

THE CATHOLIC  
*Spirit*

## Pope Releases Apostolic Letter on Sacred Scripture

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In an apostolic letter dedicated to Sacred Scripture, Pope Francis said that even today, Christians can learn new things from the countless translations of the Bible that exist.

The variety of translations of the Bible in the world today “teaches us that the values and positive forms of every culture represent an enrichment for the whole church,” the pope said in his apostolic letter, “*Scripturae Sacrae affectus*” (“Devotion to Sacred Scripture”).

“The different ways by which the word of God is proclaimed, understood and experienced in each new translation enrich Scripture

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## October is Respect Life Month

By Joyce Bibey

As a Catholic community we celebrate Respect Life Month in October. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops also observes the first Sunday of October as Respect Life Sunday, when we are asked to reflect more deeply every day on the dignity of every human life from conception until natural death. This year’s theme for Respect Life Month is “Live the Gospel of Life.” The bishops across the country hope this theme reminds and inspires us to “transform our culture by allowing the Gospel of Christ to touch and transform

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## ‘Hold Your Heads High,’ Bishop Says to Police, Firefighters, EMS, Military



Colleen Rowan Photo

Members of the Follansbee Fire Department, Police Department, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and those serving in the U.S. Military look on as Bishop Mark Brennan offers his homily during the Blue Mass at St. Anthony Church in Follansbee Sept. 29.

By Colleen Rowan

FOLLANSBEE — “Hold your heads high. You have noble professions,” Bishop Mark Brennan said. This was his message to members of Police and Fire departments, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel, and those serving in the U.S. Military at his celebration of the Blue Mass at St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee Sept. 29.

Present for the Mass were local

dignitaries, as well as the family members and community members who support these men and women who risk their lives in public service. Concelebrating the Mass were Father L.J. Asantha Jude Perera, TOR, administrator of St. Anthony’s, and Father Arul Anthony, administrator of St. John the Evangelist Parish in nearby Wellsburg.

Bishop Brennan began his homily for the Blue Mass, noting that Jewish

and Christian traditions have honored the angels and seen them as a true ministry of God toward mankind. Most notably, he pointed to the Archangels Michael, the defender of God’s people; Raphael, whose angelic mission on earth was to heal; and Gabriel, messenger of divine comfort, most particularly when he reveals to Mary that she will be the mother of our savior.

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# Bishop Brennan to Preach in Observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

**WHEELING**—Catholics For Family Peace announces that Bishop Mark Brennan will celebrate the 4th Annual National Catholic Vigil Mass in Observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling on Saturday, October 3 at 6 p.m.

The Mass is co-hosted by the USCCB's Secretariat Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. It will be livestreamed on the Dioceses' YouTube channel and Facebook page.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)'s Pastoral Statement When I Call for Help (2002) encourages pastors to dedicate at least one week-end of October to inform people how they can recognize and respond to the signs of abuse.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of abuse, please know there is hope, help, and healing. In an emergency, recommend they call 911. For information on local resources, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233; TTY: 800-787-3224.

To learn more about the Catholic response to domestic violence, please visit <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/domestic-violence> and [www.CatholicsForFamilyPeace.org](http://www.CatholicsForFamilyPeace.org) or contact Dr. Sharon A. O'Brien, Director of Catholics For Family Peace at [catholicfamilypeace@gmail.com](mailto:catholicfamilypeace@gmail.com).

## Pope ...

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itself since, according to the well-known expression of Gregory the Great, Scripture grows with the reader, taking on new accents and new resonance throughout the centuries," he wrote in the letter released by the Vatican Sept. 30.

Earlier in the day, before concluding his weekly general audience, the pope told pilgrims he had signed the document to coincide with the 16th centenary of St. Jerome's death.

"May the example of this great doctor and father of the church, who placed the Bible at the center of his life, awaken in us a renewed love for the Sacred Scripture and the desire to live in a personal dialogue with the word of God," he said.

The letter itself said that marking the 16th centenary of St. Jerome's death is "a summons to love what Jerome loved, to rediscover his writings and to let ourselves be touched by his robust spirituality, which can be described in essence as a restless and impassioned desire for a greater knowledge of the God who chose to reveal himself." Catholics today, he said, must heed "the advice that Jerome unceasingly gave to his contemporaries: 'Read the divine Scriptures constantly; never let the sacred volume fall from your hand.'" In his apostolic letter, the pope delved into the history of St. Jerome's life and his love of Scripture. His "monumental work" of translating the Old Testament from Hebrew, as well as his commentary on the Psalms and St. Paul's letters, are an example for Catholics today, he said.

"As an enterprise carried out within the community and at the service of the community, Jerome's scholarly activity can serve as an example of synodality for us and for our own time," the pope said. "It can also serve as a model for the church's various cultural institutions, called to be 'places where knowledge

becomes service, for no genuine and integral human development can occur without a body of knowledge that is the fruit of cooperation and leads to greater cooperation,'" he said, quoting a speech he gave in 2019 to the pontifical academies. St. Jerome's life and work also highlight the need for true witnesses of Christ who can faithfully interpret Scripture which often seems as if it is "'sealed,' hermetically closed to interpretation."

"Many, even among practicing Christians, say openly that they are not able to read it, not because of illiteracy, but because they are unprepared for the biblical language, its modes of expression and its ancient cultural traditions," he said. "As a result, the biblical text becomes indecipherable, as if it were written in an unknown alphabet and an esoteric tongue."

The pope said that "the richness of Scripture is neglected or minimized by many because they were not afforded a solid grounding in this area," not even from their families, who often seem unable "to introduce their children to the word of the Lord in all its beauty and spiritual power." Nevertheless, the celebration of the 16th centenary of St. Jerome's death, is a reminder of "the extraordinary missionary vitality" throughout the centuries that has led to the Bible's translation in more than 3,000 languages, he said. "To how many missionaries do we owe the invaluable publication of grammars, dictionaries and other linguistic tools that enable greater communication and become vehicles for the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone," Pope Francis said. "We need to support this work and invest in it, helping to overcome limits in communication and lost opportunities for encounter. Much remains to be done. It has been said that without translation there can be no understanding: we would understand neither ourselves nor others," he said.

## To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

**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](http://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](http://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: Sr. Ellen Dunn, O.P., ext. 264; Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988.

In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

**Links and information:** WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit, Internet Crimes Against Children

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

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



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# A Letter from Bishop Brennan



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1311 BYRON STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 230  
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

September 24, 2020

Dear faithful of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese,

I write to you again to address matters of common concern. I do so as a brother in Christ who has been given the awesome responsibility to serve as your shepherd here in West Virginia. I have considered these matters in the light of the Gospel of Christ, the teachings of our Church and my experience of forty-four years of pastoral ministry.

1. The Coronavirus pandemic. We are still in the middle of it. West Virginia has seen an upsurge of confirmed cases of the disease recently, so we cannot afford to relax our vigilance. We must persevere in patience, letting God's grace help us lead our lives productively and safely.

Since late May, we have received no reports of COVID-19 virus outbreaks traceable to a public Catholic Mass. I congratulate our parishioners, clergy and their teams for this good result but, please, do not let down your guard. While I advise persons with weakened health to stay home, I do not hesitate to urge healthy parishioners to go to Mass and bring their children, for our safety measures are working. Isn't it inconsistent to go to stores and restaurants but not to Mass, where you are safer than in many of those other venues? Is feeding the stomach more important than feeding the soul? Hearing God's Word together and receiving the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion are fundamental to our Catholic faith. If you're healthy, come to Mass!

Most of our Catholic schools have opened with teachers and students in the classroom and rigorous safety protocols in place. So far it has gone well. A few Catholic schools are teaching virtually, because of conditions in their counties, but, thankfully, our teachers are proficient at doing this. I compliment our Superintendent Mary Ann Deschaine and her staff, the principals, personnel, parents and students of our Catholic schools, for their good spirit and cooperation.

We also cooperate with civil officials in this matter, trusting that they are trying their best to deal with a changing landscape.

Most of our children attend public schools. Our parishes are beginning to offer religious education classes again, safely. Consult your parish for precisely how they are doing it. Parents: you are the primary educators of your children.

Your parish offers you help but cannot replace you. Lead your children to Jesus! You should be aware that Catholic Charities and many of our parishes continue to serve people in need, while adopting protective measures for the benefit of the serving and the served.

We must not stop reaching out with Christ's love to those who need our help. You should be proud of what your fellow Catholics are doing in this regard. Could you join them?

Let us pray hard for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic and for greater cooperation by our fellow citizens in the public health measures mandated or recommended to us all. I believe we Catholics can be a model for others in our State by showing how responsible people act in a public health crisis.

2. The upcoming elections. I urge you to remember, regardless of your political affiliation and views, that we are first and foremost disciples of Jesus Christ, who gathers us as one in his Catholic Church. While many of our fellow citizens engage in harsh rhetoric and even violence to express their feelings about issues and political leaders, we have to act differently everywhere but especially in Catholic settings. Our parishes, schools and Church groups must be oases of calm in the current political storm. It is simply wrong to despise a brother or sister in the faith because of his or her political views. We must worship, pray and work together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In this light I have told our priests and deacons that they are not to endorse, in homilies, bulletins, social media or by other means, particular candidates or political parties. They can and should strive to shed the light of the Gospel on urgent moral and social issues, for our Catholic tradition has much wisdom to offer in such matters, but our clergy, religious and lay employees should not use their Church positions to advance favored candidates or parties. That is unfair to their fellow Catholics.

All citizens ought to vote. The American bishops have a fine document,

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, available at the [uscbb.org](http://uscbb.org) website. I encourage you to read it, especially parts one and two. It says: "As citizens, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group." Conscience is different from feelings and from mere opinion, whether popular or not. We Catholics have the benefit of centuries of reflection on moral and political questions, a reflection grounded in both reason and divine revelation. We should evaluate candidates according to whether or not they stand for the inviolable dignity of the human person, the common good and the principles of subsidiarity (such as respect for the family as the basic social unit) and solidarity (in particular with the poor and oppressed). Not all issues are of equal weight. The bishops' document explains and applies appropriately these fundamental moral principles. A well-formed conscience should accompany us into the voting booth or when filling out an absentee ballot.

3. The Bransfield Saga. The reaction of our people to the Holy See's decision on the amends Bishop Bransfield should make for some of the harm he caused, has been mixed. Some are tired of the whole affair and want to move on.

Others think the former bishop got off much too lightly. For my part, I found his apology self-serving and lacking in any recognition of, or contrition for, actually having offended people. I had it published without alteration and without comment, trusting that our people would see it for the non-apology that it was, and they did. I wasn't here to experience what you did but I deeply regret the pain that such a scandal and betrayal caused you. I can only try, as long as I am here, to be faithful and show that I care for you.

