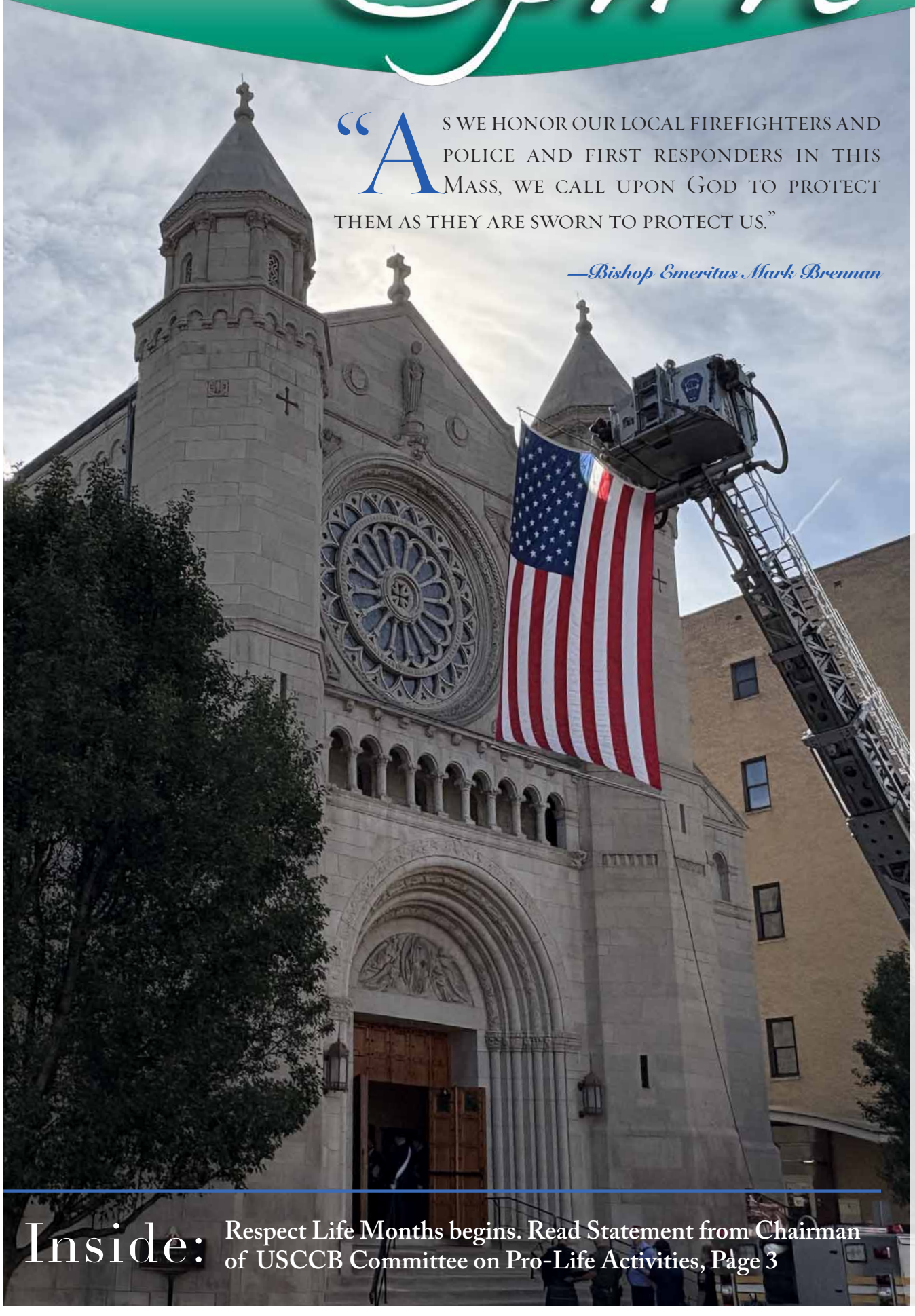
THE CATHOLIC Spirit



Blue Mass Celebrated for Law Enforcement and First Responders

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING — A huge American Flag, hoisted on the Wheeling Fire Department's Ladder 6, flying above the entrance of the Cathedral of St. Joseph welcomed the faithful to the Blue Mass on Sept. 27.

The celebration gathered the community to pray for law enforcement and first responders with Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan, celebrant. The Mass began with a procession of area law enforcement personnel and firefighters led by an Ohio Deputy Sheriff bagpiper and the Knights of Columbus. Among them were Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft; Wheeling Fire Chief Jim Blazier; and Lou Vargo, emergency management liaison for the Wheeling Fire and Police Departments.

In his homily, Bishop Brennan spoke of the recent observance of the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks where nearly 3,000 people were killed in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa. He reminded all of the bravery and sacrifice witnessed that day.

