THE CATHOLIC Spirit

The Catholic Spirit Offers this special story on Our Lady as October, the Month of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Comes to a Close

Six Times Mary Appeared to Encourage, Admonish or Inspire the Faithful

By Jeff Ziegler, OSV News

Even though God has already "said everything" through Jesus Christ, as the Church teaches, some Christians throughout the centuries have attested that they have seen or heard Jesus, the angels or the saints, especially the Blessed Mother.

Thus "throughout the ages, there have been so-called 'private' revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church," as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches (No. 67). "They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history."

What follows is a description of six of the most influential approved Marian apparitions of the past five centuries.

Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531)

On Dec. 9-12, 1531, Our Lady appeared four times to St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin (1474-1548), a member of the

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In the photo on this page, a ray of sun shines beside a statue of Our Lady amid the fall foliage at Sacred Heart Chapel in Spring Dale Oct. 22.

Patti Burwell photo

FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

Special section, Pages 6-10
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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

Evening of Healing Prayer

All are welcome for an evening of healing prayer with Vickie Smith at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Martinsburg, WV Monday, Nov. 9th, 6:30–9:00.

Vickie Smith is an inspirational Catholic speaker and teacher. She is a wife and mother of five; four on earth and one in heaven. Vickie currently resides in the Diocese of Colorado Springs.
Vickie is truly an instrument of God's healing presence.
Vickie hosts a prayer ministry called the Upper Room and is also on the Queen of Peace Media with Christina Watkins.
Check out Vickie's YouTube Channel

Contact the Parish Office, 304-267-4893 for more info

Free Will Offering that Evening

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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Our Lady ...

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Chichimeca people and a convert, on the hill of Tepeyac near Mexico City.

"Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, the true God, through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the master of heaven and earth," she said. "It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will manifest, I will give all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people."

Our Lady asked Juan Diego to make known her request to Bishop Juan de Zumárraga. The bishop asked for a sign during a visit with Juan Diego. When he saw Our Lady again, she directed him to a hilltop where he saw a flower garden; he cut the roses and placed them in his cloak, or tilma. When he returned to the bishop, he opened his tilma. The roses fell to the floor, and the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared miraculously on his tilma.

In 1754, Pope Benedict XIV approved Our Lady of Guadalupe as patroness of Mexico, and St. John Paul II named her "patroness of the Americas" in 1999. He visited her basilica in 1979, 1990, 1999 and 2002. Pope Francis visited in 2016.

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (1830)

In 1830, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared three times to St. Catherine Labouré (1806-1876), a member of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The second time, she saw Mary crushing a serpent, with rays coming forth from her hands. She also saw the words, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you," and heard a voice say, "Have a medal made on this model. Those who will wear it with confidence will receive great graces."

In time, the archbishop of Paris consented to the request.

In 1980, St. John Paul II made a pilgrimage to the chapel in Paris where St. Catherine saw the apparitions. "You obtain from God, for us, all these graces that the rays of light that radiate from your open hands symbolize, on the sole condition that we dare to ask them of you, that we ourselves approach you with the confidence, the boldness, the simplicity of a child," he prayed.

Our Lady of La Salette (1846)

In 1846, Our Lady appeared to two French children, Maximin Giraud (1835-1875) and Mélanie Calvat (1831-1904), in southeastern France. She deplored sins of blasphemy, the refusal of most villagers to attend Mass in the summer and the lack of fidelity to Lenten discipline.

"If my people do not obey, I shall be compelled to loose my son's arm," she warned. "It is so heavy I can no longer restrain it." Bishop Philibert de Bruillard of Grenoble approved the apparition in 1851.

"Mary, Mother full of love, in this place showed her sadness at the moral evil of humanity," St. John Paul II wrote in a letter marking the 150th anniversary of the apparition. "Through her tears, she helps us to better understand the painful gravity of sin, of the rejection of God, but also the passionate fidelity that her son keeps toward her children — he, the redeemer whose love is wounded by forgetfulness and refusal."

Our Lady of Lourdes (1858)

Our Lady appeared 18 times to St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879) in Lourdes, a town in southwestern France.

"From Feb. 11 to July 16, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary was pleased, as a new favor, to manifest herself in the territory of the Pyrenees to a pious and pure child of a poor, hard-working, Christian family," Pope Pius XII wrote in a 1957 encyclical.

Our Lady said on one occasion, "Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners. Kiss the ground as an act of penance for sinners." After a spring began to flow, Our Lady said, "Go, tell the priests to come here in procession and to build a chapel here." When Bernadette asked her to identify herself, she declared, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Bishop Bertrand-Sévère Mascarou-Laurence of Tarbes-et-Lourdes approved the apparitions in 1862. In 1911, St. Pius X wrote that the Lourdes shrine "surpasses in glory, it seems, all others in the Catholic world." St. John Paul made pilgrimages there in 1983 and 2004, as did Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.

Our Lady of Knock (1879)

In 1879, 15 people of all ages in Knock, Ireland, witnessed an apparition of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist on a rainy evening; the Blessed Mother prayed but did not speak. Within months, Archbishop John McHale of Tuam found their testimony credible, and the site soon became a place of pilgrimage.

In 1979, St. John Paul II celebrated Mass at Knock and dedicated the Basilica of

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In the photo on this page, a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary stands at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine at St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town.
Colleen Rowan photo

Our Lady ...

Cont'd from Page 3

Our Lady, Queen of Ireland. "For a whole century now, you have sanctified this place of pilgrimage through your prayers, through your sacrifice, through your penance," he preached. "All those who have come here have received blessings through the intercession of Mary."

"From that day of grace, 21 August 1879, until this very day, the sick and suffering, people handicapped in body or mind, troubled in their faith or their conscience, all have been healed, comforted and confirmed in their faith because they trusted that the mother of God would lead them to her son, Jesus," he added.

Pope Francis visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock in 2018 and elevated it from a national to international shrine.

Our Lady of Fátima (1917)

In 1917, Our Lady of the Rosary appeared for six consecutive months to three Portuguese children: Venerable Lúcia Santos (1907-2005), St. Jacinta Marto (1910-1920) and St. Francisco Marto (1908-1919). Her message was one of prayer, atonement and devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

"Say the rosary every day to bring peace to the world and an end to the war," she said. "And after each one of the mysteries, my children, I want you to pray in this way: O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need."

"Make sacrifices for sinners and say often, especially while making a sacrifice: O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary," she added.

She revealed to the children a three-part secret: a vision of hell, a request for the First Saturday devotion and consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, and the killing of a bishop dressed in white, along with other clergy, religious and laity. Pope Pius XII, St. Paul VI, St. John Paul II and Pope Francis have consecrated the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released text of the third part of the secret in 2000, along with commentary.

During the final apparition on Oct. 13, Our Lady requested the construction of a chapel, and 70,000 onlookers witnessed the sun dance in the sky. Bishop José Alves Correia da Silva of Leiria-Fátima approved the apparitions in 1930, and St. Paul VI, St. John Paul, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis all made pilgrimages there.

(Jeff Ziegler, who holds degrees in classics and sacred theology, writes from North Carolina.)

An Evening of Prayer and Remembrance

For our departed loved ones and all the Faithful departed.