As for those who think the former bishop should go to jail, only the civil authorities can charge a person with a crime or send him to jail; the Church can do neither. (To be clear, the Diocese cooperates with civil authorities who are investigating alleged illegal behavior.) If we filed a lawsuit to recover more money from the former bishop, it is highly likely we would lose. Owing to constitutional concerns over the First Amendment's guarantee of a free exercise of religion, civil courts are very reluctant to interfere in the internal organization and norms of religious bodies, and canon law gives the bishop great control over how diocesan funds are spent. Those who dislike referring to my predecessor as a bishop must reckon with the fact that he is a bishop by virtue of his ordination; the discipline Rome imposed on him does not change that reality. With respect to the title "emeritus," Rome uses it as a technical term for a retired bishop but I do not use it because I know that, for English speakers, the term connotes honor and esteem, which neither we nor Rome attributes to the retired bishop.

One of the things we learn in life is that we don't always get our way. We did get some satisfaction relative to the Bransfield affair: to the best of my knowledge, the Holy See has never told a bishop in this country to apologize to his people and to make some financial restitution to them. Rome did that to Bishop Bransfield, even if the "apology" was anemic and the financial restitution, though substantial, was less than we initially sought. I do think Rome's decision is a "shot across the bow" to bishops that outrageous conduct will not be tolerated and will be punished.

I hope that we will not get stuck in endless quarrels that cannot change the past, but which can certainly bog us down in the present. As some of you have told me, we need to put the Bransfield saga behind us and move on to the work before us: making Christ known and loved in this State and serving those in need.

You all remain in my prayers and I ask you to remember me in yours. God bless you, your families and your parishes.

Sincerely in Christ,

*+ Mark E. Brennan*

+Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

# Wheeling University Student-Athlete Tests Positive for Coronavirus, Mitigation Underway

**WHEELING**—Wheeling University has implemented the necessary protocols to ensure the safety and health of the entire campus after learning one student-athlete tested positive for COVID-19. The announcement was made Sept. 25. According to President Ginny R. Favede, the student-athlete is asymptomatic and has returned home to quarantine. All members of the athletic team, the coaches and the athletic trainer for the team have been placed in quarantine as a precaution.

“Once we were notified we had a positive case, we acted

swiftly to take all appropriate actions that our Return to Campus Plan includes. First, we notified Howard Gamble with the Ohio County Health Department, who supported our decision to quarantine the team, coaches and trainer,” Favede said. She added that the McDonough Center athletic facility was closed immediately, and the university’s Environmental Services team completed a deep clean and disinfecting of the entire facility. “Our employees washed and wiped down all surfaces inside the facility, including locker rooms, weight rooms, the ath-

letic training room, both gymnasiums, bathrooms and offices. Additionally, the team sprayed the entire facility with an environmentally safe sanitizing solutions with use of the Steramist machines we recently purchased,” Favede explained.

“The Steramist hydrogen peroxide concentration produces a highly effective, germ killing aerosol,” according to the manufacturer. Favede added, that the number one priority is to care for and keep the students, faculty and staff safe. “Those team members who are in quarantine are hav-

ing their meals delivered to their room and are checked on daily to make sure they are not experiencing any symptoms. In addition, they are completing any coursework online. Over the summer, we invested in additional training for our faculty to be proficient in online course delivery—this ensures that the students continue to receive a quality education,” Favede said. “It’s important that the students know they have our support and know we care about them.” Additionally, all students have their temperatures checked daily before leaving

the residence halls, while commuter students’, employees’ and visitors’ temperatures are taken as they come onto campus each day. Masks are required to be worn by all students and employees when in classrooms, offices, and any common areas inside university buildings. Social distancing is encouraged, and sanitizing stations have been placed strategically throughout campus. Additionally, Favede said, Wheeling University continues to monitor the health, wellbeing and concern of students, staff and faculty through the LiveSafe app.

## Life ...

### Cont’d from Page 1

our own hearts and the decisions we make.” There is no time like the present to renew our Christian beliefs to treat others with the dignity we want to for ourselves. Pope Saint John Paul II’s comments during his visit to the United States and Canada still hold great inspiration today, “The ultimate test of your greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless ones.... If you want equal justice for all, and true freedom and lasting peace, America, defend life!”

Parishes in all reaches of West Virginia are committed to Respect Life and Pro-Life awareness. Here are highlights of a few of those parishes, working to build a culture that cherishes every human life.

- St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg, has a Catholics for Life of the Mid-Ohio Valley group with members also from St. Monica in Lubeck, St. Michael’s in Vienna, St. Margaret Mary in Parkersburg, St. John’s in St. Mary’s, Christ Our Hope in Harrisville, and the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption in Marietta, Ohio. Yearly activities include: National Night of Prayer for Life on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; Holy Hour for Life observing the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children and marking the anniversary of Roe vs Wade legalizing abortion; May Memorial Cross Project with Parkersburg Catholic High School and the Knights of Columbus; Monthly Prayer in front of Planned Parenthood in Vienna; Spiritual Adoption program, praying for the unborn for 9 months; and much more.

- St. James Parish, Charles Town, has a Pro-Life Ministry active in educating the public about prenatal development, violence of abortion, and end of life issues. They participate in March for Life, Prayer Chains for Life, Pro-Life Booth at the Jefferson County Fair, and host the parish’s Annual International Dinner & Auction Fundraiser. The vol-

unteers also work with Birthright and the Gabriel Project locally.

- St. Anthony, Charleston, parishioner Stanley Wyatt organizes and encourages participation in a variety of events including the Day of Remembrance of the Unborn, Sept. 12; the National Chain of Life hour of prayer and silent witness for the unborn on Oct. 4th at various locations in Charleston and St. Albans (this event is held across the state and country), and the Fatima Rosary for Life on Oct. 10th near the Abraham Lincoln Statue at the West Virginia Capitol.

- Our Lady of the Hills Parish, Elkview, hosts St. Anne’s Outreach Center. The facility is open every Thursday 8:30a m to noon to serve families with children from newborn to age four, as well as young expecting single mothers in the communities of Big Chimney, Clay, Clendenin, Elkview, and Pinch.

- St. Joseph, Martinsburg, has a Spiritual Adoption Program and St. Joseph Angels “to extend the hands of Christ to families facing adverse circumstances during pregnancy and early childhood.” The group helps provide prayer, emotional support, clothing, diapers, supplies, car seats, and more.

- St. John Parish, St. Mary’s, hosts a Spiritual Adoption program; Pro-Life cross displays in the month of May; and joins with St. Francis in Parkersburg for Catholics for Life activities.

- Immaculate Conception Parish, New Cumberland, houses the Gabriel House, also known as the Gabriel Project. It is an ecumenical network of churches in northern Hancock County committed to safeguarding and honoring life, offering help to pregnant women and families with infants and young children.

- Sacred Heart, Chester, has a “Pro-Life Chester” page on Facebook; Spiritual Adoption Program; Rosary Rally for Life in October; Power of Prayer Pro-Life Rosary in January; and supports Gabriel House in New Cumberland. “Sacred Heart Religious Education” Facebook pages.

- St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Weirton, has a Pro-Life ministry that organizes a number of activities that include the Life Chain in October, Memorial Mass for the unborn, Spiritual Adoption Program, Gabriel Project, March for Life, 40 Days for Life, and more.

- St. Francis Xavier Parish, Moundsville, began a Gabriel Project in 2018 for Marshall County to provide immediate and practical support to pregnant women and families with infants and young children. By helping pregnant mothers who carry new life, and usually carry the burden of poverty as well, the parish actively reinforces the culture of life that we, as Catholics, so strongly believe in.

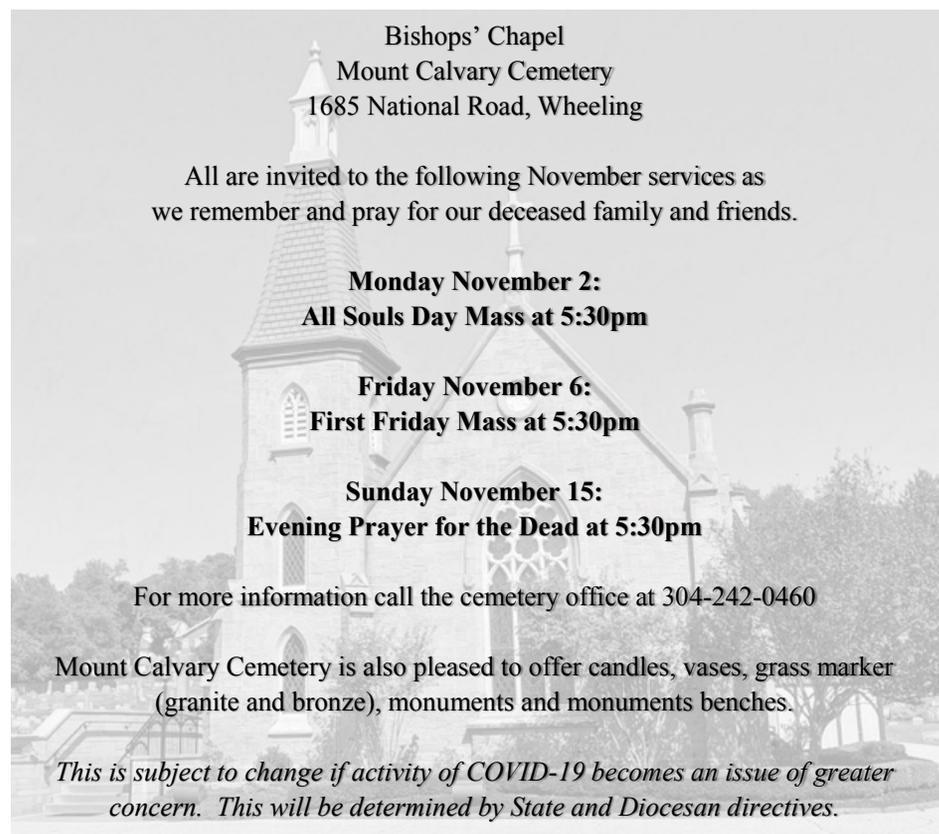
- St. Michael Parish, Wheeling, has Pro-Life Committee. This group hosts meetings every month, a Pro-Life Rosary the third Monday of each month, Spiritual Adoption Program, 40 Days of Life, Memorial Cross displays, Pro-Life Chain, Respect Life Liturgy with Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration in January, weekly columns in the bulle-

tin, March for Life, Lenten Fill The Baby Bottle fundraiser, and other gatherings such as the showing of the movie Unplanned. The Knights of Columbus, parish school students, and PSR students are also involved.

- Our Lady of Peace Parish, Wheeling, volunteers just began their Pro-Life efforts in 2019 with the Spiritual Adoption Program, posters, monthly bulletin announcements, Pro-Life bracelets, and special Pro-Life Christmas ornaments.

It doesn’t take an army, but a handful to do the legwork of these activities, said Mark Witzberger, coordinator of Pro-Life activities at Our Lady of Peace Parish. “We just need to get everyone spiritually on board.”