"Hundreds of New York City firefighters and scores of New York and

See "Blue Mass" on Page 5

A huge American Flag, hoisted on the Wheeling Fire Department's Ladder 6, flies above the entrance of the Cathedral of St. Joseph for the Blue Mass on Sept. 27.
Colleen Rowan photo

Inside: Respect Life Months begins. Read Statement from Chairman of USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Page 3

ANNUAL NOVENA TO THE
INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE
SEPTEMBER 14 – NOVEMBER 9, 2026
NINE CONSECUTIVE MONDAYS AT 7:00 P.M.

"Unless You Become Like Children"

SEPTEMBER 14
Chosen and Loved by the Father
Bishop Mark Brennan

SEPTEMBER 21
Becoming Little Before God
Father Daniel Heusel

SEPTEMBER 28
Your Heavenly Father Knows What You Need
Deacon Jacob Manning

OCTOBER 5
Here Am I, Lord
Father Clifton Mastran

OCTOBER 12
Receiving the Kingdom with Open Hands
Father Pen Manikyalarao

OCTOBER 19
Trusting God in Fear and Suffering
Father Chester Pabin

OCTOBER 26
The Freedom of Forgiveness
Deacon Douglas Breiding

NOVEMBER 2
Serving the Hidden Christ
Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala

NOVEMBER 9
The Child Who Is King
Bishop William Waltersheid

Cathedral of St. Joseph
1300 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV
www.saintjosephcathedral.com

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

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule 2026

2026 Print Dates:
Month of the Rosary, Oct. 9
Advent, Nov. 20
Christmas, Dec. 18

There are 10 print editions in 2026. Above are the names of the issues and the publishing dates left for the year. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org.

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504 or the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment", then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. The Diocese partners with Navex Global to offer EthicsPoint to report other concerns such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in WV.EthicsPoint can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

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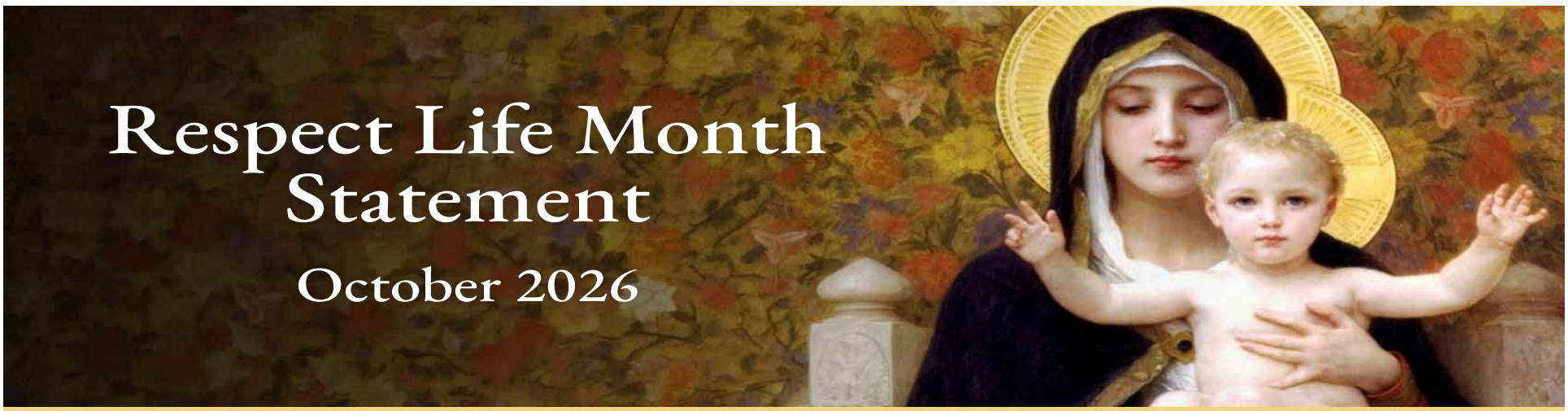

Respect Life Month Statement

October 2026

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

With great confidence, we enter into October as *Respect Life Month* with the theme of *Mary, Mother of Life*. Our Blessed Mother is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life in every stage and circumstance. We entrust all our efforts to protect mothers and babies to her motherly care, which we greatly need at this time.

"Our Blessed Mother is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life in every stage and circumstance."

Today, with easier access to abortion pills, the abortion rate is tragically climbing, along with increased health risks. The Food and Drug Administration has enabled a nationwide mail-order abortion industry by allowing the abortion pill to be prescribed in telehealth appointments, sold both at neighborhood pharmacies and online, and often shipped in the mail, circumventing state laws that protect life in the womb. This means that more women, many of whom have been misinformed about the nature and risks of the abortion pill, will have an abortion alone at home, without any medical supervision. It also sets up additional opportunities for exploitation by violent partners or human traffickers. These affronts to human dignity demand our response.

In August, the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities began inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer and action to stop the spread of the abortion pill. In addition to invoking the intercession of *St. Joseph, Defender of Life* (English | en español), participants can learn about the danger of the abortion pill and can send messages to pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies that are involved. I thank the many thousands of Catholics across the country who have embraced the nationwide invitation to prayer and action on abortion pills, and I ask that we continue our prayers and advocacy throughout the month of October. Please join us at Respect Life Prayer and Action.

