and a member of the St. Thomas More Guild, felt honored that their local organization hosted the conference. "The speakers and the fellowship were amazing. We came away refreshed and recharged to live our vocations as lawyers," she said. "I hope this conference has made more legal professionals in the Diocese of Arlington aware of our local guild and that they will join us in this great community."

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Blessed Encounter with NFL Great, Franco Harris

Editor's note: In honor of Black Catholic History Month, we share this story about Franco Harris written by Bernadette Schreyer Conklin, who grew up in the northern panhandle of West Virginia and attended Corpus Christi Parish in Wheeling, where her 93-year-old father Bill Schreyer is still a member. Conklin, who now lives in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, is the founder of the Preborn Jesus Ministry and creator of the Mary, Ark of the New Covenant Medal. She met up with Harris to present him the blessed medal and chat about all the connections between his fateful "Immaculate Reception," the sacred song "Ave Maria," his own mother, and faithful sights and signs from heaven. It was 33 hours after this encounter, the famed Pittsburgh Steeler #32 passed away just days shy of being honored by the NFL for the 50th anniversary of the "Immaculate Reception" – a day we all may have seen him pin the medal of Mary on his retired jersey, while the song "Ave Maria" played for the crowd.

By Bernadette Schreyer Conklin

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us". ~ Hebrews 12:1

In this race called "LIFE", I very much believe in the "cloud of witnesses" who help us to run with endurance, the race set before us. Amazingly, God inspired my favorite, Scripture passage as one of the topics I discussed with Franco (Harris) at our encounter on Dec. 19, 2022.

I wish to share some of the back story that led to my nearly 2.5-hour meeting with Franco Harris, to gift him the gold medal of Mary, Ark of The New Covenant just 33 hours before he passed.

I came across an interview by Pittsburgh news reporter, Andrew Stockey, of WTAE Action News 4, and was astounded to learn what Franco Harris revealed... (about the) highly debated "Immaculate Reception."

According to Harris, his mother Gina was gathered with his siblings at her New Jersey home watching the game on TV. Harris stated, his mother knew something was wrong, "So she went and got one of her Italian albums and put one of her Italian albums on." Harris said, "To this day, my brothers and sisters verify this and say, yes, this happened, this is what was going on." During the very moment of the Immaculate Reception Harris said his mother was playing "Ave Maria" on that Italian music album. When shortly thereafter, his siblings came running to her shouting, "Mom, the Steelers won!" Harris said his mother looked at them and said, "I know." Reporter Andrew Stockey ends the interview with Harris saying, what we all know in our hearts to be true, "Mother always knows best!"

I reached out to reporter Andrew Stockey and on the evening of Aug. 22, 2022 (the Queenship of Mary), we discussed the upcoming Dec. 24, 50th Anniversary of the Immaculate Reception and my desire to gift Franco the gold medal of Mary, Ark of The New Covenant in honor of his mom, Gina playing the Ave Maria when the Immaculate Reception took place.

Andrew Stockey was kind enough to attempt to connect me with Franco, especially after the announcement that Franco's # 32 jersey would be retired, but months passed, and I still had not heard anything.

Most Steeler fans who know of the "Immaculate Reception" have heard of Franco's Italian Army, and so I received the inspiration to possibly reach out to a member and amazingly I found one — Al Vento... the last surviving member of Franco's Italian Army.

I called Al and shared my story with him, stating my desire to gift Franco the gold medal.