As the USCCB reminds us, “May we strive to imitate Christ and follow in his footsteps, caring for the most vulnerable among us. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, may Our Lord grant us the grace to live courageously and faithfully his Gospel of life.”



**Bishops’ Chapel**  
Mount Calvary Cemetery  
1685 National Road, Wheeling

All are invited to the following November services as we remember and pray for our deceased family and friends.

**Monday November 2:**  
**All Souls Day Mass at 5:30pm**

**Friday November 6:**  
**First Friday Mass at 5:30pm**

**Sunday November 15:**  
**Evening Prayer for the Dead at 5:30pm**

For more information call the cemetery office at 304-242-0460

Mount Calvary Cemetery is also pleased to offer candles, vases, grass marker (granite and bronze), monuments and monuments benches.

*This is subject to change if activity of COVID-19 becomes an issue of greater concern. This will be determined by State and Diocesan directives.*

# Pro-Life Leaders Welcome 'Born Alive Executive Order' Signed by Trump

By **Catholic News Service**

**WASHINGTON (CNS)**—The chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee Sept. 26 applauded President Donald Trump's signing the "Born Alive Executive Order" to ensure babies born alive receive care.

The order, which Trump signed the evening of Sept. 25, means "babies born prematurely or with disabilities receive a basic medical assessment and appropriate care as required by our federal laws," said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, who heads the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. "In addition to our laws, basic human rights demand that no baby born alive should be abandoned and left to die due to being disabled or premature," the archbishop said. "Every human life, regardless of its stage of development or condition, is precious and irreplaceable and deserves a shot at life."

Trump's action orders the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to make certain federally funded fa-

cilities comply with current law to provide life-saving medical care for infants who survive abortions, are born prematurely or are born with disabilities. The order also calls for more funding for research "to improve outcomes" for these babies.

Trump announced he would be signing the executive order in his remarks during the annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast Sept. 23, which this year could not be an in-person event because of the pandemic and was livestreamed to over 10,000 registered participants.

Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, issued a statement shortly after the president's remarks, saying the order will "provide necessary legal protections for some of the most vulnerable in society."

"These steps had to be taken," she said, "because some Democrats in the Senate promised to block legislation that mandates basic medical care for children who survive an abortion — an extremist view shared by vice presiden-

tial candidate Kamala Harris."

Trump told the breakfast participants, "We believe in ... the eternal truth that every child, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of God. ... I will always defend the sacred right to life." He said his order will "ensure that all precious babies born alive, no matter their circumstances, receive the medical care that they deserve. This is our sacrosanct moral duty."

Trump's opponents and some obstetricians and gynecologists say existing law already provides protections to newborns, whether born during a failed abortion or under other circumstances. Trump's order ensures federally funded hospitals are aware of the law.

But Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebraska, the lead co-sponsor of the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, S. 311, has said current law does not provide enough protections. His bill would protect newborns who survive abortions by requiring appropriate care and admission to a hospital. On Feb. 23, a Senate vote to advance the bill failed.

In other reaction to Trump's planned executive order, said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, "protects the youngest of patients and ensures that their right to life is defended to the greatest extent of the law."

Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life Action, called it "a humane response to a struggling infant gasping for air."

"The fact that Democrats in the House and Senate have blocked efforts to provide legal protections for babies born during botched abortions should horrify all Americans," she said, adding that "one of the sleeper issues of this election cycle is infanticide, which is allowed under our current laws."

The Guttmacher Institute estimates that out of about 926,000 annual abortions, about 12,000 take place after viability, or after 20 weeks, she said.

"The radical reality of Roe is that abortion is legal in the U.S. through all nine months, sometimes with taxpayer funding, and it offers no legal protections for babies born during botched abortions," Hawkins said.

# Trump Announces Judge Amy Coney Barrett as U.S. Supreme Court Nominee

By **Carol Zimmermann, Catholic News Service**

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** — Eight days after the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, President Donald Trump announced Sept. 26 that Judge Amy Coney Barrett, a judge on the Chicago-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, is his nominee to fill that seat.

The president said he was honored to nominate Barrett whom he described as "one of the nation's most gifted legal minds" to the court and praised her for her loyalty to the Constitution.

This should be a "straightforward and prompt confirmation," he added before a small crowd seated in the White House Rose Garden. "The stakes are incredibly high," he added.

Barrett, for her part, said she was "humbled by the prospect of serving in the Supreme Court," and said if she were confirmed, she would always be mindful she would be following in Ginsburg's footsteps.

Noting she would be in a group of nine as a justice, she said this is something she is very used to, with her husband and their family of seven children. She also stressed that if confirmed she would "assume the role to serve you," the American public, and she has no illusions that the road ahead will be easy.

Trump's pick is not a surprise. The 48-year-old Catholic and law professor at the University of Notre Dame was reported to be on the president's short list of nominees just hours after Ginsburg's death and news outlets began announcing she was the likely pick a day ahead of the official announcement.

The news drew immediate reaction from both sides of the political spectrum and Catholics were similarly vocal in either support or alarm over Trump's nominee choice.



**CNS Photo/Carlos Barria, Reuters**  
**Federal Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the 7th Circuit is seen at the White House Sept. 26. President Donald Trump introduced her as the nominee to fill the U.S. Supreme Court seat left vacant by the Sept. 18 death of Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.**

Brian Burch, president of CatholicVote, an independent political advocacy group, said in a Sept. 26 statement ahead of Trump's formal announcement: "Catholics are thrilled with the expected nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett and believe she represents the best choice to protect the rule of law and our constitutional rights." He added that she "deserves a speedy confirmation process and a Senate vote as soon as possible."

Catholics expressing concern about Trump's pick stressed unease with her stance on a number of issues. For example, John Gehring, the Catholic program director for Faith in Public Life, a Washington-based advocacy group, said in a Sept. 26 tweet: "Being 'pro-life' isn't a single issue. Many Catholic voters are worried

that Amy Coney Barrett could undermine health care access, workers rights', environmental protections and other moral issues central to church teaching."

Barrett is not an unknown. Two years ago, she was viewed as a potential candidate for the nation's high court after Justice Anthony Kennedy retired, in the slot that was filled by Justice Brett Kavanaugh. At the time, Trump reportedly told advisers that he was "saving" Barrett if Ginsburg announced her retirement during his presidency.

In 2017, Barrett, who had clerked for Justice Antonin Scalia, was nominated by Trump to serve on the 7th Circuit in Chicago and she garnered support from some for her responses to the line of questioning she received in her confirmation hearing from Senate Democrats that focused on her Catholic faith.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, told her: "The dogma lives loudly within you, and that's a concern," to which Barrett responded: "It's never appropriate for a judge to impose that judge's personal convictions, whether they arise from faith or anywhere else, on the law."

After this interaction, several Catholic leaders spoke out against pointed questions about Barrett's faith.

Feinstein had been referring to Barrett's speeches and a 1998 article she co-wrote about the role of Catholic judges in death penalty cases. The senator also questioned Barrett about upholding *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that made abortion legal.

When Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, asked Barrett if she considered herself an "orthodox" Catholic, Barrett said: "If you're asking whether I take my faith seriously and am a faithful Catholic, I am. Although

**See "Nominee" on Page 6**

## Pope to U.N.: Respect for Each Human Life is Essential for Peace, Equality

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Francis asked members of the United Nations how they think they can respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and build a more peaceful, more just world when many of their countries spend billions on military weapons and when their treatment of the unborn, of refugees and of women shows so little respect for human life.

“We must ask ourselves if the principal threats to peace and security — poverty, epidemics, terrorism and so many others — can be effectively countered when the arms race, including nuclear weapons, continues to squander precious resources that could better be used to benefit the integral development of peoples and protect the natural environment,” the pope said in his video address, which was broadcast

Sept. 25. On the fifth anniversary of his visit to the U.N. headquarters in New York, Pope Francis returned to themes he has repeated since the COVID-19 pandemic began: Humanity faces a choice between trying to go back to an often unjust “normal” or taking the opportunity to rethink economic and political policies, putting the good of all people and the environment ahead of concern for maintaining the lifestyles of wealthy individuals and nations.

He drew particular attention to the pandemic’s impact on children, “including unaccompanied young migrants and refugees,” as well as to reports that “violence against children, including the horrible scourge of child abuse and pornography, has also dramatically increased.”

## Death Penalty Denounced for Ignoring Inmates’ Capability to be ‘Redeemed’

**By Catholic News Service**

**TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (CNS)** — On Sept. 24, Providence Sister Barbara Battista stood across the street from where her spiritual directee died just two days before. She had been with him when he was pronounced dead at 9:06 p.m. Sept. 22.

“I can tell you that my experience was of a man who was at peace, eyes clear, face relaxed,” she said. That fact might seem surprising, since her spiritual directee was federal death-row inmate William LeCroy, convicted for the 2001 rape and murder of Joann Lee Tiesler. He had been under the influence of witchcraft and mistook her for a babysitter he claimed had sexually abused him when he was a child, according to The Washington Post. At a news conference the morning of Sept. 24, Sister Barbara read aloud the letter she had received from LeCroy, who gave her permission to share it after his death.

Also speaking at the news conference was Lisa Brown, the mother of federal death-row inmate Christopher Vialva. He would be pronounced dead less than eight hours later at 6:46 p.m., executed for his involvement in the 1999 murder of Todd and Stacie Bagley. “This is hard, very hard,” she said, her voice breaking as tears welled in her eyes. LeCroy and Vialva were the sixth and seventh federal prisoners to be executed by lethal injection since July 14 after a 17-year hiatus on federal executions ended.

## Virtual Rosary Oct. 7 Aims to Unite Catholics in ‘Moment of Prayer’ for Nation

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** — The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for a “moment of prayer” to unite Catholics across the country at time when there is “much unrest and uncertainty” in the United States, said a Sept. 30 USCCB news release.

To that end, the USCCB will host a virtual rosary event Oct. 7, which is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, who is the USCCB’s president, has invited several bishops, representing the various geographical regions of the United States, to pray a

part of the rosary. The event will premiere on the USCCB’s YouTube channel and its Facebook page at 3 p.m. Eastern time (12 p.m. Pacific time) on Oct. 7.

“The faithful are encouraged to join in this prayerful moment of unity for our country, to seek healing and to ask Our Lady, on her feast, to pray for us and help lead us to Jesus,” the release said. The USCCB hashtag is #RosaryForAmerica. Social media graphics English and Spanish can be downloaded from <https://www.usccb.org/rosary-america>.

## Nominee ...

**Cont’d from Page 5**

I would stress that my present church affiliation or my religious beliefs would not bear in the discharge of my duties as a judge.”

She ended up getting bipartisan support and was confirmed with a 55-43 vote.

