THE CATHOLIC Spirit

‘I Come before You as Your Brother and Shepherd,’ Bishop Evelio Tells Faithful at Installation

By Colleen Rowan

“I come before you as your brother and shepherd,” Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala said to West Virginia Catholics at his installation as the 10th bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston July 2.

Inviting them to join him in building the Church in the Mountain State, he said, “Let us continue being a Church that resembles the heart of Jesus.”

The faithful filled the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling for the Mass that afternoon as well as overflow areas at Central Catholic High School and the chancery next door where they watched a livestream of the Mass.

The Mass also aired live on EWTN with more than 150 priests concelebrating and 35 bishops and bishops-designate who were major concelebrants with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of Washington; Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, retired archbishop of Washington; Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez, retired auxiliary bishop of San Salvador; and retired Bishop Mark E. Brennan.

Joining Bishop Menjivar as principal celebrants were Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the

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Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala is seated in the cathedra (the bishop’s chair) at his installation as bishop of Wheeling-Charleston July 2 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the U.S. (left), Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore (right), and clergy join the congregation in applause.

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Notice from the Tribunal

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston hereby formally cites Mr. John Waak as the respondent in the contention of marital nullity (Case 4075-2025 Wright-Waak) introduced by his former spouse before this Tribunal. This contention has moved to Publication of the Acts, and the respondent Mr. John Waak has until July 30, 2026, to respond to the Tribunal at (304) 233-0880.

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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."

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"Today, West Virginia truly feels like 'almost heaven' as the Church gathers in communion with Christ and with one another."

—Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala

Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala kisses a crucifix placed on a red velvet pillow after he enters the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling for his installation Mass July 2 as the 10th bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Bishop Menjivar then blessed the walls of the church, the clergy, and the people inside and outside of the church with holy water.

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 1

U.S, and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore. More than 50 deacons also participated as well as the diocese's seminarians.

The celebration began outside of the cathedral as Bishop Menjivar, with clergy and faithful looking on, knocked on the doors of the church, which were opened by Bishop Brennan. Upon entering, Bishop Menjivar kissed a crucifix placed on a red velvet pillow and blessed the walls of the church, the clergy and the people inside and outside of the church with holy water.

Following the procession into the church, Archbishop Lori said that all gathered give God thanks and praise for his abundant blessings to this local Church.

"Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the faithful, zealous, and life-giving ministry of Bishop Brennan these past seven years," the archbishop said.

And Bishop Menjivar, the archbishop continued, comes as a shepherd with a big heart.

"Bishop Evelio, how happy we are and how grateful we are to God on this day of your installation," the archbishop said.

Bishop Brennan then welcomed all and introduced Archbishop Caccia

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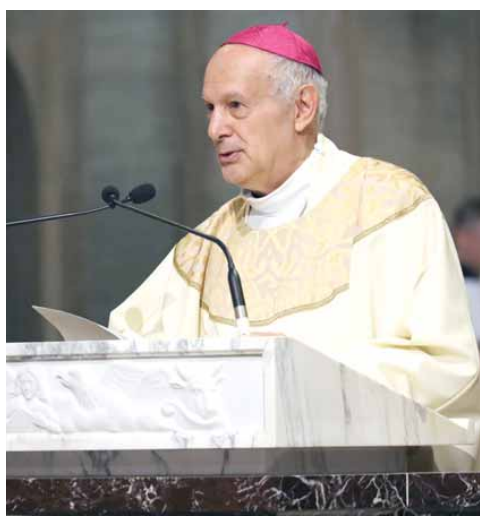
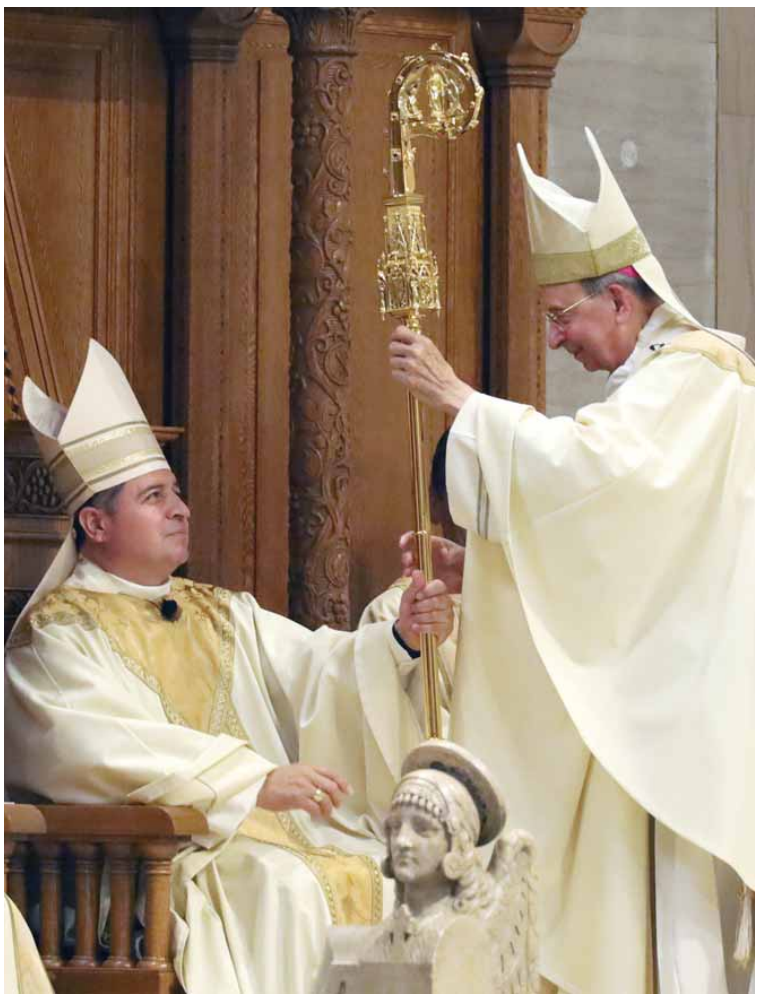


Colleen Rowan photos

From left: Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala shows Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Letter (the Papal Bull) of his appointment as bishop of Wheeling-Charleston to Bishop Mark Brennan and other bishops; Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., addresses the congregation before reading the Apostolic Mandate; and Bishop Evelio shows the Apostolic Mandate to diocesan consultors.



Colleen Rowan photo

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore (right) presents the crozier to Bishop Evelio. The crozier belonged to Bishop Patrick J. Donahue, the third bishop of Wheeling, 1894-1922, who was a champion of foreign-born laborers and their fair treatment.

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 3

who came forward to read Pope Leo XIV's apostolic letter of appointment, or Papal Bull, naming Bishop Menjivar as bishop of Wheeling-Charleston.

"It is a great joy for me to be with you today and I'm pleased, first of all, to convey to all of you the spiritual closeness, affection and blessing of Pope Leo XIV," he said. "As the Holy Father's representative to the United States, I'm honored to be with you as this local church receives a new shepherd."

He expressed his gratitude to Bishop Brennan for his years of service to the diocese and congratulated Bishop Menjivar on his appointment as bishop.

After Archbishop Caccia read the pope's decree, he presented it to Bishop Menjivar, who showed it to the diocesan consultors and the congregation.