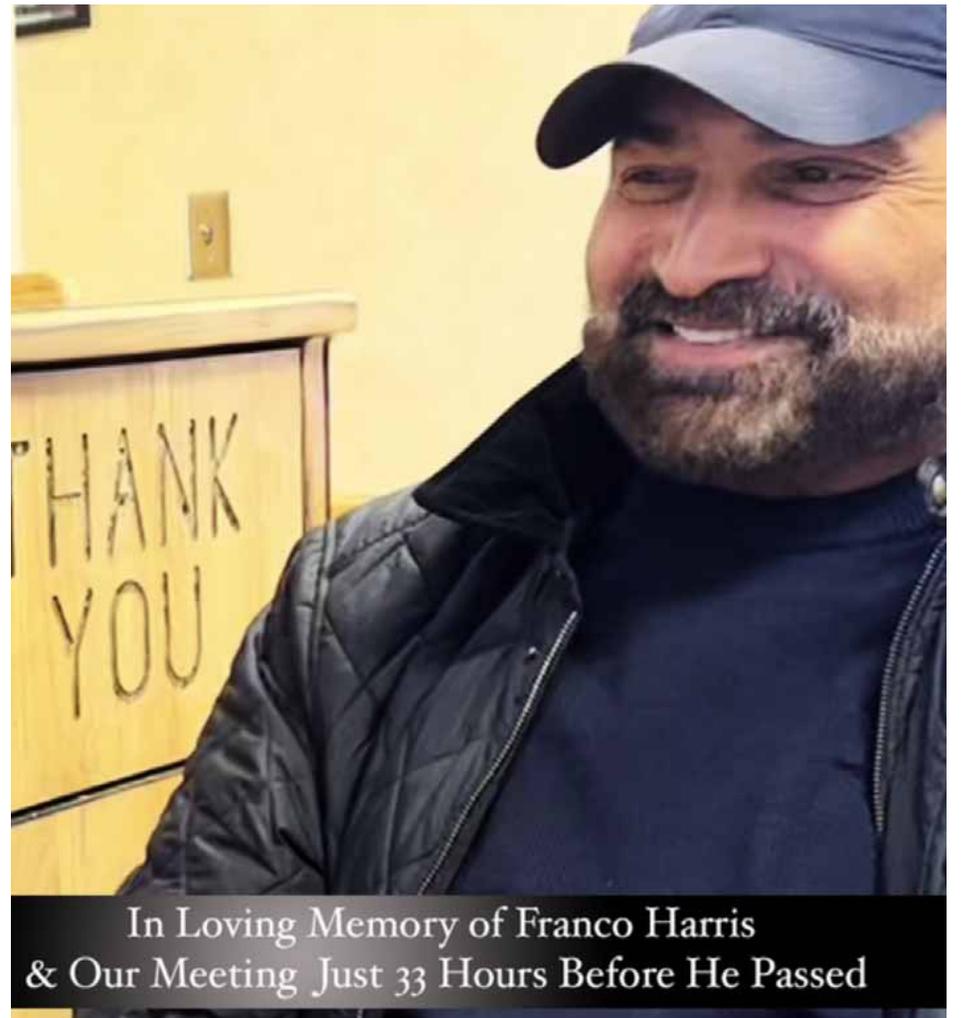
Al said he wanted to witness me gifting the medal to Franco because over the years of their long friendship, he had heard him tell the Ave Maria story before, and Al said the medal would touch him deeply. (They met up on Dec. 19th at Vento's Pizza in East Liberty.)

We sat in the booth under the poster of Al's father who started Franco's Italian Army, with Franco pulling up a chair to the booth. As our conversation began and we reminisced about the miraculous Immaculate Reception play, something stopped Franco in his tracks when I asked him how old he was when the play took place. He said, in 50 years it never occurred to him 'til that moment, but there were 22 seconds left on the clock and he was 22 years old!

Looking back at our 2.5 hour meeting it delighted me to consider how, in addition to football, our conversation covered topics like our families, his vegetarian diet, his Catholic upbringing, and his love of Christmastime, with Franco adding, "It's about Jesus's birth."

The conversation got deep as we then talked about our moms who have passed, and God's design on Motherhood. He was charmed to hear that I shared the same birthday as his mother and at that moment, I felt such love pouring out of his eyes, it was as if I was looking into the eyes of Jesus! We talked about that special "Ave Maria" moment when the Immaculate Reception took place and how his mother "sensed something was wrong" leading us to discuss the intriguing scientific phenomenon called "fetal microchimerism" and a mother's intuition.

In total humility he poured out his



Courtesy Photo

The gold medal of Mary, Ark of The New Covenant

words of affirmation, in gratitude for the gold medal of Mary, Ark of The New Covenant, connecting it to the Ave Maria and his mom.

When I thanked Franco for our meeting, I boldly suggested one more thing after handing him a bag of blessed replica medals that he might wish to share with others:

I asked, "Franco, what better way to honor your mom when your jersey's retired at halftime on Christmas Eve, as throughout our nation, football fans honor the 50th Anniversary of the Immaculate Reception, than to have the Ave Maria sung?"

"He considered not only that, but pinning the medal to his jersey!"

Franco gave me his permission to share our conversation, video, pictures and quotes from the grace-filled

Dec. 19, 2022, meeting. Little did either of us realize that I would be one of the last to spend such a blessed encounter with this true man of humility...

