

THE CATHOLIC Spirit

Pope Calls for World Day of Prayer for Peace Oct. 27

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Warning against a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and ongoing conflicts elsewhere, Pope Francis has called for a day of fasting, penance and prayer for peace in the world Oct. 27.

“War does not solve any problems, it only sows death and destruction. It increases hatred, multiplies revenge. War erases the future,” he said at the end of his general audience talk in St. Peter’s Square Oct. 18.

“Our thoughts go to Palestine and Israel,” he said to applause.

“Casualties are rising and the situation in Gaza is desperate,” he said. “Please, may everything possible be done to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.”

What is also “disturbing,” he said, is the possibility the conflict will spread just as so many other battles of war are being waged in the world.

“Please,” he said, “let us continue to pray for peace in the world, especially in tormented Ukraine,” a tragedy that is no longer talked about but continues.

“Silence the weapons. Listen to the cry of the poor, the people, the children, for peace,” the pope said. He urged all people of faith to take “just one side in this conflict: that of peace. But not with words, with prayer, with total dedication.”

For this reason, he said, he has decided to call for a day of fasting, prayer and penance Oct. 27.

The pope invited men and women of every Christian denomination and other religions as well as those committed to the cause of peace to

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Synod Assembly Calls on Everyone to ‘Concretely Participate’ in Synodality



CNS Photo/Vatican Media

Participants in the assembly of the Synod of Bishops meeting in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Oct. 25.

By Justin McLellan

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church must continue discerning its future by listening to everyone, starting with the poorest and excluded, after the assembly of the Synod of Bishops closes its first session, participants said in a letter addressed to the “People of God.”

The two-and-a-half-page letter published Oct. 25 recounted the spirit and activities of the assembly’s first session, held at the Vatican Oct. 4-29, and looked ahead to the assembly’s second ses-

sion, expressing hope that the months leading up to October 2024 “will allow everyone to concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word ‘synod.’”

“This is not about ideology, but about an experience rooted in the apostolic tradition,” the synod assembly wrote.

While the letter does not raise specific topics or questions to be addressed in the assembly’s next session — a synthesis report reflecting the work of the first session and

next steps is expected to be published Oct. 28 — it did say that to “progress in its discernment, the church absolutely needs to listen to everyone, starting with the poorest.”

“It means listening to those who have been denied the right to speak in society or who feel excluded, even by the Church,” the letter said, specifying the need to listen to victims of racism, particularly Indigenous populations. “Above all, the Church of our time has the duty

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A Prayer For Peace

By Pope Francis

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!
 We have tried so many times and over so many years
 to resolve our conflicts by our own powers
 and by the force of our arms.
 How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced;
 how much blood has been shed;
 how many lives have been shattered;
 how many hopes have been buried...
 But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid!
 Grant us peace, teach us peace;
 guide our steps in the way of peace.
 Open our eyes and our hearts,
 and give us the courage to say:
 "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost".
 Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love,
 you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters.
 Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace;
 enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister.
 Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens
 who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace,
 our trepidation into confident trust,
 and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope,
 so that with patience and perseverance
 we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation.
 In this way may peace triumph at last,
 and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war"
 be banished from the heart of every man and woman.
 Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands.
 Renew our hearts and minds,
 so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother",
 and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!
 Amen.

Peace...

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participate in any way they feel is appropriate.

There will be an hour of prayer starting at 6 p.m. Rome time in St. Peter's "imploring for peace in the world," he said, and local churches are invited to organize similar initiatives.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires that all Dioceses/Epar- chies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of chil- dren and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Di- ocese 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 Di- ocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be com- pleted online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children: The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage uti- lizing 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 miscon- duct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org.

To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law en- forcement: numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any in- cidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, con- tact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may re- port anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

To Report to Diocesan Authorities: The diocese encourages re- porting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appro- priate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Di- ocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270; or Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Additional methods of reporting are available at www.dwc.org, under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available on- line 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, Dio- cese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator: please call Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third- party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is pro- tected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: [https://www.wvdhhr.org/ report.asp](https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp). West Virginia State Po- lice, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.



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 October 27, 2023, Vol. 54, No. 44

Publisher: Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....

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Member

Catholic Press Association

West Virginia Press Association

National Press Photographers Association, Inc.



Published on the first Friday of each month. All issues sent to each registered Catholic household free of charge. Donations to help offset the cost of producing The Catholic Spirit are welcomed. Out-of-diocese subscriptions are \$25 annually. The Catholic Spirit intends its news re- ports to be fair and accurate in every regard. The opinions of correspon- dents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Catholic Spirit. Sub- mission of news releases, stories and color photos welcomed and en- couraged. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

Synod...

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to listen, in a spirit of conversion, to those who have been victims of abuse committed by members of the ecclesial body and to commit herself concretely and structurally to ensuring that this does not happen again."

The letter made special reference to the need for listening to the laity, catechists, children, the elderly, families and those who want to be involved in lay ministries and "participate in discernment and decision-making structures" of the church.

It also specified that the church must gather more experiences and testimonies from priests, bishops and consecrated persons, while being "attentive to all those who do not share her faith but are seeking the truth."