You may bring a photo(s) of your deceased loved ones if you wish

November 30, 2026

6:30pm Vespers

7:00pm Mass in All Souls Chapel

Light Refreshments and fellowship following in the Dining Room

Priest Field Pastoral Center

(4030 Middleway Pike, Kearneysville, WV 25430)

Prayer of St. Gertrude

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.

Sponsored by the Holy Souls Group of St. Joseph Parish and Priest Field Pastoral Center

Ouija Boards 'Dangerous, Dangerous' Tools of Evil, Say Catholic Experts

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — Thinking of having a little "fun" on Halloween by grabbing a Ouija board and ringing up Aunt Edna in the afterlife?

Think again, Catholic experts told OSV News.

"Dangerous, dangerous, dangerous," said Dominican Father Basil Cole, professor emeritus of moral, spiritual and dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington.

An Oct. 25 article in the New York Post provided a how-to guide for using a Ouija board, which purports to allow spirits to communicate by spelling out messages with a sliding pointer. First manufactured in the U.S. in 1890 amid surging popular interest in spiritualism, the Ouija board has long been marketed as a toy — yet it's actually a tool for Satan, said Father Cole.

"Ouija boards and things like that are probably the primary way that people open up the entry point for the demonic into their lives," said Father Vincent Lampert, exorcist for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The occult also is big business: From 2018 to 2023, industry revenue for psychic services rose 1.5% to $2.3 billion, according to market research firm IBISWorld.

The mainstreaming of magic has even prompted the U.K.-based University of Exeter to begin offering a master of arts degree in magic and occult science. The university also features an interdisciplinary Center for Magic and Esotericism.

Consulting a Ouija board is "obviously an act of superstition," and the Ouija board is "in fact a portal, an opening to receiving diabolical distortions — false ideas that somehow this board can tell you what the future is or tell you something about yourself," Father Cole told OSV News.

The so-called "messages" from the board — which some users merely regard as their own subconscious thoughts — prime participants to being "open to receiving more dark inspirations from the evil one," said Father Cole.

That process takes place "slowly, not immediately," and "these portals are (therefore) introductions to further incursions of the evil one," he said.

Father Lampert said while many "turn to a Ouija board because they think it's kind of harmless ... they don't really understand what they're putting themselves up against."

The real-life case of possession that inspired William Peter Blatty's 1971 book (and 1973 film) "The Exorcist" began with the use of a Ouija board, noted Father Lampert, adding that such items can lead to a "person's life ... (spiraling) downward and out of control" as "the devil shows his true face."

Along with Ouija boards, tarot cards, fortune tellers and horoscopes also are "problems," Father Cole warned.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "all forms of divination" — seeking to know the future through supernatural means — are to be rejected.

That includes "recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to 'unveil' the future, (and) consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums," the catechism states in No. 2116.

All such practices "conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers," it continues. "They contradict the honor, respect and loving fear that we owe to God alone."

While the human desire for clarity about the future is understandable, divination tools are the wrong method, said Father Cole.

"There's nothing wrong with wanting to know God's will," he said. "I want to know God's will, of course, but he's not going to tell me about a lot of things. He will let me discover it. Conversation with God is one thing. Conversation with the evil one is another thing."

"When people turn to the world of the occult, they're basically saying that God is deficient, God is not enough," Father Lampert said. "So I have to turn elsewhere for the answers that I'm looking for."

Even devotion to the saints can mask a wrong spiritual motive, cautioned Father Cole.

"You can make a devotion to the saints replace a relationship with God — 'I don't trust in God anymore, but I do trust in St. Jude. He always gives me what I want.' ... I've met people like that, praying to St. Jude and ignoring Mass," said Father Cole.

But with "true devotion to the saints, you always realize they're under the Lord Jesus and they want you to do the Lord's will," he said.

For those who have dabbled in the occult, there is hope, said Father Lampert.

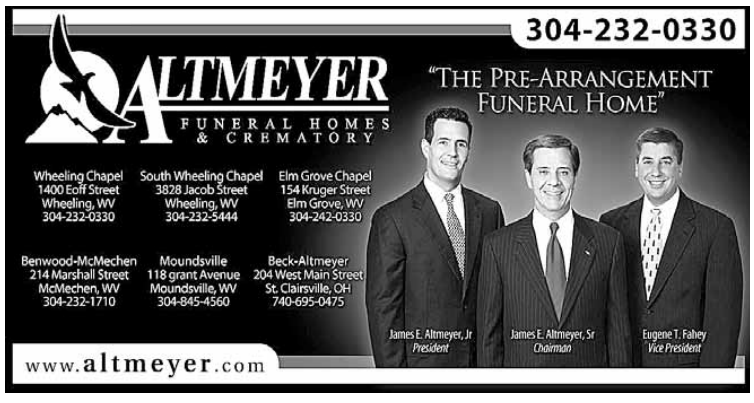
"When we confess our sins, we place them in the hands of God, and then the devil can no longer use that against us," he said. "So if somebody has played with a Ouija board, own it, take it to confession, give it over to God and then experience the freedom that God wants all of his children to have."

Ouija boards and other occult items should be "destroyed so that (they don't) fall in anyone else's hands," Father Lampert said. "The best thing to do is to kind of sprinkle it with holy water ... (and) burn it. If people don't feel comfortable doing that themselves, then they should go and take it to the local parish priest who then can dispose of it."

God is "always ready to extend his divine mercy" to those who have sinned in any way, including through occult practices, said Father Lampert.

"I like to tell people that what's unique about Christianity is that it's not about our search for God, but it's about God's search for us," he said.

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



Click here for Links

to resources for parishes, bulletin inserts, activities for families, prayers and reflections, and much more.

See Pages 7-10

for a summary of the U.S. bishops' reflection, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

En Español, Pages 15-18

The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

Part I of II: Our Call as Catholic Citizens

This brief document is Part I of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship is the teaching document of the Catholic Bishops of the United States on the political responsibility of Catholics. It provides guidance for all who seek to exercise their rights and duties as citizens. As Catholics, we bring the richness of our faith to the public square. We draw from both faith and reason as we seek to affirm the dignity of the human person and the common good of all.

Everyone living in this country is called to participate in public life and contribute to the common good.[1] In *Rejoice and Be Glad* [*Gaudete et exsultate*], Pope Francis writes:

> Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. . . . You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor.[2]

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Why Does the Church Teach About Issues Affecting Public Policy?

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34).

The US Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to proclaim and live out their faith without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning its moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

Who in the Church Should Participate in Political Life?

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to any political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. This should not discourage us. On the contrary, it makes our obligation to act all the more urgent. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good. Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.

How Can Catholic Social Teaching Help Guide Our Participation?

In the words of Pope Francis, "progress in building a people in peace, justice and fraternity depends on four principles related to constant tensions present in every social reality. These derive from the pillars of the Church's social doctrine, which serve as 'primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena.'"[3] The four principles include the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Taken together, these principles provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called a "consistent ethic of life" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 22).

Rightly understood, this ethic does not treat all issues as morally equivalent; nor does it reduce Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens "to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest" (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following summary of the four principles highlights several themes of Catholic social teaching for special consideration: these include **human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for God's creation,** and **the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable**.[4]

The Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is a rich and multifaceted Catholic teaching on human dignity summarized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Every human being "*must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness* . . . This entails above all the requirement not only of simple respect on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person" (no. 131). The *Compendium* continues, "It is necessary to 'consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity' (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27).

Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society."[5]

Subsidiarity

It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, and local realities—in short, for those economic, social, cultural, recreational, professional, and political communities to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.[6] The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions; yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.[7]

The Common Good

The common good is comprised of "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily."[8]

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met.** Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, and to the larger society.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. An economic system must serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by **respecting the dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and coworkers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

We have a duty to **care for God's creation**, which Pope Francis refers to in *Laudato Si'* as "our common home."[9] We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future. Pope Francis, consistent with St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message, 1990 and 2010), has lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. Pope Francis speaks of an "ecological debt" (no. 51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations. And he calls all of us to an "ecological conversion" (no. 219), by which "the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us]".[10] Indeed, this concern with "natural ecology" is an indispensable part of the broader "human ecology," which encompasses not only material but moral and social dimensions as well.

Solidarity

Solidarity is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible *for all*." It is found in "a commitment to the good of one's neighbor with the readiness, in the Gospel sense, to 'lose oneself' for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to 'serve him' instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage."[11]

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

In a special way, our solidarity must find expression in the **preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.** A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor, and the marginalized.

Conclusion

In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation.

Notes

1 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1913-15.
2 *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 25.
3 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221
4 These principles are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), no. 160. For more information on these principles, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2016, nos. 40ff.
5 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 132. This summary represents only a few highlights from the fuller treatment of the human person in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. For the fuller treatment, see especially nos. 124-159 where many other important aspects of human dignity are treated.
6 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.
7 *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 4-6.
8 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164
9 *Laudato Si'*, no. 77.
10 *Laudato Si'*, no. 217.
11 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27)

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The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

Part II of II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles

This brief document is Part II of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Part I of the summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, considered the core principles that underlie Catholic engagement in the political realm. Part II is a consideration of the process by which these principles are applied to the act of voting and taking positions on policy issues. It begins with the general consideration of the nature of conscience and the role of prudence. The application of prudential judgment does not mean that all choices are equally valid or that the bishops' guidance and that of other church leaders is just another political opinion or policy preference among many others. Rather, Catholics are urged to listen carefully to the Church's teachers when they apply Catholic social teaching to specific proposals and situations.

How Does the Church Help the Catholic Faithful to Speak About Political and Social Questions?

A Well-Formed Conscience

The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

The Virtue of Prudence

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us "to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage, which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. At times, Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build, through moral means, a more just and peaceful world.

Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion. Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life including genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As St. John Paul II said, "The fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment."[1] The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights such as a right to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work.

Avoiding Two Temptations

Two temptations in public life can distort the Church's defense of human life and dignity: The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed. The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, environmental degradation, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care or housing, pornography, human trafficking, redefining civil marriage, compromising religious liberty,

or unjust immigration policies are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

Making Moral Choices

The bishops do not tell Catholics how to vote; the responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience, aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection.

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.[1]

What Public Policies Should Concern Catholics Most?

As Catholics, we are led to raise questions about political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. We focus more broadly on what protects or threatens the dignity of every human life. Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. In light of ethical principles, we bishops offer the following policy goals that we hope will guide Catholics as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices:

- Address the preeminent requirement to protect **human life**—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies with the supports they need. End the following practices: the use of euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability; the destruction of human embryos in the name of research; the use of the death penalty to combat crime; and the imprudent resort to war to address international disputes.
- Protect the fundamental understanding of **marriage** as the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false "gender" ideologies; provide better support for family life morally, socially, and economically, so that our nation helps parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility.
- Achieve comprehensive **immigration** reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.
- Help families and children overcome **poverty** and ensure access to and choice in **education**, as well as decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation, while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the policy areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.
- Ensure full conscience protection and **religious freedom** for individuals and groups to meet social needs, and so enable families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.
- Provide **health care** while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.
- Continue to oppose policies that reflect racism, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of **unjust discrimination**.
- Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of **military force**—examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost—with a special view to seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.
- Join with others **around the world** to pursue peace, protect human rights and religious liberty, and advance economic justice and care for creation.

Notes

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52.

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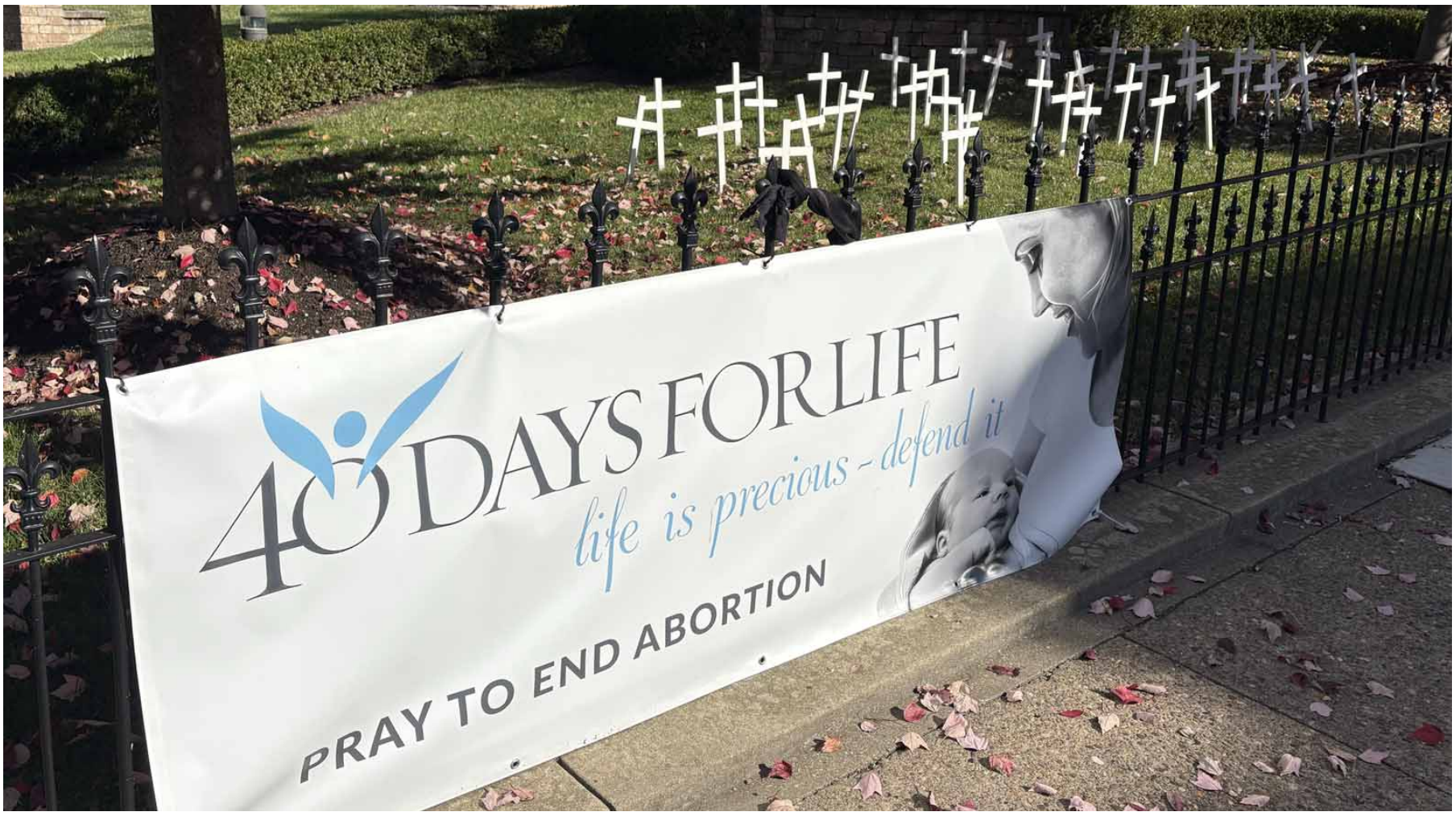