Knowing that every abortion involves the death of a child and harm to the mother, we must also continue our efforts to assist mothers facing challenging pregnancies through *Walking with Moms in Need*, and to help women and men seeking forgiveness and healing after participation in a past abortion through *Project Rachel Ministry*.

May *Mary, Mother of Life*, and *Saint Joseph, Defender of Life*, pray for us!

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Listening Sessions Take Bishop Menjívar across West Virginia

Courtesy photo

Bishop Evelio Menjívar gathers with Eastern Panhandle clergy and faithful at St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg for Eucharistic Adoration, fellowship, and a listening session. The bishop has been engaging in listening sessions at parish with Eucharistic Adoration around the diocese.

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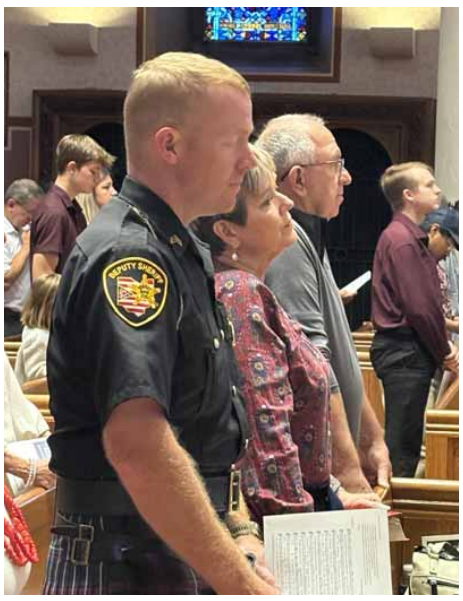

Blue Mass ...

Cont'd from Page 1

Port Authority police, who showed up every day to protect others, died trying to save people trapped in the Twin Towers," he said. "Many others have died since then of 9/11 related diseases. They paid the ultimate price for doing their duty and we rightly honor them for it."

Years later, Bishop Brennan met the son of one of the firefighters who died in the Twin Towers. His father's heroism and that of the other firefighters inspired that young man to become a firefighter also, the bishop said.

"As we honor our local firefighters and police and first responders in this Mass, we call upon God to protect them as they are sworn to protect us," he said. "And I pray that they may stay true to their commitment to public service… I pray that young people may offer themselves like that firefighter's son to serve the community."

"Our firefighters, police, and first responders know instinctively that they are committed to a cause greater than themselves. They have said yes to our community," Bishop Brennan said. "May they and we learn from Christ to be humble servants who put duty before fear and love before gain."

At the end of the Mass, Bishop Brennan offered a blessing of all law enforcement and first responders present.

Following the Mass, a reception was held in the cathedral courtyard. The cathedral thanked all who attended the Blue Mass in a Facebook post later that day: "We are especially grateful for the first responders who were able to be with us today. To all of our police officers, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers, and emergency personnel — whether you were present or not — please know of our continued prayers, gratitude, and support.

"May God bless and protect all who serve our communities!"

Colleen Rowan photos

At the celebration of the Blue Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 27 (clockwise from top right): Matt Koval (left) and brother Knights of Columbus prepare for the ending procession; an Ohio Deputy Sherriff bagpiper leads the beginning procession; firefighters walk in the beginning procession; Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan bestows a blessing upon law enforcement and first responders; Lou Vargo, emergency management liaison for the Wheeling Fire and Police Departments (left), and Wheeling Fire Chief Jim Blazier stand for the blessing; the bagpiper is pictured during the Mass; and Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft stands for the blessing.

Bishop Menjívar Confirms Young Parishioners and Blesses New Parish Center at Holy Rosary in Buckhannon

Courtesy photos

Holy Rosary Parish in Buckhannon celebrated confirmation with Bishop Evelio Menjívar on Sunday, Sept. 27, at the 9 a.m. Mass. Those confirmed were Reagan Hinton, Robert Howard, Emma Rolenson, Charlie Tenney, Lucas Tenney, and Dayla Weatherholt. They are pictured with the bishop at right. After Mass, the bishop led a procession to the new parish center which he then blessed and dedicated (pictured above). A luncheon reception was enjoyed by all in attendance.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Fall 2026
Bishop Evelio Menjívar, Celebrant

Sunday, August 30	St. Agnes, Shepherdstown - 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 27	Holy Rosary, Buckhannon - 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, October 15	St. Anthony, Fairmont/Holy Spirit, Monongah (at Monongah) - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 24	St. Thomas, Gassaway - 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 25	Ascension, Hurricane - 11:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 25	Blessed Sacrament, South Charleston - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 3	All Saints, Bridgeport - 6:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!
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DWC.ORG/2026-PACE
1. Register.
2. Check out the Schedule.
3. See All Breakout Sessions/Descriptions
Early Registration Fee: $110 (September 21-October 7)
Late Registration Fee: $130 (October 8-14)
First time PACE attendee discounted rate during Early Registration: $90
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!