Prior to this vote, The New York Times reported that Barrett was a member of a group called People of Praise, an ecumenical charismatic community, which gained some attention at the time that has now been revisited. The group, based in South Bend, Indiana, has more than 1,700 members living in 22 branches in the United States and its members are primarily Catholic.

A key aspect of the group is that many of its members sign a lifelong commitment or covenant. Massimo Faggioli, a professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University, said the Senate Judiciary Committee should be prepared to “examine any covenant — a solemn contract binding before God” that Barrett signed in the course of becoming a full member of the group. “Doing so will protect, not erode, America’s foundational value of religious liberty,” he wrote in a Sept. 24 commentary in *Politico* magazine.

In 2018, Our Sunday Visitor spoke with Auxiliary Bishop Peter L. Smith of Portland, Oregon, who is a member of People of Praise, who said misunderstandings about the group are a “fundamental part of what’s going on in our culture and in our political system right now — where we decide we don’t like somebody, maybe they have different views from us ... so we demonize them.”

Another concern expressed by those opposed to Barrett’s nomination is that she could be a vote for dismantling *Roe v Wade*.

In her 2017 hearing she said she would “commit, if confirmed, to follow unflinchingly all Supreme Court precedent,” adding: “I would not want to leave the impression that I would give some precedents more weight than others because of some sort of academic disagreement.”

As a judge, she has not ruled specifically on abortion cases but as a member of the full appeals court she has voted in a few Indiana cases related to abortion. After several judges determined that an Indiana law requiring fetal remains to be buried or cremated following an abortion was unconstitutional, Barrett voted to rehear the case. She also dissented when appeals court judges attempted to block an Indiana law mandating parental consent for a minor to have an abortion. In a 2013 speech at University of Notre Dame, she said if *Roe* were overturned, “abortion would be neither legal nor illegal throughout the United States. Instead, the states and Congress would be free to ban, protect or regulate abortion as they saw fit.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch

McConnell, R-Kentucky, has vowed that Trump’s nominee “will receive a vote on the floor of the United States Senate” which Democrats have criticized since McConnell did not consider President Barack Obama’s nominee, Judge Merrick Garland, several months before the 2016 election. McConnell and other Republicans have said the situation is different this time because the same party, Republicans, control both the Senate and the White House.

Paolo Carozza, a Notre Dame law professor, said he was “conflicted” about his colleague potentially being rushed into a confirmation just weeks before the election.

He told WBEZ, Chicago public radio, that he would love to see Barrett on the bench “because I think she’d be a great justice,” but he said he wished there were “more sort of harmony and less conflict in the process of creating our highest court, because in the long run, I think it really undermines the credibility of the judiciary.”

Some in the Notre Dame community said Barrett would be a fair-minded justice, not guided by ideology but by her strict “originalist” reading of the U.S. Constitution.

“One thing that really stands out is how fair minded her scholarship is. And she doesn’t go in with an ax to grind. She doesn’t go in with an ideological sort of conclusion in search of justifications. She goes in with a genuine, open, scholarly mind, tackling a question,” Notre Dame law professor Carter Snead told the radio program.

Snead also said he does not believe there is anyone in the country “more well qualified than she is to be on the Supreme Court because of her combination of brilliance, her work ethic, her open mindedness, her charitable manner of engaging with people.”

Barrett has been married for more than 18 years to Jesse Barrett, a partner in a South Bend law firm who spent 13 years as a federal prosecutor in Indiana. Two of their children are adopted from Haiti.

She now faces the Senate process which includes public hearings, a committee vote and the Senate floor vote where a simple majority, or 50 votes, is needed to confirm her as the next Supreme Court justice. The Republicans have 53 seats in the current Senate, and if needed, Vice President Mike Pence could break a tie vote.

Although the exact timeline has not been set, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, has said he hopes to hold a final confirmation vote by the end of October, just days before the election.

If Barrett is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice she would be the sixth Catholic justice, joining Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Kavanaugh, Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Sonia Sotomayor. Justice Neil Gorsuch was raised Catholic but is now Episcopalian. Justices Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan are Jewish.

# Vatican Reaffirms, Clarifies Church Teachings on End-of-Life Care

**By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — With the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia in many countries, and questions concerning what is morally permissible regarding end-of-life care, the Vatican's doctrinal office released a 25-page letter offering "a moral and practical clarification" on the care of vulnerable patients.

"The church is convinced of the necessity to reaffirm as definitive teaching that euthanasia is a crime against human life because, in this act, one chooses directly to cause the death of another innocent human being," the document said.

Titled, "'Samaritanus bonus,' on the Care of Persons in the Critical and Terminal Phases of Life," the letter by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was approved by Pope Francis in June, and released to the public Sept. 22.

A new, "systematic pronouncement by the Holy See" was deemed necessary given a growing, global trend in legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide, and changing attitudes and rules that harm the dignity of vulnerable patients, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, congregation prefect, said at a Vatican news conference Sept. 22.

It was also necessary to reaffirm church teaching regarding the administration of the sacraments to and pastoral care of patients who expressly request a medical end to their life, he said.

"In order to receive absolution in the sacrament of penance, as well as with the anointing of the sick and the viaticum," he said, the patients must demonstrate their intention to reverse their decision to end their life and to cancel their registration with any group appointed to grant their desire for euthanasia or assisted suicide. In the letter's section on "Pastoral discernment toward those who request euthanasia or assisted suicide," it said a "priest could administer the sacraments to an unconscious person 'sub condicione' if, on the basis of some signal

given by the patient beforehand, he can presume his or her repentance."

The church's ministers can still accompany patients who have made these end-of-life directives, it added, by showing "a willingness to listen and to help, together with a deeper explanation of the nature of the sacrament, in order to provide the opportunity to desire and choose the sacrament up to the last moment."

It is important to carefully look for "adequate signs of conversion, so that the faithful can reasonably ask for the reception of the sacraments. To delay absolution is a medicinal act of the church, intended not to condemn, but to lead the sinner to conversion," it said. However, it added, "those who spiritually assist these persons should avoid any gesture, such as remaining until the euthanasia is performed, that could be interpreted as approval of this action."

Chaplains, too, must show care "in the health care systems where euthanasia is practiced, for they must not give scandal by behaving in a manner that makes them complicit in the termination of human life," the letter said.

Another warning in the letter regarded medical end-of-life protocols, such as "do not resuscitate orders" or "physician orders for life-sustaining treatment" and any of their variations. These protocols "were initially thought of as instruments to avoid aggressive medical treatment in the terminal phases of life. Today, these protocols cause serious problems regarding the duty to protect the life of patients in the most critical stages of sick-

ness," it said.

On the one hand, it said, "medical staff feel increasingly bound by the self-determination expressed in patient declarations that deprive physicians of their freedom and duty to safeguard life even where they could do so."

"On the other hand, in some health care settings, concerns have recently arisen about the widely reported abuse of such protocols viewed in a euthanistic perspective with the result that neither patients nor families are consulted in final decisions about care," it said.

"This happens above all in the countries where, with the legalization of euthanasia, wide margins of ambiguity are left open in end-of-life law regarding the meaning of obligations to provide care."

The church, however, "is obliged to intervene in order to exclude once again all ambiguity in the teaching of the magisterium concerning euthanasia and assisted suicide, even where these practices have been legalized," it said.

Euthanasia involves "an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all pain may in this way be eliminated." Its definition depends on "the intention of the will and in the methods used," it added.

The letter reaffirmed that "any formal or immediate material cooperation in such an act is a grave sin against human life," making euthanasia "an act of homicide that no end can justify and that does not tolerate any form of complicity or active or passive collaboration." For that reason, "those

who approve laws of euthanasia and assisted suicide, therefore, become accomplices of a grave sin that others will execute. They are also guilty of scandal because by such laws they contribute to the distortion of conscience, even among the faithful."

The letter also underlined a patient's right to decline aggressive medical treatment and "die with the greatest possible serenity and with one's proper human and Christian dignity intact" when approaching the natural end of life. "The renunciation of treatments that would only provide a precarious and painful prolongation of life can also mean respect for the will of the dying person as expressed in advanced directives for treatment, excluding however every act of a euthanistic or suicidal nature," it said.

However, it also underlined the rights of physicians as never being "a mere executor of the will of patients or their legal representatives, but retains the right and obligation to withdraw at will from any course of action contrary to the moral good discerned by conscience." Other aspects of end-of-life care the letter detailed included: the obligation to provide basic care of nutrition and hydration; the need for holistic palliative care; support for families and hospice care; the required accompaniment and care for unborn and newly-born children diagnosed with a terminal disease; the use of "deep palliative sedation"; obligation of care for patients in a "vegetative state" or with minimal consciousness; and conscientious objection by health care workers.

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FOR ONESELF AND FOR OTHERS. ALWAYS."  
—POPE FRANCIS**



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# A Grandmother's Story of Open Adoption

By Beth Zarate

We never imagined we would ever have to hear the deep uncontrollable sobbing of our 16 year old son, we never knew it was possible to experience loss at such depth, to feel the world fall apart around us. On Sept 12th, 1998 my family gathered and wept as my 16-year-old son signed over his parental rights to our first grand baby. Our hearts were breaking — yet in his infinite wisdom God was opening our world to an incredible love story.

Isabelle Faith came into the world, blonde and precious, healthy and beautiful, in a hospital suite complete with her birth family and adoptive family. Together we would cherish her and watch her grow into an amazing young woman, the smart and energetic engineering student she is today. My son's picture would always be in her room — he would attend her baptism, her birthdays, vacation with her adoptive family, cheer at her high school graduation and she would be a bridesmaid in his wedding.

Today he calls her Belle, his first born angel, she calls him Rick, and they talk often. Rick knows Belle loves him and adoption was the right choice.... he enjoys a great relationship with Belle's adoptive parents David and Linda and harbors immense gratitude for them and their unwavering commitment to "open adoption." He loves Belle's older sister Emily, also from an open adoption. David and Linda are amazing people and parents, we see the beauty and love of God in them and they have blessed us immeasurably. To be clear, they did all the hard work, all the parenting, all the sleepless nights, all the nurturing.

Open adoption is honest, it is shared love, and like Christ's sacrifice for us an expression of the depth of God's love for his children. It honors the heroism and



Courtesy Photos

**Clockwise from above: Belle with Beth Zarate, her birth grandmother; Belle with Rick, her birth father; and Belle with Linda, her adoptive mother.**

bravery birth parents display when they place their child with a loving family through adoption. It honors the commitment of adoptive parents to give their child every opportunity to know their complete life story — gracious enough to share and choosing the best for their child.

If I am truthful, in the beginning the loss I felt was unimaginable and my faith doubted and my tears flowed. I felt a deep loss, experienced personal depression and sorrow for my son. I felt alone in a conversation not easily held with relatives or friends.

My belief and faith in God carried me. Faith is the first step, even when you can't see the whole staircase. Every time we received a phone call, picture, health update on Belle I realized what a privilege it was to be in her life...if only a part of her orbit... I had a part.