Once he was seated in the cathedra, or bishop's chair, he was presented with the shepherd's staff. The crozier he received belonged to Bishop Patrick J. Donahue, the third bishop of Wheeling, 1894-1922, who was a champion of foreign-born laborers and their fair treatment.

Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio's family prays during the installation Mass.

Bishop Menjivar then greeted representatives of Catholic organizations and laity as well as ecumenical leaders.

Bishop Menjivar began his homily by thanking God for the gift of his family, many of whom were present at the Mass, for his faith, vocation, and migration journey "that allows me to stand before you today. In every step of this journey, the risen Lord has walked with me."

Throughout his homily, Bishop Menjivar spoke in both English and Spanish.

Noting the words of John Denver's song "Take Me Home, Country Roads," Bishop Menjivar said,

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Colleen Rowan photo

Priests, deacons, and the congregation are shown at the installation Mass.

Colleen Rowan photo

Cardinals, archbishops, and bishops are seated in the sanctuary during the installation Mass.

Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio accepts the gifts from Daniel "Griffin" Porter. With Daniel is his mother, Danielle, and his grandfather, Chuck Griffin.

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 4

"Today, West Virginia truly feels like 'almost heaven' as the Church gathers in communion with Christ and with one another."

The words of the song, he said, express something that is deeply present in every human heart — the longing for a home, the longing to belong.

"In many ways, the desire to be at home and to belong is woven into the American experience," the bishop said. "It inspired generations of people who left their homelands in search of a place they could call home and settled in these mountains and hollers building communities and beautiful and vibrant towns in Appalachia, creating a rich and unique culture marked by deep faith, hard work, and unwavering perseverance and neighborly care and support.

"Catholics made tremendous contributions in all areas to the betterment and growth of West Virginia," he continued. "They were not exempt from hardships, discrimination, and prejudice. Yet, throughout those struggles the Church and her shepherds stood beside them, walking with them, defending their God-given dignity and advocating for their rights."

Bishop Menjivar said he was especially proud and honored to carry Bishop Donahue's crozier that day.

"Bishop Donahue was, himself, an immigrant from England and became a tireless champion of working men and women, immigrants and the poor," he said. "His witness has been also the witness of Bishop Mark Brennan, whom I am honored and humbled to follow."

Faithful bishops, priests and religious sisters, he said, remind Catholics that the church is at her best when she stands with those in the margins, defending the dignity of every human person and working tirelessly for justice rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"As our nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of its independence, may we renew our commitment to these values, present in the DNA of the American people and embodied in the self-evident

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Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio celebrates Mass for his installation.

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 5

truth upon which this nation was founded — that every human person is endowed by the creator with an indisputable dignity and with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Bishop Menjivar said.

He said his prayer "is that as we walk together in ministry not merely along country roads but along the way of the Gospel" and make the diocese and state a place where everyone feels at home, feels they belong "and are loved."

This mission, he said, calls the faithful to listen to young people, honor and accompany the elderly, support families facing economic hardship and

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Clockwise from top right: Bishop Evelio waves from the cathedral's external ambo after bestowing a blessing on the people below; musicians from St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town play after the installation Mass; faithful hold a sign of welcome; and processing at the end of Mass are Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore (right) and Bishop Mark Brennan, Knights of Columbus, and Bishop Evelio.

Colleen Rowan photos

Bishop ...

Cont'd from Page 6

those caring for loved ones struggling with addiction, mental health challenges and other burdens; to stand in solidarity with workers, immigrants, and all who feel unseen, unheard, or forgotten; to listen to those who have suffered abuse; and to support parents as they strive to pass on the faith to their children.

"More than 35 years ago, the Lord brought me from a distant land — El Salvador, the land of St. Óscar Romero — to this country," said Bishop Menjivar, a former auxiliary of the Washington Archdiocese. "I could never have imagined, then, the path he was preparing for me. Yet, now, like Peter in today's Gospel (John 21:15-19) the Lord in his mercy and providence entrusts me with a people I did not know, but whom he is asking me to love as my own. In ministry and in the Church, everything begins with love."

The communion shared with one another must be born of this love and rooted in communion with the Lord, he said.

"I come before you as your brother and shepherd, not with all the answers, but with a sincere desire to love you and to serve you the best I can," Bishop Menjivar said, adding that he feels "small before the mission entrusted" to him.

He said he takes consolation in prayers being offered for him at every Mass throughout the diocese and knows that his new mission "cannot be accomplished alone."

"We must walk together. The laity, deacons, consecrated women and men, priests, parish staffs, chancery staff all play an essential role in building the Church," he said. "Because of our baptism, we are all missionary disciples and coworkers in the vineyard. I need you all. I say it sincerely, I need you all."