West Virginians for Life
GREENBRIER COUNTY CHAPTER

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Jeremiah 1:5a

Walk for Life

White Sulphur Springs Oct. 17

Join in a Walk for Life at St. Charles Borromeo Church in White Sulphur Springs on Oct. 17. Hosted by West Virginians for Life Greenbrier Chapter, an organization dedicated to life-affirming education and helping women. The goal is to raise awareness of the dangers of the abortion pill.

Registration is at 10 a.m. The walk will start at 10:30 a.m. (total length: 2 miles round trip). Refreshments will be available after the walk.

For more information, send e-mail to Greenbrierwv4life@gmail.com

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Pope Leo Prays for the Sick and Suffering in the Lourdes Grotto in France

By Courtney Mares

LOURDES, France (OSV News) — In the Marian shrine of Lourdes, Pope Leo XIV prayed for the sick and the suffering and drank from healing spring water in the grotto where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858.

"Our Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Conception, in this blessed place you spoke with such gentleness and tenderness to St. Bernadette, a humble daughter of the French people, to convey to the world a radiant message of prayer, conversion and hope," Pope Leo said in his prayer in the grotto.

The shrine of Lourdes is one of the most visited Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world, known as a place of healing and miracles since the Marian apparition. More than 7,000 cases of healing connected to Lourdes have been officially recorded since 1858, with 72 of them officially recognized as a miracle by the International Medical Committee of Lourdes. The most recent of which was announced last year: the 2009 healing of Antonietta Raco, an Italian woman who had suffered from primary lateral sclerosis, during a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

As the sun set, the pope arrived at the Lourdes grotto for the first time in his pontificate to the singing of the traditional Lourdes hymn "Ave Maria," waving to eager pilgrims from the popemobile.

In an intimate moment of prayer in the illuminated grotto, the crowd was silent as Pope Leo knelt before the image of Our Lady of Lourdes above.

Standing, he paused to touch the rock of the grotto's wall, and received a glass of water from the site's miraculous spring, offered by Father Michel Daubanes, the rector of the Sanctuary of Lourdes. Moving his hand over the walls of the grotto, he walked to its tiered candelabra, where he lit a tall candle, placing it among the others.

OSV News photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters

Pope Leo XIV celebrates Sunday Mass on the prairie at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, as part of his four-day apostolic journey to France, in Lourdes, France, Sept. 27.

He then offered a public prayer to the Virgin Mary in French. "We turn to you with trust, for you are the Mother whom Jesus has given, and you are attentive to all our needs," he said. "We pray to you, our Mother, for France, for you are her patroness and have protected her for so many centuries."

Pope Leo prayed in particular for peace and for the renewal of "the faith and fervor of Christian families."

"May they be generously open to life, and may God awaken vocations within them, especially to the priesthood and religious life," he prayed. "Grant that your Church in France may show, especially to the youngest among them, the luminous path of the Gospel, so that they may build the just and fraternal society to which they aspire."

Praying for the sick, the caretakers, the poor and the disadvantaged, the pope asked the Virgin Mary to "obtain for France wise and generous leaders, ready to make sacrifices, capable of responding to challenges, and eager to serve the common good."

"We pray that you will remove all the obstacles that still separate us from your beloved Son and that he may reign in all heart," he concluded.

After his prayer, Pope Leo offered the shrine the gift of the "golden rose," a gilded rose that conveys papal affection and is a traditional papal gift especially to Marian shrines.

Under a shining full moon in a clear autumn sky, the pope then led the crowd in singing the Lord's Prayer in Latin and then imparted his apostolic blessing before individually greeting Lourdes' chaplains.

Lourdes is the fourth most visited Catholic pilgrimage site in the world after St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, and the Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida in Brazil.

The Virgin Mary appeared to a poor and uneducated 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous 18 times in 1858. During the ninth apparition, Mary told St. Bernadette: "Go and drink at the spring and wash yourself there." That year, the miraculous spring that appeared after St. Bernadette humbly dug in the dirt with her hands resulted in the healing of a woman with a paralyzed hand in the presence of more than 1,500 people.

During the 16th apparition, St. Bernadette asked Mary, whom she had called "the Lady dressed in white," her name. Mary replied: "I am the Immaculate Conception," referring to the Catholic dogma — long held in tradition but only promulgated four years earlier — that she was conceived without sin.

Lourdes was the second leg of Pope Leo's four-day apostolic journey to France. On Sept. 27, the pope offered Mass in Lourdes, where he also met with clerical abuse victims, visited the sick, spoke to French bishops, and presided over a candlelight rosary procession.

(Courtney Mares is Vatican editor for OSV News.)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

The American Catholic Church's official, US Bishops sponsored, international relief agency. Wherever CRS is working, the American Catholic Church is present.