I knew I had to be intentional if I hoped to have a connection with



story continues.

My prayer is everyone understands how life affirming open adoption is, how for my son, knowing his daughter, knowing she was loved and safe, and watching her grow allowed him to become the wonderful man God intended him to be. The experience blessed him and thru it he found his courage. He went to college, established a successful career, married our dearest Lane the love of his life, and they have blessed us with 2 beautiful grandchildren who also know and love our Belle.

"First there is the fall. And then we recover from the fall. Both are the mercy of God" — Lady Julian of Norwich.

Adoption is a viable and beautiful path for women in unplanned pregnancies. Our family recognizes that open adoption may not work for everybody but for our families it was a perfect blessing. Heartfelt thanks to Methodist Mission home in San Antonio for guiding us through our open adoption plan.

my birth granddaughter. Every summer I would gather our family and we would make a birthday gift to Belle from our family. From all of us signing a stuffed animal, to picking our favorite songs for a CD, to each signing a quilt square for a blanket....every birthday Belle received a special gift and a reminder of how very much she was wanted and loved. I still burst in to tears when I remember all of us signing a wall hanging that said "You are our favorite hello and hardest goodbye."

Today, Belle is 22 and she is compassionate, kind, vibrant, brave and adventurous. She tells me she loves me and it melts my heart. I love immensely all my grandchildren that followed but my love for Belle is profound, I had to love her from afar and I prayed her into my life. We did not lose a grand baby on that day, we grew our family, and our love

From Rick: "There was no "lightbulb" moment, no aligning of the stars. It's complicated and it was hard for us and our families, but it was the right choice for Belle. It's not easy to place a child and to decide that you're going to let another man be the father figure in their life."

"Of two things I am certain, that my daughter loves me and I made the right choice."

From Belle: "I love my birth family and feel so lucky that they care about me and include me... one of the things I cherish so much is I love seeing Ricky and Lane and I love, love, love getting to know my little half siblings. They are so sweet and special and I am just big sister Belle."

"I think you just get a beautiful perspective and if your adoptive family and birth family have a trusting relationship it can be a really special thing."

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# Weirton Catholic Community Thanks Police, Firefighters, First Responders, Military at Blue Mass

By Colleen Rowan

**WEIRTON**—In his homily for the celebration of the annual Blue Mass in Weirton, Very Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens, Jr., V.E, asked the honored guests seated in the front pews of the church—police officers, firefighters, first responders, and members of the U.S. Military—to take a moment, turn around, and look at the congregation. “They are here to celebrate and to give thanks to you,” Father Schuelkens said.

St. Joseph the Worker Church was filled that day with parishioners along with members of neighboring parishes as well as children and young people from the Catholic schools of Weirton—Madonna High School, St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, and St. Paul School—all of which sponsored the Mass with St. Joseph’s.

“On behalf of the student bodies of the Catholic schools of Weirton, we would like to welcome all of the police officers, firefighters, first responders, and members of the armed forces and all invited guests to this Blue Mass to honor those who are willing to lay down their life every day,” Madonna High School student Madalena Daugherty said in her wel-



**Members of the Sheriff’s and Police departments of Weirton are pictured at the Blue Mass at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Weirton Sept. 11.**

Courtesy Photo

coming before Mass.

The Mass was celebrated on Sept. 11, and also offered prayers and remembrance for those killed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, at the Pentagon, and in a field near Shanksville, Pa., 19 years ago. “Close to 3,000 people,” Father Schuelkens said. “We remember them, we pray for them. We pray for their families. That loss is palpable. It still remains in the hearts of those who lost loved ones.” Father Schuelkens

spoke of the many who ran into the buildings that day to help, to sacrifice.

“St. Joseph the Worker Blue Mass is a way for our area Catholic schools to honor those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, and for us to also say thank you to our local police officers, firemen, first responders and military for their service,” said Recheal Fuscardo, principal of St. Joseph’s, in the days after the Mass. Students from all of the schools participated in the Mass.

“We say thank you Lord to those individuals who say yes. Yes, I will defend, and I will protect, and I will help even at the risk of my own life,” Father Schuelkens said in his homily. “We give thanks because there are law enforcement officers, there are firefighters, there are first responders, and there are people in the military who say, ‘I’ll step forward, I’ll take the risk.’”

Father Schuelkens reminded the congregation that when danger occurs—fires or other tragedies or catastrophes—they, the honored guests at this Blue Mass, are the ones that run into it. Everyone has a call in their lives, he said, and God has called them forth to defend and to protect.

“And we see in the Gospel,” Father Schuelkens said, “‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ God has placed in their hearts a sense of purpose and duty, of lifting the community. They are called to bring safety. And they do it every day.

“We thank the Lord for these community leaders who step forward and say, ‘I’m willing to serve ... even at the risk of my own life.’”

## Bishop ...

Cont’d from Page 1

“God uses these archangels to serve his people, to serve his creation,” Bishop Brennan said. “And those who serve in and among the police and fire departments, first responders, and in the military imitate, among human beings, what these archangels do.”

“All of these folks are agents of comfort and providers of security in our communities, and it is right to honor them for what they do,” the bishop said. “Sometimes they have to risk their health and their lives to do their jobs.”

Bishop Brennan also called to mind the many police and firefighters who have been killed doing their jobs.

“We also hear of the bad apples,” the bishop said. “It is true there are some bad apples. ... And bad apples have to be dealt with.” He warned that there can be a culture of silence and circling the wagons mentality, which can prevent progress and reform that are needed.

“The bad apples, my friends, are not the whole story, they simply aren’t,” Bishop Brennan said. “In my experience over many years most police and fire, medical, first responders, and those serving in the military are dedicated to serving others. And they try to do it faithfully.”

Bishop Brennan said he believes that the majority of people recognize this. “If you ask people in poor neighborhoods in some of our great cities, do they want the police to be defunded? Do you know what they say? No. They want police protection.”



**Members of area Police and Fire departments, and first responders are pictured at the Blue Mass at St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee Sept. 29.**

Colleen Rowan Photo

At this Mass, the bishop said the community honors those who dedicate their lives and their energies to the people, to keeping all safe, and responding when problems occur.

“I encourage you, who are in these wonderful public service professions, hold your heads high. As there are angels that serve and continue to serve God so you do by serving your fellow human beings,” the bishop said. “You have noble professions. Never let anyone take that away from you. Honor God, trust him, and pray as we heard in the psalm, When I called,



**Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the Blue Mass at St. Anthony Parish in Follansbee Sept. 29.**

Colleen Rowan Photo

you answered me. You built up strength within me.”

God will not let down those who call upon him in their need, the bishop said to them.

“My friends who are in the police and fire departments, first responders, and those serving in the military,” Bishop Brennan said, “may the angels inspire you, may their prayers assist you.”

At the end of the Mass, Follansbee Mayor David Velegol recognized the police, firefighters, EMS personnel, and military members present noting the number of years each have served.

# Even If We Don't Deserve It, We Can Preserve It

By Father That Son Nguyen

Jean Battlo, a poet and playwright, has lived all of her life in a small town of Kimball, West Virginia. Today in her 80's, she feels most at home sitting in her garden and among her cats. Looking in the distance at the West Virginia hills, she would say to me, "We don't deserve it, because it's a gift from God." She would quote her favorite verse, "What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me" (Psalm 116:12).

In Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, he warns us that "[Mother Earth] cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her."

Pope Francis and Jean Battlo are right. We have all heard the stories of climate change over the years.

In the middle of a historic pan-

demical we also have extreme weather, devastating fires throughout the west coast, hurricanes and flooding in southern states. We need to take immediate action to stop the irreversible injury to our common home.

This is clearly a moral issue. Are we ready to talk?

We are all hurting this year. And the poor suffer the most. They lose their jobs, cannot find work, cannot buy food, cannot pay rent or afford day-care. This injustice cannot go on forever.

We must stand together to care for the poor. In Pope Francis' words, "Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another."

Pope Francis warns us that we cannot go back to the old ways after this pandemic. It is time to start something new, to care for our environment, for creation, for our common home. The

Holy Father says, in his *Plan for Rising Again*, that the pandemic is compelling us toward "uniting the entire human family in the search for sustainable and comprehensive development."

All of us need to contribute to the solution. The bishops of South Africa stated, "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation."

What will the solution look like? Sr. Libby Deliee, a Sister of Mercy who worked for 17 years in southern West Virginia, would say to me, "Be Kind, See Kind and Act Kind." Her favorite word was 'respect.' That is the best starting place I can think of.

Jesus teaches us, "[The kingdom of God] is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth

large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade." (Mark 4:30-31)

The little loving actions each of us do, grow and grow to become the Kingdom of God. As Pope Francis puts it, "St. Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness."

Let's start healing the earth! Simple daily acts change our little corner of the world, and change us, including gardening, reducing our carbon footprint, advocating to elected officials, and serving the vulnerable. Let's show each other love and respect so that we, our children and future generations, can live. Let's walk on this earth as Jesus walked: with love and with the eyes and heart of God.

## Compassionate Care Helps Walter Stay at Home



Catholic Charities  
West Virginia  
Mission Moment

By Katie Hinerman Klug, Catholic Charities West Virginia Marketing Communications Specialist

Walter Scott loves his home in Chester. For over 20 years, he has enjoyed the beautiful view from his apartment overlooking the Ohio River.

In 2015, Walter began dealing with multiple cancer diagnoses and treatments, and the activities of daily living were becoming too difficult for him. With no family nearby, and a desire to remain living at home independently, he reached out to Catholic Charities West Virginia for help. Homemaker Jennifer Davis entered his life, and the two have developed an inseparable bond.

"At that time, I had skin cancer all over me – back, face, nose, arms, head," Walter explained. "I don't think I'd have gotten through it all without her, really, to be truthful," he commented, holding back tears.

Jennifer comes to Walter's house for four hours a day, seven days a week.

Even as the coronavirus pandemic spread, Jennifer continued to care for Walter while taking necessary precautions and wearing personal protective equipment.

Jennifer arrives in the morning, helps Walter get out of bed, prepares his breakfast, helps him

bathe, shaves his face, helps him dress, and helps with other personal hygiene activities. "She's been a God send. She does everything – laundry, shopping... gentle aggravation," he joked.

Another important part of Jennifer's responsibilities is that of medication management. With multiple doctors, multiple diagnoses and multiple medications, medication management can be overwhelming for individuals, like Walter.

To ensure Walter is taking his prescription medications properly, Jennifer helps him organize and understand his prescriptions and supplements, places them in pill sorters, and sets medication reminders for him.

After serving Walter's lunch, Jennifer prepares dinner for him to reheat in the microwave later. Then the two enjoy spending quality time together.

They often run errands together, go to the grocery store, go to the bank, or just get out of the house.

"It's good to just be able to help him walk around the store," Jennifer remarked. "And it's especially great on nice days when we can get outside and go for a walk."