Stunning the Steeler Nation and beyond, Franco Harris unexpectedly passed into his eternal reward just a little before midnight on Dec. 20, 2022.

Providentially, just 7 hours prior to the time of Franco's passing, as the sun was setting over Cranberry Township, PA, I videoed the most beautiful cross in the sky that Dec. 20th day!

To read this article in its entirety, watch video clips, and for more information about the Preborn Ministry and the Mary, Ark of the New Covenant Medal click here.

A Scoop of Vocations with Your PIE

'We might be tempted to think that young people are no longer entering religious life. This is not at all true!'

—Sister Constance Veit, communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States

By Sister Constance Veit, lsp

Each November we enjoy fresh-picked apples, cranberries and pumpkin-spice everything as our excitement builds towards Thanksgiving. The church in the United States observes another celebration this month promoting vocation awareness.

The National Religious Vocation Conference encourages us to take advantage of this special vocations promotion each November to celebrate religious life and each Christian's foundational calling to discipleship. And they invite us to do so with PIE!

PIE is an acronym that stands for pray, invite and encourage. It's a call to action for vocations in which we can all participate year-round for the good of the church.

P stands for pray.

God hears our prayers. So, let's pray for an increase of vocations for the holiness of the Church and the service of God's People.

And let's pray for the priests and consecrated persons we know and love, that they will be faithful to their special call and that God will grant them the gift of perseverance in his service. The future of the church depends on the generous response to God's call to priesthood and consecrated life in its diverse forms.

We might be tempted to think that young people are no longer entering religious life. This is not at all true!

Recent data shows that there have been 3,500 new entrants to religious communities in the United States in the past 15 years, with an average of 200+ new professed members per year. Thirty-five percent of new members discerned for

more than two years and about the same number discerned for about a year before entering a community.

Although 70 percent of entrants first considered religious life before the age of 21, the average age when one enters a religious community today is 28.

From these statistics we can see that new priests and women and men religious are not made overnight – there are no instant vocations!

Nevertheless, young people are still answering the call. These facts invite us to redouble our prayers for vocations.

If you know a young person considering a priestly or religious vocation, be patient. Pray for them each day as they clarify God's call for their lives!

I stands for invite.

Among new entrants to religious life, 66 percent report that someone invited them to consider a religious vocation and that this invitation impacted them.

Whatever our own path in life, we are all called to be inviters!

We can share our faith and invite young people to pray with us, to attend Mass and other liturgies, to join in faith formation opportunities and to participate in service projects and works of charity. With us and through us, let them experience the joy of the Gospel!

For religious communities, nothing is more important in promoting vocations than welcoming young people into the heart of our communities.

Despite the abundant availability of social media and online content, recent surveys indicate that nothing can replace direct per-

sonal contact with consecrated persons and communities in supporting vocational discernment.

Meetings with a member(s) of a religious institute, opportunities to share in communal prayer and meals, invitations to special occasions like professions and jubilees and meeting individually with a vocation director are all considered more helpful by young adult discerners than websites and social media.

Finally, E stands for encourage-

ment. Although most religious communities in our country are becoming smaller and older, young members of these institutes report that smaller numbers and aging members did not deter them.

The majority of young religious report that the encouragement of others was an important factor in their vocation discernment. This encouragement comes from members of their institute, vocation ministers and spiritual direc-

tors.

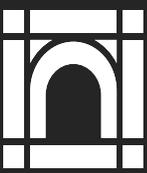
But new members in religious institutes also report that they received encouragement from those with whom and to whom they minister, diocesan priests, people in their parish and friends.

Unfortunately, many younger consecrated persons did not receive a great deal of encouragement from parents, siblings and other family members early in their discernment, but this support seemed to grow after they entered religious life.

Whether you prefer pumpkin, apple or mincemeat, I hope you have ample opportunities to enjoy homemade pie this holiday season.

And with each bite, I hope you will remember to pray, invite and encourage vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life!

(Sister Constance Veit is the communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.)



