Bishops’ Fall Assembly Sees Abortion ‘Pre-eminent’ in Faithful Citizenship, Discussion of Mental Health and Emphasis on Evangelizing

By Peter Jesserer Smith

BALTIMORE (OSV News) — Excitement about the impacts of the National Eucharistic Revival in local dioceses, support for the nomination of St. John Henry Newman as a doctor of the church, and the approval of supplements to the bishops’ teaching document on “Faithful Citizenship” underscoring the threat of abortion as “our pre-eminent priority” featured strongly on the second day of the U.S. bishops’ annual fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

The bishops typically engaged in little to no discussion on agenda items they were set to vote on, which all passed with overwhelming majorities. However, the bishops more vigorously engaged in discussion toward the end of the day with updates on the National Eucharistic Revival and the bishops’ National Catholic Mental Health Campaign.

The U.S. bishops began the day with the Latin Church bishops approving U.S. adaptations to the Liturgy of the Hours, the public prayer of the church proper to all the baptized, along with drafts for the consecration of virgins and the order of religious profession. Those texts now go to the Vatican’s Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for confirmation and recognition.

The bishops also approved a request to ask Rome to include “St. Teresa of Calcutta” as an optional memorial on the Roman Calendar for Sept. 5, and also heard that a request to include Salvadoran martyr St. Oscar Romero would have to be sent to the Vatican “accompanied by a robust letter of support from the president of the conference.”

See “Bishops” on Page 3

Martinsburg’s Mary’s Refuge Maternity Home is Changing Lives

Gala Celebrates, Brings Support to Its Mission

By Meg H. Partington

MARTINSBURG—Nov. 9 was a winning day for Mary’s Refuge Maternity Home in Martinsburg.

First, one of the guests at Mary’s Refuge delivered a healthy baby boy at 10:04 a.m. Giovanni came into the world weighing 6 pounds, 12 ounces, and measuring 19 inches from head to toe.

Second, another woman living at the former convent at 111 E. Stephen St. received her certification as a life coach from Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, one of many steps she has taken to create a stable life for herself and her infant son.

Finally, nearly 200 people attended the second annual gala, held that evening at the Hilton Garden Inn Martinsburg, the proceeds from which will be used for building maintenance, food and clothing necessities, utilities, transportation and staffing. The 501(c)(3) ministry of St. Joseph Parish and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is a pro-life home that calls itself a gateway to motherhood, providing emotional, physical and spiritual support to women as they navigate the challenges of pregnancy and child rearing.

“Thursday evening’s gala gave us the chance to both thank those generous donors who support our mission and share the way that Mary’s Refuge is changing lives,” said Brad Snowden, advancement director for St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg. He added that donations from the gala are still being received, so a final tally of how much was raised won’t be known.

See “Home” on Page 4

See “Home” on Page 4

Ellis Power, left, program manager at Mary’s Refuge Maternity Home in Martinsburg, and Allison Ferrell, executive director of Mary’s Refuge, cradle two of the maternity home’s guests at the Nov. 9 gala fundraiser in Martinsburg.
Catholics Must Not Join Masonic Groups: Membership Remains Serious Sin

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholics are still forbidden from joining Masonic organizations and, with an increasing number of Catholics joining Masonic lodges in the Philippines, the Vatican has urged the nation’s bishops to find a way to make clear the church’s continued opposition to Freemasonry.

“Membership in Freemasonry is very significant in the Philippines,” said a note from Cardinal Victor Fernandez, prefect of the Diocesary for the Doctrine of the Faith, and appointed by Pope Francis. “It involves not only those who are formally enrolled in Masonic Lodges but, more generally, a large number of sympathizers and associates about Masonic abuses who have convinced that there is no opposition between membership in the Catholic Church and in Masonic Lodges.

The diocese’s note, dated Nov. 13 and made public Nov. 15, was a response to a request from Bishop Julito Cortes of Dumaguete, Philippines, “regarding the best pastoral approach to membership in Freemasonry by the Catholic faithful.”

The bishop had voiced his concern about “the continuous rise in the number of the faithful enrolled in Freemasonry” in his diocese and asked the diocese for “suggestions regarding how to respond to this reality” from a pastoral point of view, including its “doctrinal implications.”