In addition to the activities of daily living, meal preparation, light housekeeping, and errands, Jennifer also provides companionship for Walter.

"He's just like my dad," said Jennifer. "I've kind of adopted him."

Catholic Charities HomeCare services provide comprehensive in-



Courtesy Photo

Catholic Charities West Virginia Homemaker Jennifer Davis is pictured with Walter Scott in Chester.

home services for as little, or as long, as a family needs them. Registered Nurse supervisors develop an individualized plan of care with the family and monitor the care and assistance being provided by the homemaker.

All staff are thoroughly screened with comprehensive background checks.

"I love this job. I always have. I always treat my clients as if they were my parents or how I would want my parents to be treated," said Davis.

Jennifer and Walter recently celebrated his 91st birthday with

his favorite meal of Mexican food. "I really enjoy the one-on-one time with her," said Walter. "She's a really special lady, and I'm lucky to have her."

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).

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

# Wheeling Man Puts Fatherly Love into Pro-Life Ministry

**By Joyce Bibey**

Sitting in the courtyard of the St. Joseph Cathedral in downtown Wheeling, appropriately near the statue of St. Joseph our patron saint of fathers, Mark Witzberger, shared how each one of us is called to put our faith in action.

Witzberger and his wife Barbara are the parents of two grown children, Melissa and Jason. He grew up in Immaculate Conception-St. Mary's Parish in South Wheeling, attended St. Mary's Grade School, Our Lady of Peace Grade School, and graduated from Bishop Donahue. It is obvious he cherishes his faith, which is not only visible by his unassuming reverent presence at Mass, but also his resolve to help those in need, especially in regards to respecting human life.

"As a teacher and coach, for years I worked with projects which concentrate on respecting life," Witzberger, now retired, said. "However, I never made the time to get involved in any sort of Pro-Life ministry at church until now."

Just like St. Joseph a compassionate protector, hard worker, and guardian, Witzberger's career put him in a position to help countless students, serving as the faculty coordinator for Cameron High School's Students Against Destructive Decisions organization. Through coaching he encouraged his players not only be committed to improving as athletes, but also as positive leaders in their peer groups and community.

Since his retirement a few years ago, Witzberger wanted to get his parish more involved in a Pro-Life/Respect Life ministry. He attended Respect Life conferences in the Diocese of Steubenville at Franciscan University. He has been in contact with the Archdiocese of Baltimore, sev-

eral parishes around Maryland, and has contacted fellow Catholics around West Virginia like Denny and Gretchen Wilson who are part of the Pro-Life ministry at St. Michael Parish in Wheeling.

"Saying 'I'm Pro-Life, end of story' is not enough," Witzberger said. "We need to be do-ers."

Through the mighty strength of education and prayer, he hopes to make a significant difference and encourage others to put their faith in action.

Last year he approached Our Lady of Peace Pastor Father Joseph Mandokkara Augustine with the idea of starting an official Pro-Life ministry within the parish. A small survey was taken at weekend Masses to identify parishioner interest. With the help of fellow parishioners, Bill Pack and Steve Roth, the men began a Spiritual Adoption program, committed to provide awareness information in the parish bulletin, distributed Pro-Life bracelets, and handed out special Spiritual Adoption infant ornaments at Christmas.

"We need to be a support system, not just a people who stand against abortion," he said. "We need to take care of expectant mothers then help once they have the child. We need to take care of the elderly, the homeless, the impoverished, the hurting.... That's what Pro-Life should be."

There are programs out there all over the state for those facing unexpected or unwanted pregnancies, but even in the present time we are not widely talked about or known, Witzberger said. "It's our job to help get information out so these young women know they have support and are not alone." He said. "There are groups throughout West Virginia like Wellspring Pregnancy Center in Moundsville, that offers a 20-hour training and once



Mark Witzberger

Joyce Bibey Photo

completed the mother-to-be earns a crib that turns into a toddler bed. The Gabriel Project helps women and their children from birth to preschool with supplies, and emotional and financial support. Rachel's Vineyard, which is available across the country, helps women heal from the traumatic wound of abortion; and The Crittenton Services that provide residential care for girls and young women, specialized for those who are pregnant and or parenting.

"We may have heard of these organizations, but do we really know what they do? Do we support them with donations of supplies or monetary support? Learning about these organizations and sharing what we've learned can

help our mission to protect the unborn. We need to be educated not just say we are against abortion," he said. "We need to show we care and be a support through a pregnancy or God forbid an abortion. Our God is all merciful. He is a loving forgiving God. We need to share that message and show these young ladies there is a support system. They are scared. They are living in fear. They think they are in a helpless, hopeless situation."

Witzberger said to become involved in the ministry does not take a big commitment of time and legwork.

"We can all find excuses why not to get involved," he said. "However, if we can concentrate on prayer and education as a faithful community

that's a huge step in the right direction."

At Our Lady of Peace, the Spiritual Adoption Program has taken up the most time, but that was just the time it took to create and print up cards for the parishioner participants. Through the program the congregation prays on its own for the unborn, expectant mothers, those who have had miscarriages, and those whose babies were still born. The Spiritual Adoption prayer card includes the prayer:

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to protect each baby in its mother's womb, especially (choose a name for a baby you will pray for), whom I have spiritually adopted. Please, give the parents of these children the help they need to keep their babies strong and healthy. Amen." Witzberger's dedication is a great example of what St. Therese of Lisieux was referring to, when she said, "Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them." Witzberger's compassion is undeniable.

"We need to work and pray together," he said. "And I really believe we can save lives."

#FaithInWV

Do you know an exceptional Catholic in West Virginia, someone or a group who are shining examples of #FaithInWV? Email Joyce Bibey your feature idea to [jbibey@dwc.org](mailto:jbibey@dwc.org). Visit [FaithInWV.org](http://FaithInWV.org) and every issue of The Catholic Spirit to read more inspiring stories.

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# West Virginia Catholic Author Releases New Christmas Book for Children

**By Colleen Rowan**

West Virginia Catholic author Diana Pishner Walker's new children's book is dedicated to two very special people — the late Father Benedict Kapa and Father Christopher Turner.

"They always teased me about never being characters in the books," Pishner Walker said. "So I made them both characters in this book."

The book is called a Christmas Feast: A Fishy Tale. Publisher Headline Books, describes it as the story of Italian boys, Benny and Turner, who learn to fish from their fathers, but both fall ill before Christmas, so the boys go out to sea to bring fish home for the celebrations. A raging storm besieges them and a light from above appears to aid them in their quest. Pishner Walker, tells the story behind the traditional Italian Feast of the Seven Fishes celebrated on Christmas Eve by Italian families around the world. Included are a few traditional fish recipes for the celebration!"

Father Kappa and Father Turner were assigned to Pishner Walker's Parish of All Saints in Bridgeport years ago. Father Kappa's character in the book is Benny, who is the more mature of the boys. Father Turner's character is Turner, the one that turns the will in the boat.

"Father Chris is so excited about this book and

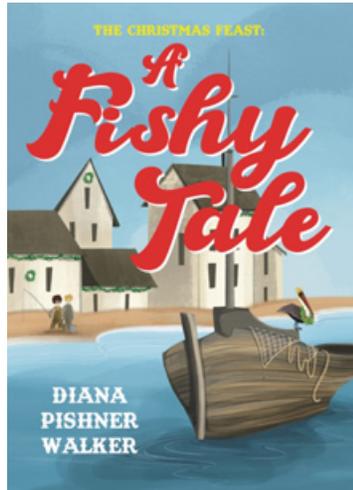


Photo Courtesy of Headline Books

being named in this book," Pishner Walker said. "We both have said that Father Benny, we're sure, has read this and approved."

The paperback book is available for purchase at [Dianapishnerwalker.com](http://Dianapishnerwalker.com) for \$13.95 with free shipping. No book signings will be held because of the coronavirus pandemic. Those interested in signed copies of the book by Pishner Walker can message her at the website.

Pishner Walker is the author of other children's book, such as the "Hopping to America" series. Through this and her other books, she draws upon her own Italian heritage as inspiration. She was born in Clarksburg to the late Louis and Anna Alessio Pishner. Her paternal grandparents were from Caulonia (Reggio Calabria) Italy and her maternal grandparents were from San



**Catholic author Diana Pishner Walker**  
Photo Courtesy of Headline Books

Giovani in Fiore, Province of Cosenza, Italy.

As a first-time author, she shared her non-fiction book "I Don't Want To Sit In The Front Row Anymore," a memoir after the loss of both of her parents.

She has been a presenter and co-chairperson at the Author's Forum during the West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival and participated in numerous book signings and events in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Massachusetts.

She wrote her first children's book, "Spaghetti and Meatballs: Growing up Italian," in 2015. The story, about her childhood, received the Reader's Choice Award Honorable Mention for best children's non-fiction as well as the Hollywood Book Festival Award Honorable Mention, Mom's Choice Award, London Book Festival Award, Southern California Book Festival award, 2016 Preferred Choice award by the Creative Child Magazine, as well as an INDIE award. It has been juried and accepted at Tamarack in Beckley and "The Italian

American Press."

Her second children's book, "Hopping to America: A Rabbit's Tale of Immigration" won its first award from New York Book Festival and a Readers Favorite award, as well as a Literary Classic award, and first place in a Next Generation Indie award. It is the story of immigration from Italy to the United States at Ellis Island in New York and onto Clarksburg by a family of rabbits. The book is on display at Ellis Island and is available in the gift shop.

The second in the "Hopping to America" series is titled "Hopping to America A Rabbit's Tale of LaBefana." The book won a Mom's Choice Award, an Indie Book Award and a Creative Child Magazine Award.

All of the children's books have been accepted to "I Am Books" the first Italian-American Bookstore in the U.S., where Pishner Walker held a book launch

and presentation. Her books are published by Headline Books and illustrated by Ashley Teets.

The "Hopping to America" series has been performed as plays by the Vintage Theater Co.

Pishner Walker is a 1977 graduate of Notre Dame High School in Clarksburg. She attended Fairmont State College and was an employee of the Marion County Board of Education for more than 25 years until recently when she resigned to pursue a full-time career as an author. She enjoys school visits and speaking to groups about family and their heritage.

She resides in Fairmont with her husband Mark, and they are the parents of three children—Curt, Courtney, Chris and his wife Ashley. They have three grandsons—Ashton, Austin, and Ace. Her books can be purchased at [Headlinebooks.com](http://Headlinebooks.com), or by contacting Pishner Walker by e-mail to [dlwalker003@hotmail.com](mailto:dlwalker003@hotmail.com).

## Correction

Brian Keiling from St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley was mistakenly left off the list of aspirants to the diaconate in the Sept. 4 issue.