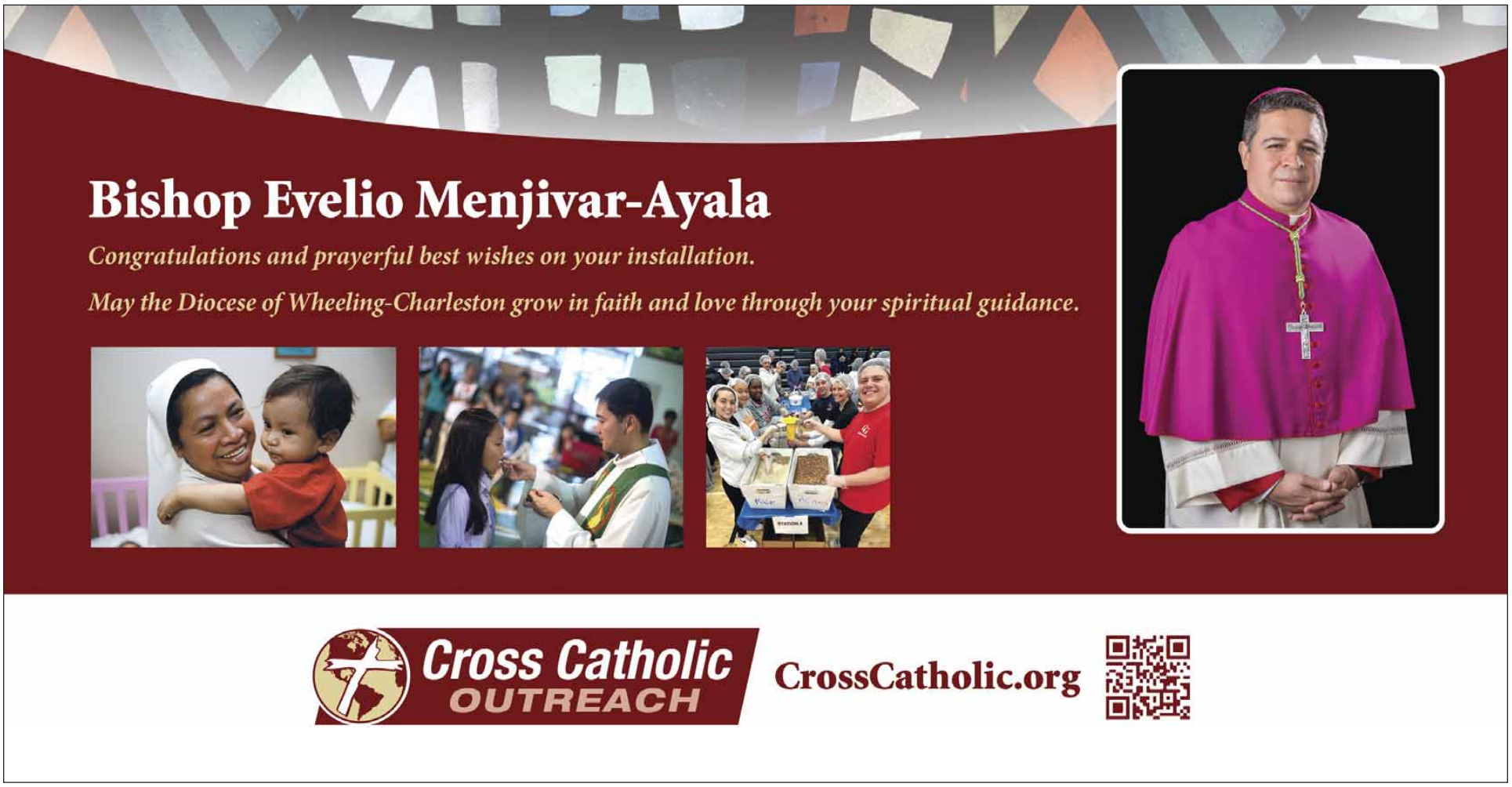
Colleen Rowan photo

Clergy, religious, and faithful fill the streets around the cathedral after Bishop Evelio's installation Mass.

Bishop Menjivar ended his homily by saying, "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on us. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and St. Joseph, patron of our diocese and protector of the Universal Church, intercede for us always. Amen."

Following the Mass, Bishop Menjivar emerged from the external ambo of the cathedral and gave a blessing to all gathered below who packed the streets around the church.

Delighting in the moment, he took a selfie with his brother bishops, priests, deacons and the people looking on, smiling from the street below.



Congratulations
Bishop Evelio Menjivar

The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese *of*
Washington

Robert Cardinal McElroy
Archbishop of Washington

together with the Auxiliary Bishops

The Most Reverend Juan Esposito
The Most Reverend Gary Studniewski
The Most Reverend Robert Boxie III

Wilton Cardinal Gregory &
Donald Cardinal Wuerl
the Archbishops Emeritus of Washington

and the

Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

congratulate

Bishop Evelio Menjivar

on his appointment as

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

IBAT CUM ILLIS

We thank you for your 22 years of dedicated service to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Washington. Know that you will always carry with you our prayers and deep admiration.

On behalf of the clergy, religious, and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Baltimore,

Archbishop William E. Lori

extends prayerful congratulations to

Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala

on the occasion of his installation as the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

Biography of Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala

Colleen Rowan photo

At his installation Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling July 2, Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala blesses the walls of the church, the clergy, and the people.

Bishop Evelio Menjivar was born August 14, 1970, in Chalatenango, El Salvador, to devoted Catholic parents Cándido Menjívar and Catalina Ayala de Menjívar. He migrated to the United States in 1990 and in 2023 became Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Washington, notably the first Salvadoran bishop in the country.

Bishop Menjivar attended St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami, Florida, receiving a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He attended the North American College in Rome and obtained a master's degree in theology from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome ("Angelicum") in 2002. He pursued licentiate studies at the Pontifical Scalabrinian Institute for Pastoral Theology for Human Mobility in Rome before his ordination. He was ordained to the priesthood for The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington on May 29, 2004.

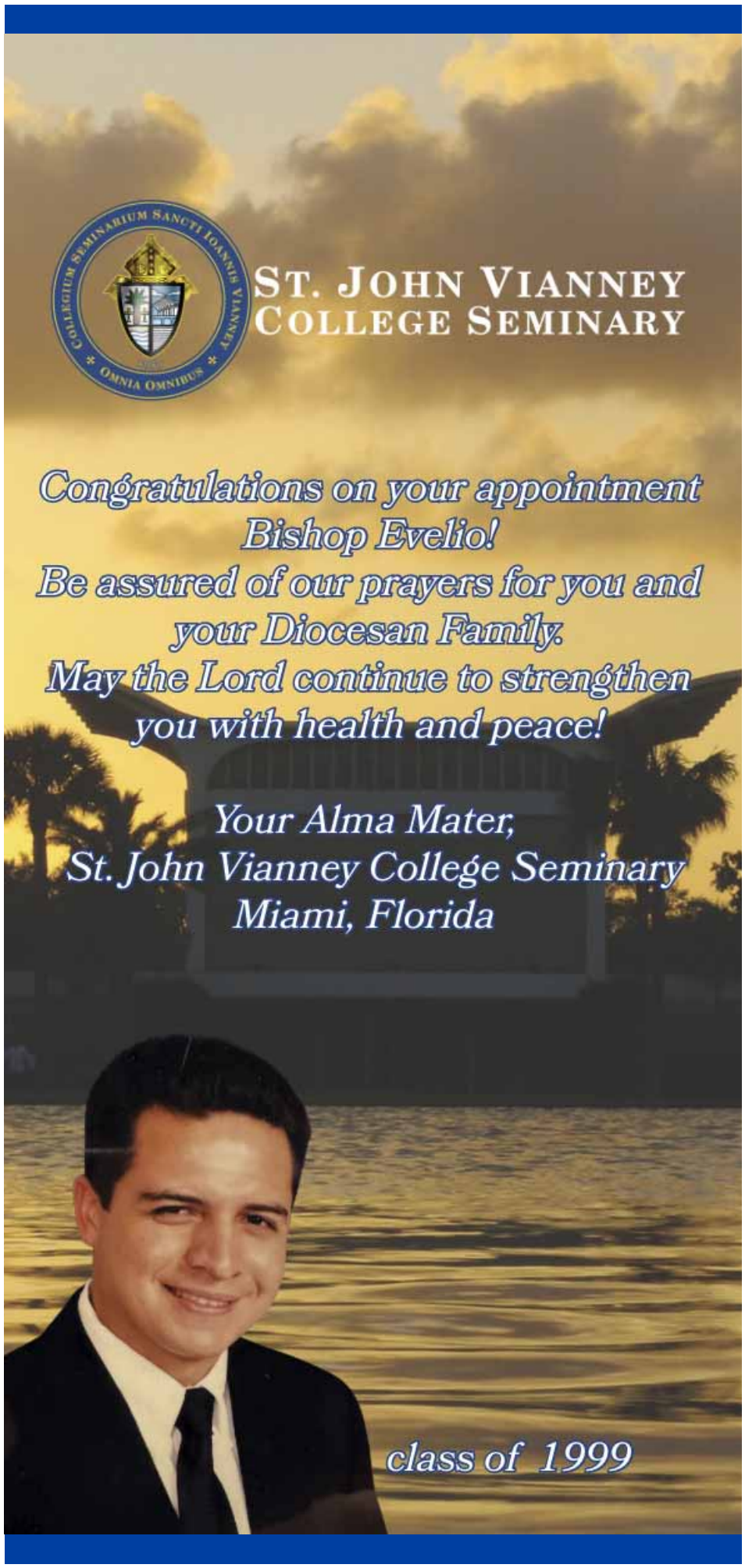
Bishop Menjivar's assignments in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington have included posts as parochial vicar at Mother Seton Catholic Church in Germantown; St. Bartholomew Catholic Church in Bethesda; the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington; and as pastor of Our Lady Queen of the Americas Catholic Church in Washington. From 2017 to 2023, he served as pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Landover Hills. He speaks English, Spanish, and Italian.