Colleen Rowan photo

For October, Respect Life Month, the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling promoted the message of the 40 Days for Life national campaign to end abortion. This is an internationally coordinated 40-day campaign that aims to end abortion locally through prayer and fasting, community outreach, and a peaceful all-day vigil in front of abortion businesses. The cathedral's display is pictured above with the white crosses in remembrance of babies killed by abortion. For more information about 40 Days for Life, click this link: https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/

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Parkersburg Catholic Schools Raise Nearly $16,000 for Pink Mammogram Fund

PARKERSBURG — On Oct. 23, students from Parkersburg Catholic Schools presented a check for $15,912 to the Camden Clark Foundation's Pink Mammogram Fund, following a week of fundraising activities called "Pink Week."

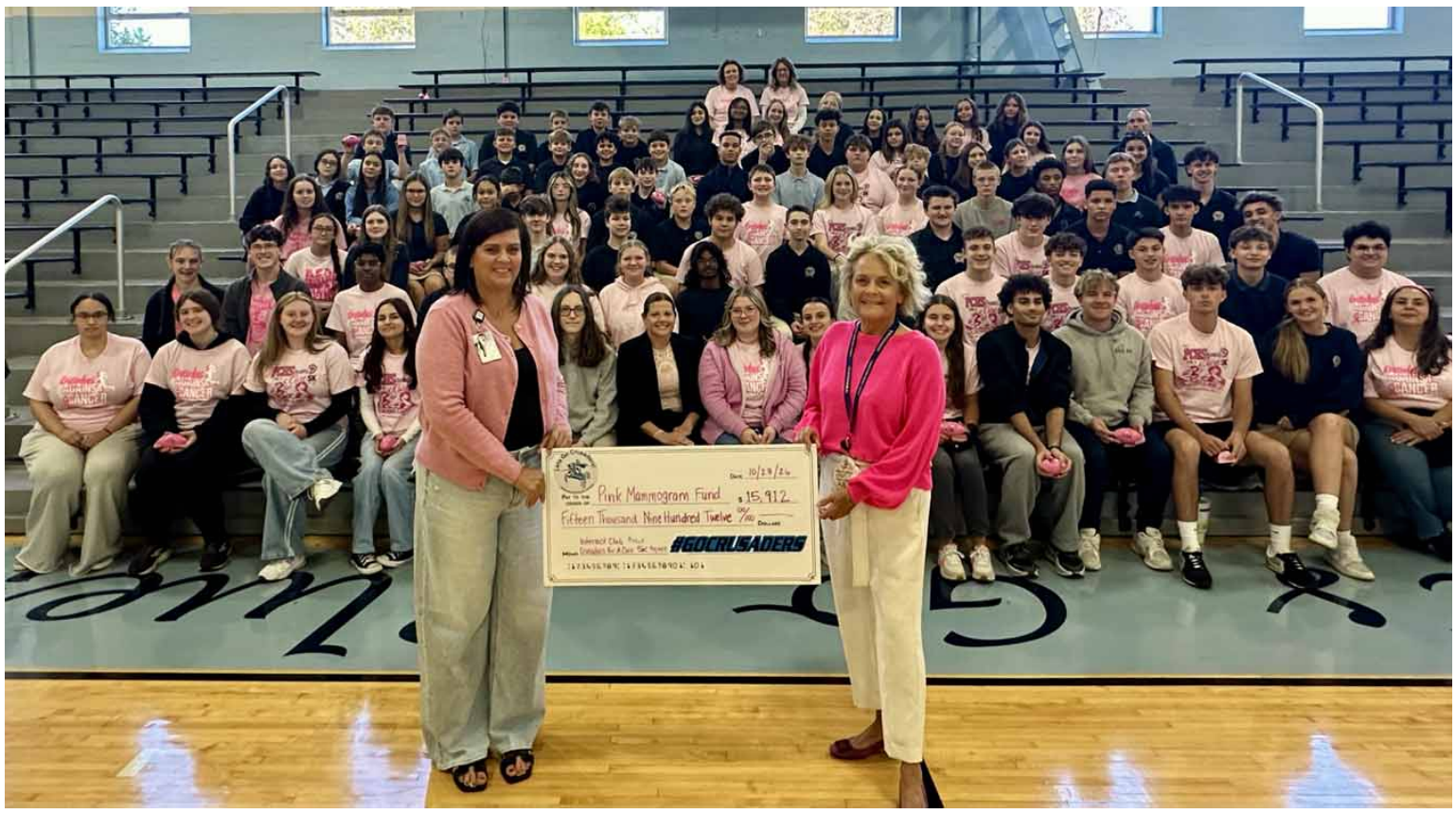
The Camden Clark Foundation supports WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center. WVU Medicine is also one of the schools' valued Partners in Education, making this opportunity to give back especially meaningful.

The Pink Mammogram Fund helps provide mammograms for women in the community who are uninsured or underinsured. With a mammogram potentially costing around $500 out of pocket, many women put off or go without this important screening because of the expense.

Each year, the school comes together for Pink Week, and this year set an ambitious goal of raising $15,000.

"We kicked things off on Saturday, Oct. 17, with our second annual Crusaders for a Cure 5K," PCS officials said. "Throughout the following week, students and staff participated in all kinds of activities, including a pumpkin decorating contest, coffee sales during morning drop-off, a $3 dress-in-pink day, pink hair extensions and one of our students' favorite activities, 'Tat a Teacher,' where students could purchase temporary tattoos and place them on participating teachers... our principal got 4 on his face raising $100 alone!

"Our elementary school joined in the effort as well! Students at PCES raised $210 by wearing pink to school, and many of our youngest Crusaders participated in the 5K alongside their families. It was wonderful to see students of all ages coming together for the same cause."



Courtesy photo

Tracy Smith, director of Imaging Services at WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center (left), and Kim Couch, director of the Camden Clark Foundation, accept the check presented to them by Parkersburg Catholic Schools to benefit the foundation's Pink Mammogram Fund.

Some activities raised just a few dollars at a time, but together, they added up to something incredible.

"What made this week especially meaningful was realizing how many of our students have been touched by breast cancer in some way," PCS officials said. "Whether it was a mother, grandmother, teacher, family member, or friend, nearly everyone had someone in mind as we worked toward our goal."

PCS officials said they are incredibly proud of the amount raised but what matters most is what the students are learning through the experience.

"At Parkersburg Catholic Schools, we want our students to leave us with a servant's heart," they said. "We want them to recognize the needs of others, understand the importance of giving back, and know that they are never too young to make a difference.