- ✓ Representing us in the Sudan famine, Nepal flooding, Gaza war zone and Venezuela and Indonesian earthquakes
- ✓ Providing emergency disaster assistance, food, clothing, medical care, agricultural support, psychological care, education of adults and children in one hundred plus countries
- ✓ Supported by the American Catholic people through Operation Rice Bowl, the annual CRS collection (in June in Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston), by legacy bequests, monthly and periodic donations
- ✓ Distributes funding by US Government and other entities

For video background on CRS go to "You Tube" and enter "Catholic Relief Services: Humanitarian Impact and Mission"

For more information about CRS in general, go to: https://CRS.org/about

CRS Rice Bowl for Lent 2027

CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services United States. CRS Rice Bowl invites US Catholics to encounter God and our global family throughout Lent. Through the **pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving**, participants deepen their faith, practice solidarity and respond to the needs of people experiencing hunger and poverty around the world.

Gifts collected through CRS Rice Bowl support the lifesaving and long-term development work of CRS in more than 90 countries. Twenty-five percent of donations remain in local dioceses to support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since 1975, CRS Rice Bowl participants have contributed more than $360 million, helping families build healthier, more secure futures.

Please place your order for CRS Rice Bowl materials for the 2027 Lenten season. Your order will be delivered in January. You may also place an order by calling 1-800-222-0025. Materials are available in both English and Spanish.

More information about Operation Rice Bowl: https://www.crsricebowl.org/about-us

Local Contact for CRS and Operation Rice Bowl: Fr. Larry W. Dorsch

ldorsch@dwc.org Phone 304-281-6503

Ohio County Sheriff Will Speak at Wheeling Parish's Annual Interfaith Prayer Service on Mental Illness

WHEELING—Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft will be the speaker at a Mental Illness Awareness Week prayer service in Wheeling. St. Michael Parish will again join NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Greater Wheeling in coming together to pray for individuals and families living with mental illness. The event will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 6, in the Angelus Center, which is just west of the church at 1225 National Road in Wheeling.

The annual prayer service has been a part of St. Michael Parish's stewardship activities for more than 20 years. Everyone who attends the vigil will have the opportunity to light a prayer candle in honor of a friend or loved one with mental illness. Please join us!

Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft

Shepherdstown Parishioners Invited to Make Their Campus a Little Greener

SHEPHERDSTOWN—Grab your gardening gloves — it's tree planting time at St. Agnes Parish in Shepherdstown. On Saturday, Oct. 3, at 10 a.m., "In honor of St. Francis and his love for all of creation, we're gathering as a parish community to plant some new trees together. No green thumb required, just a willingness to dig in and have some fun. Bring the kids, bring a friend, and help us make our parish campus a little greener. Hope to see you there!" parish officials said.

For any questions, send email to landcape@StAgnesShepherdstown.org.

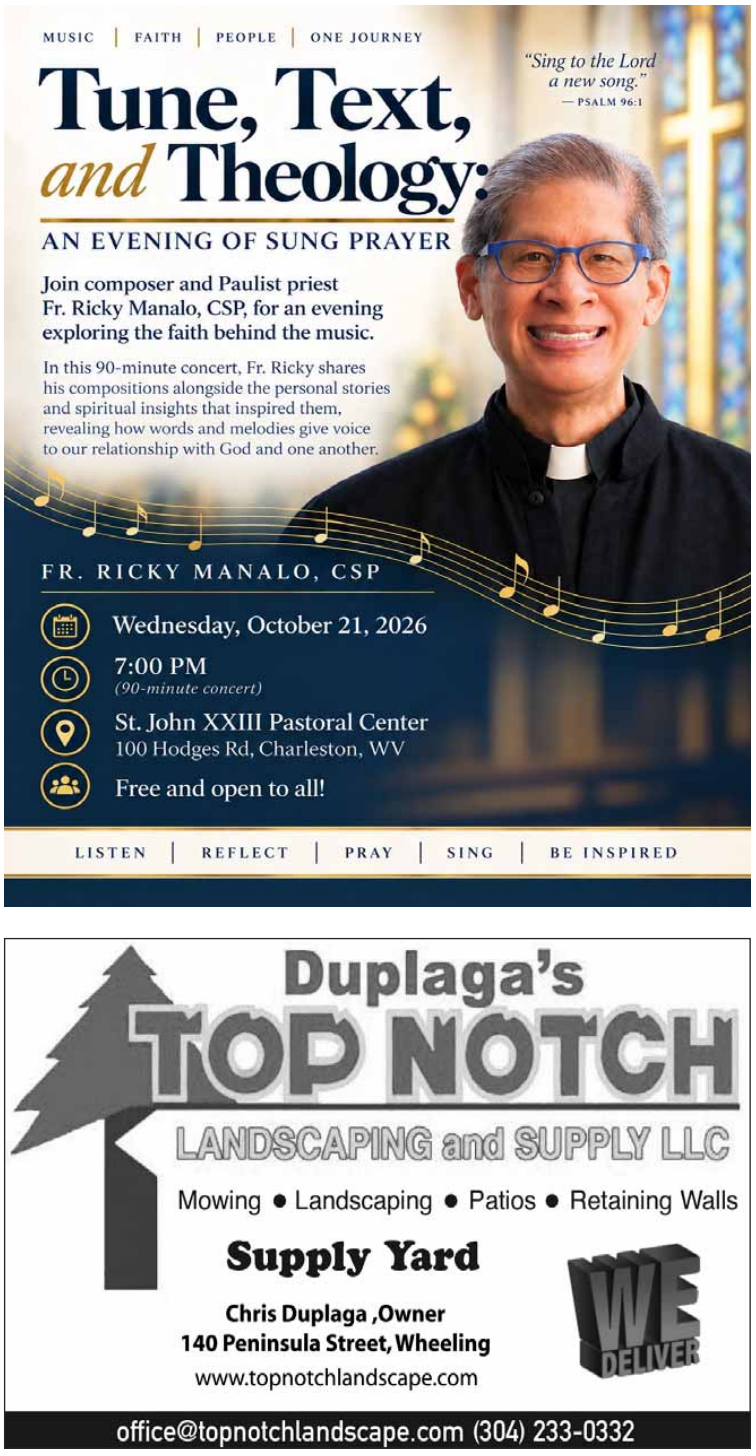
Notre-Dame de Paris Organist to Perform at Cathedral in Wheeling