He previously served as dean of Middle Prince George's County Deanery and was also a member of the Archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board. In 2023, Cardinal Wilton Gregory named him Vicar General of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. He was a member of the Priest Personnel Board, Administrative Board, the College of Consultors, and the Priest Council. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Catholic Conference, Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services. He is also the Episcopal Moderator of the National Catholic Ecclesial Movements and Member of the USCCB Committee on Communications.

In 2024, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Georgetown University. Throughout his ministry, he has actively supported workers and continues to promote social justice for immigrants.

Bishop Menjivar was ordained as an auxiliary bishop of Washington on February 21, 2023, by Cardinal Wilton Gregory at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle.

The Holy Father Pope Leo XIV appointed Bishop Menjivar to be the 10th bishop of Wheeling-Charleston on May 1, 2026.



Coat of Arms of Most Rev. Evelio Menjivar-Ayala

Motto: "Ibat cum illis," "He walked with them." (Luke 24: 15)

The **blue field** symbolizes the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the United States. It also points to the color of the flag of El Salvador, the land where Bishop Menjivar-Ayala was born.

The **horizontal stripe in silver** (white) symbolizes the desire for peace of all nations.

The **star** symbolizes the gift of faith that leads us to Jesus Christ, the true light of the world. It also symbolizes Mary, often called the Star of the New Evangelization. Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, has been instrumental in the evangelization of the Americas, in the past as in the present.

The **Cross** represents Christ and the mystery of our redemption.

The **scallop shell and the pilgrim's staff** symbolize baptism and the journey of faith of a pilgrim Church. They also represent the personal journey of Bishop Menjivar as an immigrant in the United States.

The motto, **"Ibat cum illis,"** "He walked with them," is taken from the Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 24 verse 15. While two disciples of Jesus were walking downcast and conversing about what has happened in Jerusalem, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them. In virtue of his pastoral ministry as Auxiliary Bishop, he has received from the Lord the special call

See "Coat of Arms" on Page 12

The Episcopal Insignia

By Joyce Bibey, courtesy of FaithInWV

The ancient traditional regalia of a bishop – ring, cross, mitre, and crozier – are visual signs to inspire respect for the office of bishop and the office's authority.

What are the distinctive features of Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala's symbols of office?

The EPISCOPAL RING is a traditional sign of love and fidelity that unites the bishop with Christ and His Church. It is also a symbol of the bishop's office, worn on the fourth finger of the right hand. Bishop Evelio's ring features the Greek letters for X and P, called the Chi-Rho – the initials of Christ's name and one of the oldest sacred monograms representing devotion to Him.

The PECTORAL CROSS is a symbol of his consecration to Christ. In his formal photo Bishop Evelio's cross is a crucifix and around the Redeemer is the phrase "Ecce lignum Crucis, in quo salus mundi pependi" translated: Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the Savior of the world.

The cross he wore with his clerical suit at the May 1st press conference features a simple circular center of the cross of the Agnus Dei – Lamb of God.

The MITRE, the tall, pointed headdress worn by bishops as part of their formal liturgical vestments, is a sign of his authority in the Church. While not restricted to wearing just one design, Bishop Evelio was often seen in the Archdiocese of Washington wearing a cream-colored mitre embellished with a cross and gold accents.

The CROZIER, shepherd's staff, symbolizes that the bishop is to emulate Christ as a shepherd, guiding, protecting, reaching out to bring back, and walking along with the flock as a servant leader. Bishop Evelio has been photographed carrying a deliberately simple wooden crozier as a traditional shepherd and a gilded staff for distinctively formal moments.

Chosen Especially for the July 2 Installation

Bishop Menjivar made a significant choice for the installation. The crozier he carried and the chalice he raised are special acknowledgments to shepherds who led the diocese with compassion, love, and broadened empathy before him.

THE CROSIER

The staff of the "Immigrants' Bishop."

Bishop Patrick J. Donahue was known for fiercely defending rights of foreign - born workers, especially those who came to work in the state's coal mines, steel mills, and factories. Many of these men were Catholics from Europe. Additionally, he was influential in getting legal protections and fair treatment for these laborers who were frequently attacked by secret anti-Catholic groups.

The crozier Bishop Evelio carried was a gift presented to Bishop Patrick J. Donahue in 1919 on his episcopal silver jubilee by the clergy of the Wheeling Diocese.

Bishop Donahue was the third bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling, serving from 1894 until his death in 1922.

During his tenure in West Virginia Bishop Donahue became a champion for the struggles of the workingman and immigrants. Bishop Donahue fought against antisemitism, poor working conditions, and socialism, endearing himself to Catholics and Protestants alike.

THE CHALICE & PATEN

A native son's chalice, a symbol of unity.

During the years Bishop Bernard W. Schmitt served as the seventh bishop for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, 1989 to 2004, he led a diocesan synod "On a Journey Together" to serve as a guiding pastoral vision for the faithful in WV.

Bishop Evelio's episcopal motto shares that same spiritual path to unity – "Ibat cum illis" (He walked with them). Taken from the Gospel of Luke 24:15, which echoes the importance of listening to, walking with, and being empathetic to all, moreover, it reflects Bishop Evelio's own journey that has brought him to WV.

It is Bishop Schmitt that holds the distinction of being the only American bishop born in Wheeling.

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Coat of Arms ...

Cont'd from Page 11

to go out to the peripheries to encounter those who walk without hope, and to walk with them in the journey of faith that leads to a personal encounter with the Risen Lord. As it happened with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, this journey must open our hearts to the virtue of hospitality which finds its maximum expression at the celebration of the Eucharist and when we welcome the strangers amongst us.

Designed by Bishop Menjivar, with the assistance of Reverend George Stuart and Georgina Wilkinson.

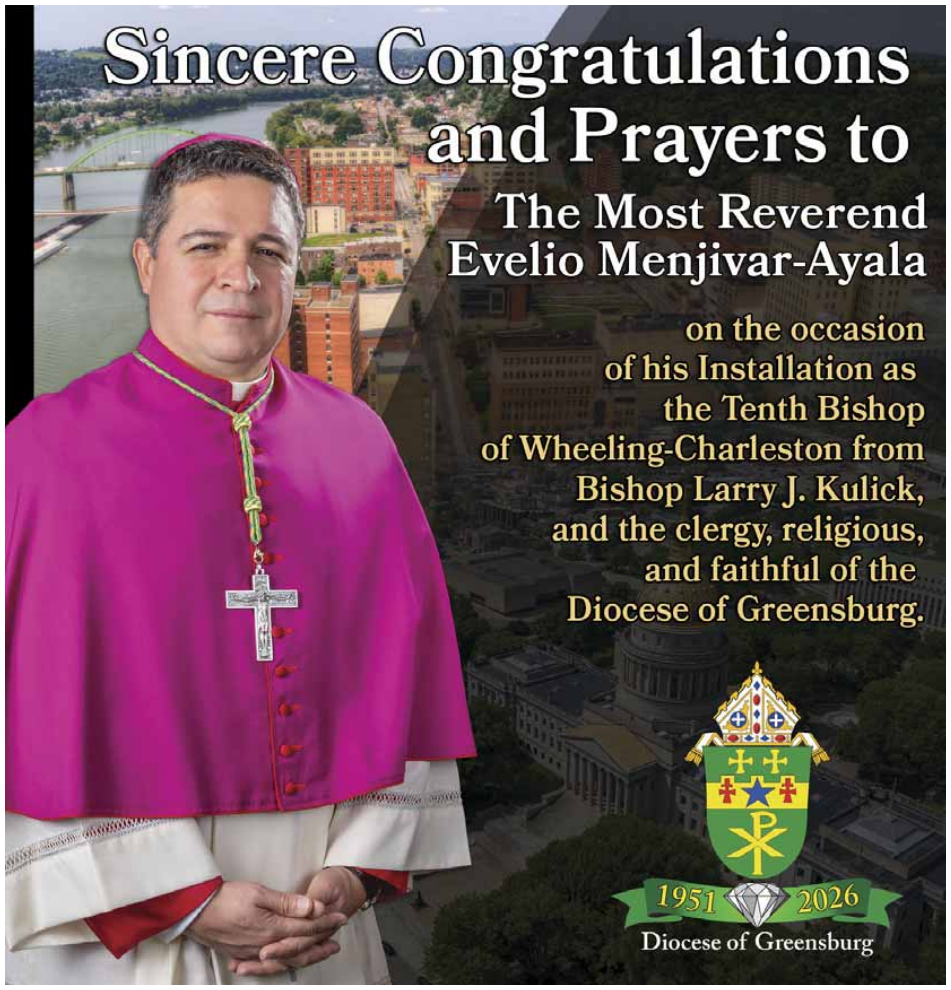
In the United States, most Episcopal Sees now show a shield containing the arms of the See, and the prelate side-by-side, in what is called impalement (shown on Page 11); which means that the shield is divided by a line down the center with the arms of the Diocese on the dexter side and the arms of the Ordinary on the sinister side. Besides this shield, an Ordinary uses for personal and private letters a seal with his own arms alone, and a seal with the arms of the diocese under a mitre for chancery documents.

