THE CATHOLIC Spirit

Pope's Prayer Intention is for Those Struggling with Suicidal Thoughts

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Leo XIV has asked Catholics to join him in praying for those who struggle with suicidal thoughts, and for all people "who live in darkness and despair."

"May they always find a community that welcomes them, listens to them and accompanies them," including by offering comfort, support and "necessary professional help," he prayed.

The pope's video sharing his prayer intention for November was distributed Nov. 4 by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network.

"Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life," he said in the video.

"May we know how to be close with respect and tenderness, helping to heal wounds, build bonds and open horizons," Pope Leo said. "Together, may we rediscover that life is a gift, that there is still beauty and meaning, even in the midst of pain and suffering."

"We are well aware that those who follow you are also vulnerable to sadness without hope," he said.

The pope prayed that the Lord would "always make us feel your love so that, through your closeness to us, we can recognize and proclaim to all the infinite love of the Father who leads us by the hand to renew our trust in the life you give us."

Choosing suicide prevention as his prayer intention for the month of November coincided with an international conference titled, "Ministry of Hope: International Catholic Forum on Mental Well-being," being held in Rome Nov. 5-7.

Organized by the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and under the patronage of the Pontifical Academy for Life, the conference was to discuss how the Christian community can accompany people who struggle with mental health issues, depression and extreme pain, and how to prevent the risk of suicide through listening and closeness.

The November video was filmed in the Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona, which has made mental health a pastoral priority with an office dedicated to mental health ministry.

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Pittsburgh Auxiliary Bishop Closes Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague in Wheeling

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—On the final night of the Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Nov. 3, Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid of Pittsburgh said the infant is a sign of hope. This was the third year the bishop was a guest homilist at the novena and he shared that it was a joy to be with the congregation once again for the devotion.

In this Holy Year, both Pope Francis and Pope Leo have given the faithful the message of hope to ponder, Bishop Waltersheid said in his homily.

"And it's a timely message for us to have because if truth be told there are those days when we find it hard to really exercise the virtue of hope." Bishop Waltersheid said."But it's a theological virtue that has already been given to us

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Colleen Rowan photo

Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid of Pittsburgh blesses the faithful on the final night of the Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Nov. 3.

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The diocese celebrates an annual Mass of remembrance for those who have died by suicide and seeks to provide safe spaces for listening, to share clear guidance on how to help someone in crisis and to lead public campaigns to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Bishop John Dolan of Phoenix told the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, "I have personally walked the difficult road of suicide loss," having lost a brother, two sisters and a brother-in-law to death by suicide.

"There are certain wounds and mysteries that we cannot comprehend. And yet, we hope," trusting in a loving Father "who holds our loved ones near, and we turn to one another, walking forward together as companions on the journey," he said. "If you feel broken, if you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, know that you are deeply loved and the Church is here for you. You are not alone."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2280-2283) teaches that suicide contradicts love of self, others and God. However, it also recognizes that "serious psychological disturbances, anxiety, or fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish personal responsibility," the prayer network said in a press release.

The church "invites us not to despair of the eternal salvation of those who have taken their own life, but to entrust them to God's mercy and to the community's prayer," it said.

"The general practice of the church today is to treat very respectfully those who have died by suicide, partly because in recent years, the church has progressively grown in its attentiveness to mental health, both through prayer and its pastoral care," it added.

Jesuit Father Cristóbal Fones, international director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network said, "The church is not a substitute for healthcare professionals — psychologists, doctors, therapists. It can carry out an important role by offering proximity, listening, and hope."

Catholics can learn in their parishes and dioceses how to reach out to those who suffer, comfort those who are sad, take care of each other and share in Christ's hope, he said in the press release.

Each month, the prayer network's Click To Pray app, has a day dedicated to praying to support those who are going through a particularly vulnerable time, he added.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 720,000 people die due to suicide each year. In the United States, the current suicide rate is about a third higher than it was in 2000.

About 56% of those who choose to end their life are under the age of 50, with suicide being the third leading cause of death among people 15 to 29 years old.

Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention for November is: "For the prevention of suicide." The pope's prayer and a video to accompany it were released by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network Nov. 4. Below is the an image from the video.

CNS photo/screen grab, Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

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 Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other concerns such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in WV.EthicsPoint can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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

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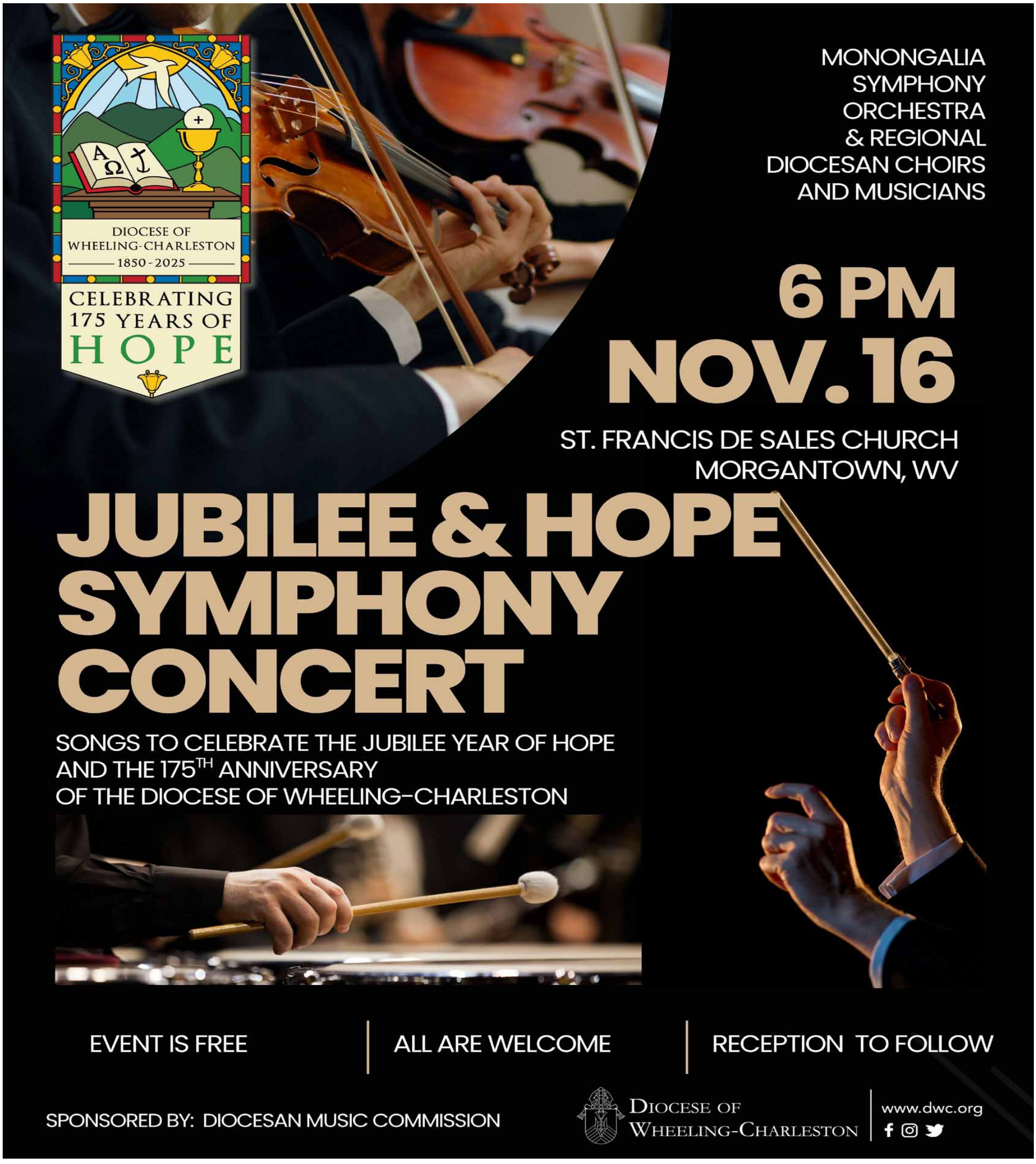
The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

There are 10 print editions in 2025. Below are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org.

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



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Colleen Rowan photo

In the procession at the end of the final night of the Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Nov. 3, Bob Braido carries a statue of the infant. He and his wife, Brenda, were very instrumental in bringing the novena to the cathedral.