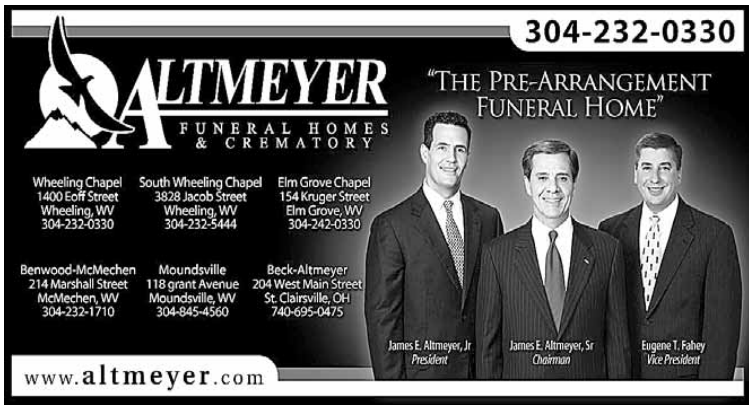
WHEELING — The Cathedral of St. Joseph, located at 1300 Eoff Street in Wheeling, West Virginia, will welcome Vincent Dubois, titular organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, for a special organ concert on Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 7 p.m.

One of the world's leading concert organists, Dubois has performed internationally and serves as one of the titular organists of the famed Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. His Wheeling performance will offer audiences a rare opportunity to hear an internationally renowned musician showcase the beauty and power of the Cathedral of St. Joseph's magnificent pipe organ.

The concert is being presented as part of the 100th Anniversary celebration of the Cathedral of St. Joseph, commemorating a century since the dedication of the Cathedral in 1926.

The concert is free and open to the public, and everyone throughout the Ohio Valley and surrounding region is warmly invited to attend.





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Five Things to Know about St. Francis of Assisi's Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

By Teresa Tomeo, EWTN News

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis, which will be celebrated on his feast day, Oct. 4. October is also a month dedicated to the Blessed Mother and the holy rosary, which helps us meditate on Christ and the great mysteries of our salvation. The timing provides good reason to examine the exceptional devotion St. Francis had for the Blessed Mother.

Here are some fascinating facts to know about St. Francis, the Franciscan order he founded, and the Blessed Mother:

St. Francis had a vision where he saw his friars try to reach Christ by a steep red ladder, but they kept falling off. Then Jesus showed him a second, less steep, white ladder that had Our Lady at the top. He told Francis: "Advise your sons to go by the ladder of my mother."

Many have given testimony stating St. Francis was one of the strongest Marian devotees in Church history. Servant of God Thomas of Celano, one of Francis' friars, said that Francis' love for the Blessed Virgin was beyond words, "inexpressible … for it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother."

Adam Jan Figel/Shutterstock

A fresco of the Virgin Mary with Infant Jesus among St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare in the Santa Maria del Carmine Church (Holy Mary of Carmel) in Pavia, Italy.

St. Francis made the Blessed Mother the patroness and queen of the Friars Minor. St. Bonaventure, one of Francis' early biographers, wrote that Francis placed himself and his order under the protection and guidance of Mary for all time: "On one side we should show Mary in all her poverty of Bethlehem placing the most sweet son of God upon the rough straw of the manger. In the other half of our painting, we would portray Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, and Queen of the Seraphic Order, in the chapel of Mary of the Angels stretching forth her arms in motherly protection over all her Franciscan sons and daughters."

It was one of St. Francis' followers who was instrumental in the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The writings of Blessed John Duns Scotus (d. 1308), one of the greatest Franciscan theologians, led the Church in part to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854.

Praying with counted beads was a common method of meditation from the earliest centuries of the Church. Although we don't have written proof that St. Francis prayed the rosary founded by St. Dominic, we do know that St. Dominic and St. Francis were contemporaries, and so it may be very probable he would know and pray it.