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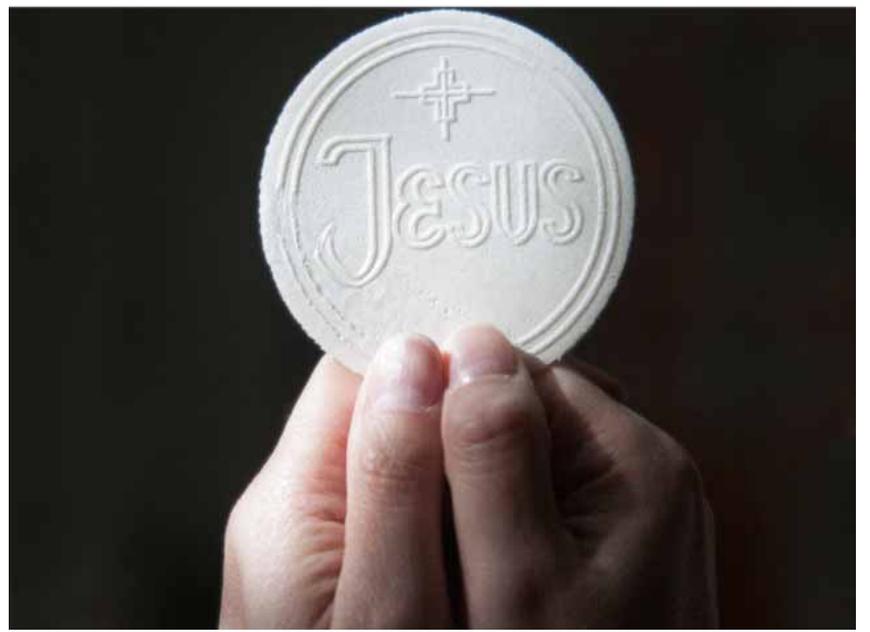
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Pope Encourages Children to Speak up, Work for Peace

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a celebration of life, peace, joy and harmony, thousands of children representing young people on every continent greeted Pope Francis during an afternoon event in the Vatican's Paul VI hall.

Children from different parts of the world, such as the Amazon and favelas of Brazil, sang on stage, and Italian pop star Mr. Rain performed his hit single, "Super Heroes."

The event Nov. 6 was sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education and was attended by more than 6,000 children from different parts of Italy and other parts of the world.

Dedicated to the importance of peace, fraternity and respect for others and creation, the event was titled, "Let Us Learn from Boys and Girls," to focus attention on children's simple and sincere desires for peace and harmony in the world.

"There is much to learn from you," the pope said. "I am always happy when I meet you because you teach me something new every time. For example, you remind me how beautiful life is in its simplicity and how beautiful it is to be together!"

"Two big gifts God has given us," he said, are life and being together with simplicity.

The pope encouraged the kids to embrace their adolescence, which is "a wonderful age" and to make their

thoughts, feelings and experiences heard by adults.

He asked the children to remember all the other kids their age who are suffering from war, hunger, climate disasters and poverty.

"You know there are bad people who do bad things, they make war and destroy. Do you want to do bad things?" the pope asked. After the children yelled, "No!" he asked, "Do you want to help?" to which they replied with enthusiasm, "Yes!"

The pope cut short his prepared speech in order to dedicate more time to questions from the children, who asked him questions about climate change, wars, his friends, his work habits and what he dreams about at night.

"I don't know what I dream because I am asleep!" he joked as the kids laughed. Sometimes, he said, he dreams about things he remembers when he was a child. "Dreaming is beautiful," he said, because it shows something alive is stirring inside.

With each question, the pope had a tidbit of wisdom for the kids to remember, making them repeat each phrase a number of times.

His words of advice included: "Whoever destroys the earth, destroys us." "Take care of nature because nature takes care of us." "Work gives us dignity." "Do not waste food." "Let's work for peace." "Peace is made with the heart and



CNS Photo/Lola Gomez

Pope Francis greets a child during a meeting with youngsters from around the world called "Let Us Learn from Boys and Girls" in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 6.

an outstretched hand." "Children's voices are needed" because "kids are messengers of peace." "When you are angry, drink a glass of water before you respond."

When a 9-year-old boy from Syria asked the pope, "Why do they kill kids during a war and no one defends them?" the pope said, "This shows the wickedness of war."

That innocent civilians and children are killed in wartime, he said, "is cruelty," and he led the children in praying the Our Father for all

children killed in wars.

He urged all the children to work for peace after a 12-year-old girl from Palestine asked whether there would be no more peace if World War III broke out.

"We have to work for peace," the pope said, asking everyone wave to the girl so she could let the people back in Palestine know that everyone there said "Hello."