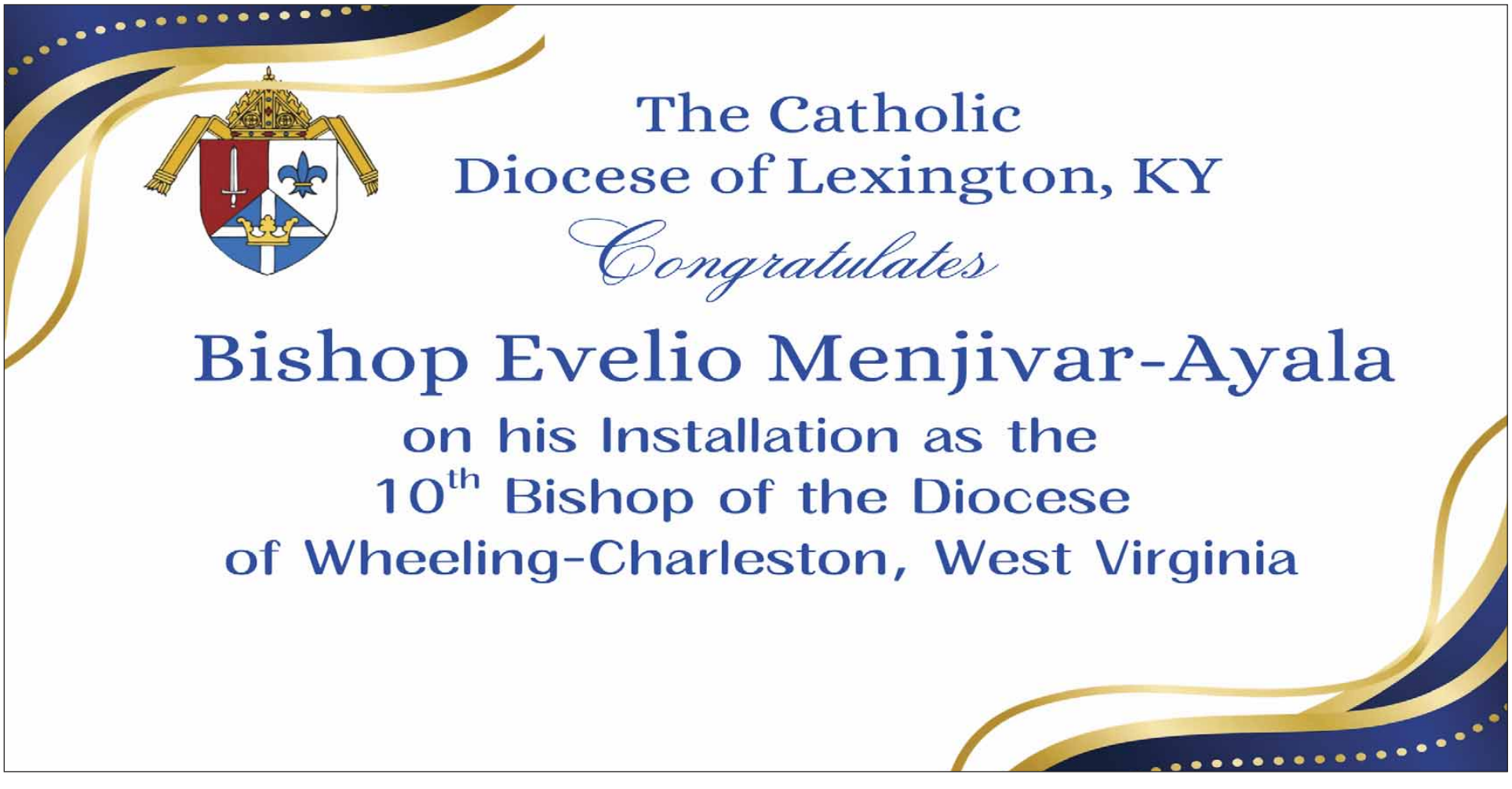
Chosen ...

Cont'd from Page 11

Bishop Schmitt was dedicated to the growth and development of Catholic parochial schools. He emphasized that parents are the primary educators of their children and that church schools serve as the ultimate support system for families. Additionally, he was a respected voice for interfaith harmony, focusing heavily on fostering open dialogue and collaboration between different religious denominations throughout West Virginia.

He was an auxiliary bishop for the diocese from May 31, 1988 – March 30, 1989. Upon his retirement he continued to serve the people of the Mountain State as a bishop emeritus. He died in 2011. (*Courtesy photos on Page 11.*)





MOST REVEREND MICHAEL F. BURBIDGE
MOST REVEREND PAUL S. LOVERDE
and the CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS and LAY FAITHFUL
in the DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

