



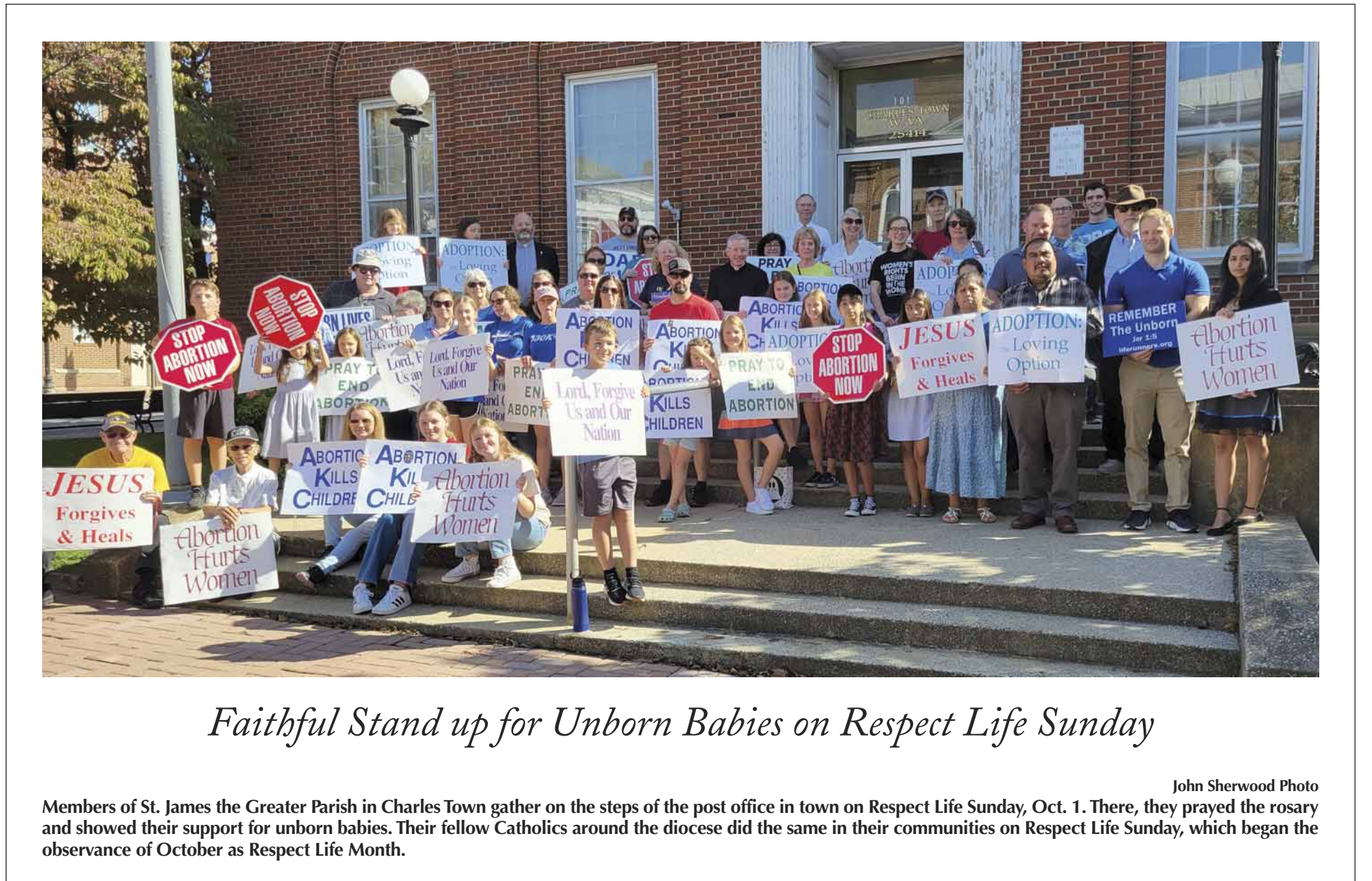
A Pastoral Letter on Pro-Life Matters from Bishop Brennan

My fellow Catholics and men and women of good will, the Catholic Church in the United States has for many years observed October as Respect Life Month. Our faith challenges us to revere the human being from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, so we recall more intensely this month what is always true: that every human being has been created by God and, for that reason alone, deserves respect for his or her physical life and the opportunity to experience conditions that allow

for human flourishing. The late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin of Chicago seized on the image of Jesus' seamless garment (see *John 19:23-24*) to speak of the interconnectedness of the various dimensions of human life that should be protected and cherished. The image unites concerns for humanity around key protections for life and the promotion of human flourishing in matters such as people's access to food and clean water, the right to an authentic ethnic or regional culture, respect for free-

dom of conscience, renunciation of torture, providing all adults with meaningful work and fostering peace among nations and groups. A garment, however, needs a hem to keep it from fraying at the edges and coming apart. That hem for the seamless garment that unites the many life issues is respect for the physical life of the human being. Whether it is capital punishment, assisted suicide, euthanasia, abortion or infanticide, these assaults on a human being's physical life disrespect the person and make irrel-

evant any other rights or needs. These evils demand our vigorous opposition and positive efforts to find remedies for the problems they pretend to solve. With respect to the taking of human life, abortion stands out for its cruelty, not only because the unborn child lacks the possibility of self-defense and the ability to advocate for his or herself but also because the child has committed no evil that could justify the taking of his or her life. The **See "Letter" on Page 3**



Faithful Stand up for Unborn Babies on Respect Life Sunday

John Sherwood Photo

Members of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town gather on the steps of the post office in town on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 1. There, they prayed the rosary and showed their support for unborn babies. Their fellow Catholics around the diocese did the same in their communities on Respect Life Sunday, which began the observance of October as Respect Life Month.

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Catholic in Recovery Founder to Speak in Wheeling This Month, Page 5

'Laudate Deum': Planet Mirrors a Deeply Flawed View of Human Life and Activity

By **Gina Christian**

(OSV News)—Pope Francis warns the clock is ticking on the dangers of climate change — and both a paradigm shift and practical action are critically needed to avert looming disasters in nature and human society.

The pope released his new apostolic exhortation "Laudate Deum" ("Praise God") Oct. 4 as a follow-up to his 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home." The exhortation's publication coincided with the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of ecology, whose famous canticle inspired the title of "Laudato Si'."

Though only about one-fifth the length of "Laudato Si'" (which it references extensively), the exhortation's message is even more urgent, since "the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point," wrote Pope Francis. "Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community."

The text reiterates key messages that have resonated throughout Pope Francis' papacy — among them, concern for the marginalized, care for creation, human ecology and a "synodal" approach to resolving global problems.

With "the effects ... borne by the most vulnerable people," the issue of climate change is "one intimately related to the dignity of human life," he said.

Addressed to "all people of good will," the exhortation declares that "it is no longer possible to doubt the human ... origin of climate change," citing data from sources such as the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. While noting that "not every concrete catastrophe" is due to global climate change, humans bear responsibility for specific changes that have led to "extreme phenomena" — such as storms, heat waves and flooding — that are "increasingly frequent and intense," said the pope.

He pointed to rapid, human-driven upticks in greenhouse gas emissions, which trap radiation from the sun in earth's atmosphere and warm the planet. The global average temperature — a metric that tracks changes in the earth's surface temperature against long-term averages for a given location and date — has risen over the past 50 years in particular, at a rate that could approach the recommended ceiling of 1.5 degrees Celsius in just 10 years, said the pope.

That acceleration has a profound impact, causing dangerous shifts in climate and weather with effects ultimately felt "in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing (and) forced migrations," Pope Francis said.

He challenged "resistance and confusion" regarding climate change, "even within the Catholic Church," stressing that "the overwhelming majority of scientists specializing in the climate" support the correlation between global climate phenomena and spikes in greenhouse gas emissions.

Pope Francis said the planet itself has become a mirror of a deeply flawed view of human life and activity. Such a "technocratic paradigm" (as the pope described it in "Laudato Si'") exalts technological and economic power as sources of reality, goodness and truth, promising unlimited potential if methodically developed.

In recent years, that paradigm has advanced still further, with a goal of "(increasing) human power beyond anything imaginable, before which nonhuman reality is a mere resource at its disposal," he said.

Yet "not every increase in power represents progress for humanity," said the pope, especially since (as he wrote in "Laudato Si'") "we cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint."

The poor pay the highest price while inflicting the least damage on the planet, said Pope Francis, citing the United Nations Environment Programme's 2022 Emissions Gap Report, which found that per capita greenhouse gas emissions of richer countries far exceed those of poorer ones.