"Peace is beautiful!" the pope said, as the children repeated it loudly.



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El Papa reza por una paz justa en el Medio Oriente y Ucrania

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Mientras las guerras, la violencia y las muertes continúan en Ucrania y en Tierra Santa, el Papa Francisco instó de nuevo a la gente a rezar por la paz.

"Recemos por las poblaciones que sufren a causa de la guerra", dijo el 8 de noviembre al final de su audiencia general semanal. "No olvidemos a la martirizada Ucrania y pensemos en los pueblos palestino e israelí. Que el Señor traiga una paz justa".

A continuación, el Papa hizo una pausa para orar en silencio.

"Están sufriendo mucho", dijo. "Los niños sufren. Los enfermos sufren. Los ancianos sufren. Y muchos jóvenes están muriendo".

"La guerra es siempre una derrota", repitió el Papa. "No lo olviden: Siempre es una derrota".

Tras pronunciar su discurso principal en italiano y saludar a grupos de personas de varios países pre-

sentes en la audiencia en la plaza de San Pedro, el Papa Francisco se dirigió a su ayudante, monseñor Luis María Rodrigo Ewart, y le preguntó si había algún texto de un llamamiento para que lo leyera. Al no haberlo, el Papa cerró los ojos e hizo el llamado a la oración de forma espontánea.

La víspera de la audiencia, Vatican News y el diario vaticano L'Osservatore Romano publicaron una entrevista con el cardenal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, patriarca latino de Jerusalén.

"La guerra terminará tarde o temprano, pero las consecuencias de esta guerra serán terribles", dijo el cardenal. "Hay dos cosas que me parecen especialmente preocupantes. La primera es que ambos bandos parecen carecer de una visión estratégica que vaya más allá de la aniquilación del otro. Incluso la propia tierra parece haber pasado a un segundo plano respecto al deseo de destrucción mutua. No

hay una estrategia de salida".

La segunda cuestión, dijo, es la dificultad que tienen israelíes y palestinos para "distanciarse, incluso emocionalmente, del pesado pasado de ambos pueblos, el Holocausto y la Nakba, que se evocó el 7 de octubre", cuando los militantes de Hamás entraron en Israel y se lanzaron a la matanza y el secuestro. "Nakba" se refiere al desplazamiento masivo de palestinos durante la guerra árabe-israelí de 1948.

"Algo se ha roto. Espero que no irreparablemente. Pero llevará mucho tiempo y mucho esfuerzo reconstruirlo", dijo el cardenal, según Vatican News en inglés. "El andamiaje era ciertamente inestable" antes del 7 de octubre, "y trabajamos en él con gran dificultad. De vez en cuando se caía un tablón. Ahora todo el andamiaje se ha venido abajo. Tendremos que empezar de nuevo".

El Papa anima a los niños a trabajar por la paz

Por Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) -- En una celebración de la vida, la paz, la alegría y la armonía, miles de niños en representación de los jóvenes de todos los continentes saludaron al Papa Francisco durante un acto celebrado por la tarde en el Aula Pablo VI del Vaticano.

Niños de diferentes partes del mundo, como el Amazonas y las favelas de Brasil, cantaron en el escenario, y la estrella italiana del pop Mr. Rain interpretó su exitosa canción "Superhéroes".

El evento del 6 de noviembre fue patrocinado por el Dicasterio para la Cultura y la Educación y contó con la asistencia de más de 6.000 niños de distintas partes de Italia y del mundo.

Dedicado a la importancia de la paz, la fraternidad y el respeto a los demás y a la creación, el evento se tituló "Aprendamos de los niños y las niñas", para centrar la atención en los

deseos sencillos y sinceros de los niños por la paz y la armonía en el mundo.

"Hay mucho que aprender de ustedes", dijo el Papa. "Siempre estoy contento cuando los encuentro porque cada vez me enseñan algo nuevo. Por ejemplo, me recuerdan la belleza de la sencillez de la vida y lo hermoso que es estar juntos".

"Dos grandes regalos que Dios nos ha dado", dijo, son la vida y estar juntos con sencillez.

El Papa animó a los chicos a abrazar su adolescencia, que es "una edad maravillosa", y a hacer oír sus pensamientos, sentimientos y experiencias a los adultos.

Pidió a los niños que recordaran a todos los demás niños de su edad que sufren a causa de la guerra, el hambre, los desastres climáticos y la pobreza.