Novena ...

Cont'd from Page 1

when the waters of baptism were poured over us."

The news of all that is happening in the country and throughout the world and even in the church can rob us of hope, he said, but then we recognize how hope came to find us in the form of a tiny child.

"An infant conceived in the womb of our blessed lady in that little house in Nazareth and then born for us in a stable in Bethlehem," he said. "So, when those days come along ... when it seems that hope has flown away, we remember him. Those days when we feel hopeless and helpless, those times we think nothing I do will matter or what I set about to do always seems to fail—and then our ancient enemy comes creeping along and says, give up—we know that hope already dwells in our midst and dwells in our midst in surprising ways."

In the gospel for the novena (Matthew 28: 16-20) the 11 disciples go to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus ordered them to go, the bishop said. When they all saw him, they worshipped but then they doubted, he pointed out.

"Sound familiar?" Bishop William Waltersheid asked the congregation. "We could be filled with faith, we could have hope in abundance, we could think that we would love as Jesus has taught us to love, and when we see him we fall down in adoration as he is truly present on the altar tonight under the form of this Blessed Sacrament, but then a thought comes into our minds and we doubt."

Like the apostles, he said, we simply need to listen to the voice of the master who said: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

The voice of the ancient enemy, Bishop Waltersheid said, the doubts that creep into minds and into hearts are dispelled by these words of our savior.

The bishop stressed that we can do anything he asks us to do, even in those times when we are feeling helpless, hopeless, or powerless.

"We look to the one who came into the world taking on human flesh as a tiny child," he said, "and just as he is depicted in this beautiful image of the Infant of Prague — that one tiny hand holds the world and in the other tiny hand is bestowed the blessing upon the world and upon each one of us."

Whatever the Lord asks us to do, he empowers us to do, the bishop said, by his presence, unfailingly with us unconditionally loving us and always giving us hope.

Refering to the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar, the bishop said: "...we see hope for the world, salvation for souls, destruction of sin, and healing for every one of us in precisely the way he knows we need to be healed. Present in what appears to be a mere piece of bread, but in it is heaven itself. For he, who is Lord of heaven and earth, fulfills his promise to be with us always until the end of the age by giving to his church this tremendous sacrament of his body and his blood.

"Who then are we to doubt? Who then are we to say I cannot oh Lord, when we know he who commands says you can because I am with you. Whatever is happening in our life, in our families, whatever trials afflict our families or marriages, whatever difficulty comes into our lives because of work, no matter what seems to be falling apart in our nation, no matter what happens throughout the world as war rages in Ukraine now for these last years, when Christians are persecuted in Nigeria and China and throughout the world, we may say what can I do about any of it? The little king says to us come to me and I will show you."

Following his homily, Bishop Waltersheid carried the Most Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance throughout the cathedral stopping roughly 30 times to bestow blessings upon the faithful.

The novena began Sept. 8, and each week included Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a reflection by a guest homilist, music, and prayers to the Infant of Prague.

Other guest homilists were: Bishop Mark E. Brennan; Father Penumaka Manikyalarao, rector of the cathedral; Father Chester Pabin of the Diocese of Steubenville; Father Dennis Schuelkens, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker and Sacred Heart of Mary parishes in Weirton; Father John Soplinski, vice rector of the cathedral and parochial vicar of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling; Deacon Jacob Manning, permanent deacon at the cathedral and St. Alphonsus; Deacon Doug Breiding of the cathedral who is also director of diocesan cemeteries; and Father Daniel Heusel, pastor of St. John Parish in Bellaire, Ohio, and St. Mary Parish in Shadyside, Ohio.

Colleen Rowan photo

In the procession at the end of the final night of the Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Nov. 3, Bishop William Waltersheid of Pittsburgh blesses the faithful.

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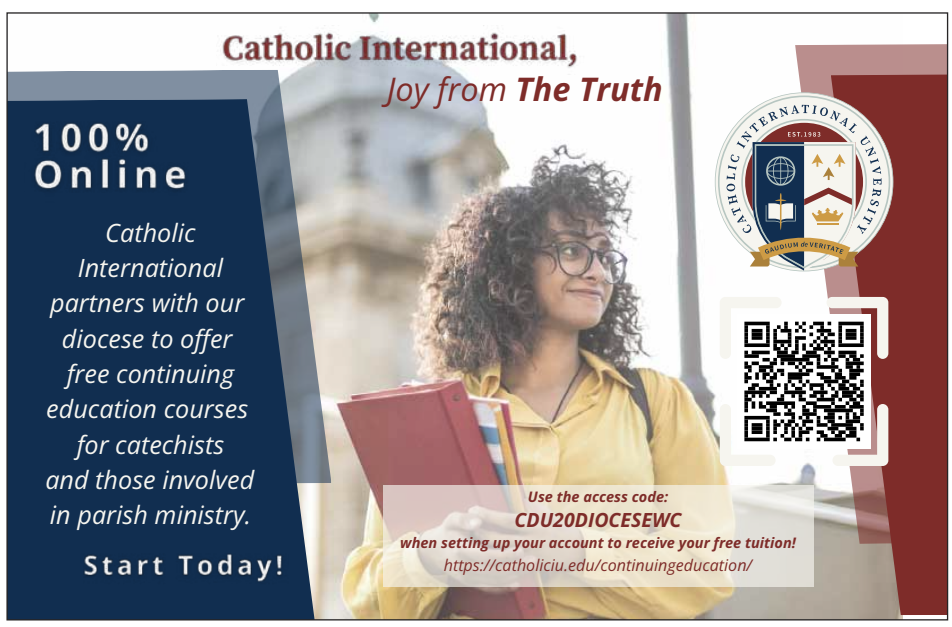
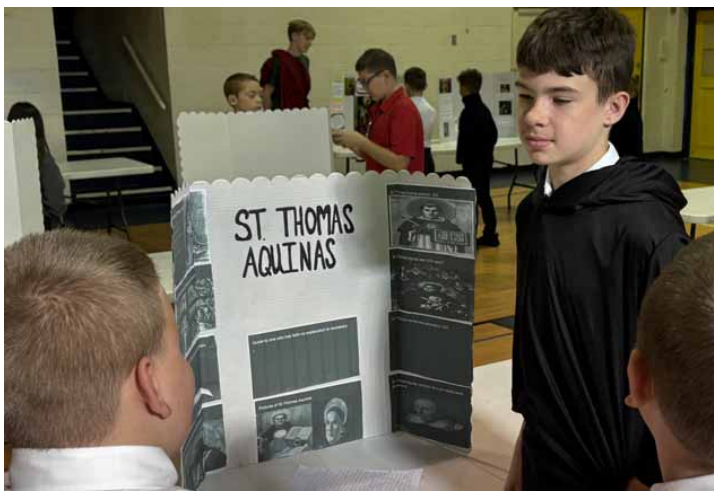


St. Vincent's Students Bring the Saints to Life

Students at St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling brought the saints to life on Nov. 3. The sixth through eighth graders portrayed many holy men and women from St. Carlo Acutis, the first millennial to be canonized; to St. Peter, the first pope; to St. Veronica, who wiped the face of our Lord as he carried his cross; to Our Lady, the mother of our savior; among many others. The students stood at stations around the gym beside display boards with photos and information about the saints they portrayed. Younger students, families, and St. Vincent de Paul parishioners were able to visit each station and listen as each student, speaking as his or her chosen saint, spoke about his or her life. Here are photos of the students in action. The gym was also decorated with younger students' artwork about the saints. *Colleen Rowan photos*



A Child Shall Lead Them

Evangelization in Our Catholic Schools

By Megan White (director of religious education at St. Patrick Parish in Weston)

"You're an Apostle!" Bishop Brennan exclaimed upon meeting nine-year-old Kian Hefner, who had just served at the altar for the first time during the bishop's visit to St. Patrick's School in Weston.

Moments before, parish secretary Sandra Mick had excitedly introduced the bishop to Kian, eager to tell him the story of a young boy who inspired his family to convert to Catholicism.

The Hefner family—consisting of Kian's parents, Brian and Rachel, his little sister, Ainsley, and aunt, Nastausha—joined the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil in 2025. Their journey to that point was shrouded in unlikely events that can only be explained by the Spirit of God that gently guides and beckons us toward Him.

Three years ago, after moving to Lewis County, Kian was set to enter the first grade. The Hefner family went to enroll him in the local public school but quickly realized the school's schedule would not align with their family's needs. With school soon approaching, a decision had to be made. They contacted the local Catholic school, St. Patrick's. Kian's mother felt an immediate sense of calm when informed about the school's programs. "By the grace of God, they had exactly one spot left open in first grade!" Rachel reflects.

While the Hefner family was thrilled to have their children enrolled in a school that provided a safe and engaging learning environment that aligned with their schedules, the last thing they expected was for the school to provide a foundation for faith to be built upon. A year later, when in the second grade, half of the children in Kian's class were preparing for their First Holy Communion. He paid close attention to the teachings about the Eucharist and quickly felt a longing in his heart.

"I kept telling my mom and my dad that one of them needed to become Catholic so I can take First Holy Communion," Kian said. His parents attest to this strong desire, stating, "He would come home excited to share what he learned about the faith and ask thoughtful questions about God, the Church, and the Mass. Before long, he began asking if we could all attend Mass together on Sundays. It was clear that his heart was being drawn toward the Catholic faith…"

But was his desire to become Catholic simply because the children around him were undergoing such a sacred process during their second-grade year? No parent wants their child to miss out, but joining the Church was quite the commitment that their hearts were not ready for. Yet, the Eucharistic Lord was not finished calling the Hefner family to His heart.

Second grade came and went for Kian, whose desire for the sacraments remained steadfast. He recalls talking to his parents about it on a daily basis. Eventually, his parents, as well as his aunt Nastausha, registered for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) program at St. Patrick's Church, and Kian was joyfully enrolled in First Communion preparation classes during his third-grade year. Like many people sampling Catholic teaching as outsiders, the Hefners felt skeptical but were curious to find out what it was exactly that had little Kian so enamored.

Throughout their conversion journey, Kian offered constant encouragement to his family. Many moments left a lasting impact on his aunt.

"Watching his sincerity and consistency in living out his faith deeply moved me. He never misses a prayer before meals and speaks about Jesus with such conviction and love. Seeing that kind of faith in someone so young made me stop and think about my own relationship with God," Nastausha said.

She described her early days attending Mass: "…it all felt a little overwhelming at first—I was just taking it all in. One day, as I sat there quietly observing, Kian looked over at me and gently motioned for me to place my hands together in prayer. It was such a small gesture, but it meant so much. For a while, I didn't feel comfortable kneeling or going up during certain parts of the Mass, and he would give me that little look, as if to say, 'Come on, you can do it.' His gentle encouragement and quiet confidence helped me feel more at home in the Church and more open to fully participating in the faith."

Nastausha also treasures a memory of her nephew giving her a rosary and asking her to keep it forever. She placed it in her car as a constant reminder of her faith as well as "the quiet way God works through others—even the very young."

It was not long until the Hefner family came to understand why Kian so loved the Catholic faith: Christ was the missing piece in their lives.

"I had been carrying a sense of emptiness that nothing and no one seemed to fill—until I realized what I was missing was a true relationship with God," Nastausha wrote before the Easter Vigil.

The Easter season was brimming with joy as the Hefners entered into full communion with the Catholic Church, Kian finally receiving the Eucharist for the first time. Their newfound faith has impacted their lives in many ways, strengthening their family and acting as a guiding light during times of uncertainty. Kian now serves devotedly at the altar of the Lord, where he enjoys being able to witness the miracles of the Mass up close.

The story of the Hefner family is inspiring but not entirely unique.

It highlights a phenomenon recently observed within the St. Patrick's community—that of the school serving as a catalyst for conversion.

Over the past few years, many families have entered faith formation due to their children coming home from school with a love and curiosity for religion.

In the recent past, a private education has not always been accessible to many. However, with the rise of the Hope Scholarship in West Virginia, financial barriers are being removed for families who desire a Catholic education for their children, opening the door for a more diverse student population.

This exciting shift is a call to mission. We must ask ourselves: Do our school communities bear the light and truth of Jesus Christ to all who enter our doors?

St. Patrick's School religion teacher, Mrs. Fiona Ayala, comments, "In today's world our children face a culture

See "Child" on Page 7

Courtesy photo

The Hefner family: Brian, Rachel, Kian, & and Ainsley with their sponsor, Josh Garton,, after the Easter Vigil at St. Patrick Church in Weston.

Child ...

Cont'd from Page 6

that often leaves them jaded and isolated. As a Catholic school, we are uniquely able to offer them something they desperately want and need. We offer them hope—hope that does not fail, because it is founded on the truth that is Jesus Christ."

How do Catholic schools effectively evangelize?

Ayala said as adults we are timid to share the Gospel, but children are actively seeking truth: "Our students are smart kids, and they are looking for something solid, something real to hold onto." As a model of evangelization, she looks to the 4th-century saint Macrina, who crafted a template for the faith communities of her day. "At the heart of all we do must be Christ. We must make the sacraments available to students, open the Scriptures to them, teach them the richness of the Mass, boldly confess the faith, and not keep Jesus confined to religion class. There is so much richness in the liturgical life, ritual, and traditions of the Church—our students deserve to experience it fully," Ayala said.

Father Doug Ondeck, who has seen the school double in size since his arrival at St. Patrick's in 2021, speaks to the purpose of a Catholic education, saying, "At the heart of a solid Catholic education is instruction in the knowledge and love of God and in serving our neighbors out of that knowledge and love."

When asked what role sending his son to Catholic school played in their family's conversion, Kian's father, Brian, summed it up in one word: "Everything. Without his enrollment in St. Patrick's, I do not believe any of this would have been possible—at least not in the foreseeable future."

The Lord continues to plant families like theirs within our communities, and the fields are ripe for harvest!

Therefore, let us not hold back in sharing our faith, but rather heed Pope St. John Paul II's famous line: "Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ!"

Courtesy photo

At St. Patrick Church in Weston, Bishop Mark Brennan stands with Kian Hefner after he served at Mass for the first time.

Courtesy photo

Nastausha Hefner, Kian Hefner's aunt, is baptized by Father Doug Ondeck at the Easter Vigil at St. Patrick Church in Weston.

REMAINING CHRISTIAN IN A CULTURE OF DEATH

FR. CALVIN ROBINSON

FROM THE UK TO THE US

Calvin Robinson is an Anglo-Catholic priest currently serving as Rector of St Paul's Church of Grand Rapids. A former television personality with GB News in England, Fr Robinson has appeared on a wide variety of programs including Megan Kelly, Eric Metaxas, Tucker Carlson, and Turning Point UK and USA. Many commentators describe him as the most cancelled man in the Western world today. The constant onslaught of British and American cancel culture has never prevented him from speaking Christian truths at all times, often challenging the prevailing spirit of compromise in our churches today.

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WEST VIRGINIA—The following is from the diocese's Office of Stewardship & Development: As we approach the end of the year and continue supporting the Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA), we encourage all parishioners to prayerfully consider making their gift now — while current tax advantages for charitable giving are still in place. Federal legislation known as the Big Beautiful Bill is expected to bring significant changes to charitable tax deductions beginning in 2026. Here's what donors should know: For 2025: If you itemize deductions, charitable gifts to qualified organizations such as your parish or diocese may reduce your taxable income.

Starting in 2026: A new "above-the-line" deduction will allow cash gifts up to $1,000 (individual) or $2,000 (joint filers), even if you don't itemize. For itemizers, only contributions exceeding 0.5% of adjusted gross income (AGI) may be deductible.

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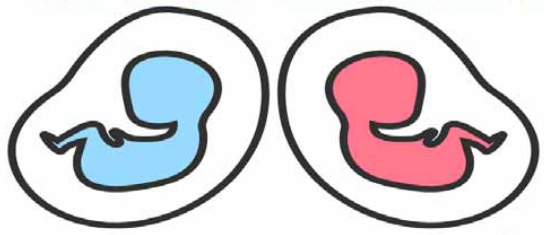
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Mary, Mother of Jesus and All Believers, is Not Co-Redeemer, Vatican Says

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While praising devotion to Mary, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith firmly rejected moves to formally proclaim Mary as "co-redemptrix" or "co-mediatrix."

In a lengthy doctrinal note titled "Mater Populi Fidelis" ("Mother of the Faithful People of God"), the dicastery said the title co-redemptrix or co-redeemer "carries the risk of eclipsing the exclusive role of Jesus Christ" in salvation.

And, regarding the title co-mediatrix or co-mediator, it said that Mary, "the first redeemed, could not have been the mediatrix of the grace that she herself received."

However, it said, the title may be used when it does not cast doubt on "the unique mediation of Jesus Christ, true God and true man."

Pope Leo XIV approved the text Oct. 7 and ordered its publication, said the note, which was released Nov. 4.

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the doctrinal dicastery, presented the document during a conference at the Jesuit headquarters in Rome and said its teaching becomes part of the church's "ordinary magisterium" and must be considered authoritative.

For more than 30 years, some Catholics, including some bishops, have asked for formal dogmatic declarations of Mary as co-redemptrix and co-mediatrix, the document's introduction said. But Msgr. Armando Matteo, secretary of the dicastery's doctrinal section, told the conference that the Vatican's first study of the doctrinal implications of the titles goes all the way back to 1926.

Cardinal Fernández said that one time, when St. Peter's Basilica was closed, he spent a long time in front of Michelangelo's Pietà. The sorrow on Mary's face because of the death of her son and, at the same time, her obvious strength, he said, "was so beautiful it was understandable why people would want to say everything and more about Mary."

The new document said that titles used for Mary should speak of her motherly care for all people and her place as the first and perfect disciple of Jesus but must not create any doubt that Catholics believe Jesus is the redeemer of the world and the bestower of grace.

"Any gaze directed at her that distracts us from Christ or that places her on the same level as the Son of God would fall outside the dynamic proper to an authentically Marian faith," it said, because Mary always points to her son.

The titles co-redemptrix and co-mediatrix have been used in reference to Mary by theologians and even popes in the past millennium, the doctrinal dicastery said, but without elaborating on the precise meaning and the extent to which those titles could describe Mary's role in salvation history.

St. John Paul II "referred to Mary as 'Co-redemptrix' on at least seven occasions," the note said, but after consultation with the then-Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and its prefect, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in 1996, he did not issue a dogmatic declaration and stopped using the title.

Citing Scripture and tradition, the future Pope Benedict XVI said, "The precise meaning of these titles (co-redemptrix and co-mediatrix) is not clear, and the doctrine contained in them is not mature."

"Everything comes from Him — Christ — as the Letter to the Ephesians and the Letter to the Colossians, in particular, tell us; Mary, too, is everything that she is through Him. The word 'Co-redemptrix' would obscure this origin," Pope Benedict said.

Pope Francis, at a general audience in 2021, said that Jesus entrusted Mary to humanity as a mother, "not as a goddess, not as co-redemptrix," adding that love motivated some people to call her co-redemptrix, but love often leads people to "exaggerate."

"Given the necessity of explaining Mary's subordinate role to Christ in the work of Redemption, it would not be appropriate to use the title 'Co-redemptrix' to define Mary's cooperation," the doctrinal note said.

The title, it said, "risks obscuring Christ's unique salvific mediation and can therefore create confusion and an imbalance in the harmony of the truths of the Christian faith, for 'there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'"

"When an expression requires many repeated explanations to prevent it from straying from a correct meaning, it does not serve the faith of the People of God and becomes unhelpful," the dicastery concluded.

The use of the title "co-mediatrix" is more complicated, the doctrinal note said, because the word "mediation" often is "understood simply as cooperation, assistance or intercession" and easily could apply to Mary without calling into question "the unique mediation of Jesus Christ, true God and true man."

Mary's role in salvation history is unique, the document said. She willingly accepted to become the mother of Jesus the savior, she raised him, traveled with him and stood at the foot of his cross.

While Christ, fully human and fully divine, is the one mediator between God and humanity, it said, "he enables various forms of participation in his salvific plan because, in communion with him, we can all become, in some way, co-operators with God and 'mediators' for one another."

"If this holds true for every believer — whose cooperation with Christ becomes increasingly fruitful to the extent that one allows oneself to be transformed by grace — how much more must it be affirmed of Mary in a unique and supreme way," the doctrinal note said.

The church believes that those in heaven can pray and intercede for people still on earth and, "among those chosen and glorified with Christ, first and foremost is his Mother," the note said. "Therefore, we can affirm that Mary has a unique collaboration in the saving work that Christ carries out in his Church. With this intercession, Mary can become for us a motherly sign of the Lord's mercy."

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Pope Calls for End to Violence in Sudan, Tanzania

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With reports of a massacre in Sudan and election-related violence in Tanzania, Pope Leo XIV pleaded for peace and dialogue.

After reciting the Angelus prayer Nov. 2, the feast of All Souls, the pope offered special prayers for the victims in el-Fasher, capital of Sudan's North Darfur state.

The pope said he was following "the tragic news" with "great sorrow."

The Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces claimed control of el-Fasher from government forces Oct. 26 after more than a year of the city being under siege with little to no food or other aid allowed in.

"Indiscriminate violence against women and children, attacks on unarmed civilians and serious obstacles to humanitarian aid are causing unbearable suffering for a population already exhausted by long months of conflict," the pope said Nov. 2.

"Let us pray that the Lord may receive the deceased with his embrace, strengthen those who are suffering, and move the hearts of those responsible," he said.

Pope Leo appealed "to all parties involved to agree to a ceasefire and to urgently open humanitarian corridors."

In addition, he called on "the international community to act with determination and generosity, to provide assistance and to support those working tirelessly to bring relief."

Denise Brown, head of U.N. humanitarian operations in Sudan, told Vatican News Nov. 1 that the United Nations had received "credible reports of summary executions of non-armed civilians" and of the "summary executions of civilians as they try and flee the fighting."

Pope Leo also asked for prayers "for Tanzania, where, following the recent elections, violent clashes have broken out, leaving many victims. I urge everyone to avoid all forms of violence and to follow the path of dialogue."

Samia Suluhu Hassan was reelected president Oct. 29 with some 98% of the votes, but members of the political opposition have claimed the election was unfair since some opposition parties were banned and opposition politicians were jailed.

Trump Says He Will Designate Nigeria 'Country of Particular Concern'

By Madalaine Elhabbal (CNA)

President Donald Trump said he is designating Nigeria a "country of particular concern."

In a social media post Oct. 31, Trump said, "Christianity is facing an existential threat in Nigeria. Thousands of Christians are being killed. Radical Islamists are responsible for this mass slaughter. I am hereby making Nigeria a 'COUNTRY OF PARTICULAR CONCERN'".

Under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998, the U.S president must designate countries that engage in or tolerate "particularly severe violations of religious freedom" as CPCs. Violations include torture, prolonged detention without charges, and forced disappearence, according to the State Department.

The last CPC designations were made by Secretary of State Antony Blinken in December 2023, when Blinken revoked Nigeria's CPC designation that was put in place by then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in 2020.

Christian leaders delivered a letter to Trump on Oct. 15 that said 52,000 Christians have been killed and over 20,000 churches attacked and destroyed in Nigeria since 2009. In addition, it said, thousands of Christians have been murdered and raped in 2025, and "over 100 Christian pastors and Catholic priests have been taken hostage for ransom."

Trump said in the social media post, "But that is the least of it. When Christians, or any such group, is slaughtered like is happening in Nigeria (3,100 versus 4,476 Worldwide), something must be done!"

The president said he will charge Rep. Riley Moore, R-W.Va., along with Appropriations Chair Tom Cole, R-Okla., "to immediately look into this matter, and report back to me."

"The United States cannot stand by while such atrocities are happening in Nigeria, and numerous other Countries," Trump stated, adding: "We stand ready, willing, and able to save our Great Christian population around the World!"

Members of Congress and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also had sought to designate Nigeria as a country of particular concern.

(OSV News photo/Temilade Adelaja, Reuters

A man cries during a funeral Mass in the parish hall of St. Francis Xavier Church in Owo, Nigeria, June 17, 2022. The Mass was for some of the 40 victims killed in a June 5 attack by gunmen during Mass at the church. Over the last 14 years in Nigeria, 52,250 people have been killed only for being Christians, according to an April 10 report.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, introduced legislation in September that would require the Trump administration to adopt the CPC designation in addition to imposing targeted sanctions against Nigerian government officials who facilitate or permit jihadist attacks against Christians and other religious minorities.

Republican Senators Ted Budd of North Carolina, Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, Josh Hawley of Missouri, and James Lankford of Oklahoma endorsed redesignating Nigeria in a Sept. 12 letter sent to Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Budd posted on X.

Similarly, the USCIRF also recommended the State Department designate Nigeria as a CPC in its latest update on religious freedom in the country in late July.

USCIRF Chair Vicky Hartzler welcomed the designation on social media: "We applaud @POTUS for making Nigeria a CPC." Hartzler said, "The Trump admin can now use the various presidential actions outlined in IRFA to incentivize Nigeria to protect its citizens and hold perpetrators accountable."

ADF Senior Counsel Sean Nelson told CNA, "We at Alliance Defending Freedom International are deeply grateful for President Trump's recognition of the grave persecution of Christians ongoing in Nigeria and worldwide."

Nelson added, "We hope that the Country of Particular Concern designation moves Nigerian officials to stop the denials and work strenuously to end the religious persecution happening in so much of the country."

Trump's announcement to move forward with the CPC designation comes amid the ongoing government shutdown that has left legislation on the matter in limbo.

Moore, who was a staff member and national security adviser for the House Foreign Affairs Committee before being elected to Congress, celebrated the designation on social media, writing: "Thank you @POTUS for your incredible leadership by designating Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern. You have always been a champion for Christians around the world, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with you and Chairman Cole @houseappropsgop to defend our brothers and sisters in Christ who are being slaughtered by radical Islamists in Nigeria."

(Madalaine Elhabbal is a staff reporter for Catholic News Agency, based at the Washington, D.C. headquarters of EWTN News.)

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Pope Answers Questions about Migrants, Venezuela, Rupnik Trial

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholics in immigration detention centers have "spiritual rights" that Catholic clergy should be allowed to serve, Pope Leo XIV said.

Speaking briefly with reporters late Nov. 4 outside his residence in Castel Gandolfo, Pope Leo was asked about a detention facility in Chicago denying access Nov. 1 to an auxiliary bishop and a delegation of clergy, religious sisters and laity, who wanted to bring Communion to Catholics detained there.

The pope was also asked about the increasing tensions between the United States and Venezuela and about the case of Father Marko Rupnik, an artist accused of multiple cases of abuse.

On the question of the Chicago detention facility, Pope Leo prefaced his remarks by noting how, at his Mass at a Rome cemetery Nov. 1, the Gospel reading was from Matthew 25 with its litany of feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger and clothing the naked. The Lord says, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

"Jesus says very clearly that at the end of the world, we're going to be asked, you know, 'How did you receive the foreigner? Did you receive him and welcome him or not?' And I think that there's a deep reflection that needs to be made in terms of what's happening" with how immigrants in the United States are being treated today, the pope said.

"Many people who've lived (in the United States) for years and years and years, never causing problems, have been deeply affected by what's going on right now," he added.

Pope Leo said he would like to ask "the authorities to allow pastoral workers to attend to the needs of those people. Many times they've been separated from their families for a good amount of time; no one knows what's happening, but their own spiritual needs should be attended to."

Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary for public affairs for the Department of Homeland Security, said in a statement to OSVNews that the Broadview facility in Chicago is "a field office, it is not a detention facility."

"Illegal aliens are only briefly held there for processing before being transferred to a detention facility. Religious organizations are more than welcome to provide services to detainees in ICE detention facilities," McLaughlin said, but not at field offices where "detainees are continuously brought in, processed, and transferred out."

Pope Leo also was asked what he thought about the United States sending warships to the Caribbean, particularly off the coast of Venezuela. President Donald Trump has said the deployment is part of his effort to stop drug traffickers.

"A country has the right to have a military to defend peace, to build peace," the pope said. "But in this case, it seems a bit different — tensions are rising. Just five minutes ago, I read some news saying that they're getting closer and closer to the coast of Venezuela."

"I think that with violence, we don't win," the pope said. "The important thing is to seek dialogue, to try in a fair way to find solutions to the problems that may exist in any country."

The last question the pope took before driving back to the Vatican regarded requests by the alleged victims of Father Rupnik to have his mosaics covered up or removed from churches around the world, something the pope noted had been occurring.

The priest, an artist and former Jesuit, has been accused of sexually, spiritually and psychologically abusing more than 20 women — many of them members of a religious community he co-founded — over a span of four decades.

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith announced in early October that it had appointed judges to form the tribunal for the priest's canonical trial.

"I know it's very difficult for the victims to ask that they be patient, but the church needs to respect the rights of all people," the pope told reporters. "The principle of innocent until proven guilty is also true in the church and hopefully this trial that is just beginning will be able to give some clarity and justice to all those involved."

Earlier in the day, journalists had asked Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the doctrinal dicastery, about the status of the trial and when it might conclude.

"They are working," he said. "They are working independently" so he could not provide details about whether they had begun listening to witnesses or how long the trial might take.

The dicastery had said in October that "the panel of judges is composed of women and clerics who are not members of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and who hold no office within any of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia."

"This has been done in order to better ensure, as in every judicial proceeding, the autonomy and independence of the aforesaid tribunal," it said.

Bishop Barron: Administration 'Assured' Him Detainees' Access to Sacraments 'under Careful Review'

By Kate Scanlon, OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Amid concern about the ability of those detained by immigration enforcement authorities to receive Catholic sacraments, a key U.S. bishop said Trump administration officials have "assured" him the matter is "under careful review."

His comments came shortly before Pope Leo XIV urged respect for "the spiritual rights" of migrants detained in the U.S. in comments to journalists Nov. 4 at Castel Gandolfo.

Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, who was appointed by President Donald Trump to the Department of Justice's Religious Liberty Commission, said in a Nov. 3 social media post that he and Father Alexei Woltornist, a Melkite Catholic priest and a member of the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Advisory Council, "have been in touch with senior officials in both the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security and have brought forward the concerns of the Church regarding detainees' access to Sacraments."

Bishop Barron's post included an OSV News article about a delegation of clergy, religious sisters and laity, and a Chicago auxiliary bishop who were barred for the second time in three weeks from bringing the Eucharist to those being held at an immigration detention center just west of Chicago on the feast of All Saints Nov. 1.

The facility in the suburb of Broadview, Illinois, has seen tense confrontations between protesters and federal law enforcement in the last several weeks as the Trump administration ramped up enforcement efforts in and around the Windy City. In a separate incident, reports of immigration authorities near St. Jerome Catholic Church in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood on Oct. 12 prompted warnings of caution from its pastor, although a spokesperson for ICE denied the church was targeted, local media reported.

Catholic bishops are among those who have acknowledged points of tension between the Trump administration's immigration policy and religious liberty.

In a statement provided to OSV News in response to an inquiry about Bishop Barron's post, Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary for public affairs for the Department of Homeland Security, said the Broadview facility is "a field office, it is not a detention facility."

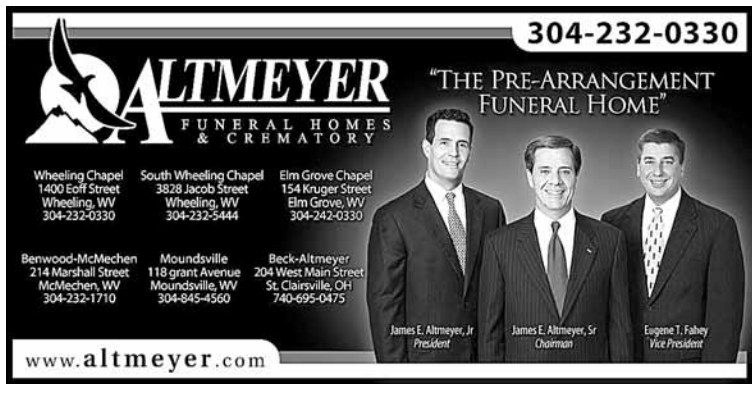
"Illegal aliens are only briefly held there for processing before being transferred to a detention facility. Religious organizations are more than welcome to provide services to detainees in ICE detention facilities," McLaughlin said. "Even before the attacks on the Broadview facility, it was not within standard operating procedure for religious services to be provided in a field office, as detainees are continuously brought in, processed, and transferred out."

McLaughlin argued the facility faces "serious public safety and officer safety threats," and that "ICE staff has repeatedly informed religious organizations that due to Broadview's status as a field office and the ongoing threat to civilians, detainees, and officers" they are "not able to accommodate these requests at this time."

In his post, Bishop Barron added, "I feel that maintaining open lines of communication and engaging in dialogue with the Administration constitute the most constructive way forward."

Catholic social teaching on immigration balances three interrelated principles — the right of persons to migrate in order to sustain their lives and those of their families, the right of a country to regulate its borders and control immigration, and a nation's duty to regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

(Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.)



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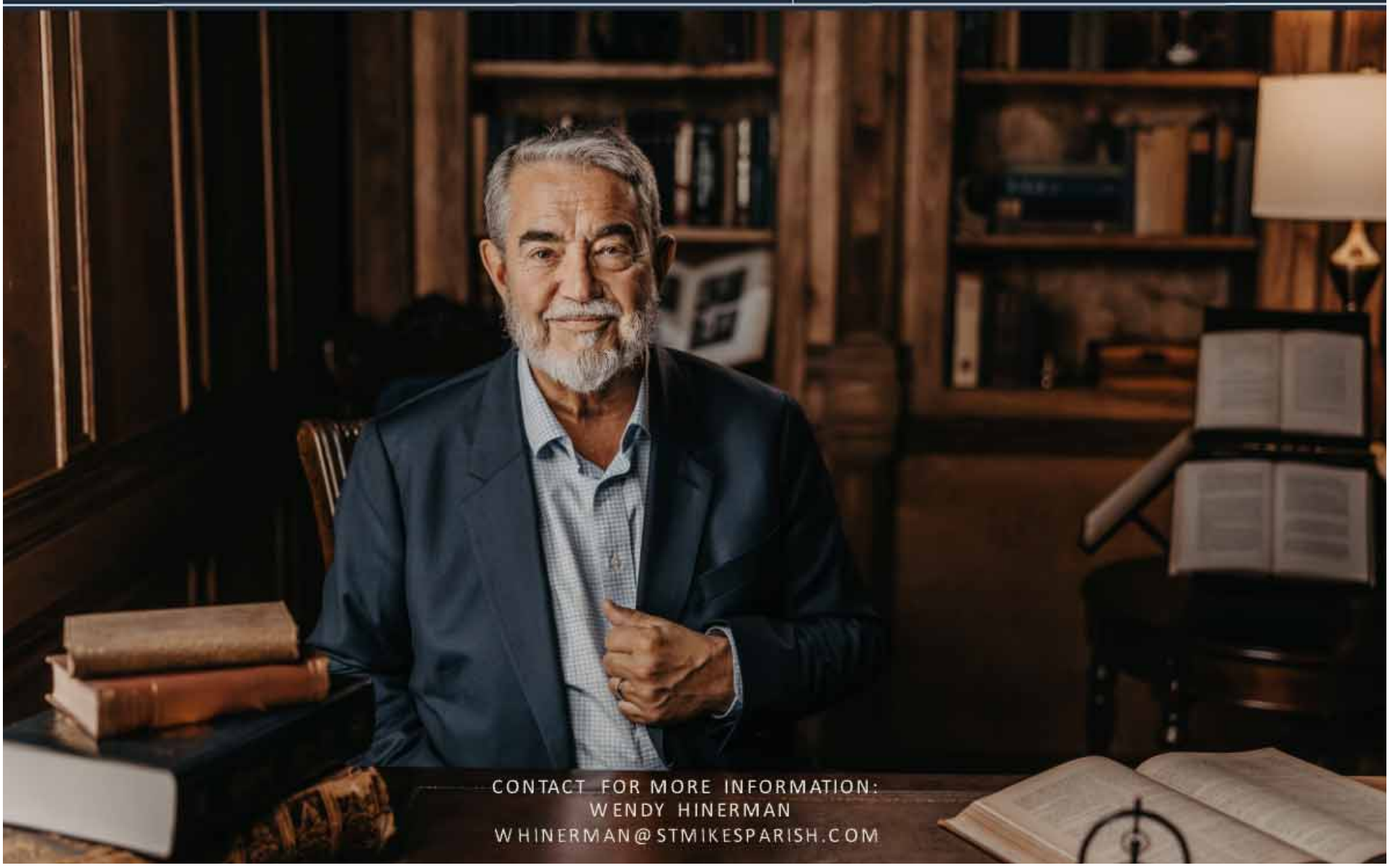

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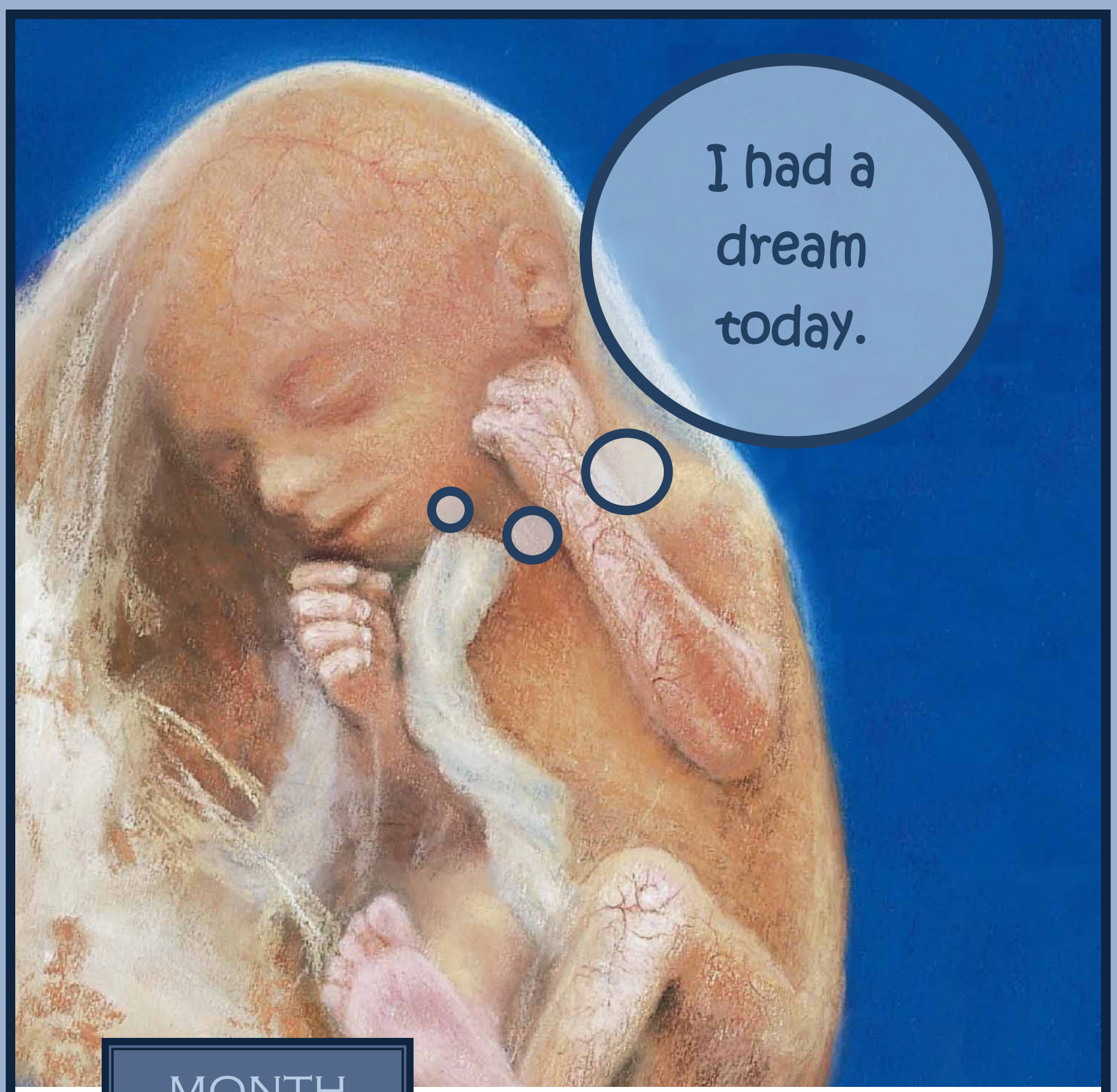

MONTH

4

The baby's brain has begun maturing - a process that will continue until she is about 14 years old. Her taste buds are now working. Nutrients consumed by her mother are passed on to her within an hour or 2. Fine hair begins to grow on her head, eyebrows and eyelashes. Facial expressions similar to the baby's parents can be seen at this time. This month REMs (rapid eye movements) have been recorded – a sign of dreaming.

Information on the developing baby was taken from: *Life before Birth* by Marjorie A. England, © 1996, Mosby-Wolfe, Times Mirror Int'l. Pub., Ltd., London, and *Abortion: Questions and Answers*, Dr. and Mrs. John C. Wilke, © 1985, Hayes Publishing Company, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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María, madre de Jesús y de todos los creyentes, no es corredentora, afirma el Vaticano

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) -- Aunque elogia la devoción a María, el Dicasterio para la Doctrina de la Fe rechazó firmemente las iniciativas para proclamar oficialmente a María como "co-redemptrix" ("corredentora") o "co-mediatrix" ("co-mediadora").

En una extensa nota doctrinal titulada "Mater Populi Fidelis" ("Madre del Pueblo Fiel"), el dicasterio afirmó que el título de co-redemptrix o co-mediadora porque conlleva "el peligro de oscurecer el lugar exclusivo" en la salvación.

Y, en cuanto al título de "co-mediatrix" o "co-mediadora", afirmó que María, "la primera redimida, no puede haber sido mediadora de la gracia recibida por ella misma".

Sin embargo, señaló que el título puede utilizarse cuando no pone en duda "la única mediación de Jesucristo, verdadero Dios y verdadero hombre".

El Papa León XIV aprobó el texto el 7 de octubre y ordenó su publicación, según la nota, que se hizo pública el 4 de noviembre.

El cardenal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefecto del dicasterio doctrinal, presentó el documento durante una conferencia en la sede de los jesuitas en Roma y afirmó que su enseñanza pasa a formar parte del "magisterio ordinario" de la Iglesia y debe considerarse autoritaria.

Durante más de 30 años, algunos católicos, incluidos algunos obispos, han pedido declaraciones dogmáticas formales de María como corredentora y co-mediadora, según la introducción del documento. Pero monseñor Armando Matteo, secretario de la sección doctrinal del dicasterio, dijo en la conferencia que el primer estudio del

Vaticano sobre las implicaciones doctrinales de los títulos se remonta a 1926.

El cardenal Fernández dijo que una vez, cuando la Basílica de San Pedro estaba cerrada, pasó mucho tiempo frente a la Piedad de Miguel Ángel. El dolor en el rostro de María por la muerte de su hijo y, al mismo tiempo, su evidente fortaleza, dijo, "era tan hermoso que se entendía por qué la gente quería decir todo y más sobre María".

El nuevo documento afirma que los títulos utilizados para María deben hablar de su cuidado maternal hacia todas las personas y de su lugar como primera y perfecta discípula de Jesús, pero no deben crear ninguna duda de que los católicos creen que Jesús es el redentor del mundo y el dispensador de la gracia.

"Una mirada dirigida a ella que nos distraiga de Cristo, o la ponga al mismo nivel del Hijo de Dios, quedaría fuera de la dinámica propia de una fe auténticamente mariana", afirma la nota doctrinal, porque María siempre apunta a su hijo.

Los títulos de co-redemptrix y co-mediatrix se han utilizado en referencia a María por teólogos e incluso papas en el último milenio, según el dicasterio doctrinal, pero sin profundizar en el significado preciso y el alcance que esos títulos podrían tener para describir el papel de María en la historia de la salvación.

San Juan Pablo II se refirió a María como "Corredentora" en al menos siete ocasiones, según la nota, pero tras consultar con la entonces Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe y su prefecto, el entonces cardenal Joseph Ratzinger, en 1996, no emitió una declaración dogmática y dejó de utilizar el título.

Citando las Escrituras y la tradición, el futuro Papa Benedicto XVI dijo: "El significado preciso de estos títulos (corredentora y co-mediadora o mediadora) no es claro, y la doctrina en ellos contenida no está madura".

"Todo procede de Él, como dicen sobre todo las epístolas a los Efesios y a los Colosenses. María es lo que es gracias a Él. La palabra 'Corredentora' ensombrecería ese origen", dijo el Papa Benedicto.

El Papa Francisco, en una audiencia general en 2021, dijo que Jesús confió a María a la humanidad como madre, "no como diosa, no como corredentora", y añadió que el amor motivó a algunas personas a llamarla corredentora, pero que el amor a menudo lleva a las personas a "hacer cosas exageradas".

"Teniendo en cuenta la necesidad de explicar el papel subordinado de María a Cristo en la obra de la Redención, es siempre inoportuno el uso del título de Corredentora para definir la cooperación de María", afirma la nota doctrinal.

El título, según la nota, "corre el riesgo de oscurecer la única mediación salvífica de Cristo y, por tanto, puede generar confusión y un desequilibrio en la armonía de verdades de la fe cristiana, porque 'no hay salvación en ningún otro, pues bajo el cielo no se ha dado a los hombres otro nombre por el que debamos salvarnos'".

"Cuando una expresión requiere muchas y constantes explicaciones, para evitar que se desvíe de un significado correcto, no presta un servicio a la fe del Pueblo de Dios y se vuelve inconveniente", concluyó el dicasterio.

El uso del título "mediadora" es más complicado, según la nota doctrinal, porque la palabra "mediación" a menudo se "se entiende simplemente como cooperación, ayuda, intercesión" y fácilmente podría aplicarse a María sin poner en duda "la única mediación de Jesucristo, verdadero Dios y verdadero hombre".

El papel de María en la historia de la salvación es único, según el documento. Ella aceptó voluntariamente convertirse en la madre de Jesús, el salvador, lo crió, viajó con él y estuvo al pie de su cruz.

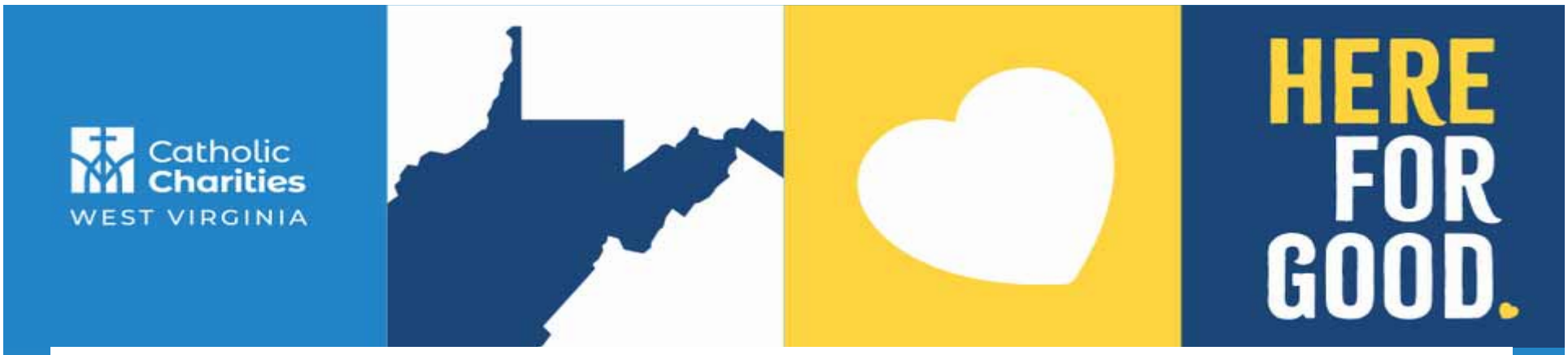
Si bien Cristo, plenamente humano y plenamente divino, es el único mediador entre Dios y la humanidad, "posibilita diversas formas de participación en el cumplimiento de su proyecto salvífico porque, en la comunión con Él, todos podemos ser, de alguna manera, cooperadores de Dios, 'mediadores' unos para con otros", afirma el documento.

"Si esto vale para cada creyente, cuya cooperación con Cristo se vuelve cada vez más fecunda cuanto más se deja transformar por la gracia, con mayor razón debe afirmarse de María, de un modo único y supremo", dice la nota doctrinal.

La Iglesia cree que quienes están en el cielo pueden orar e interceder por las personas que aún están en la tierra y, "entre los elegidos y glorificados junto a Cristo está en primer lugar la Madre", señala la nota. "Por eso podemos afirmar que existe una colaboración única de María en la obra salvífica que Cristo realiza en su Iglesia. Se trata de una intercesión que la convierte en signo materno de la misericordia del Señor".

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores:

La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estado Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web www.repostbishopabuse.org. Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiásticas correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web www.dwc.org, favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diocesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está protegida. **Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de crímenes contra a menores: 304-293-6400.

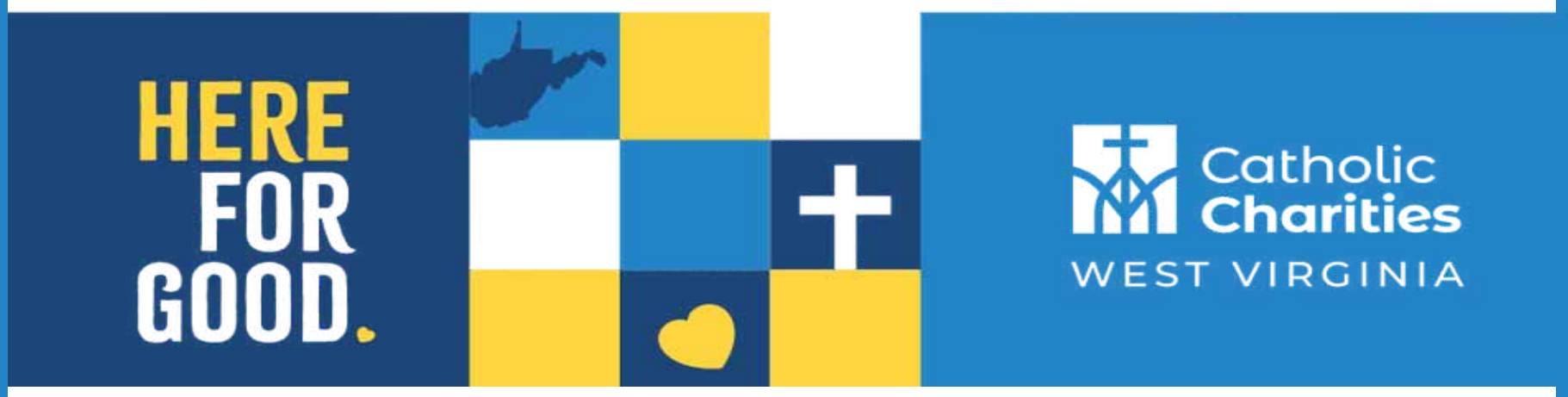


Catholic Charities West Virginia Invites You to Join Us in Our End-of-Year Campaign: A Season of Hope, Generosity, and Community, Where You Make a Difference.

Through every season of change, you have been there for your community. Because of your generosity, families have had food on their tables, lights in their homes, and hope in their hearts. You have trusted us, year after year, to meet West Virginians in their most difficult moments. Together, we have proven that we are **Here For Good.** But today, the need is greater than ever. **One in six of our neighbors is hungry.** Nearly half of Mountain State families **struggle to meet their basic needs.** In these moments of hardship, your compassion shines like a light in the darkness.

When eviction looms, **Catholic Charities is there.**
When the electricity is about to be shut off, **we are there.**
When disasters strike, **we are there.**
And with your support, **we will always be there.**

This giving season, you can help carry that light into the new year. With you by our side, we are and always will be Here For Good.



Join in Our Mission to Reduce Poverty in West Virginia

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Guided by God's Love:

Helping a Family Find Stability

When Dan called our Romney office, he was overwhelmed and unsure where to turn. Practically overnight, his life had changed dramatically—he'd been granted full custody of his five young children. Though he worked full-time, the sudden increase in responsibilities and recent family challenges quickly drained his savings. With overdue bills and uncertainty around his SNAP benefits, Dan was facing a crossroads he didn't know how to manage.

Catholic Charities West Virginia staff stepped in with compassion, guidance, and practical support. We worked with utility companies to restore essential services and connected Dan with the Hampshire County Family Support Center for ongoing help. Together, we built a network of care to help his family find stability and hope for the future.

Recognizing that Dan's adjustment would take time, we continued walking alongside him, offering help with budgeting, child-care resources, and financial planning. With this support, Dan gained the confidence and tools to create a stable, nurturing home for his children.

"Thank you for helping me and my family," he shared.

"I hope that we can make it now that everything is caught up to date."

Guided by God's love, Catholic Charities West Virginia stands with families like Dan's, ensuring no one faces hardship alone. Today, as SNAP benefits remain unfunded, more West Virginia families are facing hunger and uncertainty. Your compassion can make a lasting difference. A gift to Catholic Charities West Virginia helps provide food for families, emergency financial assistance, and the steady support that brings hope to those who are struggling. Every dollar you give is an act of love and solidarity, helping your neighbors find strength and stability in the hardest of times. Visit www.ccwva.org/get-involved/donate/donate-online.

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SNAP Benefits.

Please see the information below from the State of West Virginia regarding SNAP benefits. This information may be helpful to those to whom you minister throughout our state.

In preparation for the delay of November SNAP benefits, Governor Morrisey has initiated a statewide response effort, uniting state agencies, family resource networks, food banks, faith-based organizations, and volunteer groups. With approximately 270,000 SNAP participants in West Virginia, representing about 15% of the state's population, churches will be essential allies in this coordinated effort, continuing their vital role in ensuring no West Virginian goes hungry.

Increased Demand

· We urge churches to prepare for an unprecedented number of individuals seeking food relief.

· Encourage your congregation to volunteer for local food drives and/or at the local food pantries, as it will be needed with the increase in demand.

Resources

· Seeking Food: Please guide those in need to call 211, text their zip code to 898-211, or contact their local family resource network (FRN) for assistance with utilities and immediate food relief.

· Please see the attached graphics for details. Help us by spreading this information far and wide, emailing it to your contacts and sharing on social media.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule, Fall 2025 Bishop Mark Brennan, Celebrant

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

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

Saturday, Dec. 6: St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee, 4 p.m.

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A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

Deep within the heart of every man is a call to live with purpose and meaning; a call to lead, to protect, to serve and to defend.

Men today need a band of brothers – other Catholic men to share in that call, who walk together on the journey towards something better.

You are invited to put your faith in action

kofc.org/joinus

Knights of Columbus

The **Knights of Columbus** is a trusted name, tried by time, present where men are, providing inspiring resources and support for strengthening your faith and living a life of virtue.

Knights lead with faith. Knights protect our families. Knights serve those in need.

When the world says men should step aside, Knights of Columbus step up.

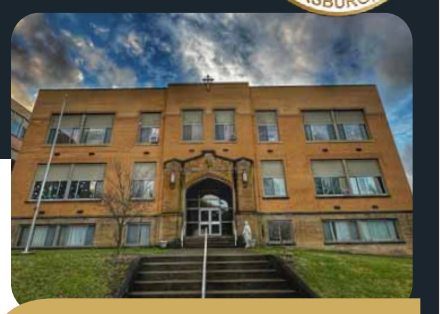
We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to discover the man God calls you to be.

Become a Knight.

Click here

WE'RE HIRING

Principals for Notre Dame Middle/High School & St. Mary's Grade School



JOIN OUR TEAM!

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is seeking dynamic, faith-filled leaders to serve as principals for Notre Dame High School and St. Mary's Grade School in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

These schools share a proud tradition of academic excellence, spiritual growth, and community engagement, forming young men and women who live out their faith in service and leadership.

Faith - Knowledge - Service

POSITION OVERVIEW

The principals will serve as the spiritual, instructional, and administrative leaders of their respective schools. Each will work closely with the designated pastor, faculty, parents, and the DWC Catholic Schools Office to advance the mission of Catholic education.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

- The ideal candidate must have an earned Master's Degree in Educational Leadership or Administration or begin the process of completing degree requirements; or hold a valid Educational Leadership certification from the state of West Virginia or be eligible for such certification.
- The candidate will have a minimum of three years of successful educational experience with a preference for administrative experience.

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates interested in this position should be energetic, positiove, enjoy working with children, and be able to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church.
Interested candidates should email their resume to avernon@stmaryswv.org

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6:30 WOAY ABC 4	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
9:30 WVVA NBC 6	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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The WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program is the only program in West Virginia that offers eight specialized, structural heart procedures and is one of the few programs in the United States (and the only one in West Virginia) offering cerebral embolic protection during transcatheter aortic valve replacement (Protected TAVR) and transcatheter mitral valve replacement.

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