The question of human power itself must be reexamined, and "human beings must be recognized as a part of nature," the pope said, stressing that "everything is connected" and "no one is saved alone."

Lamenting the "weakness of international politics" in addressing climate change, Pope Francis drew on his 2020 encyclical "Fratelli Tutti" to call for a "reconfigured multilateralism" — one "not dependent on changing political conditions or the interests of a few," but possessing a "stable efficacy" that can resolve "the real problems of humanity" by placing "the dignity of persons" before all.

International climate conferences held over the past several decades have had mixed results, said Pope Francis, labeling some as "failures" and others, such as the U.N.'s 1997 COP3 (Conference of the Parties 3) in Kyoto — which sought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 5% by 2012 — as noteworthy. While the Kyoto goal was not met, the 2015 COP21 in Paris marked "a new beginning," said the pope, as it aimed to hold the increase of average global

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Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, 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 utilizing www.reportbishop-abuse.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.reportbishop-abuse.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 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 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: 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 protected. Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.



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Letter...

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unborn child's offense is simply that he or she exists. His or her humanity is accorded no value. As Pope Francis has said, abortion is an extreme example of the throw-away culture that masquerades as wisdom in contemporary society.

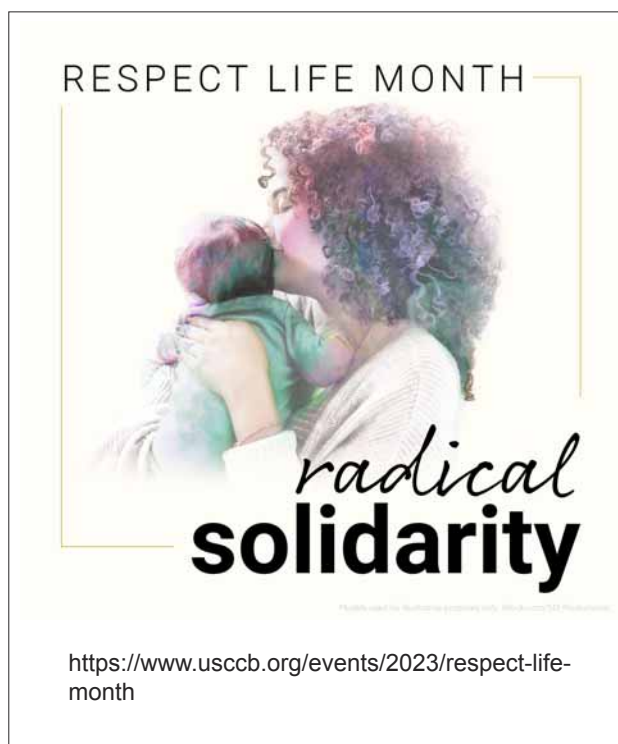
Pope St. John XXIII used the phrase the *signs of the times* in 1961, when he convoked the Second Vatican Council. It reflects Jesus' comment to the Pharisees and Sadducees that *you know how to judge the appearance of the sky but you cannot judge the signs of the times* – they did not understand that in Jesus the long-awaited Messiah had appeared (*Matthew 16:3*). If we judge rightly the *signs of the times* in our country, we understand why the American bishops have called abortion “the pre-eminent issue.”

All the life issues contained in the seamless garment matter but some are more urgent at a certain time and place than others. The people of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century read the *signs of the times* and understood that slavery was the pre-eminent issue of their times, even though there was considerable agitation over immigration, public education, labor and capital relations and religious freedom for Catholics. Slavery was the issue that most deeply divided the country, as abortion does now, and it was over slavery that the Civil War was fought. As Abraham Lincoln put it, citing Jesus Christ: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free.” A country that claims to honor “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for its citizens cannot remain permanently divided over how it will treat the unborn child.

Those who support abortion access have read the *signs of the times* and have concluded that abortion is the pre-eminent issue. They have encouraged leaders across America to put their eggs in that basket in the pursuit of political power. That is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. We who support the value of every human being should be just as astute in recognizing the importance of the abortion issue as are its proponents. All of the life issues depend on preserving the physical life of the human being, which is precisely what abortion attacks.

We West Virginians live in a state that has recently passed legislation that restricts abortion more sharply than in many other states. This law is actually saving lives. But it is not enough to simply let the child be born. We have to create positive conditions for the child and help pregnant women whose circumstances of life may push them toward abortion. We must be pro-woman as well as pro-child. As Pope St. John Paul II urged, we must show a “radical solidarity” with pregnant women who need our support.

How do we serve both mother and child? The US Bishops' Conference initiated a program called “Walking with Moms in Need.” It connects parishes with pregnancy resource centers in their area



so that the parishes can offer tangible support such as volunteers, diapers, formula and other baby needs, and financial help. Some parishes have taken advantage of that program while others have shown initiative on their own. St. Francis of Assisi Parish in St. Albans, with the help of the local Knights of Columbus, started a baby pantry called “Little Blessings” to provide clothing and other things babies need. St. Joseph's Parish in Martinsburg opened Mary's Refuge earlier this year for pregnant women with nowhere to live. Up to nine women can live there for a year after the birth of their child, receiving various services before and after they give birth. St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown has planted a garden to grow fresh vegetables for families in need. Is your parish partnered with a local pregnancy resource center in Walking with Moms in Need or engaged in some other outreach to pregnant women, new mothers and young children?

On a diocesan level, on October 5 of this year the Office of Social Ministries, directed by Kathy Barton, sponsored the first-ever Life Expo in Wheeling, bringing together more than 20 organizations dedicated to serving women and children in need. The goal was to show our parish communities that wrap-around services exist in this region to care for pregnant mothers and their born and unborn children who may be at risk. Did anyone from your parish attend Life Expo?

I should not neglect to mention Catholic Charities of West Virginia's “Birth to Three” program, which tracks young children for developmental deficiencies, such as hearing or vision impairments, and finds appropriate help. This is a true service to poorer families and is in addition to the counseling services, financial assistance and disaster relief efforts that Catholic Charities already offers. Our Church, as you can see, is already engaged around the state in efforts to support preg-

nant women and young children, even as we strive to do more.

The state of West Virginia has stepped up with some support for pregnant women and families, including creating a fund to assist organizations working to provide material support and other assistance to pregnant women and new babies, expanding the adoption tax credit and enhancing eligibility for early intervention services for adopted children. The state could do more by helping to pay attorneys' fees that are a hardship for some adoptive parents and by expanding support for kinship families. It could provide an enhanced child tax credit against state income tax obligations and make credit payments to families monthly rather than waiting until after taxes are filed (a happy feature of the now-abandoned federal child tax credit expansion during the pandemic). Paid parental leave for government employees would help young families, as would funding tax incentives for private businesses to provide paid parental leave or to make childcare available and affordable for their employees. Our Mountain State is already a leader in curtailing the practice of abortion but we could also be a leader in supporting mothers, children and families that call West Virginia home.

In discussing abortion and the help we should offer pregnant women and their families, I do not discount the importance of other issues. Some of our political leaders want to restore the death penalty, which West Virginia abolished in 1965. Violence begets violence, not social peace. Our state can do better than to revert to using the same violence that criminals have employed. Respect for human life also means recognizing the humanity of immigrants and racial and sexual minorities and challenging those who demonize them. All of God's children deserve respect and fair treatment. These are only some of the concerns we must have as disciples of Jesus Christ. His seamless garment holds them all together.

The Lord Jesus teaches us *love one another as I have loved you*. But our concerns and the rights of the living are irrelevant if a person is dead. I have focused on abortion as the pre-eminent issue dividing our people because that is what my reading of the *signs of the times* tells me. I judge that passively allowing the killing of unborn children has already made other forms of violence against persons easier to accept. The hem of the seamless garment, already ripped, must be repaired, lest the garment itself disintegrate. *You shall not kill*, says God. We must first respect the physical life of the unborn child and then apply our energies and talents to provide a more just society for that child and the child's family so that, striving to reach our full stature in Christ, we may be, as St. Irenaeus taught eighteen centuries ago, “the glory of God: the human being fully alive.”

Sincerely in Christ,

Mark E. Brennan

+Mark E. Brennan

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

View...

Cont'd from Page 2

temperatures to under 2 and, eventually, 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine both hindered progress in tackling global warming, said Pope Francis. He said COP28, set to take place Nov. 30-Dec. 12 in Dubai, will either

prove to be a turning point for decisive action or “a great disappointment” that imperils any progress made so far.

“Binding forms of energy transition” that are “efficient, obligatory and readily monitored” are essential, said Pope Francis, as “the necessary transition towards clean energy sources such as wind and solar

energy, and the abandonment of fossil fuels, is not progressing at the necessary speed.”