The drafting of the letter was approved by the synod assembly and was discussed both during small group working sessions and among the entire assembly Oct. 23, the synod general secretariat said.

It began by recounting the "unprecedented experience" of men and women participating in discussions and exercising voting rights in a synod assembly by virtue of their baptism and not based on ordination.

The assembly, it said, took place in a "world in crisis, whose wounds and scandalous inequalities resonated painfully in our hearts, infusing our work with a particular gravity, especially since some of us come from countries where war rages."

The letter also highlighted the "significant room for silence" made at the Pope Francis' invitation, meant to "foster mutual listening and a desire for communion in the Spirit among us."

"Trust," the synod assembly wrote, is what "gives us the audacity and inner freedom that we experienced, not hesitating to freely and humbly express our convergences, differences, desires and questions."

"Day by day, we felt the pressing call to pastoral and missionary conversion," the assembly said. "For the Church's vocation is to proclaim the Gospel not by focusing on itself, but by placing

itself at the service of the infinite love with which God loved the world."

The letter also shared that homeless people near St. Peter's Square were asked about their ex-

pectations of the church on the occasion of the synod and they replied: "Love!"



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Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston




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Bishop Celebrates White Mass for Healthcare Professionals and Caregivers

By Colleen Rowan

“One of the noblest ways to serve others is to care for the sick and the injured,” Bishop Mark Brennan said in his homily for the White Mass for healthcare professionals and caregivers at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. The Oct. 14 celebration gathered many who work at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital and other healthcare institutions. Joining the bishop were clergy who serve at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital—Father Michael Nwokocha and Father Cyprian Osuegbu, chaplains, who concelebrated the Mass, and Deacon Paul Lim, vice president of Mission Integration, who served as deacon of the word. Deacon Doug Breiding of the cathedral served as deacon of the Eucharist.

Continuing his homily, Bishop Brennan spoke of the many saints who dedicated themselves to the care of the sick. And the same faith and love of the saints sustains the Catholic Church’s ministry to the sick and the injured in more than 5,250 Catholic hospitals around the world, the bishop said, noting that 668 of the Catholic hospitals are in the United States, including WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital.

“We should not take the healthcare providers that we have for granted,” Bishop Brennan said. “Theirs is not an easy form of service. They’re often exposed to serious illnesses. They many times have to work very long hours. They experience the heartache of seeing some of those they care for not make it. The pandemic revealed to me, and I hope it did to you, the truly heroic spirit of many of our local healthcare providers, and it is right that we express to them our gratitude.”

The Mass was celebrated, the bishop said, to recognize and honor the men and women who care for the health needs in the Upper Ohio Valley, especially at WVU Wheeling Hospital.

In the second reading for the Mass, St. Paul wrote to the Philippians that he was grateful for their support while he was in prison. “It was kind of you to share in my distress, he tells them,” Bishop Brennan said.

“We can say the same to our healthcare professionals when we are sick or injured. It is kind of you to share our distress and use your skill and your love to heal us,” he said. Doctors, nurses, and others
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Courtesy Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan celebrates the White Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. With him, from left, are Deacon Doug Breiding of the cathedral; and, from WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital, Father Michael Nwokocha and Father Cyprian Osuegbu, chaplains, and Deacon Paul Lim, vice president of Mission Integration.

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Wheeling-Area Clergy and Religious Invited to Vocation Week Celebration

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—Priests, deacons and religious brothers and sisters within the area of Wheeling are invited to a Vocation Week Celebration on Wednesday, Nov. 8, at St. Michael Parish in Wheeling. Evening prayer will be at 5 p.m. and will be followed by Mass at 5:30 p.m. A dinner will then follow at the Angelus Center, located next to St. Michael Parish School.

The image of the church is “a walking towards Emmaus,” said Father Carlos Melocoton, pastor of St. Michael’s.

“We are afraid,” he said, “but then being strengthened by the presence of Jesus we walk together in mission. The synodality has to continue with the servant/leaders of the church and so we need to cultivate an event that we can be together in sharing and listening.”

Father Melocoton wants the Vocation Week Celebration to be that event.

Helping Father Melocoton to organize the gathering are the Wheeling Serra Club and the Confraternity of Christian Mothers and Women at St. Michael. The parish wants “to thank our religious brothers and

sisters, deacons and deacon candidates, and our presbyterate members who answer the call of servitude to walk with our lay faithful together,” Father Melocoton said. “We need to continue in sharing our vocation and eating together is a venue where we can partake and share of the beauty of our vocation towards holiness.”

The gathering is being held during National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW), which is an annual week-long celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promote vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life through prayer, invitation, and education, and to renew prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations, according to the NVAW. This year’s National Vocation Awareness Week is Nov. 5-11. The goal is to promote vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life through prayer, invitation, and education, NVAW officials say.

Clergy and men and women religious who would like to attend the event at St. Michael’s are asked to RSVP to Father Melocoton at cmelocoton@dwc.org or (304) 242-1560 by Oct. 31.

Mass...

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in the healthcare field are typically drawn to their form of service by the desire to do some real good for their fellow human beings, Bishop Brennan said.

“They want to help people get well,” he said. “That is a motivation that religious faith can strengthen and enable those who provide healthcare to this community to persevere in their service, especially when they encounter difficulties.”