## Notice from the Tribunal

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston hereby formally notifies Ms. Eletta Poston, the respondent in the contention of marital nullity (Case 4051-2018 Morrison-Moore) introduced by her former spouse before this Tribunal, of the Publication of the Acts in this case. Ms. Poston should contact the Tribunal at (304) 233-0880 as soon as possible. Any member of the faithful who knows the whereabouts of Ms. Poston is kindly asked to advise her of this matter.

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# OCP Launches Personal Missal Program to Protect Parishioners in the Age of COVID-19

By Colleen Rowan

Oregon Catholic Press (OCP) has launched the Parishioner Personal Missal Program, offering members of parish communities the opportunity to have their own personal copy of their parish's missal, to help promote safe and active participation in the Mass, while at home or in church.

The organization is a not-for-profit publisher of liturgical music and worship resources. In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, there was a concern among OCP staff about the needs of the faithful, said Wade Wisler, OCP publisher. When the pandemic started and churches around the country were shut down, parishes began livestreaming Masses.

"We thought, wouldn't it be great if the parishioners could have their own personal copy of the books that they could take home and use for worship at home? And in the cases where parishes have opened back up, they could bring the books with them," Wisler said. "It's a resource they could use to participate more fully in the liturgy."

This is the first time that OCP has made the missals available to the faithful. "This is an unusual move," Wisler said. "Of course, these are unusual times." Ordinarily, OCP sell the books directly to the Catholic parishes.

One of the beautiful things about the program, Wisler said, is that it allows the faithful to participate in the

prayer life of the parish through livestream Mass at home and to stay safe.

"For somebody who maybe in a group that is high-risk or for whatever reason didn't feel comfortable in attending Mass in the church, they can use this resource and continue to stay connected with the parish and to participate from home."

With the onset of flu season and the continuing pandemic, he feels it is important for people to have a resource like this.

The books provide the full lectionary readings for the Mass as well as the Order of Mass. "And so a family that's worshipping from home can study the readings ahead of time and really be meditating on the Scriptures and come to Mass really prepared for when the word is proclaimed in the liturgy in the livestream Mass," he said. "Their hearts are ready to receive the word."

An additional element of the program is that the books also provide the music for Mass. Wisler pointed to Breaking Bread, which is OCP's primary annual missal that has roughly 850 hymns, psalms, Mass settings, and service music.

"So families watching a Mass ... can sing along and turn to that song in the book," Wisler said, noting that his own family has been doing this since the pandemic began. "We Catholics worship through music and through song. That's been true for centuries," he said. "The book can help people to sing as

part of their worship from home."

Wisler and his colleagues at OCP believe the books are not only good for Sunday Mass but throughout the week as well. The books have a section for morning and evening prayer in the back, and there's music that can be part of that as well.

OCP will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2022. The organization was founded in 1922 as the Catholic Truth Society of Oregon and, at the time, was focused upon publishing apologetic pamphlets to counter the anti-Catholicism rampant at the time in Oregon. "So the society began publishing these wonderful pamphlets that taught people about the truth and the beauty and the goodness of our faith and the church to counter some of the misinformation out there," Wisler said.

In the 1930s the organization began publishing bilingual Latin/English booklets to help people participate more fully in the Mass. After the 1970s, the organization became Oregon Catholic Press, shifting its focus to publishing music in the vernacular as Wisler said there was a need in the church for this in the years following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

OCP established its Parish Grants Program in 2001 and, to date, has given more than \$3 million to parishes around the country to provide direct financial assistance. OCP also supports the Archdiocese of Portland, where it is

based.

"It's a mission-based, not-for-profit that's really devoted to serving the church," Wisler said of OCP. "And, really, our goal right now in these very difficult times is to do everything we can to help parishes, parish communities, parish ministries to continue to sustain their ministries and support the faith, prayer and worship needs of the people."

Part of the Parishioner Personal Missal Program is looking ahead to the coming year starting with Advent. "If people are still worshipping from home or there are still restrictions on books in the pew and that sort of thing," Wisler said, "then a parish could order their books for the coming year and then make them available to the parishioners."

Wisler noted that the program offers an opportunity for parishes to conduct fundraising. A parish would purchase the books, he said, and notify parishioners of the availability; and they could also ask for a donation to be made to cover the cost of the book and, perhaps, a little bit more.

For additional information about the program, go to [www.ocp.org/ppmp2021](http://www.ocp.org/ppmp2021).

Worship programs produced by OCP are used in churches across the United States and are distributed worldwide. Find OCP on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/OCPmusic](http://www.facebook.com/OCPmusic).

## Shinnston Parishioner's Handiwork Helps Her Neighbors in Need

By Colleen Rowan

**SHINNSTON**—If we're not here to help one another in the tough times, then what are we here for? Linda Knight asked. The Shinnston native and retired registered nurse made it her mission to help others in these tough times caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Knight, a member of St. Ann Parish in Shinnston, has been making homemade face masks since the pandemic began. Not for profit though, but for a \$3 donation for the parish's poor box. Through her efforts, she has currently raised more than \$400 for the poor box. And, as the pandemic

continues, she continues making her homemade face masks.

"It is amazing, and we are incredibly grateful for the generous work that Linda is doing by using her talents to make face masks to raise money for the parish poor box," said Father Chris Turner, associate pastor of St. Ann's. "We are truly thankful and blessed to have her."

Knight said she began making the masks for her granddaughter who is a hair stylist, then family and friends, then others. As word of her handiwork spread, she received more requests. She then thought this would be a great way to help raise money for her

parishes poor box that would help people who are struggling from unemployment and other hardships during the coronavirus pandemic.

"That's what we're here for," she said, to help one another. She had the time so she thought she could do something to help her neighbors in need.

St. Ann's announced to its members how, by obtaining one mask, they could protect themselves and others from the spread of the virus, while at the same time raising money to help those in need.

"A donation of \$3 is asked to go toward the Parish's Poor Box to help our sisters and brothers in

need, especially during this economic tough time with those unemployed and underemployed," parish officials said. "Thank you, Linda for raising monies for the poor box at St. Ann's by producing this very neces-

sary item."

To purchase one of the masks and to help in the parish and Knight's efforts, contact Knight at (304) 203-8905. "Thank you so much, Linda," parish officials said.

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## En Español

## Una carta del obispo Brennan

24 de septiembre de 2020

Queridos fieles de la diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston,

Le escribo nuevamente para abordar asuntos de interés común. Lo hago como un hermano en Cristo a quien se le ha dado la asombrosa responsabilidad de servir como su pastor aquí en Virginia Occidental. He considerado estos asuntos a la luz del Evangelio de Cristo, las enseñanzas de nuestra Iglesia y mi experiencia de cuarenta y cuatro años de ministerio pastoral.

1. La pandemia de coronavirus. Todavía estamos en medio de eso. Virginia Occidental ha visto un aumento de casos confirmados de la enfermedad recientemente, por lo que no podemos permitirnos relajar nuestra vigilancia. Debemos perseverar con paciencia, dejando que la gracia de Dios nos ayude a llevar nuestras vidas de manera productiva y segura.

Desde finales de mayo, no hemos recibido informes de brotes del virus COVID-19 que se puedan atribuir a una misa católica pública. Felicito a nuestros feligreses, clérigos y sus equipos por este buen resultado, pero, por favor, no bajen la guardia. Aunque aconsejo a las personas con problemas de salud que se queden en casa, no dudo en instar a los feligreses sanos a que vayan a misa y traigan a sus hijos, porque nuestras medidas de seguridad están funcionando. ¿No es inconsistente ir a tiendas y restaurantes pero no a misa, donde estás más seguro que en muchos de esos otros lugares? ¿Es más importante alimentar el estómago que alimentar el alma? Escuchar juntos la Palabra de Dios y recibir al Señor Jesús en la Sagrada Comunión son fundamentales para nuestra fe católica. ¡Si estás sano, ven a misa!

La mayoría de nuestras escuelas católicas se han abierto con maestros y estudiantes en el aula y se han implementado rigurosos protocolos de seguridad. Hasta ahora ha ido bien. Algunas escuelas católicas están enseñando virtualmente, debido a las condiciones en sus condados, pero, afortunadamente, nuestros maestros son competentes en hacerlo. Felicito a nuestra superintendente Mary Ann Deschaine y su personal, los directores, personal, padres y estudiantes de nuestras escuelas católicas, por su buen espíritu y cooperación.

También cooperamos con los funcionarios civiles en este asunto, confiando en que están haciendo todo lo posible para hacer frente a un panorama cambiante.

La mayoría de nuestros niños asisten a escuelas públicas. Nuestras parroquias están comenzando a ofrecer clases de educación religiosa nuevamente, de manera segura. Consulte a su parroquia para saber exactamente cómo lo están haciendo. Padres: ustedes son los principales educadores de sus hijos.

Su parroquia le ofrece ayuda pero no puede reemplazarlo. ¡Lleva a tus hijos a Jesús! Debe tener en cuenta que Caridades Católicas y muchas de nuestras parroquias continúan sirviendo a las personas necesitadas, al tiempo que adoptan medidas de protección para el beneficio de los que sirven y los que sirven.

No debemos dejar de acercarnos con el amor de Cristo a aquellos que necesitan nuestra ayuda. Debería estar orgulloso de lo que están haciendo sus compañeros católicos a este respecto. ¿Podrías unirte a ellos?

Oremos mucho por el fin de la pandemia de COVID-19 y por una mayor cooperación de nuestros conciudadanos en las medidas de salud pública que se nos ordenan o recomiendan a todos. Creo que los católicos podemos ser un modelo para otros en nuestro estado al mostrar cómo actúan las personas responsables en una crisis de salud pública.

2. Las próximas elecciones. Les insto a recordar, independientemente de su afiliación política y opiniones, que somos ante todo discípulos de Jesucristo, quien nos reúne como uno en su Iglesia Católica. Si bien muchos de nuestros conciudadanos se involucran en una retórica dura e incluso en la violencia para expresar sus sentimientos sobre los problemas y los líderes políticos, tenemos que actuar de manera diferente en todas partes, pero especialmente en los entornos católicos. Nuestras parroquias, escuelas y grupos de la Iglesia deben ser oasis de calma en la actual tormenta política. Es simplemente incorrecto despreciar a un hermano o hermana en la fe debido a sus puntos de vista políticos. Debemos adorar, orar y trabajar juntos como hermanos y hermanas en Cristo.

En este sentido, les he dicho a nuestros sacerdotes y diáconos que no deben respaldar, en homilias, boletines, redes sociales o por otros medios, candidatos o partidos políticos en particular. Pueden y deben esforzarse por arrojar la luz del Evangelio sobre cuestiones morales y sociales urgentes, ya que nuestra tradición católica tiene mucha sabiduría que ofrecer en tales asuntos, pero nues-

tro clero, religiosos y empleados laicos no deben utilizar sus puestos en la Iglesia para promover candidatos favorecidos. o fiestas. Eso es injusto para sus compañeros católicos.