The pope invited Catholics and those of other faiths to recall their “spiritual motivations” for addressing the climate crisis, asking “everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it

more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values.”

Humility is essential in this journey, he said, “for when human beings claim to take God's place they become their own worst enemies.”

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

Diocese's PACE Conference Set for Oct. 18-19

By Colleen Rowan

CHARLESTON—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's 2023 PACE Conference is set for Oct. 18-19 at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston. PACE stands for Parish Administration & Collaborative Education. The conference is presented each year for clergy, parish secretaries, bookkeepers, development directors, religious education directors, volunteers, and school administration and others involved in parishes and Catholic schools to engage in educational sessions and networking with fellow Catholics from around the state.

Chad Carter, chancellor of the diocese, who organizes the conference each year, said that PACE is always a beneficial and enjoyable event for all.

"The PACE team of presenters from the chancery always look forward to this yearly event in order to spend time with staff members and volunteers from our parishes and schools in order to help and support them in their daily tasks; as well, we get to learn and understand more about the daily challenges they may face as they work to build up the Kingdom of God through parish and school ministry," Carter said.

This year's theme is "We Are Saved By Grace," drawing upon the Catechism of the Catholic Church which states, "Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God." Moreover, "grace is the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church" (1996, 2003 from the Catechism).

"God's grace helps us in the daily living out of our vocation as Christians," Carter said.

In addition to the many chancery staff who will present educational sessions, participants will have the opportunity to hear from keynote speaker Scott Weeman, founder of Catholic in Recovery. His presentation is "Finding Freedom from Addictions, Compulsions, and Unhealthy Attachments," in which he will share an in-depth look at his recovery program that is grounded in the Catholic faith. Attendees can learn how to start this ministry in their parishes.

On the first day of PACE, participants are invited to Taize Prayer and, the next day, Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Brennan in the chapel.

A wide variety of educational sessions will be available to participants including new offerings this year on Safe Environment Assistance and Design Advice and Guidance. Sessions will focus on financial management; marketing and technology; development and mission advancement; pastoral and formational; as well as ParishSOFT & general administration. The following is just a few of the many breakout session topics: diocesan archives; diocesan benefits; Mass Stipends: Policies and Procedures; Guidelines and Tips for Scheduling the Missa pro Populo/Mass for the People; Walking With Moms in Need; Social Media – Your Catholic Identity & Evangelization; Energizing Parishes Through Ministry and Service; Being a Welcoming Community; Pastoral Care for Individuals and Families Impacted by Addiction; Annulments; Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) and Social Ministry; CCWVa Disaster Services; and spiritual and formational options.

To register or for more information, visit <https://dwc.org/2023pace/>.

St. Leo Knights and Cross Catholic Outreach Event Fights Hunger



Courtesy Photo

Volunteers from St. Leo Parish in Inwood and as far as Beckley, Wheeling, and Morgantown assist with food packing.

INWOOD—On Sept. 30, St. Leo Church in Inwood hosted a food packing event sponsored by the St. Leo Knights of Columbus and Cross Catholic Outreach where a total of 70,000 meals were packaged in preparation to be sent to the poorest countries in the world.

Approximately 7,000 meals will remain in the state of West Virginia with the balance being sent to countries in desperate need such as Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti. Volunteers for the event came from St. Leo's and as far as Beckley, Wheeling, and Morgantown to

assist with the packing.

The effort was coordinated by the St. Leo Council's past Grand Knight Greg Hilleary.

Cross Catholic Outreach is a relief and development organization that since its founding in 2001 has given more than \$1 billion in aid to help "the poorest of the poor" in more than three dozen developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and other parts of the world.

For more information about Cross Catholic Outreach and its food packing events, visit crosscatholic.org.

Father Bill Garrott to Present 'Trifecta of Divine Mercy' Parish Mission to Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg

CLARKSBURG — Immaculate Conception Church, Clarksburg, will be hosting Father Bill Garrott, OP, as presenter of a parish mission on Nov. 4-7. Father Garrott will celebrate the Saturday and Sunday Masses on November 4 and 5 with his homilies geared to the Mission, "Trifecta of Divine Mercy."

The evening presentations will be held Sunday through Tuesday at 7 p.m. A rosary will be said at 6:30 p.m. prior to each presentation: Sunday, "Trifecta One: The Father Blesses"; Monday, "Trifecta Two: The Son Heals"; and Tuesday, "Trifecta Three: The Spirit Strengthens". There will be opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation after 8 a.m. Mass on Monday and Tuesday morning, as well as after all three nights of the mission.

Father Garrott was born and raised in Hagerstown, Md. He is the youngest of eight children. He received a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md. Father Garrott entered the Order of Preachers in 1988 and was ordained for the Dominicans in 1994. He is a member of the Province of St. Joseph whose headquarters is based in New York City. He has a master's degree in spiritual theology from the Angelicum in Rome. He has served as a parochial vicar, campus minister and director of vocations, and has preached over 200 parish missions throughout the United States and Canada using his musical abilities. Father Garrott is currently assigned to St. Dominic Priory in Washington, D.C. (www.dominican



Courtesy Photo

Father Bill Garrott, OP, is shown preaching.

preachers.org).

This mission is a family event for grades 2 and up. Childcare will be provided for ages 3 and up during the three evening presentations. Immaculate Conception is located at 126 E Pike St., Clarksburg.

Catholic in Recovery Founder to Speak in Wheeling This Month

Attendees Will See How This Faith-Based Program Helps Those Suffering Addictions and How to Start the Ministry in a Parish

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—For the countless people in West Virginia suffering from addictions, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Social Ministry is introducing a recovery program grounded in the faith. A presentation on Catholic in Recovery, by its founder Scott Weeman, will be held Oct. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael Parish in Wheeling. This is a free event and is open to all to provide an in-depth look at this ministry for those fighting addiction or who have family members or friends who need help in fighting addiction. The presentation will also be especially informative for those who would like to start this ministry in their parishes.

Catholic in Recovery is a non-profit organization that seeks to serve those suffering from addictions of all kinds and unhealthy attachments (including alcoholism, drug addiction, pornography addiction, sex and relationship addiction, compulsive overeating and food addictions, gambling addiction, codependency and the impact on family, and general fear, control, and anxiety), the organization's website states. Catholic in Recovery was started by Weeman as he found healing and new life through the help of 12-step recovery and the sacramental love and mercy provided by the Catholic Church, the website states.

"We support parishes and communities with group resources that draw people closer to these two powerful sources of grace," the organization's website states. "It is the aim of Catholic in Recovery to share the Good News that God can bring about healing and recovery, even in the most hopeless of cases."

"We know that through God all things are possible, and this beautiful ministry offers renewed hope and practical spiritual tools to live a full life free from addictions of any kind."

—*Social Ministry Director*
Kathleen Barton

The diocese's Social Ministry Director Kathleen Barton hopes this presentation will reach those who need help. That need is dire in West Virginia, which ranks the highest in the nation for overdose deaths

per capita.

"The West Virginia attorney general reports that West Virginia is ranked highest per capita in the country for overdose fatalities," Barton said.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that in 2021, the drug overdose death rate was 90.9 deaths per 100,000 people. The CDC also ranks West Virginia as the state with the highest overdose death rate.

"The impact that this has on our state, communities, and families is devastating," Barton said.

Catholic in Recovery is a program that provides hope in a different way because its foundation is the Catholic faith. Barton said that Weeman offers a sacramental approach to recovery with this program.

"We know that through God all things are possible," she said, "and this beautiful ministry offers renewed hope and practical spiritual tools to live a full life free from addictions of any kind."

The ministry is parish-based, she added, and offers weekly support, via zoom, for those who lead support groups.

Weeman's presentation at St. Michael's is on "Finding Freedom from Addictions, Compulsions, & Unhealthy Attachments."

Promotional materials state that the allure of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments related to alcohol, drugs, food, lust, money, codependency, and

many others seek to separate the faithful from God, isolate them from their families, and leave them empty. While sharing personal experience, strength, and hope, Weeman will offer key spiritual insight rooted in Catholic faith and 12-step recovery wisdom on how to avoid these temptations and find freedom if already in the grip of addiction.

"Weeman is a beloved son of God, a husband, and a father. He is the founder of Catholic in Recovery, a community of men and women seeking freedom from a variety of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments," promotional materials state. He is the author of "The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments" and editor/compiler of "The Catholic in Recovery Workbook," both published by Ave Maria Press. He holds a master's degree in clinical counseling from Point Loma Nazarene University and is an associate marriage and family therapist. He and his family live in San Diego.