Bishop Brennan shared that he has a holy card on the desk in his apartment with a picture of Jesus extending his hand with the message: “Focus on me, not on the storm.”

“That’s a good message for the times when things are not going so well for us,” the bishop said.

He urged those in healthcare professions to keep their eyes on the Lord, “who will help you get through any storms you may encounter.”

The responsorial psalm for the Mass, Bishop Brennan recalled, was the 23rd Psalm: “The LORD is my

shepherd; there is nothing I lack. ...”

“Like a shepherd who will never abandon his flock, the Lord leads us to restful waters and refreshes our soul. He spreads a table before us in the sight of our foes. The healthcare professionals whom we honor and pray for in this Mass help us to navigate through turbulent waters to the restful waters that refresh not only our bodies but our souls as well,” Bishop Brennan said. “They set before us a table of good health in the face of our foes, sickness, injuries, disabilities. In all of this, they are agents of God for our temporal good, while God himself prepares for us a banquet of unimaginable joy in eternity. I pray that all of us may attain that heavenly banquet where, to quote Isaiah (25:8), ‘The Lord will wipe away the tears from every face and remove the reproach of his people. For he will destroy death forever.’ On that day we will no longer need healthcare or any of the other supports we’ve had in this life. But for now we thank God for our healthcare professionals and we ask him to bless them.”

Honor our Clergy and Men and Women Religious celebrating Jubilee Anniversaries in 2023 in a special issue of The Catholic Spirit

The Catholic Spirit will publish a special issue on December 1, 2023, celebrating this year’s Jubilarians (Clergy and Men and Women Religious celebrating Jubilee Anniversaries of 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, and 75 years). We invite the faithful, parishes, schools, and organizations to purchase congratulations ads for our jubilarians who have done so much for the people of God in West Virginia.

A list of the 2023 jubilarians and a list of ad prices and sizes are below.

Sisters

75th Anniversary
Sister Gretta Schmitz, OSF

70th Anniversary
Sister M. Bernadita Peterson, SAC
Sister Joyce Ann Waltz, CSJ

65th Anniversary
Sister Jane Harrington, CSJ
Sister Joan Singer, CSJ

60th Anniversary
Sister Stella Cronauer, CSJ
Sister Joan Kreyenbuhl, CSJ
Sister Mary Terence Wall, SAC

50th Anniversary
Sister Lorraine Therese DeFebbo, OSF
Sister Stephanie Marie Kondik, OSF

25th Anniversary
Sister Pat Murray, CSJ

Priests

25th Anniversary
Father Neil R. Buchlein
Msgr. Paul A. Hudock
Father William J. Kuchinsky
Father Biju Paul Parampil

50th Anniversary
Msgr. Patrick L. Fryer
Father John Beckley, S.M.

55th Anniversary
Father William Petro

60th Anniversary
Msgr. Lawrence Luciana
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Please reserve your ad space by November 20 by sending e-mail to crowan@dwc.org. We can design the ad for you!

Ad prices and sizes (All ads will be black and white)

Eighth of a Page – \$80.28

Quarter Page – \$173.94

Half Page – \$347.88

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The Forty Hours Devotion is a special period of continuous prayer made before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition.

All faithful throughout the Wheeling area are encouraged to participate in this beautiful devotion which begins on **Thursday, October 26 at 6:00 PM**. Adoration will continue all night and day through **Saturday, October 28 at 6:00 PM**.

At least two people are needed for every hour that the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

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40 Hours

DEVOTION

October 26-28, 2023

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

6:00 PM | OPENING MASS

Followed by Exposition / Adoration

9:00 PM | NIGHT PRAYER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27

8:00 AM | MORNING PRAYER

11:15 AM | CONFESSIONS

12:05 PM | MASS

12:45 PM | CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

6:00 PM | SUNG EVENING PRAYER

Deacon Paul Lim, Celebrant and Homilist

9:00 PM | NIGHT PRAYER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28

8:00 AM | MORNING PRAYER

9:00 AM | MASS

9:30 AM | ROSARY

5:00 PM | CONFESSIONS

6:00 PM | CLOSING MASS

Bishop Mark Brennan, Celebrant and Homilist

**Cathedral of Saint Joseph
1300 Eoff Street
Wheeling, West Virginia**





Beckley Vicariate-40 Hours Devotion

The 40 Hours Devotion dates to 1527 when it was introduced by St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria in the Italian cities of Milan and Vicenza and was later spread by St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus. Originally conceived as 40 hours of continuous prayer before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, either in one parish or in several parishes in successive periods of Eucharistic Adoration, the devotion has taken different forms over the years.