EXTEND CONGRATULATIONS

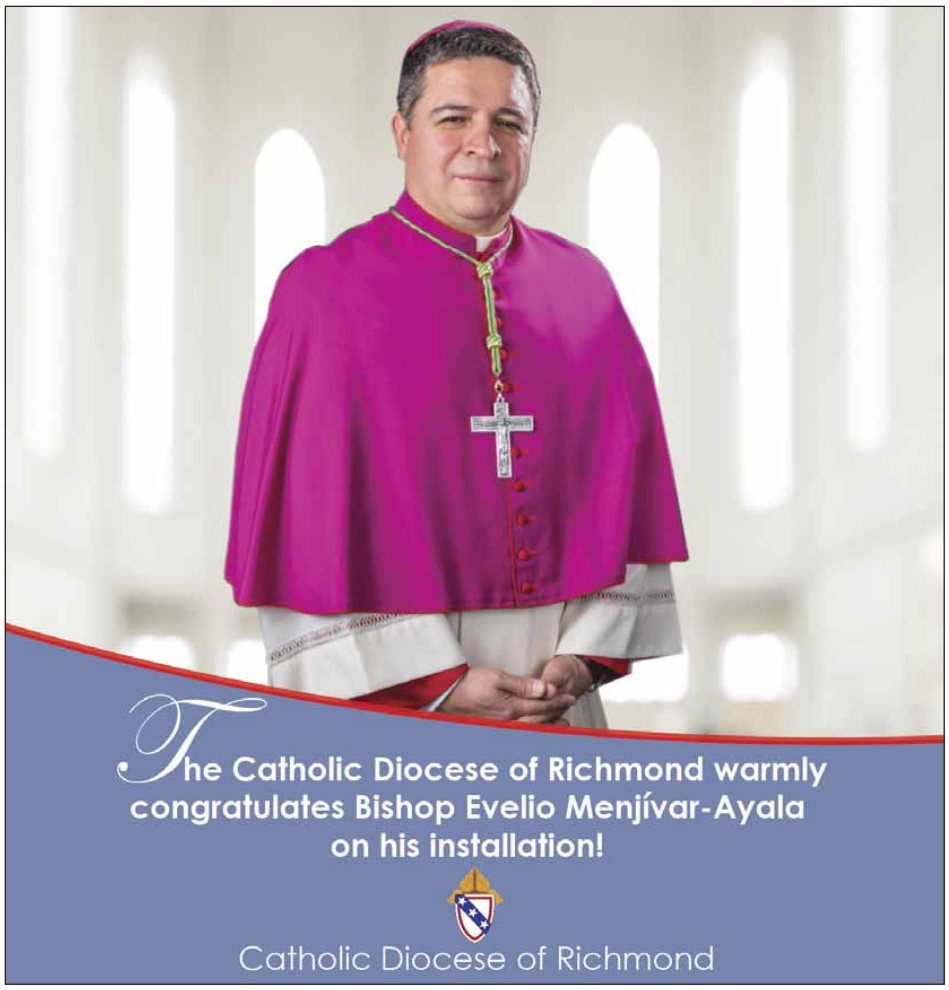
and

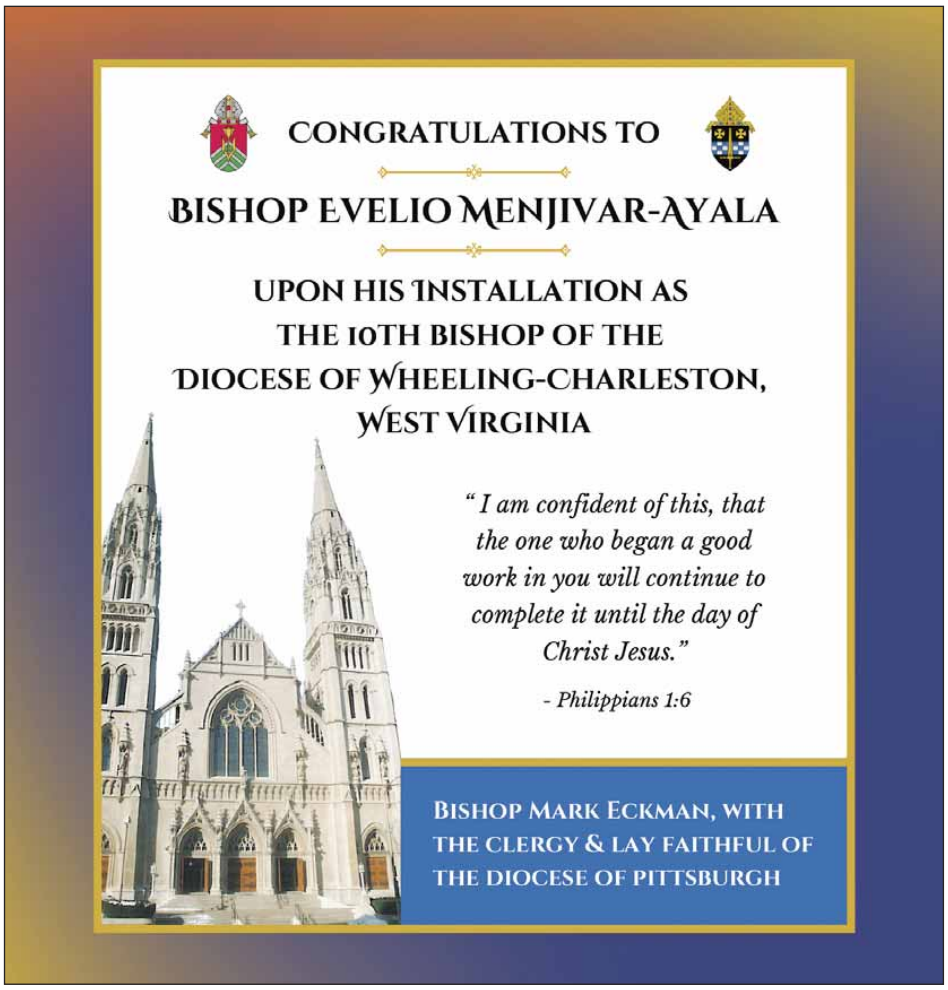
PRAYERFUL BEST WISHES

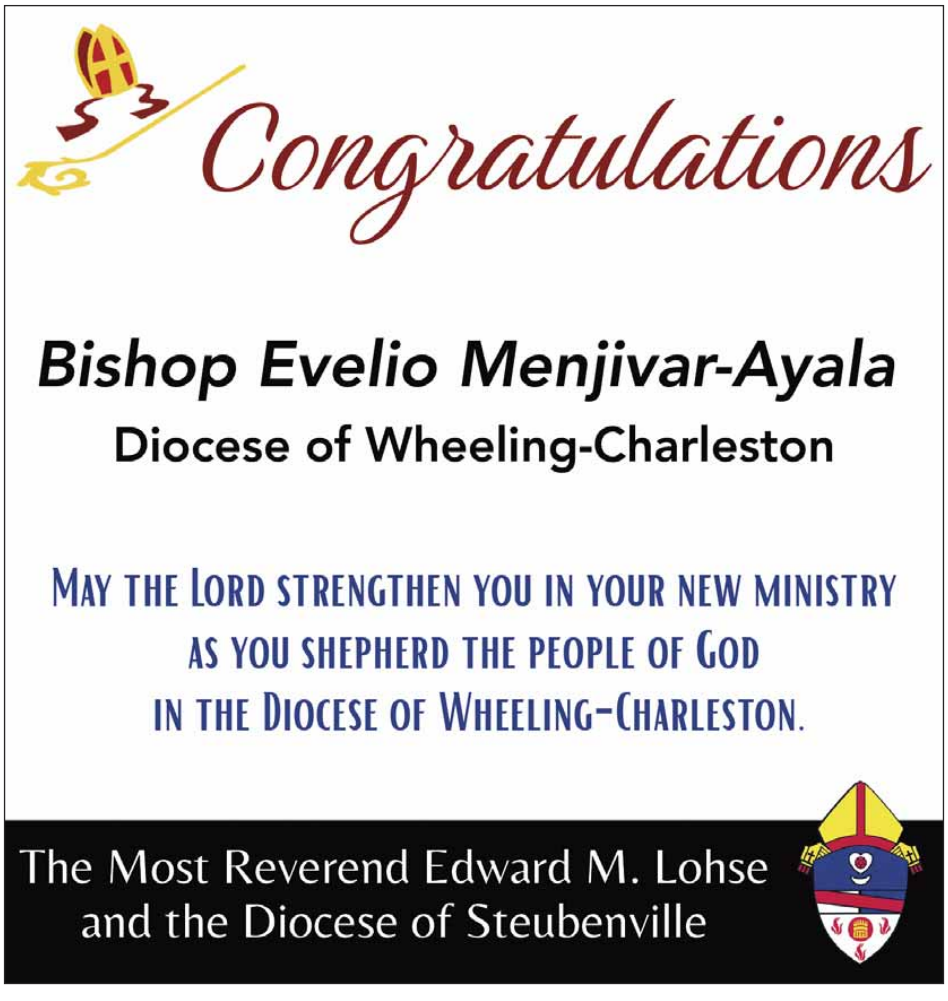
to

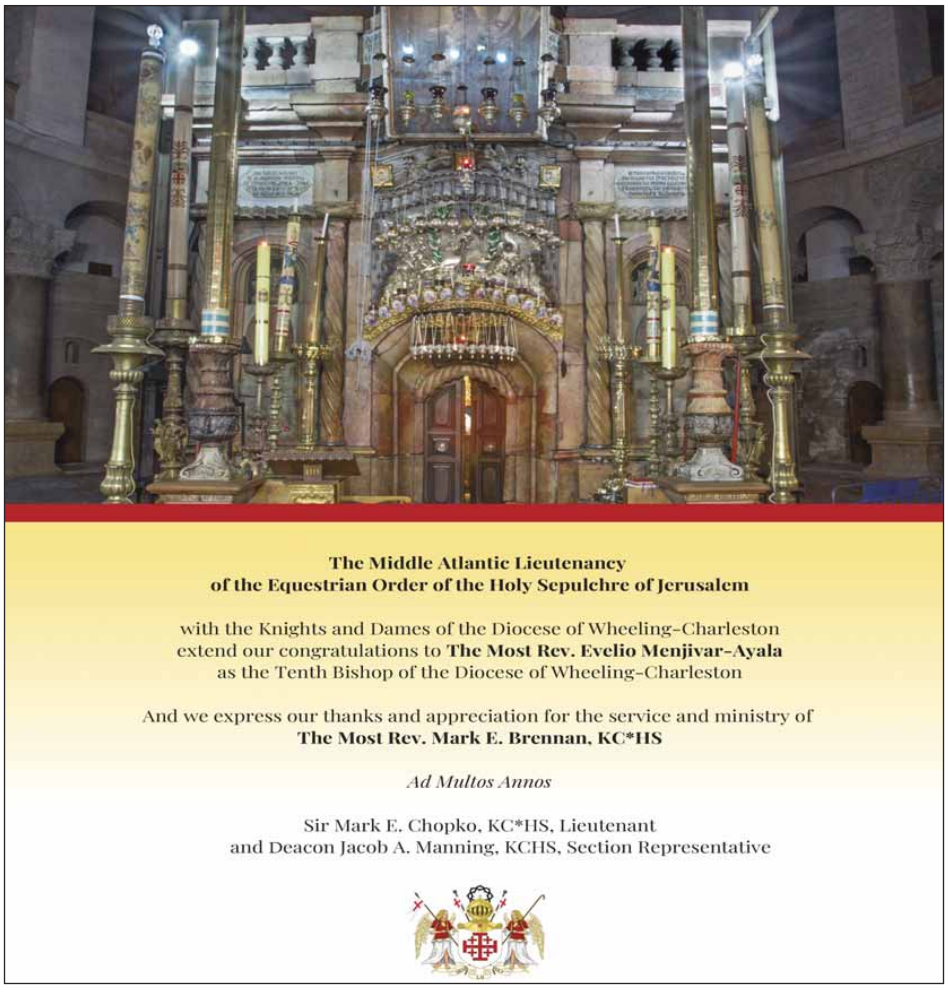