Todos los ciudadanos deberían votar. Los obispos estadounidenses tienen un excelente documento, Formando la conciencia para la ciudadanía fiel, disponible en el sitio web usccb.org. Te animo a leerlo, especialmente las partes uno y dos. Dice: "Como ciudadanos, debemos guiarnos más por nuestras convicciones morales que por nuestro apego a un partido político o grupo de interés". La conciencia es diferente de los sentimientos y de la mera opinión, popular o no. Los católicos tenemos el beneficio de siglos de reflexión sobre cuestiones morales y políticas, una reflexión basada tanto en la razón como en la revelación divina. Debemos evaluar a los candidatos en función de si defienden o no la inviolable dignidad de la persona humana, el bien común y los principios de subsidiariedad (como el respeto a la familia como unidad social básica) y de solidaridad (en particular con los pobres y oprimido). No todas las cuestiones tienen el mismo peso. El documento de los obispos explica y aplica adecuadamente estos principios morales fundamentales. Una conciencia bien formada debe acompañarnos a la cabina de votación o al llenar una papeleta de voto ausente.

3. La saga de Bransfield. La reacción de nuestro pueblo a la decisión de la Santa Sede sobre las enmiendas que el obispo Bransfield debería hacer por algunos de los daños que causó ha sido mixta. Algunos están cansados de todo el asunto y quieren seguir adelante.

Otros piensan que el ex obispo se salió con demasiada ligereza. Por mi parte, encontré su disculpa egoísta y carente de reconocimiento o arrepentimiento por haber ofendido a la gente. Lo hice publicar sin alteraciones y sin comentarios, confiando en que nuestra gente lo vería por la falta de disculpa que era, y así fue. No estuve aquí para experimentar lo que tú hiciste, pero lamento profundamente el dolor que te causó tal escándalo y traición. Solo puedo intentar, mientras esté aquí, ser fiel y demostrar que me preocupo por ti.

En cuanto a quienes piensan que el ex obispo debería ir a la cárcel, sólo las autoridades civiles pueden acusar a una persona de un delito o enviarla a la cárcel; la Iglesia no puede hacer ninguna de las dos. (Para ser claros, la Diócesis coopera con las autoridades civiles que están investigando un presunto comportamiento ilegal). Si presentamos una demanda para recuperar más dinero del ex obispo, es muy probable que perdamos. Debido a las preocupaciones constitucionales sobre la garantía de la Primera Enmienda del libre ejercicio de la religión, los tribunales civiles son muy reacios a interferir en la organización interna y las normas de los cuerpos religiosos, y el derecho canónico otorga al obispo un gran control sobre cómo se gastan los fondos diocesanos. Aquellos a quienes no les guste referirse a mi predecesor como obispo deben tener en cuenta el hecho de que él es obispo en virtud de su ordenación; la disciplina que Roma le impuso no cambia esa realidad. Con respecto al título "emérito", Roma lo usa como un término técnico para un obispo retirado, pero yo no lo uso porque sé que, para los angloparlantes, el término connota honor y estima, que ni nosotros ni Roma atribuimos al obispo jubilado.

Una de las cosas que aprendemos en la vida es que no siempre nos salimos con la nuestra. Conseguimos cierta satisfacción en relación con el asunto Bransfield: que yo sepa, la Santa Sede nunca le ha dicho a un obispo en este país que se disculpe con su pueblo y que les haga una restitución económica. Roma le hizo eso al obispo Bransfield, incluso si la "disculpa" fue anémica y la restitución financiera, aunque sustancial, fue menor de lo que inicialmente buscábamos. Creo que la decisión de Roma es un "tiro por el arco" para los obispos de que no se tolerará y se castigará una conducta indignante.

Espero que no nos quedemos atrapados en disputas interminables que no pueden cambiar el pasado, pero que ciertamente pueden atascarnos en el presente. Como algunos de ustedes me han dicho, debemos dejar atrás la saga de Bransfield y seguir adelante con el trabajo que tenemos ante nosotros: dar a conocer y amar a Cristo en este Estado y servir a los necesitados.

Todos permanecen en mis oraciones y les pido que me recuerden en las suyas. Dios los bendiga a ustedes, a sus familias y a sus parroquias.

Sinceramente en Cristo,



+ Mark E. Brennan  
Obispo de Wheeling-Charleston

# Evangelization and Catechesis Office Offering Sacraments Course

**WEST VIRGINIA**—The Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis is offering a Sacraments Course (Oct. 18-Nov. 21).

This five-week course will look at the history and theology of the sacraments. Beginning with a look at the Liturgy, we will then explore Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation (the sacraments of Initiation). We will then look at the sacraments of healing, that is, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Sick. Finally, we will examine the

sacraments of communion, also known as the Sacrament of Marriage and the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

If you are a catechist, work with the RCIA, couples preparing for marriage, parents preparing to baptize their children, or are an adult interested in deepening your faith, please join fellow Catholics from across the Diocese as we learn more about our Tradition.

This course is a hybrid model. It is composed of both weekly

live two-hour zoom lectures as well as a rich variety of online course materials and discussion experiences through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community For Faith Formation (VLCFF).

This course is being underwritten by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, who pays 100 per-

cent of the tuition and the cost of the books associated with the course. The course instructor is Dr. Rodica Stoicoiu.

For further information or to register, please contact Jeanne McKeets at [jmckeets@dwc.org](mailto:jmckeets@dwc.org) with your name, address, and phone number. The last day to register is Oct. 16.

## CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

All Saints Parish, Bridgeport  
Sunday, Oct. 11 at 3 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Blessed Sacrament Parish, South Charleston  
Saturday, Oct. 17 at 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.

St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee  
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## En Español

**Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:** La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

**Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números variarán según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anónimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesásticas apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Hna. Ellen Dunn, O.P., ext. 264; Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al 304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de

abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa está protegida.

**Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp> Policía del Estado de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Delitos contra los Niños, Crímenes de Internet contra los Niños

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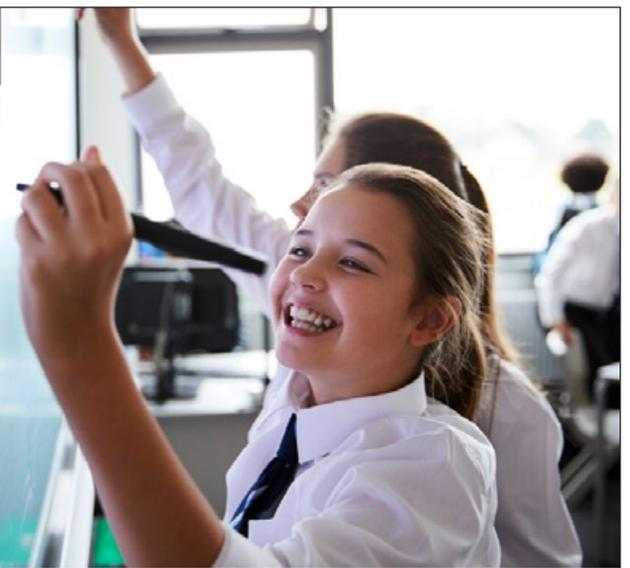


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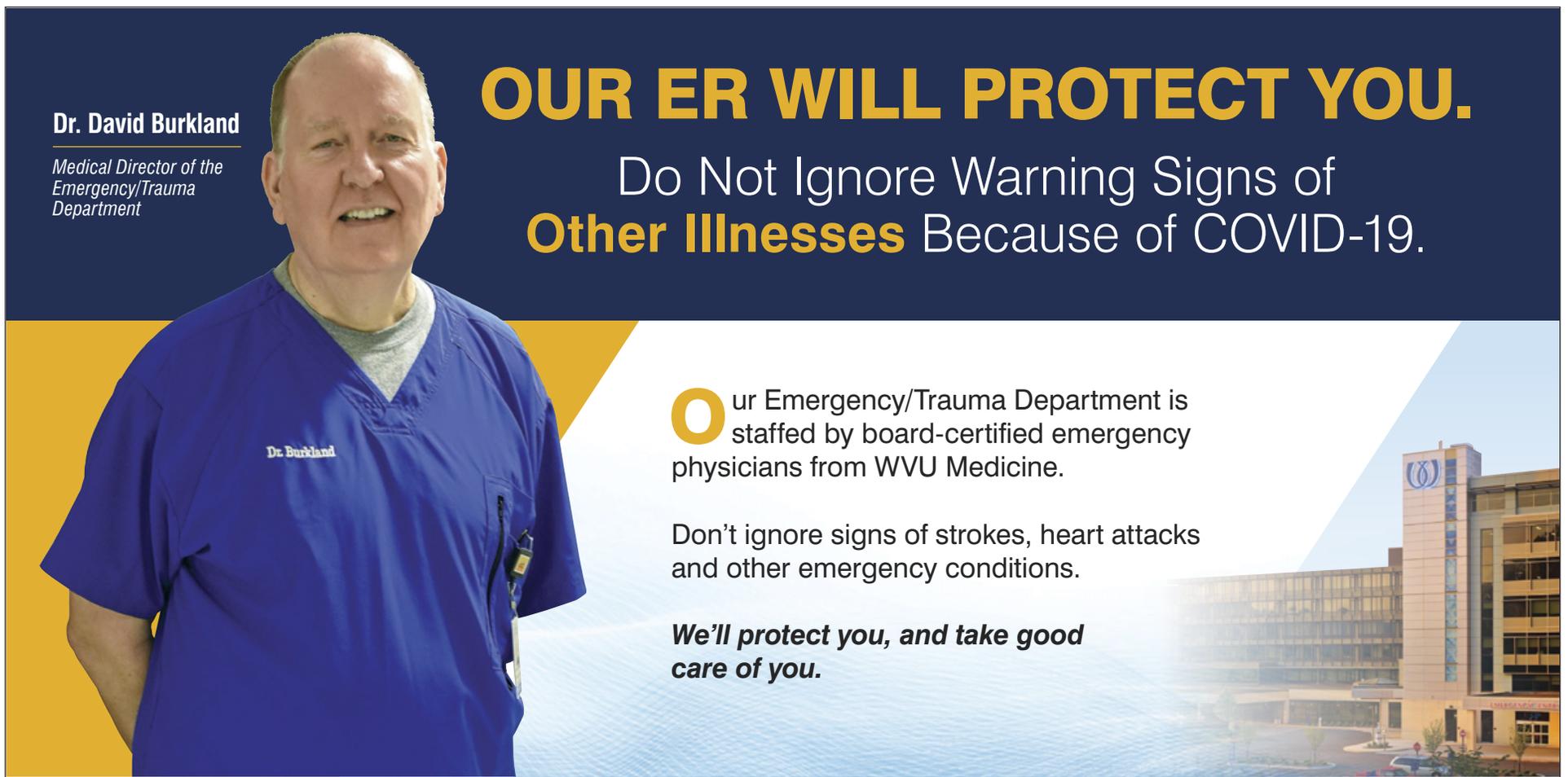
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