*As part of our observance of the **Parish Year of the Eucharistic Revival**, the parishes of the Beckley Vicariate will be hosting 40 Hours Devotion during the month of November, beginning with an opening Mass of Exposition on Friday, November 3 at 4:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield, and concluding with a Mass of Reposition on Monday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley. **Please join us as you are able as together we witness to our faith in Our Lord's presence in the Eucharist!***

Schedule of Devotions

Fri., Nov. 3	Sacred Heart Parish, Bluefield	4:00 Mass of Exposition; 5:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Tue., Nov. 7	St. John Parish, Summersville	3:00-8:00 p.m. Adoration
Wed., Nov. 8	St. Peter Parish, Welch	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Adoration
Thu., Nov. 9	St. John Neumann Parish, Marlinton	6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Fri., Nov. 10	Sacred Heart Parish, Princeton	4:00 p.m. Mass; 5:00-7:00 Adoration
Sat., Nov. 11	Holy Family Parish, Richwood	1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration
Sun., Nov. 12	Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan	11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Adoration
Tue., Nov. 14	St. Mark Mission, Bartow	6:00-7:00 p.m. Adoration
Wed., Nov. 15	St. Patrick Parish, Hinton	3:00 p.m. Mass; 4:00-7:00 Adoration
Thu., Nov. 16	SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Oak Hill	1:00-6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 Mass
Fri., Nov. 17	St. Peter Parish, Welch	9:00-11:00 a.m. Adoration
Sat., Nov. 18	St. Charles Borromeo Parish, White Sulphur Springs	1:00-4:00 p.m. Adoration; 4:00 Mass
Sun., Nov. 19	St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ronceverte	11:00 a.m. Mass; 12:00-3:00 p.m. Adoration
Mon., Nov. 20	St. Francis de Sales Parish, Beckley	9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Adoration; 6:00 p.m. Mass of Reposition

Catholic Bishops Reiterate Moral Permissibility of COVID Vaccines as Boosters Become Available

By **Kate Scanlon**

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The U.S. Catholic bishops have reiterated the moral permissibility of the COVID vaccines available in the United States for Catholics as booster shots become available ahead of flu and cold season.

Asked if the moral guidance on the use of COVID vaccines for Catholics issued in January 2021 applied to the latest versions of the vaccines, Chieko Noguchi, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, replied that “the guidance previously given by the USCCB and the moral principles articulated still hold under the circumstances of the new Covid vaccines.”

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, shortly before vaccines were made available to the American public, the Holy See’s Congregation (now Dicastery) for the Doctrine of the Faith, Catholic bishops and theologians released statements that the COVID-19 vaccines were morally permissible for Catholics to receive. Those statements varied only slightly, as the U.S. bishops encouraged Catholics, where they had such a choice, to seek some brands of vaccines over others due to the degree of connection — although remote — to abortion-derived cell lines.

Of the three COVID vaccines originally approved for emergency use in the United States — from the pharmaceutical companies Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson — the former two were tested with cell lines believed to be derived from an abortion, but not developed with them, while the latter was both developed and tested with such a cell line. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was later pulled from the market due to the risk of blood clots.

The 2020 statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said Catholics can morally undergo vaccination for COVID-19, adding that such a decision should be voluntary, not compulsory. The statement said that any connection to abortion was remote, but “the licit use of such vaccines does not and should not in any way imply that there is a moral endorsement of the use of cell lines proceeding from aborted fetuses. Both pharmaceutical companies and governmental health agencies are therefore encouraged to produce, approve, distribute and offer

ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience for either health care providers or the people to be vaccinated.”

A December 2020 note from the Vatican COVID-19 Commission in collaboration with the Pontifical Academy for Life underscored the CDF’s determination, rooting it in the CDF’s 2007 instruction “Dignitas Personae,” which considered the morality of vaccines whose research and development involved stem-cell lines derived from aborted fetuses, a topic the Pontifical Academy for Life readdressed in 2017.

From that previous work, “we believe that all clinically recommended vaccinations can be used with a clear conscience and that the use of such vaccines does not signify some sort of cooperation with voluntary abortion. While the commitment to ensuring that every vaccine has no connection in its preparation to any material originating from an abortion, the moral responsibility to vaccinate is reiterated in order to avoid serious health risks for children and the general population,” the academy and commission stated.

Pope Francis himself later appeared with other church prelates in a public service announcement encouraging people to get vaccinated.

“Thanks to God’s grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19,” Pope Francis said in the 2021 PSA. “Getting the vaccines that are authorized by the respective authorities is an act of love. ... I pray to God that each one of us can make his or her own small gesture of love. No matter how small, love is always grand.”

The U.S. bishops’ conference in 2021 urged Catholics to select a vaccine “with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines.”

“Therefore, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna’s vaccines should be chosen over Johnson & Johnson’s,” said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, then the respective chairmen of the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine and the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in the statement.

In July 2021, the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia pointed to the CDF guidance,

reiterating that it did not endorse mandated COVID-19 vaccination, “The church has consistently pointed out the ethical problems with vaccines produced and/or tested using abortion-derived cell lines,” it said. “The church has judged it permissible for people to either accept (under protest) or reject the use of such vaccines. In other words, there is no universal moral obligation to accept or refuse them, and it should be a voluntary decision of the individual.”

Joseph Meaney, NCBC president, told OSV News that their guidance on the vaccines remains the same, but argued that “the urgency of the pandemic” has lessened since their introduction, which may impact discernment.

Federal health officials approved a new COVID booster in September, recommending them for anyone six months or older. However the rollout of the vaccines has not been smooth, with some reporting experiencing difficulties getting an appointment or getting their insurance to cover the vaccine.

In a Sept. 12 statement, President Joe Biden noted Americans can undergo vaccination for three major seasonal respiratory viruses: COVID-19, flu and RSV.

“As we head into fall and winter, we are in our strongest position yet with more tools and systems available than ever before — including safe and effective vaccines, widely available at-home tests, and effective treatments,” Biden said. “Vaccination against COVID-19 remains the most important protection in avoiding hospitalization, long-term health complications, and death. I encourage all Americans to stay up-to-date on their vaccines.”

On its website, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it “is confident in the safety and effectiveness of these updated vaccines and the agency’s benefit-risk assessment demonstrates that the benefits of these vaccines for individuals 6 months of age and older outweigh their risks.”

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



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'Three-Pronged Prayer' Needed amid Maine Mass Shootings, Says Pastor

By **Gina Christian**

(OSV News) — Amid a manhunt for a suspected mass shooter, a pastor in Maine is calling for “three-pronged prayer.”

Father Daniel Greenleaf, pastor of Prince of Peace Parish in Lewiston, told OSV News that he is interceding for at least 18 people killed and 13 injured in an Oct. 25 attack in his town, as well as for their families and law enforcement.

The shootings, which began around 7 p.m. ET in Maine's second-largest city, took place in two locations: Schemengees Bar and Grille restaurant, and the Just-in-Time Recreation bowling alley, just over 4 miles apart from each other in Lewiston.

Police quickly issued shelter-in-place orders that remained standing for the communities of Lewiston, Lisbon and Bowdoin as of the morning of Oct. 26.

Hundreds of local, regional and federal officials are searching for 40-year-old Robert Card of Bowdoin, a certified firearms instructor and a petroleum supply specialist in the U.S. Army Reserve, who has been named as a person of interest. According to law enforcement, Card — who had reported having mental health issues — had recently threatened to attack a National Guard facility in Saco, Maine. He is considered armed and dangerous.

At an Oct. 26 press conference, Maine Gov. Janet Mills said the attack “strikes at the very heart of who we are.”

President Joe Biden, who has spoken with Mills, ordered flags to be flown at half-staff until sunset Oct. 30.

Due to the active lockdowns, the five churches that comprise Prince of Peace Parish — the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, Holy Cross, Holy Family, Holy Trinity and Our Lady of the Rosary — have been temporarily closed, with Mass livestreamed, said Father Greenleaf.

Two of the churches, Holy Cross and Holy Trinity, were particularly close to the shooting and search. Holy

Cross is “right up the street” from Schemengees, and Holy Trinity is adjacent to the place a vehicle, believed to be abandoned by Card after the attacks, was found, said Father Greenleaf.

None of the church buildings have been breached due to the shootings or the search, he said — although the search has come close.

As Father Greenleaf celebrated a livestreamed Oct. 26 Mass in Time of War or Civil Disturbance, “helicopters and the police came through the streets, and we could hear that during the homily,” he said. “It’s still a scary situation. (Card is) armed and dangerous.”

Father Greenleaf said Bishop Robert P. Deeley of Portland contacted him during the overnight hours and again during the morning of Oct. 26.

The bishop issued an Oct. 26 statement saying he had learned of the shootings with “profound sadness.”

Bishop Deeley said “it is heartbreaking to hear of lives lost and dozens injured and to know of the pain and grief that so many families are experiencing.”

“We pray for all those impacted by this terrible violence, that the Lord may provide them with consolation in the midst of their sorrow,” he said. “In this moment of trial and uncertainty, let us raise up our prayers, asking God to give strength to them and to our community now and in the coming days, and we ask him to protect our law enforcement officers as they seek to prevent further harm. Pray also for our hospital personnel and chaplains who are caring for the injured.”

Father Greenleaf said it is not yet clear if any of the victims are parishioners or their loved ones, noting he had confirmed Card is not a member of the parish. The mayor of nearby Auburn, Jason J. Levesque, told CNN several of his residents were impacted, adding there would be “very few people in this community that have not been touched by this.”

Prayer and fellowship are critical in this time of tragedy, said Father Green-

leaf, who led an online rosary and morning prayer following his Oct. 26 Mass, and who has sent parish-wide email messages to reassure his flock.

“As soon as we can open up, we will open up the church and make it a place of prayer, and expose the Blessed Sacrament, and all day long, if we need to, as long as we possibly can,” said Father Greenleaf, adding he also is looking to provide counselors if possible.

In the meantime, “I do pray for the law enforcement, that they’re doing their job, that God will give them the strength and courage they need to end the crisis,” especially amid an overnight search that has left them sleep deprived, he said.

“And then (we) certainly (pray) for the families that have been affected, and then the souls who have died,” said Father Greenleaf. “So let’s send some graces toward the law enforcement. And then let’s take care of the families.”

“While it may seem impossible to find hope in a time such as this, we can draw hope from our spiritual roots, trusting that a loving God will not abandon us,” said Bishop Deeley in his statement. “As we pray to him in our various ways, may he strengthen us and show us the way forward during the difficult days that lie ahead.”

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

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Confirmation in Chester

Bob Glass Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan confirmed four high school youth at Sacred Heart Parish in Chester on Oct. 23. Pictured (front, from left) Shawn Ware, Leah McMahan, Bishop Brennan, and Evan Ours. In the back, from left, are Father Bill Matheny, pastor; and Cole Long.

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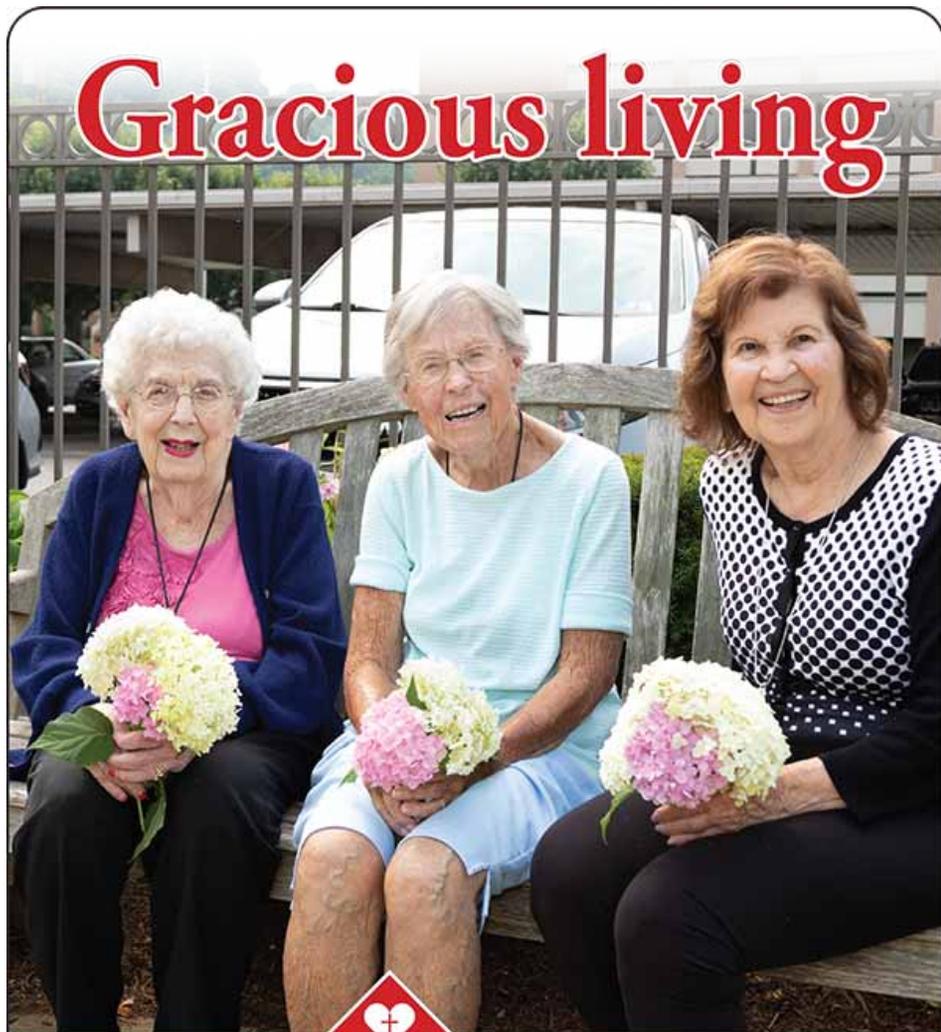
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Obispos católicos reiteran la permisibilidad moral de las vacunas contra el COVID a medida que están disponibles los refuerzos

Por **Kate Scanlon, OSV News**

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Los obispos católicos de Estados Unidos han reiterado la permisibilidad moral de las vacunas contra el COVID disponibles en Estados Unidos para los católicos a medida que las vacunas de refuerzo estén disponibles antes de la temporada de gripe y resfriados.

A la pregunta de si las orientaciones morales sobre el uso de las vacunas para prevenir el COVID para los católicos emitidas en enero de 2021 se aplicaban a las últimas versiones de las vacunas, Chieko Noguchi, portavoz de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB), respondió que "las pautas dadas anteriormente por la USCCB y los principios morales articulados siguen siendo válidos en las circunstancias de las nuevas vacunas contra el COVID".

Durante el apogeo de la pandemia de COVID-19 en 2020 y 2021, poco antes de que las vacunas estuvieran disponibles para el público estadounidense, la Congregación (ahora Dicasterio) para la Doctrina de la Fe de la Santa Sede, los obispos católicos y los teólogos publicaron declaraciones de que las vacunas contra el COVID-19 eran moralmente permisibles para que los católicos las recibieran. Esas declaraciones variaban sólo ligeramente, ya que los obispos estadounidenses animaban a los católicos, en los casos en que podían elegir, a buscar algunas marcas de vacunas en lugar de otras debido al grado de conexión -- aunque remota -- con las

líneas celulares derivadas del aborto.

De las tres vacunas para el COVID aprobadas originalmente para uso de emergencia en Estados Unidos -- de las empresas farmacéuticas Moderna, Pfizer y Johnson & Johnson -- las dos primeras se probaron con líneas celulares que se creía que procedían de un aborto, pero no se desarrollaron con ellas, mientras que la última se desarrolló y probó con una línea celular de este tipo. La vacuna de Johnson & Johnson se retiró posteriormente del mercado debido al riesgo de coágulos sanguíneos.

La declaración de 2020 de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe afirmaba que los católicos pueden moralmente someterse a la vacunación contra la COVID-19, añadiendo que tal decisión debe ser voluntaria, no obligatoria. La declaración decía que cualquier conexión con el aborto era remota, pero "el uso lícito de esas vacunas no implica ni debe implicar en modo alguno la aprobación moral del uso de líneas celulares procedentes de fetos abortados. Por lo tanto, se pide tanto a las empresas farmacéuticas como a los organismos sanitarios gubernamentales, que produzcan, aprueben, distribuyan y ofrezcan vacunas éticamente aceptables que no creen problemas de conciencia, ni al personal sanitario ni a los propios vacunados".

Una nota de diciembre de 2020 de la Comisión COVID-19 del Vaticano, en colaboración con la Pontificia Academia para la Vida, subrayó la de-

terminación de la CDF, enraizándola en la instrucción de la CDF de 2007 "Dignitas Personae", que consideraba la moralidad de las vacunas cuya investigación y desarrollo implicaba líneas de células madre derivadas de fetos abortados, un tema que la Pontificia Academia para la Vida retomó en 2017.

De ese trabajo previo, "creemos que todas las vacunas clínicamente recomendadas pueden usarse con la conciencia tranquila y que el uso de tales vacunas no significa algún tipo de cooperación con el aborto voluntario. Al tiempo que se reitera el compromiso de garantizar que toda vacuna no tenga relación en su preparación con ningún material procedente de un aborto, se reitera la responsabilidad moral de vacunar para evitar graves riesgos para la salud de los niños y de la población en general", señalaron la academia y la comisión.

El propio Papa Francisco apareció más tarde con otros prelados de la Iglesia en un anuncio de servicio público animando a la gente a vacunarse.

"Gracias a la gracia de Dios y al trabajo de muchos, hoy tenemos vacunas para protegernos del COVID-19", dijo el Papa Francisco en el anuncio de servicio público 2021. "Vacunarse con vacunas autorizadas por las autoridades competentes es un acto de amor. ... Le pido a Dios que cada uno de nosotros pueda aportar su pequeño grano de arena, su pequeño gesto de amor. Por pequeño que sea, el amor siem-

pre es grande".

En 2021, la conferencia episcopal de Estados Unidos instó a los católicos a elegir una vacuna "con la menor conexión con líneas celulares derivadas de abortos".

"Por lo tanto, si uno tiene la posibilidad de elegir una vacuna, las vacunas de Pfizer o Moderna deben ser elegidas sobre las de Johnson & Johnson", dijeron en la declaración el obispo Kevin C. Rhoades de Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, y el arzobispo Joseph F. Naumann de Kansas City, Kansas, entonces presidentes del Comité de Doctrina y del Comité de Actividades Pro-Vida de la USCCB, respectivamente. En julio de 2021, el Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética de Filadelfia se refirió a las directrices de la CDF, reiterando que no respaldaba la vacunación obligatoria de la vacuna contra el COVID-19. "La Iglesia ha señalado sistemáticamente los problemas éticos de las vacunas producidas y/o probadas utilizando líneas celulares derivadas del aborto", afirmó. "La Iglesia ha considerado permisible que la gente acepte (bajo protesta) o rechace el uso de tales vacunas. En otras palabras, no existe una obligación moral universal de aceptarlas o rechazarlas, y debe ser una decisión voluntaria del individuo".

Joseph Meaney, presidente del NCBC, dijo a OSV News que su orientación sobre las vacunas sigue siendo la misma, pero argumentó que "la urgencia de la pandemia" ha disminuido desde su introducción, lo que puede afectar el discerni-

miento.

Las autoridades sanitarias federales aprobaron un nuevo refuerzo de la vacuna para el COVID en septiembre, recomendándola para cualquier persona de seis meses o más. Sin embargo, el despliegue de las vacunas no ha sido fácil, y algunos han informado de que han tenido dificultades para conseguir una cita o para que su seguro cubra la vacuna.

En una declaración del 12 de septiembre, el presidente Joe Biden señaló que los estadounidenses pueden vacunarse contra los tres principales virus respiratorios estacionales: COVID-19, gripe y VSR.

"A medida que nos adentramos en el otoño y el invierno, nos encontramos en nuestra posición más fuerte hasta la fecha, con más herramientas y sistemas disponibles que nunca, incluidas vacunas seguras y eficaces, pruebas caseras ampliamente disponibles y tratamientos eficaces", afirmó Biden. "La vacunación contra el COVID-19 sigue siendo la protección más importante para evitar la hospitalización, las complicaciones de salud a largo plazo y la muerte. Animo a todos los estadounidenses a que se mantengan al día con sus vacunas".

En su sitio web, la Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos de EE.UU. afirmó que "confía en la seguridad y eficacia de estas vacunas actualizadas y la evaluación beneficio-riesgo de la agencia demuestra que los beneficios de estas vacunas para las personas de 6 meses de edad y mayores superan sus riesgos".

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

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304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

Wheeling University Selected Best in West Virginia by Ranking Service WalletHub

A national online ranking service, WalletHub, named Wheeling University the best college or university in the state of West Virginia for 2024.

WalletHub looked at colleges and universities from across the country, looking at a variety of areas to determine their ranking. The service notes by scoring schools nationally and by state, it helps college bound students, and their parents select the best institution to meet their needs.

“Once again Wheeling University was chosen the best institution in the state by a national ranking service. Like U.S. News & World Report, WalletHub found that Wheeling provides students a well-rounded educational experience that produces graduates who are successful once they complete their degrees. We are so grateful that U.S. News, WalletHub and others ranking services recognize that Wheeling University is providing an outstanding education at an affordable price,” said Ginny R. Favede, president of Wheeling University.

She noted that WalletHub looked at 30 key variables in seven categories that are important to families when making a college selection. Those items included: faculty resources, educational and career outcomes, campus safety, campus experience, cost & financing and student selectivity.

Wheeling University was selected as the highest ranked among the 10 colleges and universities WalletHub ranked in West Virginia this year. It placed higher than the state’s biggest universities – WVU and Marshall, Favede explained.

WalletHub noted making a decision on which college or university to attend can be hard, that is why it looked at all the colleges and universities in West Virginia. The ranking service noted that colleges may be the best route for students seeking a small school atmosphere, while those looking for both under-

graduate and graduate programs might want to attend a university. To determine which institutions in the state offer excellent education programs at the most affordable price, WalletHub compared each college and institution in West Virginia, ranking the 10 best accordingly.

Earlier this Fall, U.S. News & World Report named Wheeling University the 49th best Regional University in the South, making it a top tier institution again this year, as well as placing it as the highest ranked college or university in West Virginia. Also, the university moved up significantly in the Social Mobility ranking, jumping from 90th to 19th. Social Mobility measures the extent that institutions enroll and graduate students who receive Pell Grants. Data shows that Wheeling students who receive a Pell Grant graduate at a much higher rate than those who do not receive this financial assistance.

Wheeling University’s academic programs have received outstanding accolades by a number of ranking services this year. Intelligent.com, Niche, Stacker.com University HQ and ZDNET have recognized the university and its academic programs among the best institutions in West Virginia.

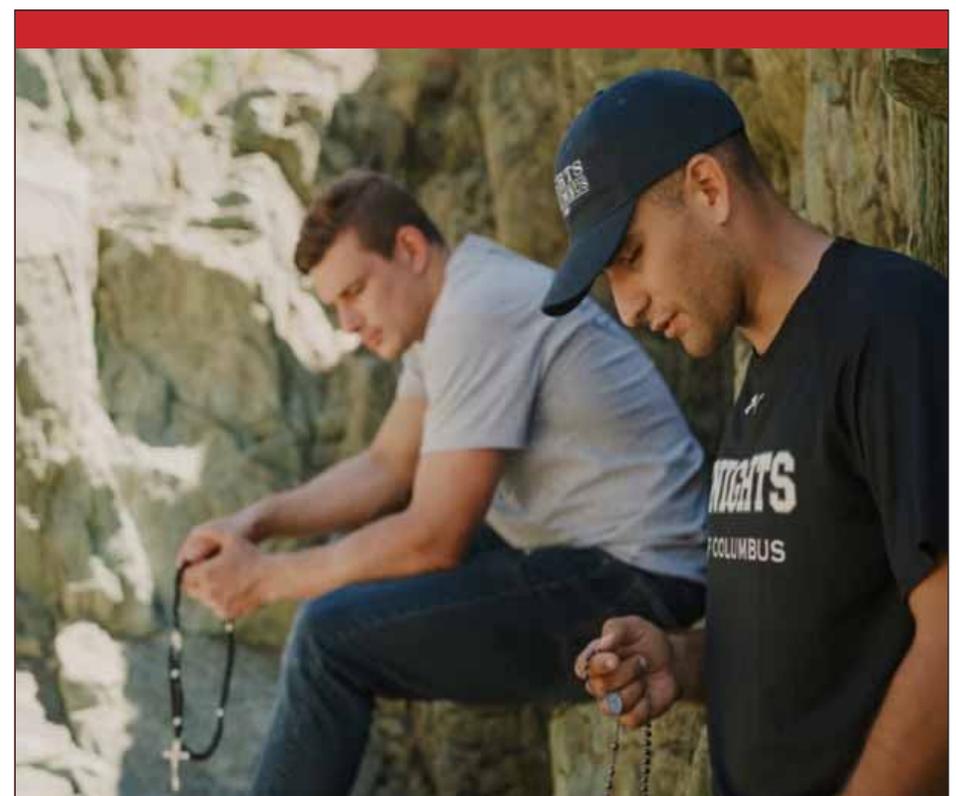
Wheeling proudly remains the only campus-based Catholic institution of higher education in West Virginia. According to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), Wheeling University is one of only 12 diocesan-sponsored universities in the United States. In addition to Wheeling, those other institutions include; Carroll College, Catholic Distance University, Donnelly College, Gannon University, Loras College, Mount St. Mary’s, Seton Hill University, St. Ambrose University, St. Thomas University, Thomas More University, University of Dallas, and the University of St. Thomas (M.N.).



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"At the end of the day, our success comes from the people we work with, our clients, and caring about them and how to best achieve their goals in real estate. We are "People first" in our actions. When you combine that with hard work, market knowledge, and our highly developed skills, it is a recipe for success."

- Paul Grist

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