The diocese wrote that active members in Freemasonry by a member of the faithful is forbidden because of the irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry — a position that was re-established in the doctrinal congregation in its “Declaration on Masonic Associations” in 1983 and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines’ official stance.

Therefore, it said, “those who are formally and knowingly enrolled in Masonic Lodges” — including clerics — “have embraced Masonic principles fall under the provisions in the above-mentioned declaration.”

The 1983 declaration states that Catholics enrolled in Masonic associations “are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.”

The diocese said it notified the Philippines’ bishops’ conference that “it would be necessary to put in place a coordinated strategy among the individual bishops” to address the issue appropriately.

The strategy should include both a doctrinal and a pastoral approach, it said, proposing the bishops “conduct catechesis accessible to the people and in all parishes regarding the reasons for the irreconcilability between the Catholic faith and Freemasonry.”

“The Philippine bishops are invited to consider whether they should make a public pronouncement on the matter,” it added.

The Catholic Church has long denounced Freemasonry; in particular, Pope Leo XIII, in the late 19th-century, insisted “Christianity and Freemasonry are essentially irreconcilable, so that enrolment in one means separation from the other.”

Freemasonry refers to the beliefs and practices of a number of fraternal organizations worldwide that are oath-bound secret societies tracing their ancient origins to the local guilds of stonemasons. Today, many of the organizations are known for their charitable activity, and worldwide membership in various Masonic lodges is estimated between 2 million and 6 million people.

Freemasonry appears to relativize the religious faith of its members with respect to a “broader truth, which instead is shown in the community of good will, that is, in the Masonic fraternity,” according to a 1985 article in the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano.

“For a Catholic Christian, it is not possible to live his relationship with God in a twofold mode, that is, dividing it into a supra-conformal humanist form and an interior Christian form,” said the article, which is also published in the doctrinal dicastery’s archives.

“Only Jesus Christ is, in fact, the Teacher of Truth, and only in him can Christians find the light and the strength to live according to God’s plan, working for the true good of their brethren,” it said.

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost about suspicion of sexual abuse. In addition, if you wish 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. 13 and made public Nov. 15, was a...
Bishops...

**Cont’d from Page 1**

The U.S. bishops voted to approve supplements to the bishops’ teaching document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” which consists of a new introductory note, bulletin inserts, a template video script and social media kit. A majority of 225 bishops voted yes, 11 voted no and seven abstained.

Quoting Pope Francis’s 2020 encyclical letter, “Fratelli Tutti” (“Brothers All”), the new supplements encourage Catholics to follow the example of the Good Samaritan and serve as neighbors to all, while underlining the threat of abortion as “our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters.”

The day’s surprise came as Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, announced that the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston asked the U.S. bishops to recommend the saint as “worthy of veneration” and the pope to declare him a “doctor of the church” like the first-century saint is named a “doctor of the church” in 1996. The process took nearly 20 years to reach the point of a formal vote, the bishops said.

Bishop Seitz said the archdiocese had been working on the project for 10 years, and the next steps would be to submit a dossier to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for approval, and then to submit it to the Vatican for formal approval.

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Maternity homes are a wonderful, wonderful way for us to get our hands in and help those women,” said Regina Smith, president of the Jefferson County Chapter of West Virginians for Life, as she addressed the crowd. Among those seated at round tables in the ballroom were Bishop Mark Brennan; Wanda Franz, president of West Virginians for Life; Allison Ferrell, executive director of Mary’s Refuge; clergy and parishioners from throughout the Eastern Panhandle; and staff from St. Joseph School in Martinsburg and St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School in Hagerstown, Md.

Smith shared the names of several noteworthy people whose mothers considered aborting them, including St. John Paul II; Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple; Oprah Winfrey, American talk show host, television producer, actress and author; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; actor Jack Nicholson; and actress/singer Cher.

“They all escaped a horrific death,” Smith said, adding that she is concerned that abortion is too often promoted as a solution to challenging situations.

Sen. Patricia Rucker, R-Jefferson, said another obstacle faced by those trying to promote the pro-life stance is people’s tendency to express differing opinions with running, Galvin said as he reminded him that the boys at St. Mary’s deserved a hero whose behavior they could model.

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St. Michael Parish Will Host Wheeling’s Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Service

WHEELING — St. Michael Parish will host this year’s community wide Interfaith Service of Gratitude in Wheeling, set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22.

The faithful of the Wheeling area will come together with clergy from local houses of worship to thank God for blessings bestowed and to pray for less fortunate people. The faith leaders will share sacred scripture readings from their various traditions.

Among the clergy who will participate are Bishop Mark Brennan; Suff. Bishop Darrell Cummings, pastor of Bethlehem Apostolic Temple; Father Carlos Melecoton, pastor of St. Michael Parish; Rabbi Joshua Lief of Temple Shalom; Rev. Kenneth Hardway, pastor of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Erica Hall, pastor of Vance Memorial Presbyterian Church; and Rev. Marshall Davis, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church.

The clergy asked that people bring nonperishable food items to donate to Catholic Charities and other organizations that help to feed neighbors in need. “Please join with our brothers and sisters of many faiths to praise and thank the Lord,” organizers said.

A brief reception will be held immediately after the service. All are welcome.
In celebration of all who support ministry & outreach through their gifts to the Catholic Sharing Appeal, please join us for the

Mass of Gratitude

Monday, November 20th at 12:05 P.M.
Cathedral of St. Joseph • 1218 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV

MASS WILL BE LIVE STREAMED AT DWC.ORG/CSA
Over 60 women met at St. Joseph the Worker Grade School’s cafeteria in Weirton on Saturday morning, Nov. 4, for a one-day Eucharistic Revival Retreat. Women were welcomed by Tina Rocchio, point person for St. Joseph the Worker Parish Eucharistic Revival. After registration, donuts, muffins, granola bars, hot coffee and tea were served for breakfast. Besides parishioners from St. Joseph the Worker, six additional parishes were represented.

The women were warmly greeted by the pastor, Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens Jr., V.E., who welcomed the first speaker, Sister Peter Thomas Burson, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. Her opening talk was “Eucharistic Theology & Why It Matters.” Sister Peter Thomas spoke on the richness of terminology that we use in referring to the Eucharist (“Blessed Sacrament,” “Holy Communion,” “Eucharist,” etc.) and how each of them sheds light from a different angle on this incredibly rich mystery. She also opened up just one of the many Scripture passages that can help us to reflect on the gift of the Eucharist, comparing the covenant language in Exodus 24 with that of Luke 22.

Dr. Tom Octave, secretary for the Secretariate for Formation and the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and the director of Sacred Music for the Diocese of Greensburg, Pa., spoke next on Eucharistic Culture. Using wit and his gift for story-telling his message was clear, “In our parishes, Sunday Eucharist is source and summit for parish life. In this time of Eucharistic Revival, it is important for us to strengthen our celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. We are called to witness through our worship to full and active participation in the celebration of the Mass. We are sent forth from the Eucharistic celebration to share the good news of the Gospel in all we say and do!”

During John Michael Talbot’s song, “I Am the Bread of Life” women took a few minutes to ponder the image of standing in line at Mass for Holy Communion and being aware of other parishioners in line and to visualize the comparison of the multitudes that sought after Jesus for His touch and healing and those in line today to receive Jesus.

Mary Evkovich a parishioner of St. Joseph the Worker and the adoration guardian coordinator at St. Joseph’s shared a witness about her devotion to the Eucharist and how adoration started in the Communion of Saints Eucharistic Adoration Chapel at the parish. She gifted each participant with a fairy-light lantern, a reminder to be a light in the world. Jesus is currently adored Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon.

Following Evkovich’s talk, seven men from St. Joseph’s Ground’s Committee who oversaw breakfast, exercised their gift of service again at lunch. An enthusiastic round of applause was given to John Yacoviello, Tom Runkle, Frank Merenda, Kevin Neverly, Ray Gajtka, Chuck Ballato, and Jim Reardon. Christian note cards were passed out and women wrote a message of encouragement for another woman. These cards were passed out at the end of the retreat.

After lunch the women walked to the church to hear a personal witness from Rocchio who spoke on the love and healing power of adoration. The Blessed Sacrament was adored with musical selections sung by Celia Mergen, St. Joseph music director. During this time the sacrament of reconciliation was offered by Father Schuelkens and Father John Neiman.