MOST REVEREND EVELIO MENJIVAR-AYALA

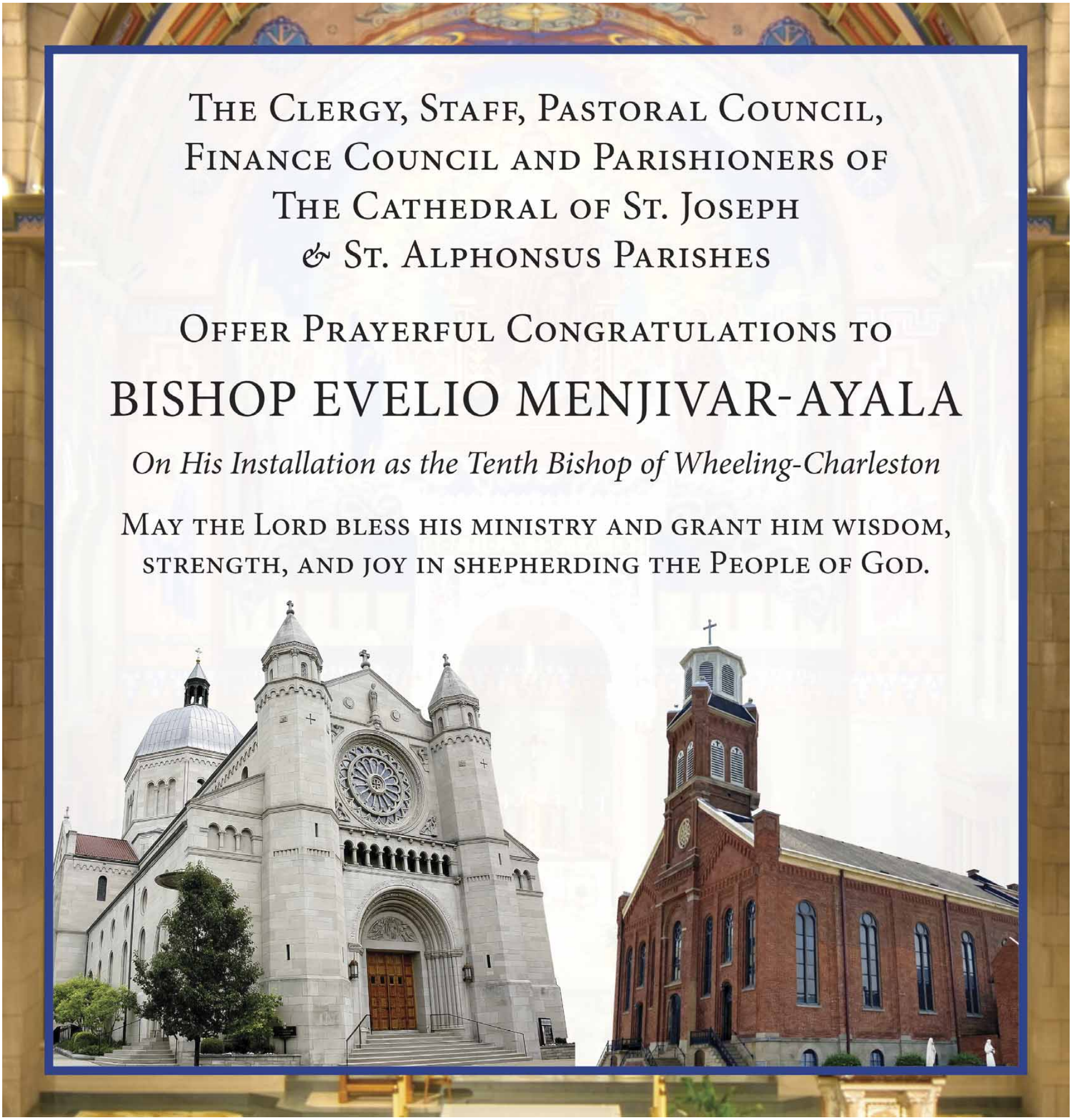
ON HIS APPOINTMENT
as the Tenth
BISHOP
of the
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON


The Catholic Diocese of Richmond warmly
congratulates Bishop Evelio Menjívar-Ayala
on his installation!
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

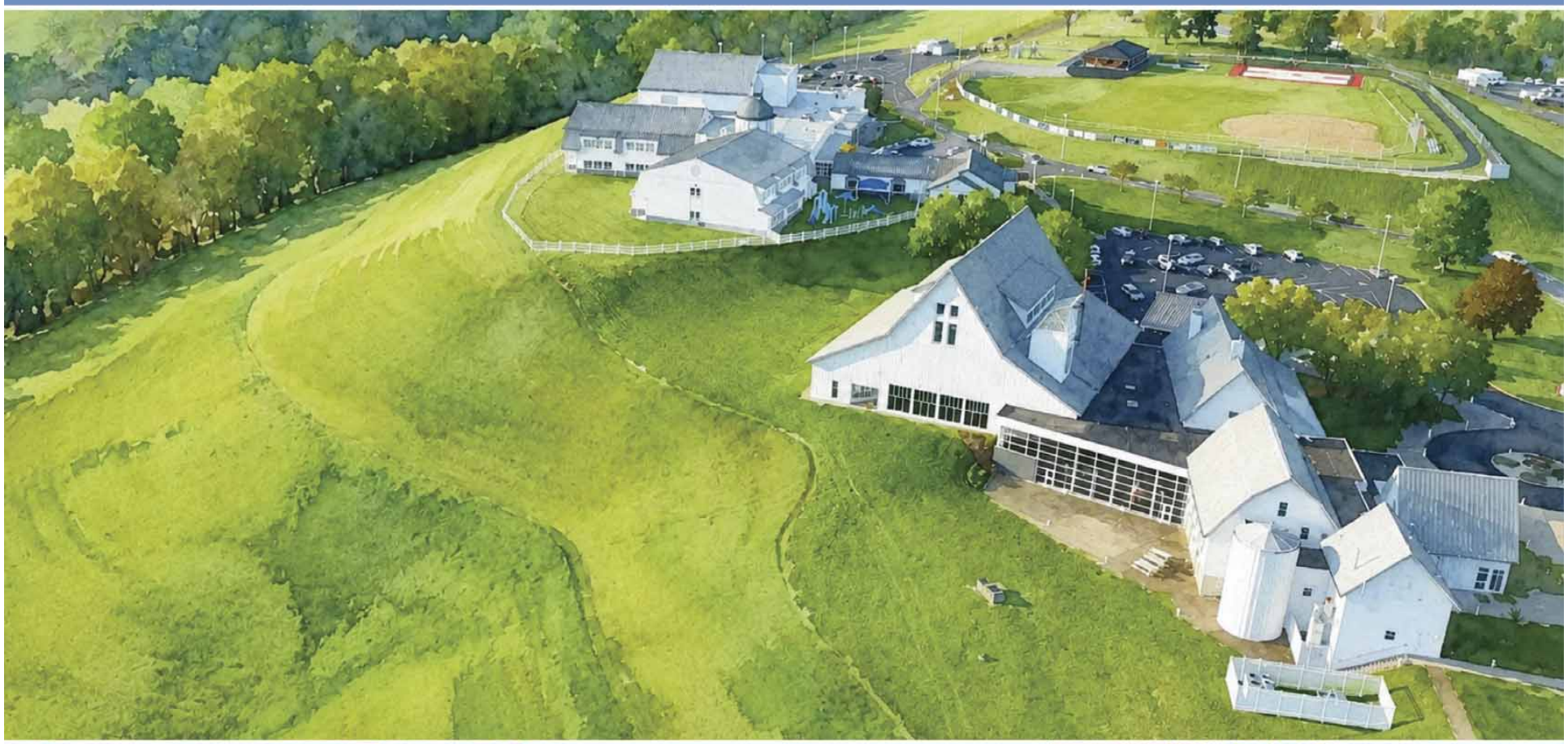

CONGRATULATIONS TO
BISHOP EVELIO MENJIVAR-AYALA
UPON HIS INSTALLATION AS
THE 10TH BISHOP OF THE
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON,
WEST VIRGINIA
"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."
- Philippians 1:6
BISHOP MARK ECKMAN, WITH
THE CLERGY & LAY FAITHFUL OF
THE DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH


Congratulations
Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
MAY THE LORD STRENGTHEN YOU IN YOUR NEW MINISTRY
AS YOU SHEPHERD THE PEOPLE OF GOD
IN THE DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON.
The Most Reverend Edward M. Lohse
and the Diocese of Steubenville

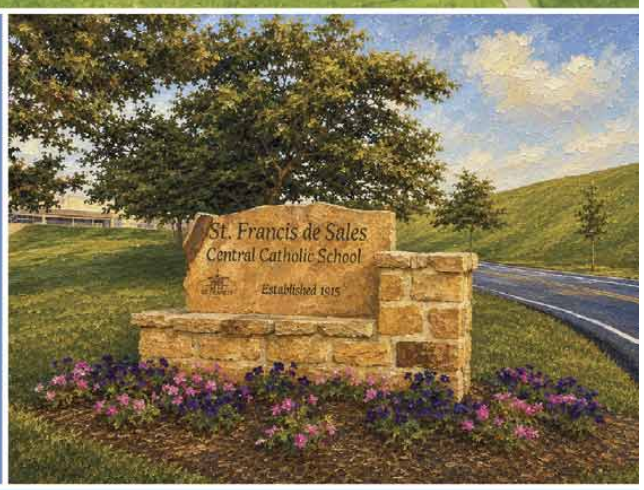

The Middle Atlantic Lieutenancy
of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem
with the Knights and Dames of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
extend our congratulations to The Most Rev. Evelio Menjivar-Ayala
as the Tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
And we express our thanks and appreciation for the service and ministry of
The Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, KC*HS
Ad Multos Annos
Sir Mark E. Chopko, KC*HS, Lieutenant
and Deacon Jacob A. Manning, KCHS, Section Representative


The Clergy, Staff, Pastoral Council,
Finance Council and Parishioners of
The Cathedral of St. Joseph
& St. Alphonsus Parishes
Offer Prayerful Congratulations to
BISHOP EVELIO MENJIVAR-AYALA
On His Installation as the Tenth Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston
May the Lord bless his ministry and grant him wisdom,
strength, and joy in shepherding the People of God.

Welcome, Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala!
Your flock at Guthrie Lane welcomes you as the Tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.
We look forward to walking together with you in faith, hope, and service.



"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."
Matthew 5:14



St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church &
St. Francis de Sales Central Catholic School
in Morgantown

Coverage continues in Part 2 of
The Catholic Spirit's
special issue on the Installation of
Most Rev. Evelio Menjivar-Ayala
as the 10th Bishop of the
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston