

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Love for the Poor is Hallmark of Faith, Pope Says in First Exhortation

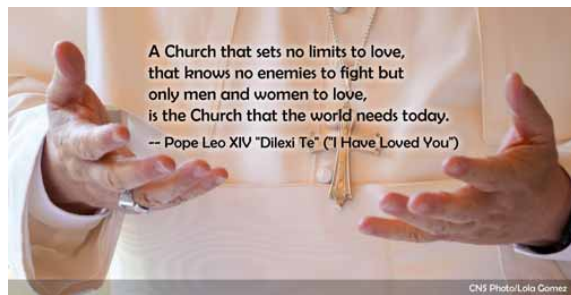
By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Many Christians “need to go back and re-read the Gospel” because they have forgotten that faith and love for the poor go hand in hand, Pope Leo XIV said in his first major papal document.

“Love for the poor — whatever the form their poverty may take — is the evangelical hallmark of a Church faithful to the heart of God,” the pope wrote in “Dilexi Te” (“I Have Loved You”), an apostolic exhortation “to all Christians on love for the poor.”

Pope Leo signed the document Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Vatican released the text Oct. 9.

The document was begun by Pope Francis, Pope Leo said, but he added to it and



CNS illustration/Joanna Kohorst with photo by Lola Gomez
A quote from Pope Leo XIV's apostolic exhortation “Dilexi Te” (“I Haved Loved You”) is seen over a photo of his hands taken in August.

wanted to issue it near the beginning of his papacy “since I share the desire of my beloved predecessor that all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ’s love and his summons to care for the poor.”

The connection is not new or modern and was not a Pope Francis invention, he said. In fact, throughout the Hebrew Scriptures “God’s love is vividly demonstrated by his protection of the weak and the poor, to the extent that he can be said to have a particular fondness for them.”

“I am convinced that the preferential See “Exhortation” on Page 3

Holy Land Patriarch Welcomes Announcement of Peace Deal ‘with Joy’ as ‘First Step’



OSV News photo/Dawoud Abu Alkas, Reuters
Palestinian children celebrate in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip after U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Israel and Hamas agreed on the first phase of a Gaza ceasefire Oct. 9.

By Judith Sudilovsky, OSV News

JERUSALEM (OSV News) — The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem welcomed “with joy” the announcement of an initial agreement between Hamas and Israel in an Oct. 9 statement, but also stressed the “absolute urgency” for the “immediate” and “unconditional” entry of humanitarian relief and sufficient aid into Gaza.

The agreement anticipates an end to the two-year long war in Gaza and allows for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prison.

“The Patriarchate ardently hopes that this accord will be fully and faithfully imple-

mented, so that it may mark the beginning of the end of this terrible war,” the patriarchate said in the statement. “Above all, the Patriarchate prays that this step may open a path of healing and reconciliation for both Palestinians and Israelis.”

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa called the announcement “good news” and a “first step,” noting in the statement that there will be other phases that will need to be implemented. But for now, he said, the patriarchate was “very happy.”

“Of course, there are many others, and surely there will be other obstacles. But now we have to rejoice about this important step that will bring a

little more trust for the future and also bring new hope, especially to the people, both Israeli and Palestinians,” Cardinal Pizzaballa said in the statement.

The statement quoted the cardinal as emphasizing that there would be a “new atmosphere” for the continuation of the negotiations and for life inside Gaza, which will “remain terrible for a long time.”

In an Oct. 9 video statement released to the press by the Latin patriarchate, Cardinal Pizzaballa also said that while they were aware of the need to be “very realistic and not naive,” the announcement of the agreement had See “Peace” on Page 4

Exhortation ...

Cont'd from Page 1

choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society," Pope Leo wrote, "if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry."

As he has done from the beginning of his papacy in May, the pope decried the increasing gap between the world's wealthiest and poorest citizens and noted how women often are "doubly poor," struggling to feed their children and doing so with few rights or possibilities.

Pope Leo also affirmed church teaching since at least the 1960s that there are "structures of sin" that keep the poor in poverty and lead those who have sufficient resources to ignore the poor or think they are better than them.

When the church speaks of God's preferential option for the poor, he said, it does not exclude or discriminate against others, something "which would be impossible for God."

But the phrase is "meant to emphasize God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity," he wrote.

"Wanting to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity," Pope Leo said, "God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest."

That choice, he said, must include pastoral and spiritual care as well as education, health care, jobs training and charity — all of which the church has provided for centuries.

The document includes a separate section on migrants with the pope writing, "The Church has always recognized in migrants a living presence of the Lord who, on the day of judgment, will say to those on his right: 'I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.'"

The quotation is from the Gospel of Matthew 25:35, which is part of the "Judgment of the Nations" in which Jesus clearly states that his followers will be judged on how they care for the poor, the sick, the imprisoned and the foreigner.

"The Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking" in search of a better, safer life for themselves and their families, Pope Leo wrote.

"Where the world sees threats, she (the church) sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges," he continued. "She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it is translated into gestures of closeness



CNS photo/Vatican Media
Pope Leo XIV signs his first apostolic exhortation, "Dilexi Te" ("I Have Loved You"), in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, as Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, the substitute secretary for general affairs at the Vatican Secretariat of State, looks on. The exhortation was released Oct. 9.

and welcome."

The church knows, he said, "that in every rejected migrant, it is Christ himself who knocks at the door of the community."

In his exhortation, Pope Leo went through biblical references to the obligation to love and care for the poor and cited saints and religious orders throughout history that have dedicated themselves to living with the poor and assisting them.

A section of the document focuses on the "fathers of the church," the early theologians, who, he said, "recognized in the poor a privileged way to reach God, a special way to meet him. Charity shown to those in need was not only seen as a moral virtue, but a concrete expression of faith in the incarnate Word," Jesus.

Of course, for Pope Leo, an Augustinian, St. Augustine of Hippo was included in the document. The saint, "The Doctor of Grace, saw caring for the poor as concrete proof of the sincerity of faith," the pope wrote. For Augustine, "anyone

who says they love God and has no compassion for the needy is lying."

And while the pope wrote that "the most important way to help the disadvantaged is to assist them in finding a good job," he insisted that when that is not possible, giving alms to a person asking for money is still a compassionate thing to do.

"It is always better at least to do something rather than nothing," Pope Leo wrote.

Still, the pope said, Christians cannot stand idly by while the global economic system penalizes the poor and makes some people exceedingly wealthy. "We must continue, then, to denounce the 'dictatorship of an economy that kills,'" he said, quoting a phrase Pope Francis used.

"Either we regain our moral and spiritual dignity, or we fall into a cesspool," he wrote.

"A Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love," Pope Leo said, "is the Church that the world needs today."



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Peace ...

Cont'd from Page 1
brought a "new atmosphere" and "a new spirit of trust ... and hope within both Israelis and Palestinians."

"This is very important," he said in the video.

"The devastation is enormous but now, today, is the time to rejoice for this important step that is bring-

ing a new spirit in our life and the lives especially of Gaza inhabitants," he added. "We hope we can dedicate all our energy now not to rebuild just the infrastructure but the human life devastated by this war."

He also expressed hope that with the signing of the agreement, they can now begin focusing on rebuilding Gaza after the war, rather than on the war.

"We have to turn a new page, start

writing a new page. We have to talk not about the war but how to build after the war," he said in the video.

"The patriarchate commends the work of all those who have been involved in the negotiations and expresses appreciation for their tireless efforts in making this step possible," the Patriarchate said in the statement.

The Israeli security cabinet,

where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling Likud party holds a majority, was scheduled to meet to vote on the agreement at 5 p.m. Israeli time with the full Knesset meeting to convene at 6 p.m.

In its statement the patriarchate reiterated its call for the day of prayer for peace declared by Pope Leo XIV on Oct. 11.

(Judith Sudilovsky writes for OSV News from Jerusalem.)



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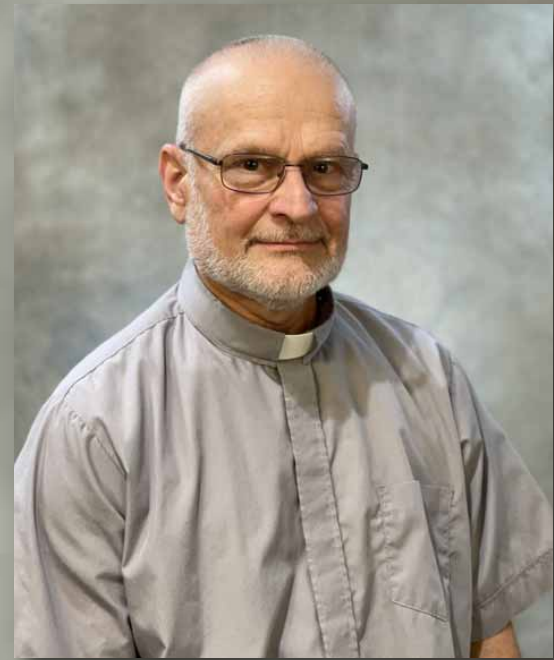
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On Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bishop Encourages all to Pray to Mary

By Colleen Rowan

On the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bishop Mark Brennan encouraged the students, teachers, and administration from St. Vincent de Paul Parish School in Wheeling to pray to Mary.

“We turn to God in prayer,” the bishop said, “and the prayer to Mary, the rosary, is a magnificent prayer to offer because Jesus has a special tender love for his mother and when she asks something of him, he’s very inclined to give it to her. So, we pray to her to help us in our needs.”

The bishop shared these words in his homily for the school Mass he celebrated that morning at St. Vincent de Paul Church. Also attending were many of the students’ families as it was the school’s Grandparents Day celebration in the afternoon.

The bishop’s visit to St. Vincent’s that morning was part of his yearly visits to all Catholic schools in the state. He now has five schools left to visit before the end of the month.

In his homily at St. Vincent’s, the bishop told the children the story of the feast day and of the great naval battle between the Turkish Ottoman Empire and the Catholic nations of southern Europe more than 450 years ago. “The Turkish Empire thought they could conquer Europe and they could force the Christians to abandon the Christian faith and become Muslims,” the bishop said. “The pope at the time, Pius V, got the different Catholic countries of the southern part of Europe to put together a great fleet of boats to stop the Turkish Empire. And he asked all the Christian faithful to pray the rosary on behalf of the sailors and soldiers who would be fighting. The soldiers and sailors also prayed the rosary.”

Early in the day on the 7th of October of 1571 it looked like the Christians were going to be defeated, the bishop told the students. But things changed because of the praying of the rosary.

“The tide turned, and although they were outnumbered, the Christian fleet defeated the Turkish fleet,” the bishop said. “And the pope, in recognition of that great victory—which he attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all those rosaries offered by millions of Christian people including the soldiers and sailors—called it the feast of Our Lady of Victory. Then later, we changed it to Our Lady of



Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates Mass on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Wheeling for students, teachers, and administration of the parish school.

the Rosary, remembering the prayer that resulted in that victory.”

In the history of the feast day,

the bishop told the children, we learn the importance of turning to God in prayer and in facing difficulties and problems.

October is the Month of the Rosary. Pope Leo XIV asked Catholics to pray the rosary each day in October for peace.

Mary, Mother of the Church:

A Living Guide for Hearts and Vocations

By **Joyce Bibey/Courtesy of FaithInWV**

As we focus on the Month of the Rosary, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia Very Rev. John Rice, hopes the faithful of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will make time to focus on the guidance of Mary, Mother of the Church on Ecclesial (divine call to ordained priests and deacons; consecrated life; Catholic marriage; or single life holy and serving God) Vocations and how our mental health benefits from praying the Rosary.

These topics were highlighted in the Fall 2025 CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) Report — a series of documents from CARA/studies and surveys that address aspects of the Church.

As Catholics we wholeheartedly honor Mary as the Mother of the Church, acknowledging she draws souls closer to her Son — guiding, comforting, and inspiring the faithful of every generation.

Two recent studies reveal what practicing Catholics have long experienced in their hearts — devotion to Mary and the Rosary profoundly shapes both our spiritual lives and our well-being.

The recent CARA report found that devotion to Mary has deeply influenced the faith journeys of bishops, priests, deacons, and religious in the United States (1,019 completed the survey for the study). More than half (59%) said Mary's presence and intercession played an important role in their "discernment of a vocation" to serve Christ and His Church.

Their individual devotions varied — from praying the Rosary privately or in community, to making pilgrimages to beloved Marian shrines like Lourdes, Fatima, and Guadalupe. Many shared that these prayers and pilgrimages

awakened a personal sense of calling and reminded them that, through Mary, they never walk alone.

Of those surveyed 66% were cradle Catholics. The other 34% reported that a Marian devotion was inspirational to their conversion.

Even after entering ministry or consecrated life, devotion to Mary remains a daily source of strength. Eighty percent of those surveyed stated they actively turn to her in prayer; and 80% said their Marian devotion has deepened their love for the Eucharist — the Source and Summit of the Catholic Church.

Through the Rosary and her example of humble faith, Mary continues to form hearts to say "yes" to God's will.

Beyond the spiritual realm, researchers are also discovering what countless Catholics already know: praying the Rosary brings peace to the mind and soul.

A 2025 international study published in the *Journal of Religion and Health* found that regular devotion to the Rosary is linked to lower stress and depression, greater empathy, and stronger community bonds.

The study noted that this meditative prayer appeals across generations and backgrounds — uniting young and old, educated and humble, clergy and laity — in one shared rhythm of faith, hope, and love.

The Rosary not only connects us to Mary but also helps us breathe more deeply, think more compassionately, and live more peacefully, according to researchers.

Together, these studies remind us that Mary is not just a figure of the past — she is a living mother, tenderly guiding her children today. Her example calls us to trust, to listen,



Joyce Bibey photo

A statue of Our Lady of Fatima stands at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling following a procession through the city on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima May 13.

and to say "yes" even when the path ahead seems uncertain.

In every decade of the Rosary, we walk with her through the mysteries of

Christ — His life through her eyes, and to feel His love through her heart.

Whether whispered alone in quiet moments or prayed in a circle of friends

and family, the Rosary continues to unite heaven and earth in a song of faith that never fades.

Holy Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

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Wheeling University Dedicates Father James A. O'Brien, S.J. Center for Service

WHEELING — Mentor, friend, teacher and servant leader are the words that best describe Father James O'Brien, S.J. On Sunday, his home for more than 50 years, Wheeling University, recognized his lifetime of service to the institution by naming its Center for Service in his honor.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, University President, Dr. Dianna Vargo, members of the Board of Trustees and Father David Griffin, director of Campus Ministry, formally dedicated the new Center with Father O'Brien's family, alumni and friends in attendance.

"His life reflects the University's mission of educating men and women for life, leadership and service to others. In August, our 2025-2026 academic year began with faculty, staff and students performing service in honor of Father O'Brien. The shirts we wore listed his name ... How appropriate," Dr. Vargo said.

"Today, we continue to honor his legacy of service to Wheeling University and our community by naming our Center for Service the Father James A. O'Brien, S.J. Center for Service. The Center will be the hub for service activities performed by our faculty, staff and students today and for years to come," she added.

David O'Brien, class of 1982 and Father's nephew, extended his gratitude to the University "for honoring him in this fitting, fitting way. We as a family are very touched by this."

According to David O'Brien, family remembers Father O'Brien as the most popular uncle – always surrounded at family gatherings by multiple generations of relatives "who adored him. He was eminently relatable and positive ... He brought joy to everyone around him."

David O'Brien admitted that he didn't understand Father's impact and what family meant to him, until he became a student at Wheeling. He saw firsthand how engaged his

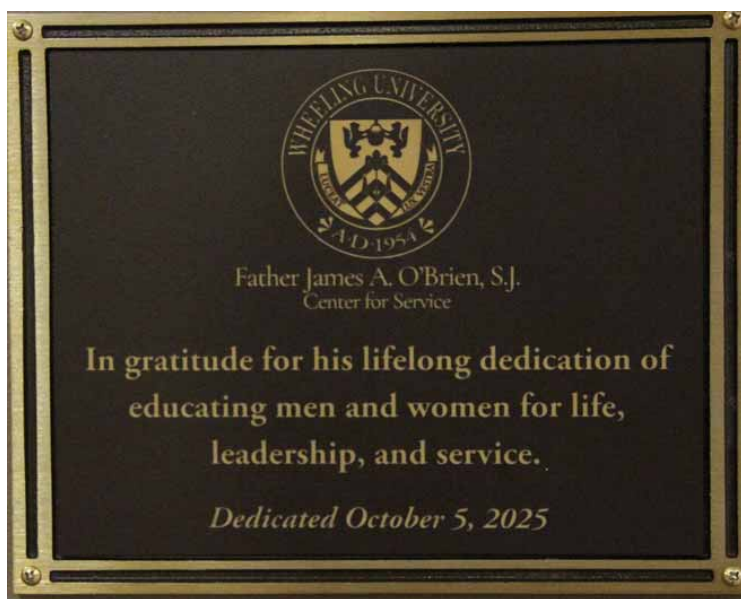


From left are Father David Griffin, director of the Center for Service; Dr. Dianna Vargo, president; David O'Brien, Father O'Brien's nephew; Brian Keys, Father's great nephew, his wife Emily Keys and in front their children Jack and Ellie.

uncle was in the lifeblood of the campus. David O'Brien recalled Father's days would start early, ending usually around 11 p.m. Each day was filled with interactions with students, faculty and staff, he recalled. "He took great, great joy in this place and this notion of family."

"What is so appropriate here is recognizing Jim's service. It was his everyday activity that was an example of service, it was an example of Christian living, of following in the example of Christ. It showed up in a gentle, gentle way ... That gave him joy, that gave him life and it (service) was his life's work," David O'Brien added.

Father Griffin, who will lead the Center for Service, said he never had the privilege of meeting Father O'Brien, but has heard how he touched the lives of multiple generations of Wheeling students and faculty. He offered a scripture pas-



Pictured is the plaque honoring Father James O'Brien, S.J.

sage that he believed were words that Father O'Brien.

"Faith without works is dead. This certainly means that true saving faith is not just intellectual belief, but is demonstrated through tangible actions of love, compassion and service to

others, as good deeds are a natural outcome of a transformed heart. These words are not a means to earn salvation but are the evidence that one's faith is alive and active showing a genuine transformative presence of God in their life. Father O'Brien is the epitome of

this text. He is a model of faith, service and fidelity to the Gospel. It is most fitting and well deserved that Wheeling University honors his legacy," Father Griffin explained.

Father O'Brien came to Wheeling in August 1962. Throughout his time at Wheeling University, he instilled in others what it meant to be a person for others, by organizing retreats and leading yearly service trips to Big Laurel Learning Center in Kermit, where students and alumni cut firewood to heat the Center. In addition to his faculty position in the Philosophy Department, Father O'Brien was the moderator of the Alumni Council, and he founded the student club, Justice and Peace in Our Time.

Even after his retirement, Father O'Brien remained involved at Wheeling University until his death in December 2023 at the age of 96.

Courtesy photo

Courtesy photo

Camden and Glenville Parishioners Embark on Pilgrimage on Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

For the Pilgrims of Hope 2025 Jubilee Year, Father Joseph Kutty K. Sebastian and parishioners from St. Boniface Parish in Camden and Good Shepherd Mission in Glenville journeyed to the St. Anthony Shrine in Boomer on Oct. 4 to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and for the praying of the Rosary. The shrine houses a relic of St. Anthony, shown at right. At far right, Father Sebastian celebrates Mass. Below are pilgrims—(first row) Gary Cunningham; (second row) Greg Cunningham; (third row, from left) Roberta Garton, Pam Leonard, Garry Norton & Father Sebastian; (fourth row, from left) Kristi McWhirter, Tessie Manchee, Susie Cunningham, and Sharon Kraus. Courtesy photos



Bishop Seitz Shares Migrants' Stories with Pope Leo

By **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Many immigrants in the United States today are living with the same fear people experienced under the “tyrannical” communist governments of the past, said Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas.

“We have made people who have fled for their lives now live in even greater fear” than they faced in their homelands, the bishop said the day before he met Pope Leo XIV and shared with him letters from immigrants across the United States.

Pope Leo had tears in his eyes reading some of the letters, Bishop Seitz said after meeting the pope Oct. 8.

“He was very affirming of the work that we are doing in the United States, especially our work directly with immigrants,” the bishop said, and he asked the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to continue speaking “strongly on this issue.”

“The church, through our Holy Father, the vicar of Christ, is very personally concerned about these matters,” Bishop Seitz said.

Dylan Corbett, executive director of the Hope Border Institute in El Paso, who joined Bishop Seitz for the private papal audience, posted on X that Pope Leo told them, “The church cannot stay silent before injustice. You stand with me. And I stand with you.”

Bishop Seitz had celebrated Mass Oct. 7 for members of the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry’s “Pilgrimage of Hope” to Rome and the Vatican.

Members of the pilgrimage met Pope Leo briefly that evening. Before blessing the pilgrims, the pope told them, “You have in your hands a very impor-

tant task: to accompany those who are deeply in need of a sign that God never abandons us: the smallest, the poorest, the foreigner — everyone.”

“In the pastoral service you offer,” he told them, “you are clearly this testimony, which is so important, perhaps especially in the United States, but also throughout the world.”

Speaking to Catholic News Service and to the Reuters news agency Oct. 7, Bishop Seitz said he thinks that in many ways the fear being experienced by immigrants in the United States is compounded by the fact that “they had put all their hope in thinking that they had found safety at last.”

And now, he said, with the immigration raids being carried out by U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration, “Where do they go?”

The government is saying, “We’re going to send you back to Cuba; we’re going to send you back to Venezuela; we’re going to send you back to Afghanistan,” he said.

“Does that mean that crossing the border, seeking refuge in the nation that is made up of immigrants is now a capital crime?” the bishop asked. For many migrants and refugees, danger “is what they are going back to.”

The support of Pope Leo and all Catholics is crucial, Bishop Seitz said.

“It is just so important today — in this time more than ever — that the Latino presence in the United States be acknowledged, encouraged, loved, accompanied,” he said. “You know, they feel so much rejection, so much hatred in the place that they came to seeking security and love.”

“The Latino presence has enriched the United

States, has strengthened the practice of the faith, has strengthened our family life by their witness,” he said. “So, we should be thanking (them) rather than putting into question whether Latinos belong in the United States. And that’s really what the question has become.”

While the Trump administration says that it is targeting criminals, “that is not the reality. That’s not what we are seeing,” Bishop Seitz said. “The vast majority of those who are being detained today are not criminals by any reasonable definition of that word, but they are being treated worse than we ought to treat criminals, and it is just so sad to see our nation treating our brothers and sisters in this way — sad, and you know, so wrong.”

Bishop Seitz also spoke about Pope Leo’s remark Sept. 30 about Catholics needing to be consistently pro-life. “Someone who says that I am against abortion, but I am in agreement with the inhuman treatment of immigrants who are in the United States, I don’t know if that’s pro-life,” the pope had said.

“The church is consistent in her teaching,” the bishop said. “This is not something new. We have always drawn from our fundamental belief that we were created and loved by God. We were given a special dignity by God as made in his own image and likeness. And there are no exceptions to that.”

Abortion is “a special concern for us based on that teaching, because it is the direct taking of an innocent human life,” Bishop Seitz said. “But it is not as though we say, well, we are going to love one group, we are going to respect one group, and we are not going to respect others who share that same humanity. That would be ridiculous, irrational.”

Man Arrested Outside Washington Cathedral Ahead of Red Mass Found to Have Explosives

By **Richard Szczepanowski/Catholic Standard, OSV News**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Court documents show that a New Jersey man arrested Oct. 5 outside of St. Matthew’s Cathedral just hours before the start of the annual Red Mass had a “fully functional” arsenal of explosives that he threatened to detonate.

According to the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, after officers took Louis Geri — a 41-year-old resident of Vineland, New Jersey — into custody, they discovered he had “multiple suspicious items, including vials of liquid and possible fireworks” inside a tent he erected on the steps of the cathedral.

Geri had previously been barred from the cathedral premises and was encountered when authorities were making a security sweep several hours in advance of the annual Mass to mark the start of the Supreme Court’s new term.

Published reports indicate that Geri had in his tent 200 incendiary devices including handmade gre-

nades, bottle rockets, Molotov cocktails and vials of nitromethane, the compound used in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

Agents from the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Metropolitan Police Department’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Arson Task Force, were able to take Geri into custody when he stepped away from his tent.

After his arrest, Geri was found to have a lighter and an explosive device on his person. He was charged with unlawful entry, threats to kidnap or injure a person, and possession of a Molotov cocktail, according to authorities.

Court documents show that Geri had expressed hostility and disdain for the Supreme Court, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Catholic Church and Jewish people.

The Red Mass is offered each year on the Sunday before the first Monday in October to mark the opening of the Supreme Court’s term and to invoke God’s blessings on those responsible for the administration of

justice as well as on all public officials.

The start of the Red Mass was delayed because of the incident. In a later statement, police said the scene had been secured and there was no ongoing threat to public safety. Normally several Supreme Court justices attend the annual Red Mass, but as the security situation unfolded, none

of the justices attended this year’s Mass.

(Richard Szczepanowski is managing editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington. This story was originally published by the Catholic Standard and distributed through a partnership with OSV News.)

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Pro-Life Advocates Object as Trump FDA Approves New Generic Pill for Early Abortion, Again

By **Kate Scanlon**, OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The Food and Drug Administration recently approved a new generic form of mifepristone — a pill commonly, but not exclusively, used for early abortion — drawing criticism from pro-life advocates. It marks the second time a Trump administration has approved a generic form of the pill.

On Sept. 30, the FDA notified Evita Solutions that its generic version of mifepristone was approved, despite previous suggestions from FDA and Department of Health and Human Services officials that mifepristone would undergo a review.

The move was met with condemnation by former Vice President Mike Pence, who wrote in a post on X, “The Trump Administration’s approval of a generic chemical abortion drug is a complete betrayal of the pro-life movement that elected President Trump.”

Pence previously advocated for the Senate to reject Trump’s nomination of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a Catholic and scion of the famous Kennedy political clan, as HHS secretary in part due to his views supporting legal abortion. Kennedy was ultimately confirmed to the role.

Pence argued the approval of the drug should prompt Kennedy’s resignation.

“Earlier this year, I op-

posed RFK’s nomination because he was unfit for the role and particularly over the concern that he would expand access to abortion, as he has done today,” Pence wrote.

“President Trump must immediately reverse this decision. RFK must resign and give President Trump the opportunity to appoint a new Secretary of HHS who will protect the sanctity of life,” he said. “The fight for life continues.”

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., a close ally of Trump, also expressed surprise in his own comments on X.

“FDA had promised to do a top-to-bottom safety review of the chemical abortion drug, but instead they’ve just greenlighted new versions of it for distribution,” he said. “I have lost confidence in the leadership at FDA.”

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which works to elect pro-life candidates to public office, said in a statement, “This reckless decision by the FDA to expand the availability of abortion drugs is uncon-

scionable.”

“These dangerous drugs take the lives of unborn children, place women and underage girls at serious risk, empower abusers, and trample the pro-life laws enacted by states across the nation,” she said.

Dannenfelser, who is also Catholic, argued that “Secretary Kennedy said the Biden administration ‘twisted the data to bury one of the safety signals.’ Secretary Kennedy and FDA Commissioner Makary assured Congress and the American people they would conduct a thorough review given credible evidence of the harm inflicted by these drugs. The prompt completion of the review is made more urgent given this approval to flood the market with a cheap abortion drug.”

“The FDA must, at a minimum, immediately reinstate the commonsense safeguards that were in place during President Trump’s first term,” she said.

Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America and Students for

Life Action, and a Catholic, argued in a statement the drug’s approval was “a stain on the Trump Presidency and another sign that the deep state at the FDA must go.”

However, the Evita Solutions generic is actually the second approved generic pill for mifepristone. The first generic pill for abortion — from GenBioPro — was approved in 2019, during the first Trump presidency.

Prior to Evita Solutions’ announcement, GenBioPro claimed to have cornered two-thirds of the U.S. market for mifepristone.

The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and as such, opposes direct abortion.

Approved by the FDA for early abortion in 2000, mifepristone — the first of two drugs used in a medication-based abortion — gained the moniker “the abortion pill.” However, the same drug combination has become used sometimes in recent years for miscarriage care, where an unborn child

has already passed, a situation that Catholic teaching would hold as morally licit use.

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

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Pope Leo Praises Catholic Charities USA for its Work, Especially in Assisting the Displaced

By OSV News

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV sent a letter commending the work of Catholic Charities USA, the domestic charitable arm of the Catholic Church in the U.S., to mark its 115th annual gathering Oct. 6-9 in San Juan.

“Dear friends, I express my heartfelt gratitude for all that you and those who work with your networks do each day to put into practice the Lord’s admonition to see and serve him in the poor, hungry, homeless, and people in any kind of need (cf. Mt 25:31-46),” Pope Leo wrote. “May Christ continue to accompany you and give you his joy and peace.”

The organization said its annual gathering was held for the first time in a U.S. territory, Puerto

Rico, in concert with *Cáritas de Puerto Rico*, a member agency that serves the island. Pope Leo encouraged CCUSA in its work “providing food, shelter, medical care, legal assistance, and many other gestures of kindness,” and highlighted in particular its work “assisting displaced persons.”

“It might be said that through assisting displaced persons to find their new homes in your country, you also act as bridge builders between nations, cultures and peoples,” Pope Leo wrote. “I encourage you, then, to continue helping the communities who receive these newly arrived brothers and sisters to be living witnesses of hope, recognizing that they have an intrinsic human dignity and are invited to participate fully in community.”

Kerry Alys Robinson, president and CEO of

CCUSA, said in a statement, “We are profoundly grateful to Pope Leo XIV for the Apostolic Blessing he has imparted upon the Catholic Charities network, and we are inspired and invigorated by the solidarity and encouragement he offered in his letter.”

“As we celebrate our 115th anniversary during this Jubilee Year of Hope, our network leaves our annual gathering resolutely committed to serve, in the words of the Holy Father, as ‘agents of hope’ for our vulnerable and suffering sisters and brothers across the United States,” she said.

CCUSA, which has 168 independent Catholic Charities member agencies, said its annual gathering brought together about 600 staff, volunteers and supporters from around the country.

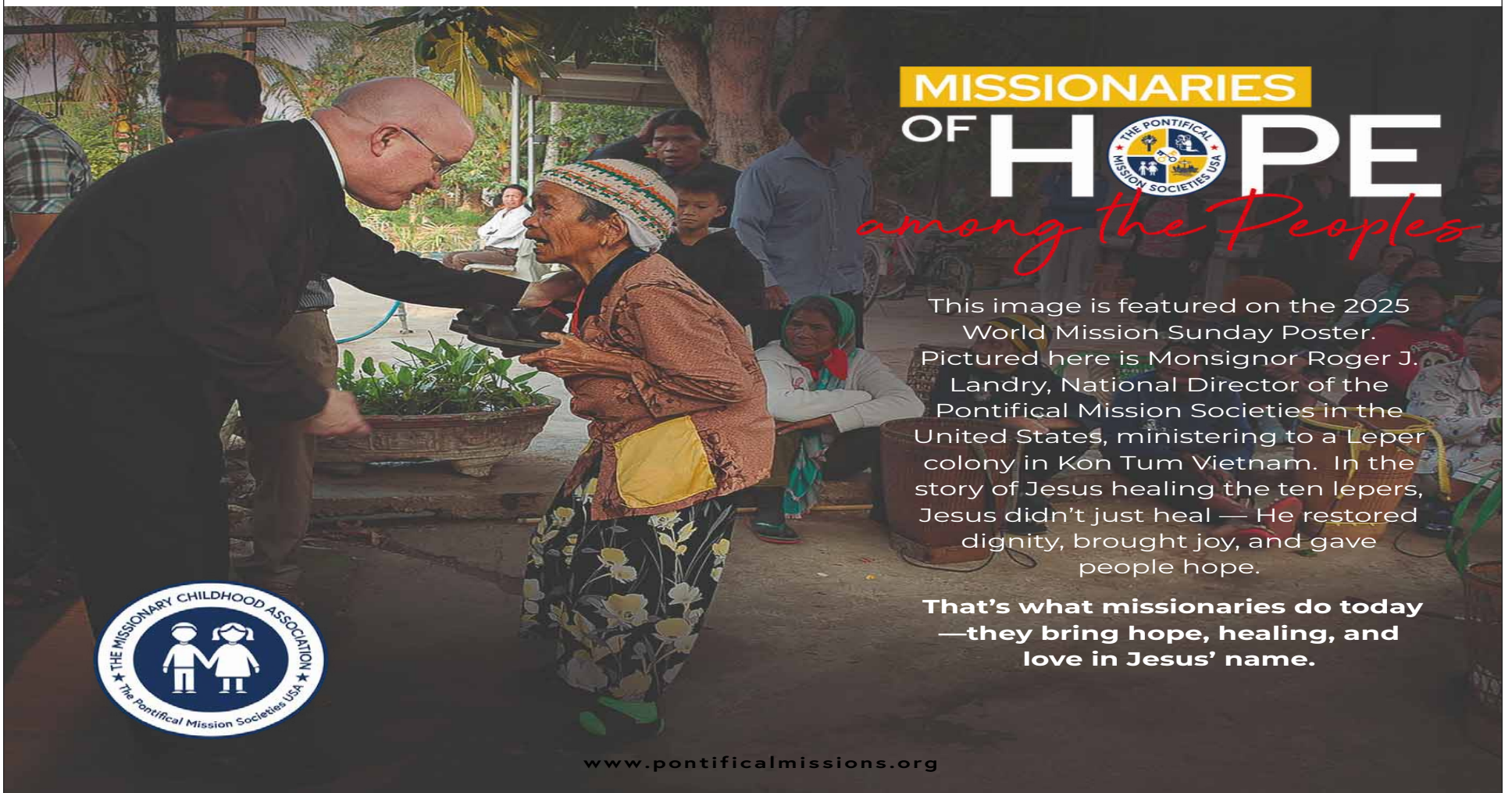
MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

October 19, 2025

World Mission Sunday (WMS) is a special day celebrated by the Catholic Church around the world to recognize and support the Church’s missionary work. Each year, the Pope chooses a theme for World Mission Sunday. For 2025, the theme is: “Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples” This theme calls all Catholics — young and old — to be messengers of hope, just as missionaries bring Christ’s love to people around the world.

The **Missionary Childhood Association** (MCA) celebrates WMS throughout the month of October by joining other children around the world to offer their prayers and their sacrifices in order to bring hope, healing, and the love of Jesus to mission places. Included in this resource is a WMS lesson plan rooted in the Gospel story of Jesus healing the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19), as well as activities and an inspiring MCA story. Use this to ignite a missionary zeal in your students leading up to this world-wide celebration of our Mission church.




MISSIONARIES OF HOPE
among the Peoples

This image is featured on the 2025 World Mission Sunday Poster. Pictured here is Monsignor Roger J. Landry, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, ministering to a leper colony in Kon Tum Vietnam. In the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers, Jesus didn’t just heal — He restored dignity, brought joy, and gave people hope.

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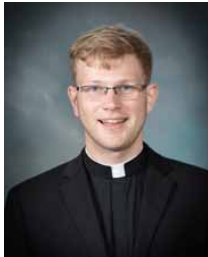
Pontifical College Josephinum (7625 N High St., Columbus, OH 43235)



Donvito Cortese
Birthday: Aug. 30
Fourth Collège



David Hensler
Birthday: July 29
First Philosophy



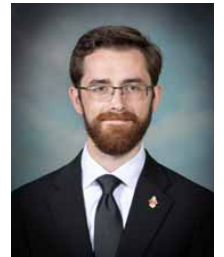
Timothy Kawash
Birthday: July 22
Second Theology



Sebastian Lasko
Birthday: Sept. 18
Second Collège

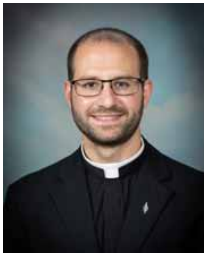


Daniel Long
Birthday: Apr. 15
Propaedeutic Year



Reece Lopatka
Birthday: June 5
First Philosophy

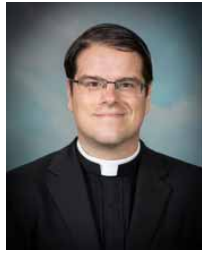
Mount St. Mary's Seminary (16300 Old Emmitsburg Rd., Emmitsburg, MD 21727)



Michael Aiello
Birthday: Sept. 16
Third Theology



Andrew Dean
Birthday: Nov. 14
First Philosophy



Nathan Schmidt
Birthday: Jan. 20
Second Theology

Pope St. John Paul II Seminary (145 Taylor St. NE, Washington, DC 20017)



Dominick Beckman
Birthday: Dec. 10
Propaedeutic Year

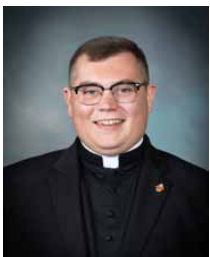


Thomas Lough
Birthday: July 23
Propaedeutic Year

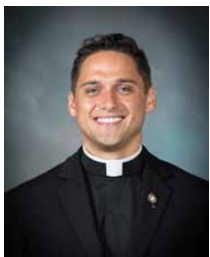


Christopher Nelson
Birthday: Dec. 4
Second Collège

Pontifical North American College (00120 Vatican City State Europe)



Joseph Derico
Birthday: Feb. 16
First Theology



Michael J. Tupta
Birthday: Apr. 24
Second Theology

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Weirton, WV 26062



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El amor por los pobres es el sello distintivo de la fe, afirma el Papa León en su primera exhortación

Por **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Para muchos cristianos "es necesario volver a leer el Evangelio" porque han olvidado que la fe y el amor por los pobres van de la mano, afirmó el Papa León XIV en su primer documento papal importante.

"El amor a los que son pobres --en cualquier modo en que se manifieste dicha pobreza-- es la garantía evangélica de una Iglesia fiel al corazón de Dios", escribió el Papa en "Dilexi Te" ("Te he amado"), una exhortación apostólica a todos los cristianos "sobre el amor hacia los pobres".

El Papa León firmó el documento el 4 de octubre, festividad de San Francisco de Asís, y el Vaticano publicó el texto el 9 de octubre.

El documento fue iniciado por el Papa Francisco, dijo el Papa León, pero él lo amplió y quiso publicarlo al comienzo de su papado "comparando el deseo de mi amado predecesor de que todos los cristianos puedan percibir la fuerte conexión que existe entre el amor de Cristo y su llamada a acercarnos a los pobres".

La conexión no es nueva ni moderna y no fue una invención del Papa Francisco, dijo. De hecho, a lo largo de las Escrituras hebreas "el amor de Dios a través de la protección de los débiles y de los que menos tienen, hasta el punto de poder hablar de una auténtica 'debilidad' de Dios para ellos".

"Estoy convencido de que la opción preferencial por los pobres genera una renovación extraordinaria tanto en la Iglesia como en la sociedad", escribió el Papa León. "Cuando

somos capaces de liberarnos de la autorreferencialidad y conseguimos escuchar su grito".

Como ha hecho desde el comienzo de su pontificado en mayo, el Papa León denunció la creciente brecha entre los ciudadanos más ricos y más pobres del mundo y señaló cómo las mujeres a menudo son "doblemente pobres", luchando por alimentar a sus hijos y haciéndolo con pocos derechos o posibilidades.

El Papa León también reafirmó la enseñanza de la Iglesia, al menos desde la década de 1960, de que existen "estructuras de pecado" que mantienen a los pobres en la pobreza y llevan a quienes tienen recursos suficientes a ignorar a los pobres o a pensar que son mejores que ellos.

Cuando la Iglesia habla de la opción preferencial de Dios por los pobres, dijo, no excluye ni discrimina a los demás, algo "que en Dios serían imposibles".

Pero la frase "desea subrayar la acción de Dios que se compadece ante la pobreza y la debilidad de toda la humanidad", escribió.

"Queriendo inaugurar un Reino de justicia, fraternidad y solidaridad", dijo el Papa León, Dios "se preocupa particularmente de aquellos que son discriminados y oprimidos, pidiéndonos también a nosotros, su Iglesia, una opción firme y radical en favor de los más débiles".

Esa elección, dijo, debe incluir la atención pastoral y espiritual, así como la educación, la atención médica, la formación profesional y la caridad, todo lo cual la Iglesia ha proporcionado durante siglos.

El documento incluye una sec-

ción sobre los migrantes en la que el Papa escribe: "La Iglesia siempre ha reconocido en los migrantes una presencia viva del Señor, que en el día del juicio dirá a los que estén a su derecha: 'Estaba de paso, y me alojaron'".

La cita procede del Evangelio de Mateo 25,35, que forma parte del "Juicio de las Naciones", en el que Jesús afirma claramente que sus seguidores serán juzgados por cómo cuiden de los pobres, los enfermos, los presos y los extranjeros.

"La Iglesia, como madre, camina con los que caminan" en busca de una vida mejor y más segura para ellos y sus familias, escribió el Papa León.

"Donde el mundo ve una amenaza, ella (la Iglesia) ve hijos; donde se levantan muros, ella tiende puentes", continuó. "Sabe que su anuncio del Evangelio solo es creíble cuando se traduce en gestos de cercanía y de acogida".

La Iglesia sabe, dijo, "que en cada migrante rechazado, es Cristo mismo quien llama a las puertas de la comunidad".

En su exhortación, el Papa León repasó referencias bíblicas a la obligación de amar y cuidar a los pobres y citó a santos y órdenes religiosas a lo largo de la historia que se han dedicado a vivir con los pobres y a ayudarlos.

Una sección del documento se centra en los "padres de la Iglesia", los primeros teólogos, quienes, según él, "reconocieron en el pobre un acceso privilegiado a Dios, un modo especial para encontrarlo. La caridad hacia los necesitados no se

entendía como una simple virtud moral, sino como expresión concreta de la fe en el Verbo encarnado", Jesús.

Por supuesto, para el Papa León, quien es agustino, San Agustín de Hipona estaba incluido en el documento. El santo, "el Doctor de la Gracia, veía en el cuidado a los pobres una prueba concreta de la sinceridad de la fe", escribió el Papa. Para Agustín, "quien dice amar a Dios y no se compadece de los necesitados, miente".

Y aunque el Papa escribió que "la ayuda más importante para una persona pobre es promoverla a tener un buen trabajo", insistió en que, cuando eso no es posible, dar limosna a una persona que pide dinero sigue siendo un acto de compasión.

"Siempre será mejor hacer algo que no hacer nada", escribió el Papa León.

Aun así, dijo el Papa, los cristianos no pueden quedarse de brazos cruzados mientras el sistema económico mundial penaliza a los pobres y hace que algunas personas sean extremadamente ricas. "Es preciso seguir denunciando la 'dictadura de una economía que mata'", dijo, citando una frase del Papa Francisco.

"O reconquistamos nuestra dignidad moral y espiritual, o caemos como en un pozo de suciedad", escribió.

"Una Iglesia que no pone límites al amor, que no conoce enemigos a los que combatir, sino sólo hombres y mujeres a los que amar", dijo el Papa León, "es la Iglesia que el mundo necesita hoy".

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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 Estados 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 eclesásticas 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 di-

recta 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, Diocese 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 ofrece 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.

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

- Saturday, Oct. 18: St. Anthony Parish, Charleston, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 19: Sacred Heart Parish, Huntington, 9 a.m.
- 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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- 8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
- 9:30 WVVA NBC 6 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
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