

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

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 blessing of an abbot or abbess; 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



Hallie Brown Photo, Hallie Michelle Photography
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 Víctor Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and approved 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 who are personally convinced that there is no opposition between membership in the Catholic Church and in Masonic Lodges."

The dicastery'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 dicastery "for suggestions regarding how to respond to this reality" from a pastoral point of view, including its "doctrinal implications."

The dicastery wrote "that active membership in Freemasonry by a member of the faithful is forbidden because of the irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry" — a position that was reiterated by the doctrinal congregation in its "Declaration on Masonic Associations" in 1983 and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 2003.

Therefore, it said, "those who are formally and knowingly en-

rolled in Masonic Lodges" — including clerics — "and 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 dicastery 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-confessional humanitarian 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.

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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Bishops...

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The 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' 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 underscoring the threat of abortion as "our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone."

The day's surprise came as Bishop Chad W. Zielinski of New Ulm, Minnesota, chair of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs, requested the postponement of a vote on a comprehensive pastoral framework for Indigenous ministry which was on the agenda.

Bishop Zielinski said the subcommittee had met the night before to review amendments and decided it needed more time to address them and would re-present the text to the bishops at their 2024 June assembly.

The bishops also approved revised national statutes for Christian Initiation.

The U.S. bishops also voted nearly unanimously to support the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in their request for Pope Francis to name St. John Henry Newman a doctor of the church. Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, said the doctrine committee he chairs had studied St. John Henry Newman's writings and recommended the saint as "worthy of this high honor."

A floor discussion followed as Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston asked about the prudence of advocating for a recently declared saint (2019) to be declared a "doctor of the church," while joking he also didn't want 1,900 years to elapse before a saint is named a "doctor of the church" like the first-century St. Irenaeus.

Several bishops spoke from the floor about Newman's relevance to evangelization, the development of a synodal church and his ecumenical admiration, including the respect he holds among the Eastern churches.

Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, also noted the saint unites Catholics on both the "conservative" and "progressive" sides.

"We should take advantage of that and study his writings. It might really help to heal the divisions in the church," he said.

Outside the hotel where the bishops' assembly was held, the Baltimore-based Defend Life organization held a rosary rally led by Bishop Joseph E. Strickland. The event, however, was planned in advance of the bishop learning Nov. 11, just days before the assembly, that Pope Francis had removed him from pastoral governance of his Diocese of Tyler, Texas.

About 125 participants, including some clergy and religious, participated.

Back in the bishops' plenary session, Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu gave a presentation on the bishops' pastoral care of Asian and Pacific Islander communities, which he said were the "third largest segment of the U.S.' Catholic population," and he thanked Cardinal Pierre for his work to have more Asian and Pacific Islander bishops appointed in the U.S.

The bishops also voted to replace the USCCB's current strategic planning cycle with a mission planning process.

While emphasizing the work of streamlining, reducing spending and removing silos at the USCCB, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, the USCCB's new secretary-elect, said the new model would propose two aspects: the normal ordinary responsibilities of the conference and then "mission directives that evolve after a process of discernment."

Archbishop Coakley explained it provided an opportunity to put into action synodality by inviting feedback from bishops, who could be informed by their pastoral and presbyteral councils, with time set aside in regional meetings to distill insights into a few initiatives.

Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, and Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Oregon, both expressed their support for the development.

"I think it gives us a chance to bring new wind into the life of the conference at a time when we're looking to do things more synodally," Bishop Seitz said.

However, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, took to the floor to ask how the USCCB was going to head in this direction without new resources. Just prior to the discussion, the bishops passed the USCCB's budget overwhelmingly — with no increases in its assessment on dioceses for the fourth year in a row despite the effects of inflation. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation calculator, \$1.20 in October purchases what \$1 did four years earlier.

"Part of that is part of our ongoing discussion," Archbishop Coakley responded. "But I don't know that it would necessarily mean any sort of budgetary increase."

"I'm just speaking as a diocesan bishop who knows that something's got to give, you know," the cardinal said before sitting down.

During a presentation on the National Eucharistic Revival, many bishops spoke about exciting developments taking place in their diocese.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, gave an upbeat presentation, noting the bishops are "halfway through this National Eucharistic Revival." He shared that attendees of the National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21 in Indianapolis now have the option of purchasing single-day and weekend passes, among other provisions to make participation more affordable and flexible, including scholarship from the bishops' Solidarity Fund. He also mentioned the Apostolic Penitentiary is going to grant a plenary indulgence to anyone who participates in one of the four legs of the pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress.

His figures also indicated the church was also halfway there. Among the Catholic Church's 17,000 parishes in the U.S., the National Eucharistic Revival has "8,000 parish point persons" and over 10,000 downloads of its parish playbook, while the latest statistics on in-person weekly Mass attendance was hovering

at 17%, below pre-pandemic levels.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, provided an update on the newly launched Institute on the Catholicism to the U.S. Catholic bishops, and said its vision of "evangelizing catechesis" intersected with the ongoing National Eucharistic Revival.

Peter Kilpatrick, president of The Catholic University of America, discussed the mission of the university and encouraged the bishops to learn more about the U.S.'s only pontifical university in Washington and engage in a "robust dialogue" about how it can be of greater service to the church.

The bishops also heard about the USCCB's mental health campaign from Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Barron, chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

The campaign — announced Oct. 10 to coincide with World Mental Health Day — is a response to the "dire mental health crisis" the nation now faces, said Archbishop Gudziak in his Nov. 15 address to the bishops' assembly, during which he cited data from the Centers for Disease Control indicating that more than one in five adults in the U.S. live with a mental illness.

The presentation evoked the most sustained discussion over the past two days from the assembly, with many bishops weighing in on the importance of addressing the issue.

Cardinal DiNardo noted that Houston is "running out of psychiatrists, particularly for young people," and emphasized the need for Catholics to enter this profession.

"The lack of such help is very disturbing in the United States," he said.

The day's session concluded with a presentation on how the new lay ministry of the instituted catechist established by Pope Francis can help the U.S. bishops give life to the "evangelizing catechesis" they're seeking to give their

people.

During an interview with OSV News on the conference's second day, Archbishop Broglio noted the unity demonstrated by the conference, but also emphasized the bishops most need wisdom and guidance on "how we draw people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The first day of the assembly saw elections to important posts while public presentations chiefly centered on synodality, the use of technology in the liturgy and advancing the cause for canonization of a champion of evangelizing through media.

The day's events were marked by little public discussion from the floor. The bishops' meeting was prefaced by 90 minutes of closed-door "fraternal dialogues," which gave bishops face-to-face group discussions before the plenary assembly itself. Toward the end of the day, a few U.S. delegates to the Synod on Synodality shared with the bishops their positive experiences of the Oct. 4-29 global gathering. The U.S. bishops voted to approve the sainthood cause launched by the Archdiocese of New York for Father Isaac Hecker (1819-1888), a Catholic convert and pioneering Catholic publisher who founded the Paulist fathers.

The bishops elected Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City as secretary-elect of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. They also elected chairmen-elect for six standing committees: Catholic Education: Bishop David M. O'Connell of Trenton, New Jersey; Communications: Bishop William D. Byrne of Springfield, Massachusetts; Cultural Diversity in the Church: Bishop Robert J. Brennan of Brooklyn, New York; Doctrine: Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn; National Collections: Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg of Reno, Nevada; and Pro-Life Activities: Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio.

Archbishop Coakley will serve one year as "elect" and the chairmen-elect also will each serve for one year as "elect" before they each begin a three-year term in their respective positions at the conclusion of the fall plenary assembly in 2024, when the current committee chairmen complete their three-year term.

(Peter Jesserer Smith is the national news and features editor for OSV News.)



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Home...

Cont'd from Page 1
for a few weeks.

"Maternity homes are a wonderful, wonderful way for us to get our hands in and help these 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 rancor. Introduced by event emcee Ed Wilson as "a voice

for the unborn, a voice for the newly born and a voice for all of us who care about the unborn," Rucker said, "there's a lot of ugliness, a lot of division" in the world in general, something she urged attendees to counter by demonstrating love toward everyone.

"The model we portray can change the world," Rucker said.

The maternity home, which opened in January, has already changed the world for those who live there.

"Mary's Refuge is the first stable home I have ever had, a safe space to raise my 2-



Hallie Brown Photo, Hallie Michelle Photography
Regina Smith, president of the Jefferson County Chapter of West Virginians for Life, was one of the guest speakers at the second annual gala for Mary's Refuge, a maternity home in Martinsburg.

month-old son, Jaxen," said Tiffany, 36, who lives at Mary's Refuge. "He has two brothers, ages 17 and 10, who came into the world while I was addicted to heroin and incapable of raising them. They were taken from me, so they don't know me at all. I will not let history repeat itself with Jaxen."

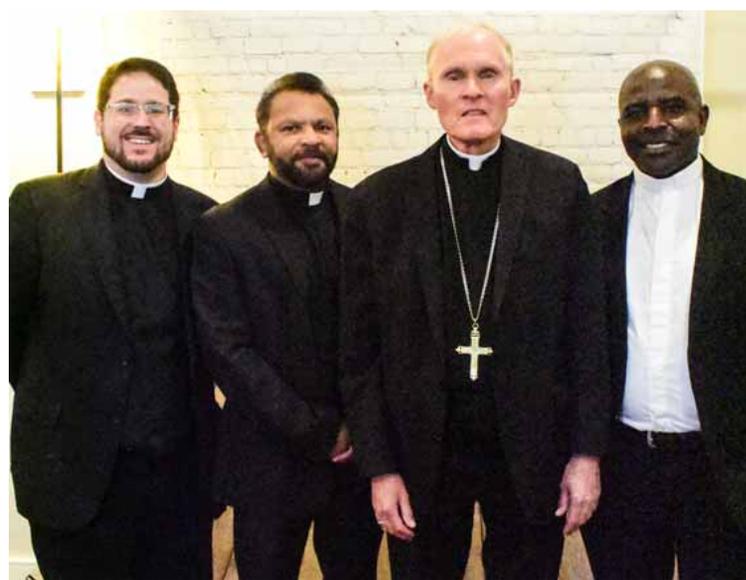
Tiffany, the newly certified life coach, started taking classes this month through Blue Ridge CTC toward a degree in addictions counseling.

"My passion is helping people who are in the same situation as I was," Tiffany said. "I want to be the trusted person they need to get them on a positive path, the person I wish I had in my life at my lowest points."

"Mary's Refuge saved my life and gave my son everything he needs. This place, these people, restored my hope in humanity. It really IS this good."

To make the space even better, Michael Gormley, president of the Mary's Refuge board, announced a goal of raising \$35,000 for a playground to be used exclusively by the guests at Mary's Refuge and replacing a portion of the exterior of the building.

Deacon Dave Galvin of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town ended the event by expressing hope for ending the banner day with a home run. He shared a story about baseball legend Babe Ruth, who credited a man who taught him at St. Mary's Industrial Training School in Baltimore with developing his baseball game and his character.



Hallie Brown Photo, Hallie Michelle Photography
Among the nearly 200 people who attended the second annual gala for Mary's Refuge were, from left, Father Thomas Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg; Father Paul Vazhappilly, associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish; Bishop Mark Brennan; and Father Aloysius Boh, pastor of St. Bernadette Parish in Hedgesville.

Ruth said that Martin Leo Boutilier shaped him from a troubled boy into a skilled professional athlete. In adulthood, the man, also known as Brother Matthias, helped steer him away from womanizing and carousing. Deacon Galvin said Matthias reminded Ruth of the God-centered life he led as a child and reminded him that the boys at St. Mary's deserved a hero whose behavior they could model.

"I'm looking for Babe Ruths," heroes who are willing to help keep Mary's Refuge running, Galvin said as he invited guests to join the Cradle Club, a group he hopes to include 200 people and/or businesses committed to donating \$1,000 each on an annual

basis to the maternity home. Such pledges would ensure the site can continue to provide stable housing, educational resources, prenatal care and parenting classes for years to come. He added that smaller contributions are just as cherished and reflective of love for mothers and their babies.

Checks to Mary's Refuge, which receives no government money, may be made out to St. Joseph Parish (with Mary's Refuge written in the memo line), and mailed to the church at P.O. Box 885, Martinsburg, WV 25402.

For more information about Mary's Refuge, call (304) 350-1632; email life@marysrefuge.com; or go to marysrefuge.com.



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To start this ministry in your parish, contact:

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

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 Melocoton, 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.

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Women's Eucharistic Retreat at St. Joseph the Worker in Weirton Draws over 60 Participants from Area Parishes

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



Courtesy Photo

Sister Peter Thomas Burson, OP, speaks at the retreat.



Courtesy Photo

Dr. Tom Octave speaks at the retreat.



Courtesy Photo

Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens Jr., V.E., kneels before the Most Blessed Sacrament during adoration at the Women's Eucharistic Revival Retreat at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Weirton, where he is pastor.

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 Ekvovich 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 Ekvovich'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.



Courtesy Photo

Participants enjoy refreshments at the Women's Eucharistic Revival Retreat at St. Joseph the Worker Grade School in Weirton.



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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

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.

The papal message was published June 13, the feast of St. Anthony of Padua, patron of the poor.

Christians are called to “acknowledge every poor person and every form of poverty, abandoning the indifference and the banal excuses we make to protect our illusory well-being,” Pope Francis wrote. “Regardless of the color of their skin, their social standing, the place from which they came, if I myself am poor, I can recognize my brothers and sisters in need of my help.”

The theme for World Day of the Poor 2023 is a passage from the Book of Tobit: “Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor.”

“When we encounter a poor person, we cannot look away, for that would prevent us from encountering the face of the Lord Jesus,” Pope Francis wrote.

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 affluently, 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 parable “is not simply a story from the past; it continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives,” he said. “It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved.”

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.”

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).

While recognizing the need to pressure 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 of no use to wait passively to receive everything ‘from on high.’”

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 leads to frustration and even suicide.

He urged people not to fall into “rhetorical excess” or merely consider statistics when speaking of the poor, but to remember that “the poor are persons; they have faces, stories, hearts and souls.”

“Caring for the poor is more than simply a matter of a hasty hand-out,” Pope Francis said, “it calls for reestablishing the just interpersonal relationships that poverty harms.”

Calling for a care for the poor marked by “Gospel realism,” the pope invited Christians to discern the genuine needs of the poor rather than their own personal hopes and aspirations.

“What the poor need is certainly our humanity, our hearts open to love,” he said.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA MISSION MOMENT



Courtesy Photo

Families from Catholic Charities’ Relatives as Parents Program gather for a Halloween party.

Harvesting Halloween Joy:

CCWVa’s Relatives as Parents Program Unites Caregivers and Kids for a Spooktacular Celebration

This October, our Relatives as Parents Program held a Halloween party, bringing together costumed kids and caregivers over pizza.

“It was a fun time for parents and kids to get together and celebrate the holiday,” said Diana Bell, Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) assistant Chief Program officer.

CCWVa’s Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) serves families in which caregivers other than the biological parents are raising children. We often see grandparents or aunts or uncles stepping in to raise children when their biological parents are not in a place to do so.

RAPP provides a variety of supports and interventions for these children and families. The program gives participating caregivers the resources they need to be informed, effective, and responsible parents.

While the children did a Halloween craft, the caregivers learned about parenting topics from the monthly guest speaker. “As much as our parents learn from the guest speaker at each meeting, they also learn from each other,” said Bell.

In that way, group members engage and support one another.

“The common aspect of raising other peoples’ children – for whatever reason – brings the parents together,” said Bell. To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, please visit www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org.

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God’s love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes, and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.

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The Cathedral of St. Joseph

'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."



OSV News Photo/courtesy Indi Gregory family via Christian Concern

Indi Gregory, an 8-month-old child suffering from a degenerative disease who was at the center of a legal battle in the U.K. to keep her on life support, is pictured Sept. 22, the day of her baptism. Indi died Nov. 13, after neither a court battle nor Italian citizenship granted to the infant prevented the British courts from halting her life support.

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 move-

ment does to support women facing difficult or unplanned pregnancies.

At an event in Washington, Mancini said the theme was selected due to what she called "the false narrative around abortion, whether it's through mainstream media or the entertainment industry or academia, is that abortion is empowering and necessary."

"We disagree," she 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 who are here today know 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

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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 office of the Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch, R-Miss., which connects pregnant women and families with resources for parents. Fitch argued the Dobbs case before the Supreme 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 support 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, ranging from medical care during pregnancy to food stamps to job training.

"When a woman is facing an unexpected 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 additional ballot measures on abortion, 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 constitution through fetal viability, typically understood to be 24 weeks gestation, 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 Supreme Court's Dobbs decision: In 2022, voters in California, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Vermont and Kansas either rejected new limitations on abortion or expanded legal protections for it.

The March for Life said some of the speakers at its 51st include singer Danny Gokey, as well as Pastor 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 reporter for OSV News covering Washington.)



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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 has 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 themselves 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, racially 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 having 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 predecessors, 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 restoring 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 Catholics, but particularly for our bishops and priests upon whom so much depends.”

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



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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 hebrea, 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 importa 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 volver 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 despreciar 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 la ayuda 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 los derechos de los que gozan todas 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 limosnas apresuradas", 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.

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 eclesásticas 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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