For information about the presentation, contact the St. Michael Parish office at (304) 242-1560. For more information about Catholic in Recovery, visit catholicinrecovery.com.

Barton encourages anyone who is suffering or knows someone suffering from any kind of addiction and those who want to start this ministry in their parish to attend the presentation.

New Graduate Course Focuses on Social Doctrine of the Church

WEST VIRGINIA—CST 510. Social Doctrine of the Church, 1891–1965, will be offered in Catholic Distance University's Fall II term. Classes begin on Oct. 23. The course introduces students to the Church's social doctrine from the time of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum novarum" to the end of Vatican II and will be taught by moral theologian Dr. William Neu, an educator and translator who holds a doctorate from Sophia University, Incisa Vald'arno, Italy. He currently shares responsibility for the Focolare Movement in the Midwestern and Eastern U.S.

Students will become familiar

with the basic principles of this doctrine by reading encyclicals and other Magisterial documents from this period, along with the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Through discussion and writing assignments, students will explore the application of these principles to particular historical circumstances. Required synchronous sessions will be held each week on Mondays, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

To learn more and enroll, reach out to admissions at admissions@cdu.edu or 1-800-254-4CDU, or visit cdu.edu.



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7:30 WOWK CBS 13 Huntington-Charleston
8:00 WBOY NBC 12 Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
11:00 WDVM 25 Hagerstown-Washington D.C.
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The Eucharist
in song

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Reception to follow

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Charleston Catholic Celebrates 100th Anniversary

By Colleen Rowan

Opening the Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of Charleston Catholic High School, Very Rev. Don Higgs, V.F., said, "It is with great joy that we gather to thank God for the gift of our Catholic school for 100 years. And we pray for another 100."

The Mass was celebrated Sept. 11 at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston by Father Higgs, who serves as rector of the basilica and designated pastor and president of CCHS.

Father Higgs continued by saying, "It's great to have with us the one who is most responsible for us to have the ability to celebrate 100 years"—Msgr. P. Edward Sadie, P.A., S.T.L., who concelebrated the Mass and is the long-serving and beloved former rector of the basilica. Also concelebrating were Msgr. Frederick P. Annie, an alumnus of the school, who offered the homily for the Mass, and Father Rayappa Kurakula, chaplain of CCHS and associate rector of the basilica.

Speaking at the end of Mass, Msgr. Sadie commended former Principal Debra Sullivan and current Principal Colleen Hoyer as well as the many religious denominations in the community "who have contributed so much to the excellence we celebrate today." Msgr. Sadie congratulated Sullivan and Hoyer "for the faculties and student bodies they have assembled over the years and all those before them, and thank them for making us Sacred Heart pastors look so good."



Screen Shot Photos

Msgr. P. Edward Sadie, P.A., S.T.L., and Charleston Catholic High School Principal Colleen Hoyer speak at the Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of Charleston Catholic.

Hoyer is a member of the CCHS class of 1994. She recently shared with The Catholic Spirit that through all of the planning of the celebrations, she has recognized the lasting traditions of the school. "The emphasis on academic excellence, on helping students to be the best they can be, on their faith development," she told The Catholic Spirit. "That has endured through the history of the school. But the thing that really resonated with me the most was the community and the people."

CCHS is more than a school or a building, she said. "It's about the people. It's about the students and the teachers and the families who have been a part of the school over the 100 years," Hoyer said. "That's what came through so much as we gathered together."

Hoyer also spoke of the years of tremendous work of Msgr. Sadie and Sullivan and their steadfast commitment to

CCHS. As principal, she now looks to a bright future for the school family.

"We're excited to celebrate the history," Hoyer said, "but we're also excited for the current students to be now part of the laying of the foundation for the next 100 years."

History of Charleston Catholic High School

Sacred Heart Church, founded in 1815, established a parochial school as early as 1869. In 1903, the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, of Stella Niagara, New York, assumed administration of the school.

In 1923, Sacred Heart added high school grades in the former Chilton house in downtown Charleston and named the institution Sacred Heart High School.

In 1940, Archbishop John J. Swint created Charleston Catholic High School. Area Catholics contributed to the construction of a three-story building, including science laboratories and a gymnasium,



Screen Shot Photos

Above are scenes from a celebration for the 100th anniversary of Charleston Catholic High School.

completed in 1941. Post-war growth of Charleston led to the expansion of the school and the addition of a third floor in the 1950s. Enrollment peaked in the late 1960s and then began a slow decline in the mid-1980s.

In 1986, Msgr. Sadie hired Sullivan as the principal. Enrollment rebounded through the 1990s. In 1994 construction began on a new math and science wing. In 2000, Charleston Catholic purchased and renovated the

Players Club tennis building, adding basketball, volleyball, and training facilities.

In 2014, Sullivan retired as principal, handing the reins to Hoyer. In the spring of 2016 plans were announced to build a fourth floor on the math and science wing, thanks to a generous lead gift from the Krupa Foundation. Construction began in the summer of 2016. The fourth floor was completed in the summer of 2017 and put in use starting with the 2017-2018 school year.

Eucharistic Revival Gatherings in Charleston This Month

By Colleen Rowan

CHARLESTON—Two gatherings in Charleston will give the Catholic faithful enriching and prayerful opportunities in devotion to the Eucharist. Presented as part of the National Eucharistic Revival's Parish Year, the first gathering is "The Eucharist in Song" at 7 p.m. Oct. 20 at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston. Mark Haas, director of Music at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston, will lead the gathering.

Participants, Haas said, will have a chance to experience a unique overview of the church's teaching on the Holy Eucharist. The material is presented in an engaging way through music and visuals, he said.

"We will track the Holy Eucharist from the Garden of Eden to Calvary; using music and visuals to help us. As a (major!) bonus, I will be joined by my very talented and beautiful wife, Renae Haas!"

He recalled that he first presented this talk in 2019 two weeks after Pew Research Center reported that just one-third of Catholics believed in the true presence of

Christ in the Eucharist. "I wanted to fire up myself, and my community about the reality of the Holy Eucharist," he said. "I also wanted to present the topic in the best way that I can: music."

The next day, Oct. 21, the basilica co-cathedral will host "How to Live and Be a Eucharistic People" from 9 a.m. to noon in the Sacred Heart Gathering Space. Donuts and coffee begin at 8:30 a.m.

This gathering is being sponsored by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and will offer Catholics time to gather with each other and to spend some time with Jesus Christ. "It is an opportunity to learn about the nature and purpose of the Eucharistic Revival, a time to reflect on what God is trying to do with and through our church, with and through Jesus Christ, truly present in the Eucharist," said Daniel Maul, director of Evangelization and Catechesis, who is leading the gathering.

The program includes two main presentations, Maul said, as well as time for silent, personal reflection

on specific questions.

"An opportunity to share our thoughts and beliefs in small groups of the attendees, then a facilitated, large-group discussion amongst the entire group, and some prayer time, as well," he said.

The gathering will help answer the question, "How are we doing at being and living the Eucharist?" Maul said.

"That question doesn't even make sense to many of us," he said. "How can I be and live the Eucharist? But, we are called — summoned actually — to be the Body of Christ, together, for the sake of the world. We are to be that self-emptying, loving, sacrificial presence of Jesus Christ to and for others. That's living the Eucharist — becoming whom we eat. How're we doing with that? We need both God and each other to become the Eucharist — to be Jesus' flesh, for the life of the world. Won't you join us in this holy endeavor?"

See more about these events in the ads on Page 6 of this issue.

Students Welcome Bishop Brennan



Colleen Rowan Photo

Audrey Hughes, far left, a second grader at Corpus Christi School in Wheeling is very excited to see Bishop Mark Brennan as he greets her and her fellow students following the Mass he celebrated for them at Corpus Christi Church Sept. 22. Bishop Brennan is once again visiting all 24 of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Catholic schools. During the visits, he celebrates Masses for the school communities, tours facilities and classrooms, and engages in discussions with students. By the end of October, he will have visited all 18 of the diocese's Catholic elementary and grade schools and six Catholic high schools.

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Catholic Charities W.Va. Helps Flood Victims Rebuild Their Homes and Lives

WEST VIRGINIA — It has been a little more than a year since severe storms ravaged parts of Southern West Virginia. And thanks to the generosity of faithful throughout the diocese, Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) has helped more than 60 families rebuild their homes and lives.

In August of 2022, more than \$370,000 was donated by the faithful in West Virginia parishes for Bishop Mark Brennan's special disaster relief collection to help West Virginia and Kentucky families. Nearly \$100,000 went directly to Southern West Virginia recovery efforts including short- and long-term relief. The funds were used for homes in areas where damage did not qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) aid.