"Sabén que hay gente mala que hace la guerra, que hace el mal, que destruye. ¿Quieren hacer el mal?", preguntó el Papa. Después de que los niños gritaran: "¡Nooo!", preguntó: "¿Quieren hacer el bien?", a lo que re-

spondieron con entusiasmo: "¡Sí!".

El Papa interrumpió su discurso preparado para dedicar más tiempo a las preguntas de los niños, que le hicieron preguntas sobre el cambio climático, las guerras, sus amigos, sus hábitos de trabajo y con qué sueña por las noches.

"¡No sé lo que sueño porque estoy dormido!", bromeó mientras los niños reían. A veces, dijo, sueña con cosas que recuerda de cuando era niño. "Soñar es hermoso", dijo, porque demuestra que algo vivo se está moviendo en su interior.

Con cada pregunta, el Papa daba un consejo para que los niños lo recordaran, haciéndoles repetir cada frase varias veces.

Entre sus consejos estaban: "Destruir la Tierra es destruirnos a nosotros". "Cuida la naturaleza porque la naturaleza cuida de nosotros". "El trabajo nos da dignidad". "No desperdiciemos la comida". "Trabajemos por la paz". "La paz se hace con el corazón y la mano tendida". "Las voces de los

niños son necesarias" porque "los niños son mensajeros de paz". "Cuando estés enfadado, bebe un vaso de agua antes de responder".

Cuando un niño de 9 años de Siria preguntó al Papa: "¿Por qué matan a niños durante una guerra y nadie los defiende?", el Papa dijo: "Esto muestra la maldad de la guerra".

Que civiles inocentes y niños sean asesinados en tiempos de guerra, dijo, "es una crueldad", y dirigió a los niños en el rezo del Padre Nuestro por todos los niños asesinados en las guerras.

Instó a todos los niños a trabajar por la paz después de que una niña palestina de 12 años preguntara si no habría más paz si estallaba la Tercera Guerra Mundial.

"Tenemos que trabajar por la paz", dijo el Papa, pidiendo a todos que saludaran con la mano a la niña para que pudiera hacer saber a la gente de Palestina que todos allí decían "Hola".

"¡La paz es hermosa!", dijo el Papa, mientras los niños lo repetían en voz alta.

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 variarán 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; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; 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, diácono, 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 esta 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 Niños: 304-293-6400.



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Priest Explains What's Allowed, What's Not in Catholic Funeral and Burial Practices

By Kurt Jensen

(OSV News) — Father Patrick Carrion, a priest for more than 40 years, has headed the Office of Cemetery Management for the Archdiocese of Baltimore for the past 15 years. And he always knew he'd eventually be described as someone who has seen and heard it all when it comes to questions about Catholic funeral and burial practices.

That doesn't faze him. He's more than happy to share what he's experienced, and to clarify expectations for Catholic burials, handling of remains and ashes, and the pesky matter of eulogies.

Burying the dead is a corporal act of mercy. Everything centers on the belief in the intact body, since baptism makes individuals temples of the Holy Spirit. Catholic belief is that upon death, the soul meets God, and God gives incorruptible life to bodies by reuniting them with their souls.

Burials as they have been done in the United States for the past century — embalmed body, sealed casket in a concrete vault — are accepted, although Father Carrion points out that billions of coffins take up a lot of land and cemetery "perpetual care" means the land will never have another use. His own preference — something he's chosen for himself — is what's called a "green" burial, in which coffin, remains and shroud decompose into the soil, with no embalming of the body.

It's permitted and regulated in Maryland, and used to be the only kind of burial in family graveyards and churchyards, although most cemeteries now don't permit it out of concern for contaminating groundwater.

"It's what our ancestors did," said the pastor of St. Francis of Assisi, Shrine of the Little Flower, St. Dominic, St. Anthony of Padua and Most Precious Blood, all in Baltimore. "It's not irreverent to bury someone on top of someone else."

So-called "composting burials" are legal in just seven states, but not Maryland. In these, the body is converted to soil after first being placed in a sealed chamber with water and chemicals which are then heated in a process called alkaline hydrolysis. This reduces the



Tombstones are pictured in the cemetery at historic St. Mary's Catholic Church in Bryantown, Md., Aug. 25, 2022.

body to bone fragments.