Additional plans for the Eucharistic Revival for the rest of the year will include Our Jesus and the Eucharist seven-week study that begins in January; an Immaculate Mary Pilgrimage to Carey, Ohio; a Lenten retreat; evenings of praise and worship during adoration; and 40 hours of adoration beginning Ash Wednesday.
Have You Heard?

GOD IS DOING SOMETHING NEW—AND HE IS CALLING YOU TO BE A PART OF IT!

We are in the midst of a National Eucharistic Revival. Why? Because the Church needs healing, and the world needs Jesus. The Holy Spirit is inviting us to return to the source and summit of our faith—the Eucharist.

Scan the code to learn more about the exciting journey ahead, and sign up for weekly updates on what’s happening in this unprecedented national movement!

eucharisticrevival.org
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov. 3</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Parish, Bluefield</td>
<td>4:00 Mass of Exposition; 5:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue, Nov. 7</td>
<td>St. John Parish, Summersville</td>
<td>3:00-8:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Nov. 8</td>
<td>St. Peter Parish, Welch</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, Nov. 9</td>
<td>St. John Neumann Parish, Marlinton</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov. 10</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Parish, Princeton</td>
<td>4:00 p.m. Mass; 5:00-7:00 Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat, Nov. 11</td>
<td>Holy Family Parish, Richwood</td>
<td>1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun, Nov. 12</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue, Nov. 14</td>
<td>St. Mark Mission, Bartow</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, Nov. 15</td>
<td>St. Patrick Parish, Hinton</td>
<td>3:00 p.m. Mass; 4:00-7:00 Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, Nov. 16</td>
<td>SS. Peter &amp; Paul Parish, Oak Hill</td>
<td>1:00-6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri, Nov. 17</td>
<td>St. Peter Parish, Welch</td>
<td>9:00-11:00 a.m. Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat, Nov. 18</td>
<td>St. Charles Borromeo Parish, White Sulphur Springs</td>
<td>1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration; 4:00 Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, Nov. 19</td>
<td>St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ronceverte</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. Mass; 12:00-3:00 p.m. Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, Nov. 20</td>
<td>St. Francis de Sales Parish, Beckley</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 p.m. Mass of Reposition</td>
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On World Day of Poor, Be Poor Like Those You Serve, Pope Says

By Justin McLellan

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — To recognize and address the poverty of others, Christians must become poor like the figure of Tobit from the Hebrew Bible, Pope Francis said.

Tobit, a blind and elderly man who dedicated his life to the service of others, “can show practical concern for the poor because he has personally known what it is to be poor,” the pope wrote in his message for the November celebration of the World Day of the Poor.

Pope Francis also called for a “serious and effective commitment on the part of political leaders and legislators” to defend the rights enjoyed by all people to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest and social services as outlined in St. John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical “Pacem in Terris” (Peace on Earth).

In his message for the world day, which will be celebrated Nov. 19, Pope Francis listed an array of cultural phenomena that prevent people from caring for the poor: greater pressure to live affluentlly, a tendency to disregard suffering, virtual reality overtaking real life and a sense of haste that prevents people from stopping to care for others. He offered the parable of the Good Samaritan, who stops to help a man in the street beaten by robbers, to counter the hangups many people have against helping the poor.

The pope thanked God for the men and women “of every age and social status” who devote themselves to caring for the poor and excluded, the “ordinary people who quietly make themselves poor among the poor.”

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While recognizing the need to provide public institutions to defend the poor, the pope praised volunteers who serve the common good in a “spirit of solidarity and subsidiarity,” saying “It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved.”

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The pope also pointed to the way poverty is exacerbated by inhumane working conditions, inadequate pay, the “scourge” of job insecurity and by workplace accidents resulting in death. Young people, he said, are also afflicted by a cultural poverty that destroys their self-worth and security and by workplace accidents resulting in death. Young people, he said, are also afflicted by a cultural poverty that destroys their self-worth and security and by workplace accidents resulting in death.

He urged people not to fall into “rhetorical excess” or merely conjecture about suffering, virtual reality overtaking real life and a sense of haste that prevents people from stopping to care for others. He offered the parable of the Good Samaritan, who stops to help a man in the street beaten by robbers, to counter the hangups many people have against helping the poor.

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An Afternoon of Advent & Christmas Music

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 AT 3PM

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOSEPH
1300 EOFF STREET, WHEELING, WV

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Chad Carter, handbells • Sarah Gorder, cello
Deborah Podolski Breiding, piano • Carrie Oliver-Shultz, vocalist
Christie Greenwood, vocalist • Braden Mills, vocalist

Free Admission
Donations will be accepted for the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center
‘Truly Compassionate Society Protects Its Most Vulnerable,’ U.K. Bishops Say after Baby’s Death

By OSV News

NOTTINGHAM, England (OSV News) — British bishops expressed their condolences to Dean and Claire Gregory, parents of 8-month-old Indi, who died Nov. 13 after neither a court battle nor Italian citizenship granted to the infant prevented the British courts from halting her life support.

Following the death of baby Indi, Bishop Patrick McKinney of Nottingham and Auxiliary Bishop John Sherrington of Westminster, who is the lead bishop for life issues, wrote in a statement that they learned about the death of the child with “deep sadness,” assuring the parents “of our prayers and those of all the Catholic Community, including Pope Francis, at this sad time.”

“As a baptized child of God, we believe that she will now share in the joy of heaven after her short life which brought deep joy to her parents who loved and protected her as a precious gift of God,” the bishops said.

The father of the girl said earlier that he was not religious, but he had chosen to have his child baptized Sept. 23 after feeling the “pull of hell” in their court battle to extend her life. Indi died at 1:45 a.m. U.K. time Nov. 13.

In a statement, Indi’s father, Dean Gregory, said he and his wife, Claire, “are angry, heartbroken and ashamed. The NHS (National Health Service) and the Courts not only took away her chance to live a longer life, but they also took away Indi’s dignity to pass away in the family home where she belonged.”

In their statement Bishop McKinney and Bishop Sherrington thanked “all who worked so tirelessly to care for her,” at the Queen’s Medical Center in Nottingham and at the hospice where she died.

They added that the legal battle between the NHS Trust and her parents showed again “the need for greater weight to be given to the parental voice in these complex and sensitive cases.”

“A simple way to begin to remedy this,” the bishops said, “would be to amend the Health and Care Act 2022 by reintroducing Baroness Ilora Finlay’s amendment on ‘Dispute resolution in children’s palliative care’ formulated after the death of Charlie Gard,” they said, recalling a similar case of a child whose life support was halted because of the court ruling in 2017.

Andrea Williams, chief executive of the Christian Legal Center, an advocacy group that supported Indi’s parents, said Nov. 13, “Our hearts are broken for Dean and Claire and their family. Please hold them in your prayers at this time.”

At the Christian Legal Center, she said, “We have given our all, working day and night to support Indi’s parents in their weeks, days and hours of need as they sought to protect their daughter and pursue justice.”

“We have also worked to make known how important it is to uphold laws that wholly protect life and the rights of parents in the lives of their children. Doctors cannot be compelled to treat a patient against their conscience, but neither should they be the ones to prevent parents who secure specialist medical treatment for their child elsewhere from accessing that help,” Williams said.

“Justice is done in the light and a truly compassionate society protects its most vulnerable,” she emphasized.

The bishops added that they will “continue to contribute to wider discussions on questions of when treatment becomes disproportionate to any possible benefit and the duty of the continuation of basic care, including assisted nutrition and hydration, to protect the good of every child.”

March for Life Announces 2024 Theme: ‘Pro-Life: With Every Woman, For Every Child’

By Kate Scanlon

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The March for Life’s theme for its 2024 event will be “Pro-Life: With Every Woman, For Every Child,” the group’s president announced Nov. 14.

The March for Life first took place in Washington in 1974 in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion nationwide the previous year. Pro-life advocates have gathered in Washington to march each year since then to protest the ruling, with a smaller-in-scale event during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

After the high court reversed Roe in 2022, marchers still gathered to protest abortion. Each year, the group selects a theme that it says fits the cultural moment. Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, said that following the court’s ruling in Dobbs, she wanted to highlight the work the pro-life movement does to support women facing difficult or unplanned pregnancies.

“In the face of this new landscape, we have to be even more intentional about standing alongside women,” Mancini said.

“Such fear-based messaging tries to convince women who are facing unexpected pregnancies that they’re alone, that they are incapable, that they are ill-equipped to handle motherhood. We are here today knowing that is just not true. We aren’t saying that it’s easy. But we are saying that it is right to choose life and we hold that choosing life is empowering, and...”

See “March” on Page 13
March...
Cont’d from Page 12

that love saves lives.”

Mancini said that she wanted to
highlight “the vast pro-life safety net” from pregnancy resource
centers to state resources, including
the Mississippi Access to Maternal
Assistance program — or MAMA
program — administered by the of-
fice of the Mississippi Attorney Gen-
eral Lynn Fitch, R-Miss., which con-
nects pregnant women and families
with resources for parents. Fitch
argued the Dobbs case before the Su-
preme Court.

Mississippi Deputy Attorney
General Whitney Lipscomb said at
the Nov. 14 event that “in the Dobbs
case we asked the Supreme Court to
return the issue of abortion to the
states, for the people through their
elected leaders to decide how to best
promote the dignity of life and sup-
port mothers and children.”

“And when the Supreme Court
did just that, it became incumbent
on all of us to find ways to match
the compassion in our hearts with
the compassion and justice in
our laws,” Lipscomb said, adding
that the MAMA program connects
public and private resources, rang-
ing from medical care during preg-
nancy to food stamps to job train-
ing.

“When a woman is facing an un-
expected pregnancy, what she most
needs to hear (at) that moment is
you can do this,” Mancini said.

The national march is scheduled
for Jan. 19. The 2024 event will take
place in both a presidential election
year, and one that could bring ad-
ditional ballot measures on abor-
tion, possibly in states including
Arizona and Florida.

Ohio voters Nov. 7 approved
Issue 1, a measure that will codify
abortion access in the state’s consti-
tution through fetal viability, typi-
cally understood to be 24 weeks ges-
tation, and beyond, if a physician
decided an abortion was necessary
for the sake of the mother’s life or
health. The loss marked another
electoral defeat for pro-life ballot
measures in the wake of the Su-
preme Court’s Dobbs decision: In
2022, voters in California, Ken-
tucky, Michigan, Montana, Ver-
mont and Kansas either rejected
new limitations on abortion or ex-
panded legal protections for it.

The March for Life said some of
the speakers at its 51st include
singer Danny Gokey, as well as Pas-
tor Greg and Cathe Laurie. Former
NFL tight end and founder of the
Watson 7 Foundation, Benjamin
Watson, will be speaking at the Rose
Dinner, which follows the event.

The group said a full speaker list
will be announced prior to the event.

(Kate Scanlon is a national re-
porter for OSV News covering Wash-
ington.)
Younger U.S. Priests Increasingly Identify as Theologically Conservative, ‘First Responders’ to Abuse

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — A closer look at the largest survey of U.S. Catholic priests in 50 years revealed a major shift in how priests view themselves and their priesthood," said researchers.

Compared to their older peers, younger priests are far more likely to describe themselves as theologically orthodox or conservative, politically conservative or moderate, and prepared to be “first responders” to the abuse victims they encounter in their ministry. Furthermore, researchers noted a “significant proportion of American priests say that they had ‘personally experienced sexual harassment or abuse or suffered sexual misconduct during their formation or time in seminary.’

The findings were detailed in “Polarization, Generational Dynamics, and the Ongoing Impact of the Abuse Crisis: Further Insights from the National Study of Catholic Priests,” a November 2023 report released by The Catholic Project, an initiative from The Catholic University of America designed to foster effective collaboration between the church’s clergy and laity in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis.

The report drew on data collected for The Catholic Project’s landmark “National Study of Catholic Priests,” the results of which were issued in October 2022 and featured responses from 3,516 priests (out of 10,000) across 191 dioceses and eparchies. The national study also included in-depth interviews with more than 100 priests selected from those respondents and a census survey of U.S. bishops that drew 131 responses.

Three themes were the focus of the November 2023 report on that data: polarization, generational dynamics and the ongoing impact of the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.

Stephen White, executive director of The Catholic Project, told OSV News the research represents an effort “to really understand how our priests are doing... so that we can provide the data that can help bishops and priests.”

He said, “This is really a tool for the edification and help of the church.” With respect to theology and doctrine, younger priests are far more likely to describe themselves as “conservative/orthodox” or “very conservative/orthodox,” as opposed to “very progressive,” “somewhat progressive” or “middle of the road,” according to the report.

“More than half of the priests who were ordained since 2010 see them- selves on the conservative side of the scale,” said the report. “No surveyed priests who were ordained after 2020 described themselves as ‘very progressive.’”

That shift became particularly ap- parent among the cohort of respondents ordained between 1985-1989, and has continued to the present, according to the report.

One survey respondent quoted anonymously in the report said “priests in their 70s and 60s now would be one cohort,” with a Pope John Paul II generation that “would be very orthodox” with some “freeflowing” liturgical approaches. The respondent broadly characterized priests ordained during Pope Benedict XVI’s papacy as “the hard-on-everything kind of guys,” while “the young guys now... have a lot in common with those last few cohorts.”

The report noted that while theologically “progressive” and “very progressive” priests once made up 68% of new ordinands — the 1965-1969 cohort — it added that number today “has dwindled almost to zero.”

White also told OSV News that as “the priesthood has become more unified over time theologically, it’s become more moderate politically, and it’s become more racially diverse, rhythmically and ethnically diverse over time.”

In fact, the report noted that in contrast to the theological trend among priests, the trend in their political views “seems to have stabilized to include a large proportion of ‘moderates’.”

“While roughly half (52%) of the recently-ordained cohort described themselves as ‘conservative’ or ‘very conservative,’ a full 44% (the highest percentage of any cohort) self-described as ‘moderate,’” said the report.

Yet “it’s important to qualify” such descriptors, said White.

“These are ways that priests themselves chose to describe themselves. And across generations, that changes,” he said, stressing that “context matters.”

“At the Second Vatican Council, Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) would have fairly been described as sort of a reformer or more progressive relative to his surroundings,” White said. “And without hav- ing changed too much 30 years later, he would have been described very differently.”

Additionally, “despite younger age and ordination cohorts trending more conservative/orthodox both politically and theologically, the overwhelming majority of these youngest priests do value accountability to Pope Francis,” who is often regarded as being more liberal than his prede- cessors, said the report.

The researchers found as well that priests tended to trust bishops whom they perceived to share their theological and political views. Overall, levels of trust expressed by priests in their bishop varied widely among dioceses, from 100% to as low as 9%.

Noting that “the causes and consequences of these shifts” are “no doubt complex,” the report said qualitative interviews with respondents pointed to “two watershed moments” that shape priests’ perception of themselves: the Second Vatican Council and the clergy sexual abuse crisis of 2002.

Regarding the abuse crisis, the report anonymously quoted several respondents ordained after 2002 who indicated they accepted that healing the wounds is essential to their pastoral ministry.

“The Lord intends to use me and my priesthood to help restore this and restore the trust and credibility of the priesthood for people,” said one respondent, while another quoted his seminary rector as saying, “You guys will spend your entire priesthood re- storing trust.”

The data showed that “71% of priests report knowing at least one victim-survivor of clergy sexual abuse, with 11% knowing five or more.”

However, priests are also among the victims of sexual abuse with 9% reporting they personally experienced sexual harassment or abuse or suffered sexual misconduct during priestly formation or seminary; another 6% said they were unsure or preferred not to answer.

The majority of priests surveyed (69%) “say that they feel well-prepared to minister to a victim of abuse, and 54% report that they are already doing so,” the report said.

“There’s a sense in which the church in the United States is about two decades ahead of much of the rest of the church in responding to the abuse crisis,” White said.

He and his team found in their report that “against the backdrop of all these challenges, priests remain largely satisfied in their ministry and few (4%) are considering leaving.”

“Many of these trends have been decades in the making and show little sign of reversal any time soon. Building trust and restoring confidence begins with mutual understanding,” the report stated. “It is our hope that the data presented here can strengthen that understanding among all Catho- lics, but particularly for our bishops and priests upon whom so much de- pends.”

(Gina Christian is a national re- porter for OSV News.)
En la Jornada Mundial de los Pobres, sean pobres como aquellos a quienes sirven, dice el Papa

Por Justin McLellan, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Para reconocer y afrontar la pobreza de los demás, los cristianos deben hacerse pobres como la figura de Tobit de la Biblia hebreña, dijo el Papa Francisco.

Tobit, un hombre ciego y anciano que dedicó su vida al servicio de los demás, “la atención efectiva hacia los pobres le era posible porque había experimentado la pobreza en su propia carne”, escribió el pontífice en su mensaje para la celebración en noviembre de la Jornada Mundial de los Pobres.

El mensaje papal se publicó el 13 de junio, fiesta de San Antonio de Padua, patrón de los pobres.

Los cristianos están llamados a “encontrar a cada pobre y a cada tipo de pobreza, sacudiendo de nosotros la indiferencia y la banalidad con las que escudamos un bienestar ilusorio”, escribió el Papa Francisco. “No imparte el color de la piel, la condición social, la procedencia. Si soy pobre, puedo reconocer quién es el hermano que realmente me necesita”.

El lema de la Jornada Mundial de los Pobres 2023 es un pasaje del Libro de Tobías: “No apartes tu rostro del pobre”. “Cuando estamos ante un pobre no podemos volverse la mirada hacia otra parte, porque eso nos impedirá encontrarnos con el rostro del Señor Jesús”, escribió el Papa Francisco.

En su mensaje para la jornada mundial, que se celebrará el 19 de noviembre, el Papa Francisco enumeró una serie de fenómenos culturales que impiden que la gente se preocupe por los pobres: una mayor presión para vivir en la opulencia, una tendencia a desprestar el sufrimiento, la realidad virtual que se impone a la vida real y un sentido de la prisa cotidiana que impide que la gente se detenga a cuidar de los demás. Propuso la parábola del Buen Samaritano, que se detiene a ayudar a un hombre en la calle apaleado por unos ladrones, para contrarrestar los complejos que muchas personas tienen contra que ayudar a los pobres.

La parábola “no es un relato del pasado; interpela el presente de cada uno de nosotros en el aquí y ahora de nuestra vida cotidiana”, dijo. “Delegar en otros es fácil; ofrecer dinero para que otros hagan caridad es un gesto generoso; la vocación de todo cristiano es implicarse en primera persona”.

El Papa agradeció a Dios por los hombres y mujeres “de toda edad y condición social” que se dedican a cuidar de los pobres y excluidos, los "vecinos de casa" que encontramos cada día y que en el silencio se hacen pobres y con los pobres.

El Papa Francisco también pidió un "serio y eficaz compromiso político y legislativo" para defender a los derechos de los que gozan las personas a la alimentación, el vestido, la vivienda, la atención médica, el descanso y los servicios sociales, tal y como se dice en la encíclica de San Juan XXIII de 1963 "Pacem in Terris" (Paz en la Tierra).

Al mismo tiempo que reconocía la necesidad de presionar a las instituciones públicas para que defiendan a los pobres, el Papa elogió a los voluntarios que sirven al bien común con “espíritu de solidaridad y subsidiariedad”, afirmando que "no sirve permanecer pasivos en espera de recibir 'desde lo alto'".

El Papa también señaló el modo en que la pobreza se ve exacerbada por condiciones de trabajo inhumanas, salarios inadecuados, el "flagelo" de la inseguridad laboral y los accidentes de trabajo con resultado de muerte. Los jóvenes, dijo, también se ven afectados por una pobreza cultural que destruye su autoestima y conduce a la frustración e incluso al suicidio.

Instó a no caer en "la retórica" ni limitarse a considerar las estadísticas al hablar de los pobres, sino recordar que "los pobres son personas; tienen rostros, historias, corazones y almas".

"El interés por los pobres no se agota en listas de apoyos o programas sociales", dijo el Papa Francisco, "exige restablecer las justas relaciones interpersonales que han sido afectadas por la pobreza".

Llamando a un cuidado de los pobres marcado por el "realismo evangélico", el Papa invitó a los cristianos a discernir las necesidades genuinas de los pobres en lugar de sus propias esperanzas y aspiraciones personales.

"Lo que [los pobres] necesitan con mayor urgencia es nuestra humanidad, nuestro corazón abierto al amor", dijo.

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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 se alienta 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 Ninos y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513.

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 Ninos y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513.

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 eclesiásticas apropiadas para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados a 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuilkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; o Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264.


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El formulario se titulará "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 303, Wheeling WV 26003.


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.dwvc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informe ma 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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