According to the West Virginia Emergency Management Division, between May 6 and Aug. 15, 2022, there

were 858 reports of flood damage in eight counties of the state (Cabell, Mingo, Fayette, McDowell, Wyoming, Jackson, Doddridge, and Kanawha).

Parishioners who contributed gifts of prayer and funds greatly eased the burden of recovery and rebuilding. Following a disaster, there's an innate human desire to lend a hand, with many providing aid through cleanup efforts and donations of supplies, said Lora Pierce, CCWVa Disaster Services specialist. While these immediate responses are essential, the next step is in addressing the long-term repair and rebuilding needs of affected families.

"Catholic Charities is committed to returning West Virginians to safe, secure and stable housing," said Pierce. "We will walk alongside flood survivors for as little or as long as they need us."

Despite more than a year of recovery efforts, there are still households in need of assistance. The long-term recovery initiative is expected to last until the end of this year. Thanks to the generosity of the Catholic community, and with grant support from partner organizations, CCWVa Disaster Services has disbursed or committed over \$60,000, benefiting numerous individuals and families.

In addition to support from the Catholic community in West Virginia, Catholic Charities USA has been a huge asset in providing funding to the CCWVa Disaster Services program. In response to the May 2022 and August 2022 flood events, they awarded CCWVa two \$10,000 grants. Also, the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster awarded CCWVa a \$5,000 Lowe's Reconstruction Grant for the May 2022

flood recovery efforts.

To date, 47 households comprising 32 individuals, including 16 seniors, 13 individuals with disabilities, six children, and three veterans have received assistance. While these figures illustrate the profound impact of CCWVa, it's vital to remember that each statistic represents a real individual or family.

Here are a few of the recovery stories made possible by the Catholic community:

—Mr. R, a disabled senior in Huntington, faced severe flooding on May 6, 2022, resulting in significant damage to his home. Volunteers cleaned and removed damaged materials, and he received donations of furniture and household items. However, his electrical system was compromised, posing a fire hazard. Funding from the DWC special collection enabled us to hire an electrician, ensuring the safety of this senior gentleman.

—Mrs. E, a widow in Kanawha County, endured heavy rains on Aug. 15, 2022, resulting in significant creek

See "Rebuild" on Page 10



Courtesy Photos Before and after photos of a home damaged in last year's floods and then repaired through help from Catholic Charities West Virginia are shown. This is the home of Mr. R (as he is referred to in the story), a disabled senior in Huntington.



Courtesy Photos Two sets of before and after photos of a home damaged in last year's floods and then repaired through help from Catholic Charities West Virginia are shown. This is the home of Mr. S (as he is referred to in the story), a senior in Huntington.

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Courtesy Photos

Shown above are before and after photos of a home damaged in last year's floods and then repaired through help from Catholic Charities West Virginia. This is the home of Mrs. E (as she is referred to in the story), a widow in Kanawha County.

Rebuild...

Cont'd from Page 9

overflow and damage to her property. Volunteer teams aided in clean-up, and her furnace was repaired, but two sections of her retaining wall were washed away. With limited income, she couldn't afford the repairs, leaving her anxious about future storms. CCWVa provided funding for a contractor to replace the retaining wall, contributing to flood mitigation efforts and safeguarding her home from future damage.

—Mr. S, a senior residing alone in Huntington, experienced severe flooding on May 6, 2022, which inundated his home with 36 inches of water.

The initial estimate for his complete recovery amounted to \$33,000. The resources for his recovery were made possible through contributions from various organizations and individuals, including the Catholic Special Collection, Knights of Columbus, Society of St. Vincent DePaul, St. Joseph Catholic Church, WV Council of Churches, Episcopal Diocese of WV, WVVOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), as well as support from his family members and volunteers. It took a total of 13 months for the full restoration of his home. During the repair process, Mr. S resided in a single bedroom with a recliner chair and a small refrig-

erator. With each donation and completed task, Mr. S was deeply moved by the overwhelming support he received, and he expressed his heartfelt gratitude.

The stories shared here reflect not only the tangible impact of CCWVa's Disaster Services, but also the unwavering resilience of individuals and families facing adversity. It is through the collective compassion and support of the Catholic community and dedicated volunteers that CCWVa has been able to help those in need rebuild their lives and find hope

amidst challenging circumstances.

"As we continue our long-term recovery efforts, we are reminded that every statistic represents a unique life touched by your generosity," said Pierce. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have played a part in this journey of restoration, reinforcing the power of community and the spirit of solidarity in times of crisis. Together, we demonstrate that, in the face of disaster, the bonds of compassion and assistance can truly make a difference."



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Legion of Rosary Warriors

Facebook Group is an Example of FaithInWV

By Joyce Bibey

How many times have you heard, "I'm done with Facebook because of the toxic negativity"?

Cynthia Dimmey of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling was certainly frustrated, but instead of giving up the social media platform she chose to use it to create – the Legion of Rosary Warriors – a prayer space for like-minded people and those searching for an online prayer group.

She said the page is more than intentional evangelization, it is fostering lifelong catechesis.

"There's no holier call, no holier accomplishment, than to bring people home (to the Church)," Dimmey said. "For our group, evangelization isn't as much a focus as the idea of continuing conversion. To continue to get better in our prayer life. To be aware of intentions beyond our own bubbles, and to have heart for the Church at large. When you work on those, I think evangelization – and NEW evangelization – happens naturally. When your faith becomes a bigger part of you, it also becomes a part of your personality, and you can't help but share it."

When you become a member of the group your Facebook feed would then be filled with prayerful posts or inspiring images. As someone who struggles with ADHD, Dimmey said she needed a group of prayer warriors at her fingertips as a reminder to pray, especially the Rosary.

"If it shows up on my feed in bite size pieces, I can take 2 minutes when the post pops up to pray a half a decade," she said.

Soon after the group was formed Mary Anne Cleavenger of Philippi and Mark Witzberger joined after being invited by friends of Dimmey. Soon all three were administrators of the page, because of their evident passion for prayer, hope in God, positivity, and the Church. Between the trio posts blossomed, and prayers were reaching all over and outside of West Virginia.

The fact that the group was started in October – the month of the Rosary – was guided by God not coincidental. The Rosary is Dimmey's favorite prayer, bringing her balance and focus back to her Catholic faith.

"The rosary is where I'm reassured in my faith," Dimmey said. "(Like) the Eucharist, I'm most intimately reminded that I'm where Christ called humanity to be – within the Catholic Church. I struggle to grow my faith life, but the rosary has been the one constant that always comes through. It really has been a weapon of faith, and a life preserver to hold out to the

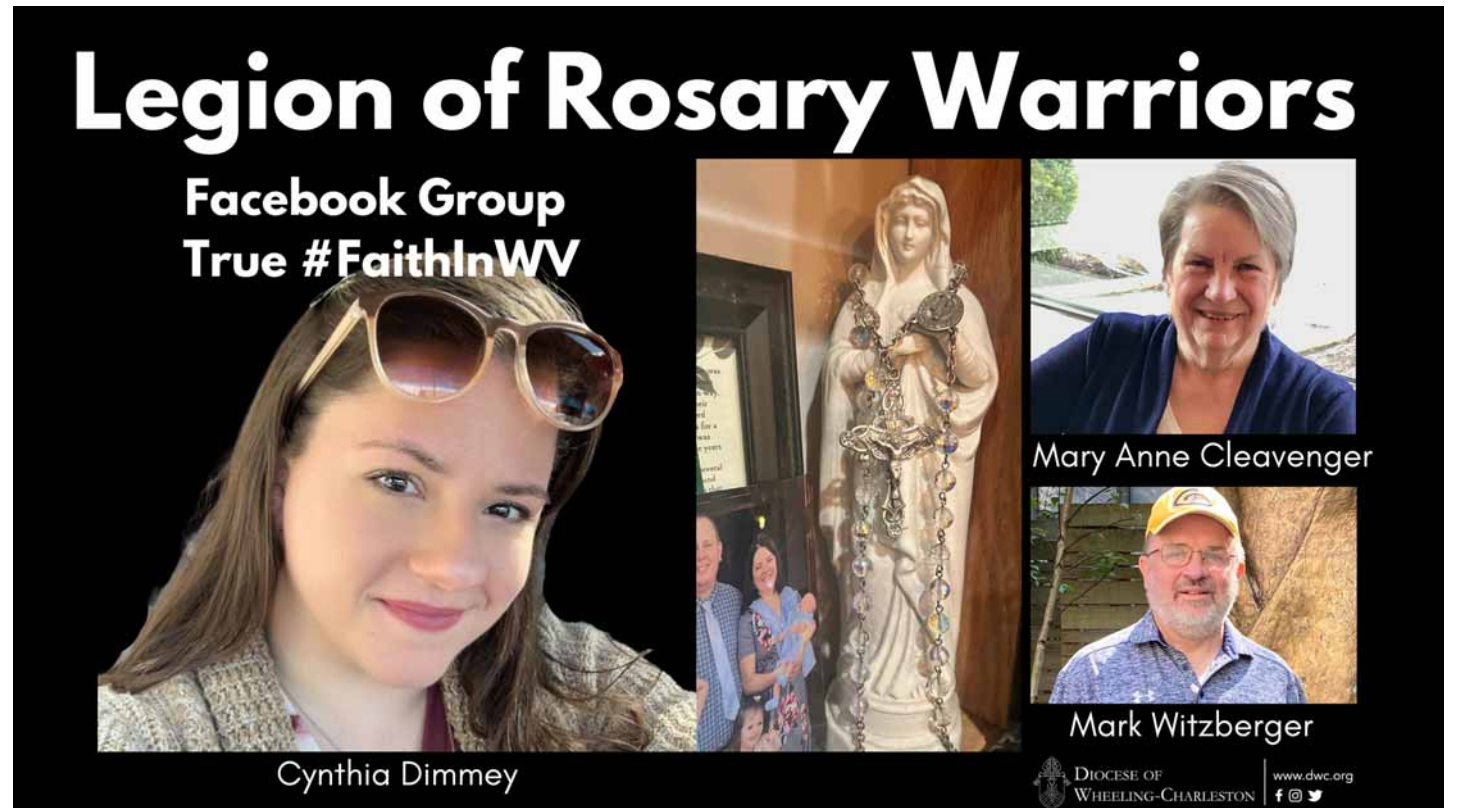


Photo Illustration by Joyce Bibey

drowning."

The Rosary became a treasured prayer for Dimmey after the birth of her first child.

"Late night nursing meant either doom scrolling, or dozing off," she said. "So, I turned to Our Lady instead. I had a bad habit of putting our baby down before she was good and asleep. I discovered that praying 5 decades of the rosary was the perfect amount of time she needed. My hands were often full holding a tiny baby and my rosary app open on my phone, so I often used my daughters fingers to keep track. To this day (now 6 years old) she loves it when you gently tickle her hands and arms while she's going to sleep."

The first post on the Legion of Rosary Warriors page was on October 2, 2021. It detailed Dimmey's prompting for the group:

"Hello all and #welcome! This all started from a post by Fr. Patrick Hyde, OP, challenging us to pray the rosary daily. I shared the post, friends responded, and it became an opportunity to create an accountability group to spread the rosary.... Please spread the rosary and invite people!"

The group remains a private group, meaning members invite their like-minded friends to join, or individuals searching Facebook for a Rosary group can find it and ask to be a member and wait for approval from the page administrators in an effort to keep the page authentic, positive, and Catholic.

Cleavenger said the page is not for

debate or disrespect that would need moderating.

Keeping the page private keeps it, "safe and sane," she said.

The Legion of Rosary Warriors page "is for real people seeking to be inspired and inspire with prayer," Cleavenger said. Life is hard enough; the page is an effort to provide comfort through prayer.

"It's not always been an easy life, but thankfully, God has stuck by me," she said. "I'm a mom of seven (aged 41 to 53). I lost (a daughter) when I was five months pregnant. She is buried with my grandfather."

Only two of her children are still active in the Catholic church. We all have "so many things to pray for," she said, noting that her intentions lovingly surround her growing family, which includes 24 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

She was raised Catholic and went to St. Joseph Catholic School in Lucinda, Pa., and Facebook allows her to stay connected with former schoolmates from Pennsylvania, people she has met in prayer groups, and those who like Witzberger and Dimmey, whom she has not even met in person but are firm believers in the power of prayer through the Rosary.

Sharing the group is sharing the "opportunity to grow in our faith," Witzberger said. "Anytime we have an opportunity to share our faith and reach out to others I think we should as we are called to do so. I may not be the strongest in praying the rosary, but I believe in its importance and

pray it a lot more often than I ever have. It's more than a repetition of words. Some people think that praying is only asking for something. But it's much more. Sometimes it's just as simple as being quiet and listening for a reply in a conversation. And I try to end every day giving thanks for something no matter how the day has gone. Not a day goes by when I am not praying or conversing with God."

Cleavenger said that staying active on the page allows her to stay focused on faith, "to reflect Jesus and His love to the people I encounter every day."

Witzberger hopes the page is a way to help others develop the habit of the Rosary and "to add weight to prayer intentions. I gain peace when praying it."

If you are interested in joining the page on Facebook, you can find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/legionofrosarywarriors>.

#FaithInWV

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

Rosary Appeal Deadline is Here

The official deadline for submissions for the One Million Rosaries for Increased Vocations in WV is 11:59:59 p.m., Oct. 7.

Nearly 1,000 individuals and groups from W.Va., all over the U.S., as well as Mexico and abroad have joined the prayer warriors in this mission for our diocese.

“As of our publication deadline we have more than 239,000 Rosaries that have been or will be said with the intention of increased vocations in WV,” said Joyce Bibey, manager of Social Media and Writing for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. “While that number is just over a quarter of a million that we are hoping for, we are still celebrating that this appeal is stirring loving prayers for WV and the Church. From here in the state to more than 8,600 miles away in the Philippines, we have friends praying for a strong future.”

Father Roberto Sanchez is one of those friends. Father Sanchez met Bibey and appeal originator Sister Martha Gomez at a Rosary group at St. Michael’s Parish in Wheeling. The priest and 22 of his

colleagues at Immaculate Conception Seminary and more than 340 students and teachers from Immaculate Conception Academy in the Diocese of Virac in Catanduanes, Philippines, are praying the holy rosary with special intentions for the priestly vocations of the diocese.

“So not only are we seeing our Catholic schools, parish religion classes, seminarians, fellow parishioners, and local rosary groups praying for increased vocations in WV, but we are also feeling the love and prayer of those literally continents away – prayer partners that we most likely will never get to thank in person,” Bibey said.

The crusade to have One Million Rosaries for Increase Vocations in WV began on the Feast of the Assumption on Aug. 15, and has run more than 50 days through the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on Oct. 7.

The final pledge number will be reported next week. Until the deadline more information, resources, and the pledge submission portal can be found at:

<https://dwc.org/onemillionrosaries//>.

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Our Lady of Peace Parish in Wheeling Invites All to Novena for Life

By Colleen Rowan

Our Lady of Peace Parish in Wheeling is inviting all to an opportunity to gather in prayer in October, Respect Life Month. For the third year, the parish is holding a nine-day Novena for Life. This year’s novena is once again being sponsored by the parish’s Knights of Columbus council and will be held from Oct. 21, for nine consecutive days, to Oct. 29.

During this month, all over the country special Masses and other prayerful events are being held, said Very Rev. Joseph Augustine, J.C.L., J.V., pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish and School.

“People organize throughout the nation to remind ourselves and others about the

need for the protection of life for the most vulnerable, especially the most defenseless — unborn children in the womb,” Father Augustine said. “Life is sacred and a gift of God that begins at conception. We have an obligation to respect and protect that life from conception to natural death. A lot of catechesis is needed to teach about this truth.”

He continued by saying that courage is needed to stand up for life as well as many prayers to change the hearts of people toward a culture of life.

“Unfortunately, we live in a culture that overwhelmingly promotes death and destruction through various media. And sadly,” he said, “most of the time this endless promo-

tion of a culture of death is all we hear everywhere.” Father Augustine said that abortion has become a political issue and that many hesitate to address it for fear of being politically one sided.

“Oftentimes, it is a great comfort to see and hear various people, even if a minority, who courageously go against this mainstream culture of death through marches, prayers, and holding various signs that promote life,” he said. “Prayer is always very powerful. Here, at OLP, we join in prayer with everyone else, especially through this Novena for Life, for greater protection of the unborn. May the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph continue to intercede for us.”

Our Lady of Peace’s annual Novena for Life was of the idea of the parish’s Knights of Columbus council as a way of contributing to the protection of life in the womb by way of prayer and sacrifice.

The novena will begin at Our Lady of Peace Church with the 5 p.m. vigil Mass on Oct. 21 with a brief novena prayer through the intercession of Our Lady immediately

following the Mass. The next nine days will include the celebration of Mass and the Novena for Life. Monday through Friday, the Masses will be at 6 p.m. followed by the novena prayer. Weekend Masses will be at 5 p.m. on Saturday; and 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. The final novena will be after the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Oct. 29.

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Synod Begins Work with Focus on Holy Spirit and Listening

By **Cindy Wooden**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis opened the work of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops asking members to meditate on ancient theological texts about the Holy Spirit, have the courage to be honest about their disagreements and focus much more on listening than on sharing their opinions.

The synodal process “is not easy, but it’s beautiful, very beautiful,” Pope Francis told some 364 other synod members and 85 non-voting experts, ecumenical delegates and facilitators the afternoon of Oct. 4 as the synod work began in the Vatican audience hall.

“A certain asceticism” is needed for the synod, the pope said. He asked forgiveness from journalists trying to cover the monthlong meeting but insisted “a certain fasting from public words” would be needed to ensure the proper spiritual atmosphere for the synod members.

And, in fact, the synod rules distributed that evening said, “In order to guarantee the freedom of expression of each and all regarding their thoughts and to ensure the serenity of the discernment in common, which is the main task entrusted to the assembly, each of the participants is bound to confidentiality and discretion regarding both their own interventions and the interventions of other participants.”

Pope Francis also repeated what he has said many times: “the synod is not a parliament” where the ideas of opposing parties will be debated and voted up or down along party lines. Neither, he said, is it “a meeting of friends” getting together to exchange opinions and try to solve problems they see around them. “The synod is a journey that the Holy Spirit makes,” he said, so constant prayer and listening are necessary to follow the path the Spirit indicates.

“The Holy Spirit triggers a deep and varied dynamism in the Christian community, the confusion of Pentecost,” when people from every nation heard the disciples speaking in their own languages, the pope said. From the ex-

perience, the Spirit creates not uniformity, but harmony.

Differences of opinion will surface, he said. “If you don’t agree with what that bishop or that nun or that lay person says, say it to their face. That’s what the synod is for. To tell the truth, not the chatter under the table.”

Pope Francis also acknowledged how people outside the synod members are offering “hypotheses about this synod — ‘But what will they do there?’ ‘The priesthood for women?’ — these are the things that are being said outside.”

But what is happening, he said, is that the universal church has gathered in Rome to pause and to listen.

“The church has stopped, as the apostles stopped after Good Friday, on that Holy Saturday,” closed in the Upper Room, he said. “But they were afraid; we are not. ... It is a pause for the whole church to listen.”

Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the synod, told the members, “Today the church is at a crossroads, and the urgent challenge, strictly speaking, is not of a theological or ecclesiological nature, but how at this moment in history the church can become a sign and instrument of God’s love for every man and woman.”

“God’s love is the medicine that can heal today’s wounded humanity, and as the church our mission is to be a sign of this love,” he said.

In discerning the best ways to do that, Cardinal Grech said, participants should remember the assembly is not “an isolated act,” but part of a process that began two years ago with local, diocesan, national and continental listening sessions.

The presence of members who are not bishops — some 70 priests, religious, lay men and women — is not meant to represent “the totality of the People of God,” he said, but to “remind us with their presence” of the whole synod process and its invitation for all Catholics to participate, sharing their experiences of things that help or hinder their sense of communion, participation and mission.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hol-

lerich, relator general of the synod, noted how the members were gathered at round tables in the Vatican audience hall rather than in the rows of the synod hall to promote conversation but also to remind them of similar experiences they had at listening sessions in their parishes and dioceses.

“Bishops who were not very active in the process but have been elected by their (bishops’) conferences,” he said, “may face challenges at the beginning. On the other hand, there are the members who are not bishops. Many among them were particularly involved in the continental stage of this synod and are called to testify their experience.”

In the synod discussions, he urged members to remember that each person, with his or her differences, is a Christian trying to follow the Lord.

“The church is the people of God, walking through history, with Christ in her midst,” Cardinal Hollerich said. “It is only normal that there is a group walking at his right, another at his left, while some run ahead and others lag behind.”

From any of those positions, he said, when a person looks at the Lord, “they cannot help but see the group that is doing the opposite: those walking on the right will see those walking on the left, those running ahead will see those lagging behind.”



CNS Photo/Lola Gomez

Pope Francis prays with participants in the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican’s Paul VI Audience Hall during the first working session of the assembly Oct. 4.

“In other words, the so-called progressives cannot look at Christ without seeing the so-called conservatives with him and vice-versa,” he

said. “Nevertheless, the important thing is not the group to which we seem to belong, but walking with Christ within his church.”

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'Laudate Deum': El planeta refleja una visión profundamente errónea de la vida y la actividad humana

Por Gina Christian, OSV News

(OSV News) — El Papa Francisco advierte que el tiempo corre en nuestra contra para abordar los peligros del cambio climático, y que tanto un cambio de paradigma como la acción práctica son críticamente necesarios para evitar los desastres que se avecinan en la naturaleza y en la sociedad humana.

El Papa publicó su nueva exhortación apostólica "Laudate Deum" ("Alaben a Dios") el 4 de octubre como continuación de su encíclica de 2015 "Laudato Si", sobre el cuidado de la casa común. La publicación de la exhortación coincidió con la fiesta de San Francisco de Asís, patrón de la ecología, cuyo famoso cántico inspiró el título de "Laudato Si". Aunque sólo tiene una quinta parte de la extensión de "Laudato Si" (a la que hace amplia referencia), el mensaje de la exhortación es aún más urgente, ya que "el mundo que nos acoge se va desmoronando y quizás acercándose a un punto de quiebre", escribió el Papa Francisco. "El cambio climático es uno de los principales desafíos a los que se enfrenta la sociedad y la comunidad mundial".

El texto reitera mensajes clave que han resonado a lo largo del papado del Papa Francisco -- entre ellos, la preocupación por los marginados, el cuidado de la creación, la ecología humana y un enfoque "sinodal" para resolver los problemas globales. Ya que "efectos del cambio climático son soportados por las personas más vulnerables", la cuestión del cambio climático está "íntimamente relacionada con la dignidad de la vida humana", dijo.

Dirigida a "todas las personas de buena voluntad", la exhortación declara que "ya no es posible dudar del origen humano... del cambio climático", citando datos de fuentes como el Grupo Intergubernamental de Expertos sobre el Cambio Climático de las Naciones Unidas y la Nacional de Admin-

istración Oceánica y Atmosférica de Estados Unidos. Aunque señaló que no toda "catástrofe concreta" se deben al cambio climático global, los seres humanos son responsables de cambios específicos que han provocado "fenómenos extremos" -- como tormentas, olas de calor e inundaciones -- "cada vez más frecuentes e intensos", dijo el Papa.

Señaló el rápido aumento de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero provocado por la actividad humana, que atrapan la radiación solar en la atmósfera terrestre y calientan el planeta. Según el Papa, la temperatura media global -- una medida que compara los cambios de la temperatura de la superficie terrestre con las medias a largo plazo para un lugar y una fecha determinados -- ha aumentado especialmente en los últimos 50 años, a un ritmo que podría acercarse al límite máximo recomendado de 1,5 grados centígrados en sólo 10 años.

Esta aceleración tiene un profundo impacto, causando cambios peligrosos en el clima y el tiempo, con efectos que se sienten en última instancia "en los ámbitos de la salud, las fuentes de trabajo, el acceso a los recursos, la vivienda, las migraciones forzadas", dijo el Papa Francisco.

Cuestionó las "resistencias y confusiones" en relación con el cambio climático, "incluso dentro de la Iglesia católica", subrayando que "una abrumadora mayoría de los científicos especializados en el clima" apoyan la correlación entre los fenómenos climáticos globales y el aumento de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero.

El Papa Francisco afirmó que el propio planeta se ha convertido en el espejo de una visión profundamente errónea de la vida y la actividad humanas. Tal "paradigma tecnocrático" (como lo describió el Papa en "Laudato Si") exalta el poder tecnológico y económico

como fuentes de realidad, bondad y verdad, prometiendo un potencial ilimitado si se desarrolla metódicamente. En los últimos años, ese paradigma ha avanzado aún más, con el objetivo de "acrecentar el poder humano más allá de lo imaginable, frente al cual la realidad no humana es un mero recurso a su servicio", dijo.

Sin embargo, "no todo aumento de poder es un progreso para la humanidad", dijo el Papa, sobre todo porque (como escribió en "Laudato Si") "podemos sostener que le falta una ética sólida, una cultura y una espiritualidad que realmente lo limiten y lo contengan en una lúcida abnegación".

Los pobres pagan el precio más alto al tiempo que infligen el menor daño al planeta, dijo el Papa Francisco, citando el Informe sobre la Brecha de Emisiones 2022 del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente, según el cual las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero per cápita de los países más ricos superan con creces las de los más pobres.

La cuestión del poder humano en sí debe ser reexaminada, y el ser humano "debe ser considerado como parte de la naturaleza", dijo el Papa, haciendo hincapié en que "todo está conectado" y "nadie se salva solo".

Lamentando la "debilidad de la política internacional" a la hora de abordar el cambio climático, el Papa Francisco se basó en su encíclica de 2020 "Fratelli Tutti" para pedir "reconfigurar el multilateralismo", para "que no dependa de las circunstancias políticas cambiantes o de los intereses de unos pocos", sino que posea una "eficacia estable" que pueda resolver "los problemas reales de la humanidad, procurando ante todo el respeto a la dignidad de las personas de manera que la ética prime por sobre las conveniencias locales o circunstanciales".

Las conferencias internacionales

sobre el clima celebradas en las últimas décadas han tenido resultados dispares, dijo el Papa Francisco, calificando algunas de "fracasos" y otras, como la COP3 (Conferencia de las Partes 3) de la ONU de 1997 en Kioto -- que pretendía reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero en un 5% para 2012 -- de notables. Aunque el objetivo de Kioto no se cumplió, la COP21 de 2015 en París marcó "un nuevo comienzo", dijo el Papa, ya que pretendía mantener el aumento de la temperatura media mundial por debajo de 2 y, eventualmente, 1,5 grados centígrados. La pandemia del COVID-19 y la guerra de Rusia en Ucrania han obstaculizado los avances en la lucha contra el calentamiento global, afirmó el Papa Francisco.

Dijo que la COP28, que se celebrará del 30 de noviembre al 12 de diciembre en Dubai, Emiratos Arabes Unidos, o bien será un punto de inflexión para una acción decisiva o "una gran decepción" que pondrá en peligro cualquier progreso realizado hasta ahora.

"Formas vinculantes de transición energética" que sean "eficientes, que sean obligatorias y que se puedan monitorear fácilmente" son esenciales, dijo el Papa Francisco, ya que "la transición que se necesita, hacia energías limpias como la eólica y la solar, abandonando los combustibles fósiles, no tiene la velocidad necesaria".

El Papa invitó a los católicos y a los de otras religiones a recordar sus "motivaciones espirituales" para hacer frente a la crisis climática, invitando "a cada uno a acompañar este camino de reconciliación con el mundo que nos alberga, y a embellecerlo con el propio aporte, porque ese empeño propio tiene que ver con la dignidad personal y con los grandes valores". La humildad es esencial en este viaje, dijo, "porque un ser humano que pretende ocupar el lugar de Dios se convierte en el peor peligro para sí mismo".

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.

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

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

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, 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.

Sacred Music Night for Eucharistic Revival Coming to St. John Church in Summersville

SUMMERSVILLE — A night of Sacred Music for the Eucharistic Revival will be held at St. John the Evangelist Church in Summersville Oct. 15 at 5 p.m. featuring the Harpa Dei Choir. The group consists of four siblings: Nikolai, Lucia, Marie-Elisée and Mirjana Gerstner. Born in Germany, they grew up in Ecuador.

All four members have as their spiritual foundation the long formation they have received in a religious community of

Catholics.

Since 2011, as part of a peace initiative, the siblings have been called to evangelization through Sacred Music. In this sense, Harpa Dei tries to collect the most beautiful songs from different traditions, in order to glorify God, and, on the other hand, to transmit to people the beauty of the Lord, which shines so eminently in Sacred Music.

Since then, their mission has taken them to many countries in the world, in-

cluding Mexico, Israel, Germany, Russia, Ecuador, Lithuania, the United States, and so on.

Harpa Dei hopes to be able to contribute to recovering and creating sensitivity towards the musical tradition of the universal church, which, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, “constitutes a treasure of inestimable value, which stands out among other artistic expressions.”

For more information, call the parish at (304) 872-2554.

Preview of History of the Catholic Faith in the Americas Conference at Priest Field Set for Oct. 17

MIDDLEWAY—Priest Field Pastoral Center in Middleway will host a preview of the History of the Catholic Faith in the Americas Conference Oct. 17 from 6:30-9 p.m.

“Members of our Catholic community in the panhandle will be offering their work during this evening preview and the full-day conference is in December,” conference organizers said.

This is a free event which will feature keynote speaker Bob O’Connor, who will discuss Priest Field and the Colonial Founding of the American Catholic Church. O’Connor is a Civil War historian, author of over two-dozen books on Civil War history, a frequent speaker and historical impersonator, and past director of Tourism in Washington County, Md.

The conference will also offer a look at St. Augustine Of Hippo with a reading of an excerpt from a sermon by this saint who was bishop of Roman North Africa.

Dr. Donald Patthoff will discuss Faith in Fiction, History, and Reality: Presence and Possession. He is a dentist, author, editor-in-chief of the “Journal of Laser Dentistry,” and co-founder of the George Washington Institute of Living Ethics.

A presentation on The Catholic

Church in America and Writing the Wizard Clip Haunting Novel will be presented by Stanley D. Williams, Ph.D. Williams is a filmmaker, author, Hollywood screenplay consultant, and a publisher of Catholic apologetic media.

The evening will also include a book signing.

The full-day History of the Catholic Faith in the Americas Conference at Priest Field Pastoral Center will be held Dec. 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The full conference is being organized by Patthoff and Williams.

For more information, call (304) 725-1435. To register and for information on the full conference in December, visit www.wizardclip.stanwilliams.com/conference.html.

Priest Field is a center for Christian life where people can walk with Jesus and experience him through personal and group retreats, authentic community, and the beauty of creek-side cedar forest in wild, wonderful West Virginia. The center is a ministry of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town.



A Newly Renovated Baptismal Font for the Cathedral

Courtesy Photo

Bishop Mark Brennan blesses the newly renovated baptismal font at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 16. Also pictured, from left, are altar server Luke Minor; Tyler Greenwood, pastoral associate; and Father Sateesh Narisetti, HGN, J.C.L., vice rector. Holding the Book of Blessings is altar server Lydia Koval.



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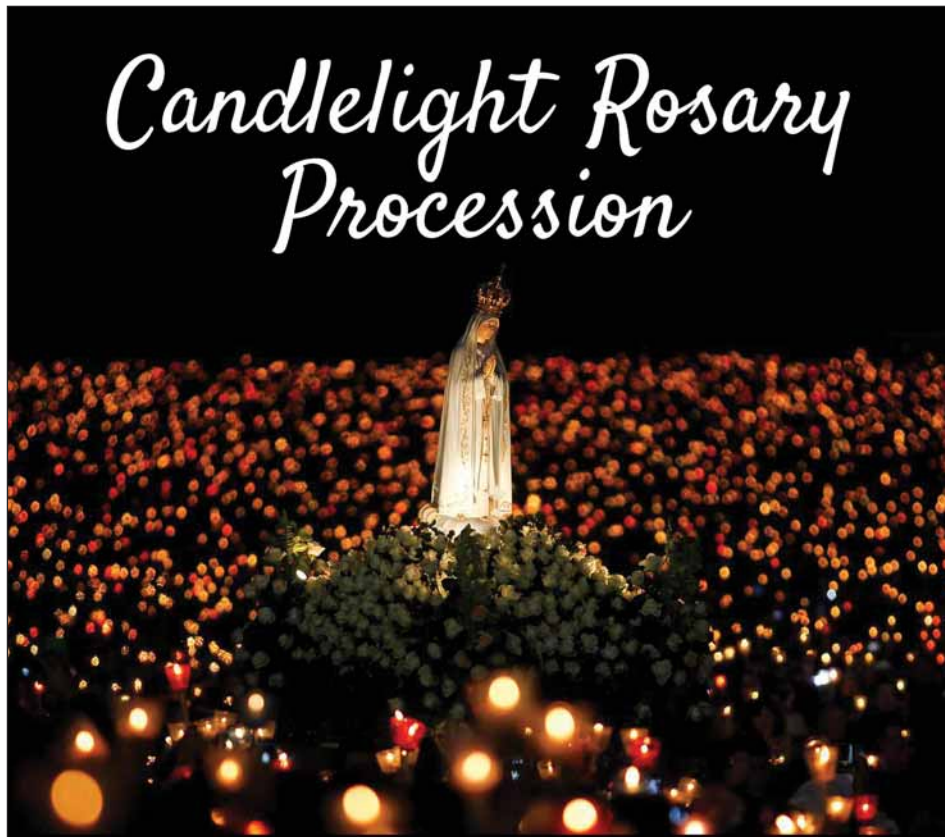
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