This is "just totally unacceptable to us," Father Carrion told the Catholic Review, Baltimore's archdiocesan news outlet. "It's just dissolving the body. At least with ashes, there's something to bury." A composting process "is saying that the body never existed."

Which brings us to cremations and urns. Cremated remains are considered the same as intact bodies — cremation was first permitted by the Vatican in 1963 and part of canon (church) law since 1983.

But urns are to be placed in mausoleums or columbariums, not kept at home, and cremated remains are not to be scattered or split up.

It's a question that often comes up, Father Carrion said. "Sometimes people want to put parts of the ashes into earrings or necklaces," he said. "You're treating the deceased as if it is a possession of yours.

You don't possess people."

Human remains, he pointed out, are "for the whole people of God."

Each November, the month of All Souls, the archdiocese, through the Ministry of the 14th Station of the Cross, buries urns in a single vault at Holy Cross Cemetery in Anne Arundel County. There is a minimal fee of \$350.

This mass inurnment — each urn is handled individually in the rite — comes from many sources other than families, since authorities call Father Carrion's office when urns are found in abandoned houses, and on one occasion, in the trunk of a car that was about to be demolished at a scrap yard.

Twice a year, Father Carrion's office also holds services for collective burials, in a marked gravesite, of miscarried babies, provided by hospitals upon request of the par-

priests will talk about as a difficult hurdle," Father Carrion said.

"That's not what our ritual is meant to be," he explained, noting that the ritual says that those activities should occur at the wake, although most people still want them at the church.

If families strongly desire eulogies at the funeral Mass, Father Carrion asks them to take place before the body is brought into the church, as an extension of the wake.

Father Carrion conceded that lengths of eulogies have crept up because of all the eulogies people see at state funerals and those of celebrities.

But they're not as easy to give as people who are not professional speakers think they are.

There's a way around that, though. When he's asked, the pastor sets a five-minute limit on a eulogy, which is easy to calculate. A full typed page, double-spaced, takes two minutes to read. So two pages is the max and Father Carrion usually limits the number of eulogists to two.

(Kurt Jensen writes for the Catholic Review, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.)

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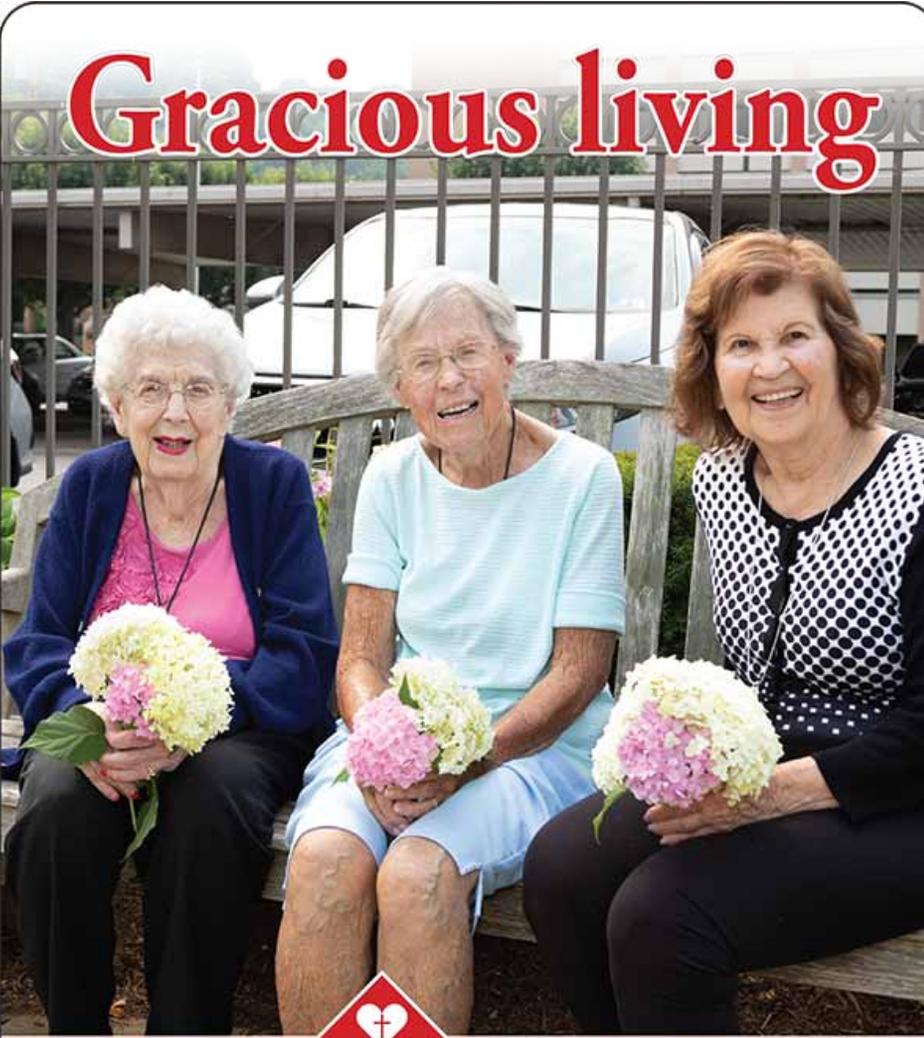
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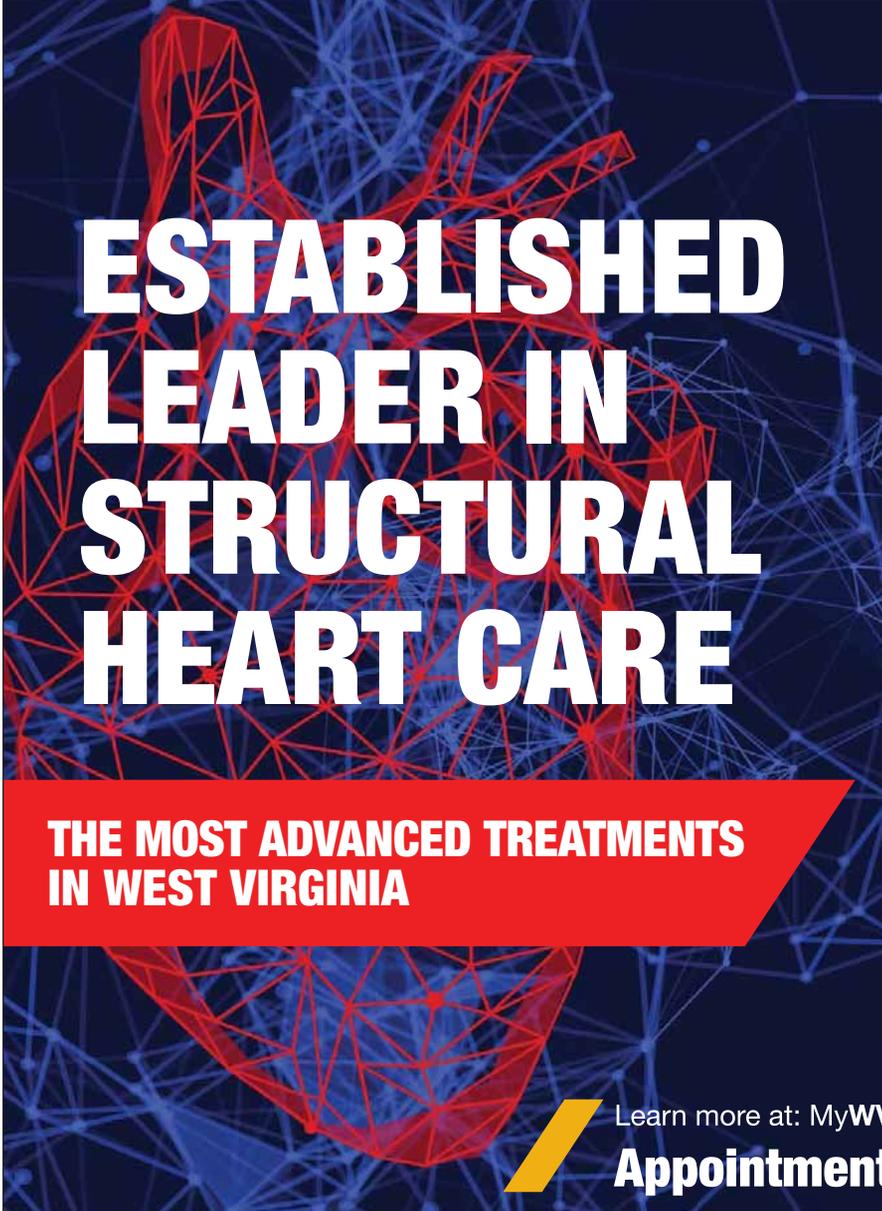
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