"Our hope is that Pink Week showed them how small acts of kindness and generosity, when brought together, can have an extraordinary impact."

Every dollar raised goes back into the local community to help women receive potentially lifesaving screenings. It is one small way the Crusader family can put their faith into action and serve those in their community.

The schools are grateful to students, families, staff, local businesses, and community members who supported this effort. "We could not have accomplished this without them," they said.

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Liturgical Music Composers and Young Voices Enrich PACE Conference Closing Mass

Courtesy photo

Young singers from Sacred Heart Grade School in Charleston are pictured with Catholic liturgical composers Stephen Pishner (left), Father Ricky Manalo, CSP, and Rosemary Severn, the school's choir director and director of music at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston (in the back); and Tami Alexander (right).

By Joyce Bibey

CHARLESTON — The closing Mass of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's 2026 PACE, professional development conference, brought together young singers, local musicians, and three Catholic liturgical composers including Father Ricky Manalo, CSP, Stephen Pishner, and Tami Alexander.

Bishop Evelio Menjívar celebrated the Mass at the St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston, that was truly an extraordinarily rare moment as the three composers present shared their gift and love of music with the children and conference attendees, who represented parishes and schools in all six vicariates in the diocese.

The fourth and fifth grade choir and handbell ensemble from Sacred Heart Grade School were led by Rosemary Severn, the school's choir director and director of music at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston. Her sons, Caleb and Levi, also sang with the choir.

The children performed a bilingual Responsorial Psalm arrangement based on Psalm 96, composed by Tami Alexander, pastoral associate for liturgy and music at St. Mary's Parish in Morgantown. Alexander wrote the arrangement for Bishop Menjívar's installation Mass.

The choir also sang two hymns by Father Ricky Manalo, CSP: "Spirit and Grace" during Communion and "With One Voice" as the recessional. Father Ricky was the keynote speaker for the conference and was able to meet with the students after the Mass.

Stephen Pishner, director of music and liturgy at All Saints Catholic Church in Bridgeport, accompanied the Mass on piano, and worked with the students and Severn during rehearsal.

The works of the composers and musicians, together with the children's singing and handbells, were an integral part of the Mass's prayer and a fitting expression of hope and unity.

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El reto de formar la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles

FORMANDO LA CONCIENCIA PARA SER CIUDADANOS FIELES

Parte I de II: Nuestro llamado como ciudadanos católicos

Este breve documento es la Primera parte de un resumen de la reflexión de los obispos de los Estados Unidos, *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles*, que complementa la enseñanza de los obispos en las diócesis y las conferencias estatales de obispos católicos.

Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles es el documento de enseñanza de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos sobre la responsabilidad política de los católicos. Brinda orientación a todos los que buscan ejercer sus derechos y obligaciones como ciudadanos. Como católicos, llevamos la riqueza de nuestra fe al ámbito público. Nos basamos tanto en la fe como en la razón al buscar afirmar la dignidad de la persona humana y el bien común.

Todos los que viven en este país están llamados a participar en la vida pública y contribuir al bien común.[1] En "*Alegraos y regocijaos*"[*Gaudete et exsultate*], el Papa Francisco escribe:

> "Tu identificación con Cristo y sus deseos, implica el empeño por construir, con El, ese reino de amor, justicia y paz para todos… No te santificarás sin entregarte en cuerpo y alma para dar lo mejor de ti en ese empeño.[2]

Como católicos, somos parte de una comunidad con profundas enseñanzas que nos ayudan a considerar los retos en la vida pública, contribuir a una mayor justicia y paz para todas las personas, y evaluar las posturas políticas, los programas de los partidos políticos y las promesas y acciones de los candidatos a la luz del Evangelio para ayudar a construir un mundo mejor.

¿POR QUÉ ENSEÑA LA IGLESIA SOBRE CUESTIONES QUE AFECTAN A LA POLÍTICA PÚBLICA?

La obligación de la Iglesia de participar en la formación del carácter moral de la sociedad es un requisito de nuestra fe, una parte de la misión que hemos recibido de Jesucristo. Como personas de fe y como seres racionales, los católicos estamos llamados a llevar la verdad a la vida política y practicar el mandamiento de Cristo de "que se amen los unos a los otros" (Jn 13:34).

La Constitución de los Estados Unidos protege el derecho de cada creyente y de cada institución religiosa a anunciar y vivir su fe sin interferencias gubernamentales, favoritismos o discriminación. La ley civil debería reconocer y proteger el derecho y la responsabilidad de la Iglesia de participar en la sociedad sin abandonar sus convicciones morales. La tradición pluralista de nuestra nación se ve reforzada, y no amenazada, cuando los grupos religiosos y las personas de fe llevan sus convicciones a la vida pública. La comunidad católica aporta al diálogo político un marco moral coherente y amplia experiencia de servicio a los necesitados.

¿QUIÉN EN LA IGLESIA DEBERÍA PARTICIPAR EN LA VIDA POLÍTICA?

En la tradición católica, ser ciudadanos responsables es una virtud, y la participación en la vida política es una obligación moral. Como ciudadanos deberíamos ser guiados más por nuestras convicciones morales que por nuestro apego a un partido político o grupo con intereses especiales. En el ambiente de hoy en día, los católicos pueden sentirse desamparados políticamente, percibiendo que ningún partido político y muy pocos candidatos comparten plenamente nuestro compromiso integral con la vida y dignidad humanas. Esto no debe desanimarnos. Por el contrario, hace más urgente nuestra obligación de actuar. Los laicos católicos necesitan actuar según los principios morales de la Iglesia e involucrarse más: presentándose como candidatos, trabajando dentro de los partidos políticos y transmitiendo sus preocupaciones a quienes ocupan funciones públicas. Incluso quienes no pueden votar deben hacer oír sus voces respecto a cuestiones que afectan su vida y el bien común. Ser ciudadanos fieles es una responsabilidad permanente, no un deber sólo durante los años de elecciones.

¿CÓMO PUEDE LA DOCTRINA SOCIAL CATÓLICA AYUDAR A GUIAR NUESTRA PARTICIPACIÓN?

En palabras del papa Francisco, "para avanzar en esta construcción de un pueblo en paz, justicia y fraternidad, hay cuatro principios relacionados con tensiones bipolares propias de toda realidad social. Brotan de los grandes postulados de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia, los cuales constituyen 'el primer y fundamental parámetro de referencia para la interpretación y la valoración de los fenómenos sociales'".[3] Los cuatro principios son la dignidad de la persona humana, el bien común, la subsidiariedad y la solidaridad. Tomados en conjunto, estos principios proporcionan un marco moral para la participación católica en el fomento de lo que hemos denominado una "ética uniforme hacia la vida" (*Vivir el Evangelio de la Vida*, no. 23).

Entendida correctamente, esta ética ni trata todas las cuestiones como equivalentes moralmente ni reduce la doctrina católica a una o dos cuestiones. Ancla el compromiso católico de defender la vida humana y otros derechos humanos, desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural, a la obligación moral fundamental de respetar la dignidad de cada persona como hijo o hija de Dios.

Los votantes católicos deberían usar la doctrina católica para examinar las posiciones de los candidatos respecto a las cuestiones, y deberían considerar la integridad, filosofía y desempeño de los candidatos. Es importante que todos los ciudadanos "vayan más allá de la política partidista, que analicen las promesas de la campañas con un ojo crítico y que escojan sus dirigentes políticos según su principio, no su afiliación política o el interés propio" (*Vivir el Evangelio de la Vida*, no. 34). El siguiente resumen de los cuatro principios resalta varios temas de la doctrina social católica para una consideración especial: **derechos humanos y responsabilidades, respeto por el trabajo y los derechos de los trabajadores, cuidado de la creación de Dios y la opción preferencial por los pobres y vulnerables.**[4]

La dignidad de la persona humana

La vida humana es sagrada porque cada persona es creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Hay una rica y multifacética doctrina católica sobre la dignidad humana que se resume en el *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*. Cada persona "*debe ser comprendida siempre en su irrepetible e insuprimible singularidad*. . . . Esto impone, ante todo, no sólo la exigencia del simple respeto por parte de todos, y especialmente de las instituciones políticas y sociales y de sus responsables, en relación a cada hombre de este mundo, sino que además, y en mayor medida, comporta que el primer compromiso de cada uno hacia el otro, y sobre todo de estas mismas instituciones, se debe situar en la promoción del desarrollo integral de la persona" (no. 131). Continúa el *Compendio*, "El respeto de la dignidad humana no puede absolutamente prescindir

de la obediencia al principio de 'considerar al prójimo como otro yo, cuidando en primer lugar de su vida y de los medios necesarios para vivirla dignamente' (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27). Es preciso que todos los programas sociales, científicos y culturales, estén presididos por la conciencia del primado de cada ser humano".[5]

Subsidiariedad

Es imposible promover la dignidad de la persona si no se cuidan la familia, los grupos, las asociaciones, las realidades territoriales locales, en suma, aquellas comunidades de tipo económico, social, cultural, recreativo, profesional, político a las que las personas dan vida espontáneamente y que hacen posible su efectivo crecimiento social.[6] La familia, fundada en el matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer, es la unidad fundamental de la sociedad. Este santuario para la creación y crianza de los niños no debe ser redefinido, socavado o descuidado. Apoyar a las familias debe ser una prioridad de las políticas económicas y sociales. La forma en que nuestra sociedad se organiza —en la economía y la política, en la legislación y en las políticas públicas— afecta el bienestar de los individuos y de la sociedad. Cada persona y cada asociación tienen el derecho y el deber de participar en la formación de la sociedad para promover el bienestar de los individuos y el bien común.

El principio de subsidiariedad nos recuerda que las instituciones más grandes de la sociedad no deberían abrumar o interferir con las instituciones más pequeñas o de carácter local; sin embargo, las instituciones más grandes tienen responsabilidades esenciales cuando las instituciones más locales no pueden adecuadamente proteger la dignidad humana, responder a las necesidades humanas y promover el bien común.[7]

El bien común

El bien común está compuesto por "el conjunto de condiciones de la vida social que hacen posible a las asociaciones y a cada uno de sus miembros el logro más pleno y más fácil de la propia perfección".[8]

La dignidad humana es respetada y el bien común promovido sólo si **se protegen los derechos humanos y se cumplen las responsabilidades básicas**. Cada ser humano tiene el derecho a la vida, el derecho a la libertad religiosa y el derecho a tener acceso a aquellas cosas que requiere la decencia humana: alimento y albergue, educación y trabajo, cuidado médico y vivienda. A estos derechos les corresponden obligaciones y responsabilidades, para con los demás, nuestras familias y la sociedad en general.

La economía debe estar al servicio de la gente y no al contrario. Un sistema económico debe servir a la dignidad de la persona humana y al bien común mediante **el respeto de la dignidad del trabajo y la protección de los derechos de los trabajadores**. La justicia económica exige un trabajo decente con salarios justos y dignos, un programa de legalización amplio y justo que ofrezca un camino a la ciudadanía a los trabajadores inmigrantes, y la oportunidad para que todas las personas trabajen juntas por el bien común a través de su trabajo, propiedad, iniciativa, inversión, participación en sindicatos y otras formas de actividad económica. Los trabajadores también tienen responsabilidades: realizar el trabajo que corresponde a un salario justo, tratar con respeto a los empleadores y compañeros de trabajo y llevar a cabo su trabajo de tal manera que contribuya al bien común. Los trabajadores, los empleadores y los sindicatos deberían no sólo promover sus propios intereses, sino también trabajar juntos para promover la justicia económica y el bienestar de todos.

Tenemos el deber de **cuidar la creación de Dios**, o como el papa Francisco se refiere a ella en *Laudato Si'*, "nuestra casa común".[9] Todos estamos llamados a cuidar responsablemente de la creación de Dios y asegurar un ambiente seguro y hospitalario para los seres humanos vulnerables ahora y en el futuro. El papa Francisco, en coherencia con San Juan Pablo II y con el papa Benedicto XVI (Mensajes para la Jornada Mundial de la Paz en 1990 y 2010), ha destacado la contaminación, el cambio climático, la falta de acceso al agua potable y la pérdida de biodiversidad como retos particulares. El papa Francisco habla de una "deuda ecológica" (no. 51) contraída por los países más ricos con las naciones en desarrollo. Y nos llama a todos a una "conversión ecológica" (no. 219), "que implica dejar brotar todas las consecuencias de [nuestro] encuentro con Jesucristo en las relaciones con el mundo que [nos] rodea".[10] De hecho, esta preocupación por la "ecología natural" es una parte indispensable de la "ecología humana" más amplia, que abarca no sólo las dimensiones materiales, sino también las morales y sociales.

Solidaridad

La solidaridad es "la *determinación firme y perseverante* de empeñarse por el *bien común*; es decir, por el bien de todos y cada uno, para que todos seamos verdaderamente responsables *de todos*". Se encuentra en "la entrega por el bien del prójimo, que está dispuesto a 'perderse', en sentido evangélico, por el otro en lugar de explotarlo, y a 'servirlo' en lugar de oprimirlo para el propio provecho".[11]

Somos una sola familia humana, independientemente de nuestras diferencias nacionales, raciales, étnicas, económicas e ideológicas. Nuestro compromiso católico con la solidaridad requiere de nosotros buscar la justicia, eliminar el racismo, poner fin a la trata de personas, proteger los derechos humanos, buscar la paz y evitar el uso de la fuerza excepto como un último recurso necesario.

De manera especial nuestra solidaridad debe expresarse en la **opción preferencial por los pobres y vulnerables**. Una prueba moral para la sociedad es la forma en que tratamos a los más débiles entre nosotros: los no nacidos, los que lidian con discapacidades o enfermedades terminales, los pobres y los marginados.

CONCLUSIÓN

A la luz de la doctrina católica, los obispos repiten vigorosamente su llamado a un tipo renovado de política que se enfoque en los principios morales, la promoción de la vida y dignidad humanas y la búsqueda del bien común. La participación política en este espíritu refleja no sólo la doctrina social de nuestra Iglesia, sino las mejores tradiciones de nuestra nación.

Notas

1. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, nos. 1913-15.
2. *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 25.
3. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221
4. Estos principios se han extraído de una rica tradición descrita en mayor profundidad en el *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, del Consejo Pontificio "Justicia y Paz" (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 2006), no. 160. Para obtener más información sobre estos principios, véase *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles*, 2016, nos. 40ss.
5. *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, no. 132. Este resumen representa solamente algunos aspectos destacados de la exposición más completa sobre la persona humana en el *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*. Para una exposición más completa, véanse especialmente los nos. 124-159, donde se tratan muchos otros aspectos importantes de la dignidad humana.
6. *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, no. 185.
7. *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 4-6.
8. *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, no. 164.
9. *Laudato Si'*, no. 77.
10. *Laudato Si'*, no. 217.
11. *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, no. 193 (Véase Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mc 10:42-45; Lc 22:25-27).

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CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

El reto de formar la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles

FORMANDO LA CONCIENCIA PARA SER CIUDADANOS FIELES

Parte II de II: Tomar decisiones morales y aplicar nuestros principios

Este breve documento es la Segunda parte de un resumen de la reflexión de los obispos de los Estados Unidos *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles*, que complementa la enseñanza de los obispos en las diócesis y las conferencias estatales de obispos católicos.

La Primera parte del resumen de la reflexión de los obispos de los Estados Unidos *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles*, examinó los principios básicos que subyacen a la participación católica en el ámbito político. La Segunda parte es un examen del proceso por el cual estos principios se aplican al acto de votar y tomar posiciones sobre cuestiones políticas. Comienza con la consideración general de la naturaleza de la conciencia y el papel de la prudencia. La aplicación de un juicio prudencial no significa que todas las opciones sean válidas por igual, o que la orientación de los obispos y la de otros líderes de la Iglesia sea simplemente otra opción política o que sea una preferencia política entre otras muchas. Más bien, exhortamos a los católicos a que escuchen cuidadosamente a los maestros de la Iglesia cuando aplican la doctrina social católica a propuestas y situaciones específicas.

¿CÓMO AYUDA LA IGLESIA A LOS FIELES CATÓLICOS A HABLAR DE LAS CUESTIONES POLÍTICAS Y SOCIALES?

Una conciencia bien formada

La Iglesia prepara a sus miembros para abordar las cuestiones políticas ayudándolos a desarrollar una conciencia bien formada. “La conciencia moral es un juicio de la razón por el que la persona humana reconoce la cualidad moral de un acto concreto . . . [Cada ser humano] está obligado a seguir fielmente lo que sabe que es justo y recto” (*Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, no. 1778). Los católicos tenemos la obligación permanente de formar nuestra conciencia de acuerdo con la razón humana, iluminada por la enseñanza de Cristo tal como viene a nosotros a través de la Iglesia.

La virtud de la prudencia

La Iglesia también anima a los católicos a desarrollar la virtud de la prudencia, que nos posibilita “discernir en toda circunstancia nuestro verdadero bien y a elegir los medios rectos para realizarlo” (*Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, no. 1806). La prudencia forma e informa nuestra capacidad para deliberar sobre las alternativas disponibles, identificar cuál es la más adecuada en un contexto específico y actuar decisivamente. La prudencia debe ir acompañada de la valentía, que nos llama a actuar. Al buscar el avance del bien común, los católicos debemos discernir cuidadosamente qué políticas públicas son moralmente sólidas. A veces los católicos pueden elegir diferentes formas de responder a los problemas sociales, pero no podemos alejarnos de nuestra obligación de proteger la vida y dignidad humanas y ayudar a construir, a través de medios morales, un mundo más justo y pacífico.

Hacer el bien y evitar el mal

Hay cosas que nunca debemos hacer, ni como individuos ni como sociedad, porque estas son siempre incompatibles con el amor a Dios y al prójimo. Estos actos intrínsecamente malos siempre se deben rechazar y nunca apoyar. Un ejemplo claro es quitar intencionadamente la vida de un ser humano inocente, como en el aborto provocado. Del mismo modo, la clonación humana, la investigación destructiva de embriones humanos y otros actos que violan directamente la santidad y dignidad de la vida humana, como el genocidio, la tortura y atentar contra los no combatientes en actos terroristas o de guerra, jamás pueden ser justificados. Las violaciones de la dignidad humana, tales como los actos de racismo, tratar a los trabajadores como meros medios para un fin, someter deliberadamente a los trabajadores a condiciones de vida infrahumanas, tratar a los pobres como objetos desechables, o redefinir el matrimonio para negar su significado esencial, tampoco pueden ser jamás justificadas.

La oposición a actos intrínsecamente malos también nos mueve a reconocer nuestro deber positivo de contribuir al bien común y de actuar solidariamente para con los necesitados. Tanto oponerse al mal como hacer el bien son esenciales. Como dijo San Juan Pablo II, “El hecho de que solamente los mandamientos negativos obliguen siempre y en toda circunstancia, no significa que, en la vida moral, las prohibiciones sean más importantes que el compromiso de hacer el bien, como indican los mandamientos positivos”.[1] El derecho básico a la vida implica y está ligado a otros derechos humanos, tales como el derecho a los bienes que toda persona necesita para vivir y desarrollarse, como el alimento, la vivienda, el cuidado médico, la educación y un trabajo digno.

Evitar dos tentaciones

Dos tentaciones en la vida pública pueden distorsionar la defensa que hace la Iglesia de la vida y dignidad humanas: La primera es una equivalencia moral que no hace distinciones éticas entre las diferentes clases de cuestiones que tratan la vida y dignidad humanas. La destrucción directa e intencionada de la vida de personas inocentes, desde el momento de la concepción hasta la muerte natural, es siempre mala y no es simplemente una cuestión entre muchas otras. Siempre debe ser rechazada. La segunda es el uso indebido de estas distinciones morales necesarias como una manera de rechazar o ignorar otras amenazas serias a la vida y dignidad humanas. El racismo y otras discriminaciones injustas; el uso de la pena de muerte; recurrir a una guerra injusta; la degradación del medio ambiente; el uso de la tortura; los crímenes de guerra; la pornografía; la trata de personas; la redefinición del matrimonio civil; la falta de acción para responder a los que sufren a causa del hambre o la falta de cuidado sanitario o de vivienda; la puesta en peligro de la libertad religiosa; o políticas inmigratorias injustas son todas ellas cuestiones morales serias que retan a nuestra conciencia y requieren que actuemos.

Tomar decisiones morales

Los obispos no dicen a los católicos cómo votar; la responsabilidad de tomar decisiones políticas recae en cada persona y su conciencia bien formada, apoyada por la prudencia. Este ejercicio de la conciencia comienza con oponerse siempre a las políticas que violan la vida humana o debilitan su protección.

Cuando ya existen leyes moralmente defectuosas, se necesita un juicio prudencial para determinar cómo hacer lo que es posible para restablecer la justicia —aunque sea parcial o gradualmente— sin abandonar nunca un compromiso moral con la plena protección de toda la vida humana desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural (véase San Juan Pablo II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

El juicio prudencial también es necesario para determinar la mejor manera de promover el bien común en áreas tales como la vivienda, el cuidado médico y la inmigración. Cuando los líderes de la Iglesia formulan juicios sobre cómo aplicar la doctrina católica a políticas específicas, esto puede no tener la misma autoridad vinculante que los principios morales universales, pero no puede ser descartado como una opinión política entre otras. Estas aplicaciones morales deben informar las conciencias y guiar las acciones de los católicos.

Como católicos, no votamos basándonos en una sola cuestión. La posición de un candidato respecto a una sola cuestión no es suficiente para garantizar el apoyo del votante. Sin embargo, la posición de un candidato respecto a una sola cuestión relacionada con un mal intrínseco, como el apoyo al aborto legal o la promoción del racismo, puede llevar legítimamente al votante a descalificar a un candidato y no darle su apoyo.

¿QUÉ POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DEBEN PREOCUPAR MÁS A LOS CATÓLICOS?

Como católicos, estamos llamados a plantear preguntas sobre la vida política que vayan más allá de las que se concentran en el bienestar material individual. Nos enfocamos más ampliamente en lo que protege o amenaza la dignidad humana de cada vida humana. La doctrina católica reta a los votantes y a los candidatos, a los ciudadanos y a los funcionarios públicos a considerar las dimensiones morales y éticas de las cuestiones de política pública. A la luz de los principios éticos, nosotros, los obispos, ofrecemos los siguientes objetivos políticos que esperamos guiarán a los católicos a medida que estos formen su conciencia y reflexionen sobre las dimensiones morales de sus opciones públicas:

- Tratar el requisito supremo de proteger la **vida humana** restringiendo y poniendo fin a la destrucción de los niños no nacidos mediante el aborto provocado y proporcionando a las mujeres en crisis de embarazo los apoyos que necesiten. Poner fin a las siguientes practicas: el uso de la eutanasia y el suicidio asistido para tratar el peso de la enfermedad y la incapacidad; la destrucción de embriones humanos en nombre de la ciencia; el uso de la pena de muerte para combatir el crimen; y recurrir imprudentemente a la guerra para tratar disputas internacionales.
- Proteger el concepto fundamental del **matrimonio** como la unión fiel y para toda la vida de un hombre y una mujer y como la institución central de la sociedad; promover la complementariedad de los sexos y rechazar las falsas ideologías de "género"; y ofrecer un mejor apoyo a la vida familiar moral, social y económicamente, de manera que nuestra nación ayude a los padres de familia a criar a sus hijos inculcando en ellos el respeto a la vida, valores morales sólidos y una ética de corresponsabilidad y responsabilidad.
- Conseguir una **reforma migratoria** comprensiva que ofrezca un camino a la ciudadanía, trate a los trabajadores inmigrantes con justicia, impida la separación de las familias, mantenga la integridad de nuestras fronteras, respete el estado de derecho y se preocupe por los factores que fuerzan a las personas a abandonar sus países de origen.
- Ayudar a las familias y a los niños a salir de la **pobreza**, asegurando el acceso y opciones a la **educación**, así como un puesto de trabajo con salarios justos que permitan vivir y asistencia adecuada para los más vulnerables de nuestra nación, a la vez que también se ayuda a derrotar el hambre y la pobreza tan extendidos por el mundo, especialmente en las áreas de asistencia al desarrollo, alivio de la deuda externa y el comercio internacional.
- Asegurar la plena protección de la libertad de conciencia y la **libertad religiosa** de las personas y grupos para responder a las necesidades sociales, y así posibilitar que las familias, grupos comunitarios, estructuras económicas y gobiernos trabajen juntos para superar la pobreza, buscar el bien común y cuidar de la creación.
- Proveer **cuidado médico** a la vez que se respeta la vida humana, la dignidad humana y la libertad religiosa en nuestro sistema de salud.
- Continuar oponiéndose a políticas que reflejan racismo, hostilidad hacia los inmigrantes, intolerancia religiosa y otras formas de **discriminación injusta**.
- Establecer y cumplir con los límites morales concernientes al uso de la **fuerza militar** —examinando con qué propósitos se puede usar, bajo qué autoridad y qué costo humano conllevará— con miras especialmente a buscar una respuesta responsable y eficaz para poner fin a la persecución de los cristianos y otras minorías religiosas en el Medio Oriente y otras partes del mundo.
- Unirse a otros en **todo el mundo** para buscar la paz, proteger los derechos humanos y la libertad religiosa, y progresar en la justicia económica y en el cuidado de la creación.

Notas

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52.

Haz clic aquí para leer el documento completo y acceder a enlaces con recursos para parroquias y boletines, actividades para familias, oraciones y reflexiones, y mucho más.

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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.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
CHARLES CARROLL ASSEMBLY 1185
HONOR A VETERAN
THIS CHRISTMAS
Remember your deceased family members and friends who served our country through the Veterans Christmas Wreath Program at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Wheeling.
WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY
DECEMBER 5 AT 9:00 AM
Bishops Chapel – Mount Calvary Cemetery, Wheeling
Following the ceremony, wreaths will be placed on the graves of veterans throughout the cemetery.
Your donation, large or small, will help us honor those who served.
You may also make a donation in memory of a veteran loved one.
TO DONATE:
Make checks payable to
Knights of Columbus Charles Carroll Assembly 1185.
Please write "Veterans Wreaths Program" and the name of the veteran being honored on the memo line.
Mail donations to:
118 Edgington Lane
Wheeling, WV 26003
Help us ensure that our veterans are never forgotten.

St. Michael
Christian Mothers and Christian Women
Children's Clothing & More Sale
Children's CLOTHING SALE and More
November 6th 4pm – 7pm
November 7th 8am – Noon
at the Angelus Center
Donation Drop Offs:
Wednesday, November 4th 4pm-7pm
Thursday, November 5th 4pm-7pm
Friday, November 6th 8:30am- 10am

Christmas Faith & Music
Prison Visit Services 2026
Priests, Deacons & Volunteers
Join our Prison Ministry Team this Christmas season as we bring the message of Christ's love and hope to the incarcerated men and women in West Virginia facilities.
Service Dates
Service Dates
• Lakin Correctional Center — December 2nd, 1:00–2:00pm
• Mt. Olive Correctional Complex — December 7th, 1:00–2:00pm
• Northern Regional Correctional — December 11th, 5:00–6:00pm
• Huttonsville Correctional Center — December 14th, 12:30–1:30pm
• Parkersburg Correctional Center — December 16th, 1:00–2:00pm
Service details will be provided in the coming weeks.
All volunteers must be cleared through
WV Department of Corrections (DCR) to enter facilities.
If interested, contact us and we will begin the clearance process.
Contact:
Kay Sanders — msanders@dwc.org
Sr. Dolores Keyser — dkeyser@dwc.org
"This Christmas, we remember those behind the walls. Your presence can bring Christ's hope to men and women who often feel forgotten. Join us in sharing the light of Christ where it is needed most."
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston-Office of Prison Ministry

Charleston Catholic Students Welcome Bishop Menjívar

Bishop Evelio Menjívar visited Charleston Catholic High School Oct. 23. "We started the day with a beautiful Mass led by our 6th graders and choir," CCHS officials said in a post on Facebook. "The Bishop then talked to students in several classrooms, telling them about his life and answering lots of questions. At the end of his visit he joined students for lunch for more conversation. We are thankful to the Bishop and look forward to seeing him again soon." Students are pictured with the bishop in these photos. Courtesy photos

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.

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Our expert team uses the latest catheter-based techniques to treat all forms of structural heart disease, including aortic, mitral, and tricuspid valve diseases and conditions and congenital defects.

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Interventional Cardiology

Deepak Hooda MD
Interventional Cardiology

Sushant Sharma MD
Cardiology

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