St. Francis' devotion to the Blessed Mother is summarized beautifully in his "Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary":

Hail, O Lady,
Mary, holy Mother of God:
you are the Virgin made Church
and the one chosen by the
most holy Father in heaven
whom he consecrated
with his most holy beloved Son
and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete,
in whom there was and is
the fullness of grace and every good.
Hail his palace!
Hail his tabernacle!
Hail his home!
Hail his robe!
Hail his servant!
Hail his mother!

And hail all you holy virtues which through the grace and light of the Holy Spirit are poured into the hearts of the faithful so that from their faithless state you may make them faithful to God. Amen.
St. Francis of Assisi, pray for us!

Follow Bishop Menjívar on Social Media

Bishop Menjívar has set up his official accounts on social media. GIVE HIM A FOLLOW! Click links below.

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INSTAGRAM:
https://www.instagram.com/bishopmenjivar

X: https://x.com/bishopmenjivar

Legion of Mary Offers Families Chance to Host Pilgrim Virgin Statue in Their Homes

INWOOD—The Legion of Mary offers the opportunity for families to have our Pilgrim Virgin statue in their home for 1-2 weeks.

This is a Catholic tradition that some of you may remember or may have done in the past. For those who have never heard of this tradition, it begins with a simple ceremony which includes the Rosary and prayers to welcome Our Lady into the home, led by Legion of Mary members when we bring the statue to your home.

During the Pilgrim Virgin visitation period, your family would have the opportunity to pray the Rosary together. At the end of the visitation, Legion members would come to your home and say our prayers of farewell. You would also have the opportunity to consecrate your home and family members to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Many families have shared that many blessings come to the family as they invite the Pilgrim Virgin into their home.

Please consider this opportunity! If you would like to have a Pilgrim Virgin visit, please email Michele Bui (familylife@stleo.com).

Princeton Parishioners Celebrate Their Pastor on Priesthood Sunday

Courtesy photo

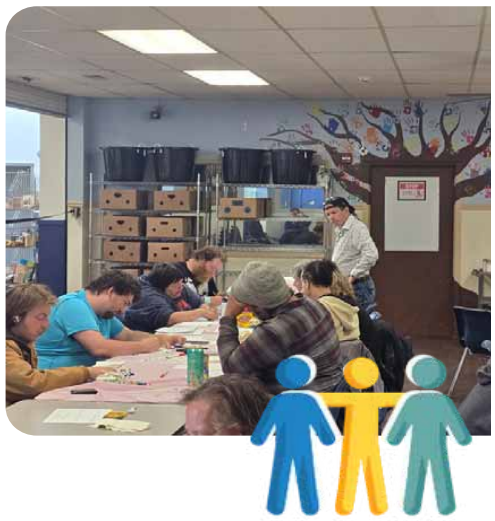
Sacred Heart Parishioners in Princeton celebrate their pastor, Father Joseph Mandokkara Augustine, J.C.L., on Priesthood Sunday with a cake and a party. "Thank you, Fr. Joseph, for your dedication, guidance, and the countless ways you serve our parish family. We are grateful for your priesthood and for all you do for Sacred Heart," the parish posted on Facebook Sept. 27.

Mission Moments

Catholic Charities WEST VIRGINIA

A Space For Encouragement

At the Neighborhood Center, a simple idea turned into something meaningful for everyone involved. During a recent Positive Affirmation Day, Franciscan interns Katie S. and Anna N. invited neighbors to take time to reflect on their own worth and the value they see in others.



At first, some participants were unsure about joining in. It can be difficult to put thoughts and feelings into words, especially in a group setting. But as the morning continued, the atmosphere began to shift. After sharing a meal during the Center's regular breakfast service, the interns spoke about self-worth and the importance of recognizing personal growth. Their words opened the door for deeper reflection.

Slowly, people began to engage. With markers, paper, and creativity, neighbors expressed themselves in their own ways. By the end of the event, about 15 posters had been created, each one offering a glimpse into someone's story, hope, or encouragement.

At the Neighborhood Center, a simple idea turned into a reality. There was a sense of connection in the room. Participants shared their work, supported one another, and enjoyed a few simple extras like snacks, small gift bags, and a door prize drawing. What stood out most was not the artwork itself, but the willingness to be seen and to affirm one another.

To honor that creativity, two of the posters will be displayed on the Center's new Art Wall. This space will continue to grow as a place where neighbors can share their voices through art, poetry, and personal messages.

Moments like these remind us that encouragement can take many forms. Sometimes it begins with a quiet invitation and grows into something that brings people together.

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El Papa León reza por los enfermos y los que sufren en la gruta de Lourdes

Por Courtney Mares

LOURDES, Francia (OSV News) — En el santuario mariano de Lourdes, el Papa León XIV rezó por los enfermos y los que sufren y bebió del agua de la gruta donde la Virgen María se le apareció a Santa Bernadette en 1858.

"Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, Inmaculada Concepción, en este lugar bendito donde hablaste con tanta dulzura y ternura a Santa Bernardita, humilde hija del pueblo de Francia, para transmitir al mundo un luminoso mensaje de oración, conversión y esperanza, acudimos a ti llenos de confianza", dijo el Papa León en su oración en la gruta.

El santuario de Lourdes es uno de los lugares de peregrinación católica más visitados del mundo, conocido como un lugar de sanación y milagros desde la aparición mariana. Desde 1858 se han registrado oficialmente más de 7.000 casos de curaciones relacionadas con Lourdes, de los cuales 72 han sido reconocidos oficialmente como milagros por el Comité Médico Internacional de Lourdes. El más reciente de ellos se anunció el año pasado: la curación en 2009 de Antonietta Raco, una mujer italiana que padecía esclerosis lateral

Foto OSV News/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

El Papa León XIV se arrodilla en la Gruta de las Apariciones en el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, Francia, el 26 de septiembre de 2026.

primaria, durante una peregrinación a Lourdes.

Al ponerse el sol, el Papa León llegó a la gruta de Lourdes por primera vez en su pontificado al son del tradicional himno de Lourdes "Ave María", saludando con la mano a los entusiastas peregrinos desde el papamóvil.

En un momento íntimo de oración en la gruta iluminada, la multitud guardó silencio mientras el Papa León se arrodillaba ante la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes que se encontraba en lo alto de la gruta.

Al ponerse de pie, se detuvo para tocar la roca de la pared de la gruta y recibió un vaso de agua del manantial milagroso del lugar, que le ofreció el padre Michel Daubanes, rector del Santuario de Lourdes. Mientras recorría con la mano por las paredes de la gruta, caminó hasta los candelabros escalonados, donde encendió una vela alta y la colocó entre las demás.

Luego dirigió una oración pública a la Virgen María en francés. "Acudimos a ti llenos de confianza. Porque Tú eres la Madre que Jesús nos ha dado y permaneces atenta a todas nuestras necesidades", dijo. "Te rogamos, Señora nuestra, por Francia, de la que eres Patrona y a la que durante tantos siglos has rodeado con tu protección".

El Papa León rezó especialmente por la paz y por la renovación de "la fe y el fervor de las familias cristianas".

"Que estén generosamente abiertas a la vida y que Dios suscite en ellas vocaciones, especialmente sacerdotales y religiosas", rezó. "Concede a tu Iglesia en Francia mostrar, particularmente a los más jóvenes, el camino luminoso del Evangelio, para que puedan edificar la sociedad justa y fraterna que anhelan".

Al orar por los enfermos, los cuidadores, los pobres y los desfavorecidos, el Papa le pidió a la Virgen

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

En Español

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María que obtenga "para Francia gobernantes sabios y generosos, dispuestos al sacrificio de sí mismos, capaces de afrontar los desafíos y decididos a servir al bien común".

"Aparta, te lo suplicamos, todos los obstáculos que todavía nos separan de tu Hijo amado y haz que Él reine en todos los corazones", concluyó.

Tras su oración, el Papa León ofreció al santuario el regalo de la "rosa de oro", una rosa dorada que transmite el afecto papal y es un obsequio tradicional del Papa, especialmente para los santuarios marianos.

Bajo una brillante luna llena en un cielo despejado de otoño, el Papa León dirigió luego a la multitud en el canto del Padrenuestro en latín y, a continuación, impartió su bendición apostólica antes de saludar individualmente a los capellanes de Lourdes.

Lourdes es el cuarto lugar de peregrinación católica más visitado del mundo después de la Basílica de San Pedro en la Ciudad del Vaticano, la Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en México y la Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Aparecida en Brasil.

La Virgen María se le apareció 18 veces en 1858 a Bernadette Soubirous (conocida como Santa Bernardita), una niña de 14 años pobre y sin estudios. Durante la novena aparición, María le dijo a Santa Bernardita: "Ve a beber del manantial y lávate allí". Ese año, el manantial milagroso que surgió después de que Santa Bernadette cavara humildemente en la tierra con sus manos provocó la curación de una mujer con una mano paralizada, en presencia de más de 1.500 personas.

Durante la decimosexta aparición, Santa Bernardita le preguntó a María, a quien había llamado "la Señora vestida de blanco", cuál era su nombre. María respondió: "Soy la Inmaculada Concepción", refiriéndose al dogma católico --mantenido desde hace mucho en la tradición, pero promulgado apenas cuatro años antes-- de que ella fue concebida sin pecado.

Lourdes es la segunda etapa del viaje apostólico de cuatro días del Papa León a Francia. El 27 de septiembre, el Papa celebrará una Misa en Lourdes, donde también se reunirá con víctimas de abuso por parte del clero, visitará a los enfermos, se reunirá con los obispos franceses y presidirá una procesión del rosario a la luz de las velas.

(Courtney Mares es editora del Vaticano para OSV News.)

project rachel

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