THE CATHOLIC Spirit

Bishop Menjívar Offers Prayer on 25th Anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

Click here for video

Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio Menjívar offers a prayer for peace at Wheeling's observance of the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa. City and religious leaders are also pictured.

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—On the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Bishop Evelio Menjívar joined religious leaders and Wheeling city officials in prayer at Wheeling's Heritage Port on the Ohio River. The ceremony gathered area residents in solemn remembrance of the attacks which took the lives of almost 3,000 people in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa.

Above Heritage Port's entrance was a large American Flag hoisted on Ladder 6 of the Wheeling Fire Department.

Sept. 11, 2001, was "the day that changed our nation forever," said Wheeling Mayor Denny Magruder, who is also a member of St. Michael Parish in Wheeling. "We continue to remember the nearly 3,000 innocent lives that were lost."

Six religious leaders participated, each offering a specific prayer during the ceremony. Bishop Menjívar offered a Prayer for Peace.

"Grant us peace, your most gracious gift, oh

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For National Migration Week, Bishops Urge Policy That Upholds 'God-Given Human Dignity'

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — In a statement to mark National Migration Week Sept. 21-27, Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, urged U.S. officials and lawmakers to enact policy that upholds the "God-given human dignity" of migrants and prevents the separation of families.

Bishop Cahill, who currently leads the Diocese of Victoria, Texas, has been named by Pope Leo XIV as the new bishop of Joliet, Illinois, Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States, announced Sept. 17.

The bishop's statement for National Migration Week was issued Sept. 16, ahead of the observance, which culminates with the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

"Our Church in this country and beyond has a long, inspiring history of caring for migrant and refugee children — from the days of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini and her sisters sheltering many orphaned immigrant children when few others looked their way to today's diocesan charities providing them and their families with vital support," Bishop Cahill said.

Bishop Cahill added, "We owe much gratitude to the law enforcement officers, social workers, pastoral staff, and caregivers who dedicate themselves to their safety and well-being."

"As we see protections for this population being undermined in various ways, including prolonged stays in detention and decreased access to legal representation, we urge governments and communities to ensure a high level of care rooted in their God-given human dignity," he said. "This requires promoting family unity and reunification whenever possible."

In a news release with Bishop Cahill's statement, the USCCB acknowledged "heightened social tensions regarding immigration" and invited Catholics across the country "to reflect on how our faith is calling us to respond to this most vulnerable group within the context of migration."

"Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, and organizations nationwide are encouraged to mark this observance with prayer, educational programs, pastoral outreach and support for migration-related ministries," the USCCB said.

Previously, in a video message for the USCCB's Committee on Migration's "You Are Not Alone" campaign, Bishop Cahill said, "Human dignity does not depend on immigration status."

"It is given by God and cannot be taken away," he said in the video posted by USCCB. "In this moment, many immigrant families living in our communities are grappling with real fear and uncertainty, worrying about their children, their future, and whether they will be able to remain together," he said, referring to the fear families are experiencing over raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

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

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

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

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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Anniversary ...

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eternal source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth. Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace and its advocate among the nations," the bishop prayed. "May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship among inhabitants of all lands and may the love of your name hallow every home and every heart. May the day come soon when violence shall be no more, when evil shall give way to goodness, when war shall be forgotten, and at last we shall live in freedom. May this day come soon in our own day and our own lives with your help, Almighty God, and through our hard work. Amen."

Prayers were also offered by Rev. Kenneth Hardway, pastor of First Christian Church, for the military; Rev. Devin Ames, pastor of First English Lutheran Church, for first responders; Rev. Joshua Saxe, pastor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, for the nation; and the Rev. Erica Hartley, pastor of Vance Memorial Presbyterian Church, for victims of terror and defenders of freedom. Rabbi Joshua Lief of Temple Shalom was the moderator.

The Wheeling Fire and Police Departments' Honor Guard presented the colors at the ceremony and the National Anthem was played by members of the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra.

Lou Vargo, emergency management liaison for the Wheeling Fire and Police Departments who is also a member of St. Michael's, recalled the horrific events of the attacks and introduced local first responders as they came forward to lay wreaths in memory of those who were killed.

At 10:28 a.m. at the North Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed killing 343 members of the Fire Department of New York. Wheeling Fire Chief Jim Blazier came forward to place a red wreath in memory of the men and women of the FDNY who made the ultimate sacrifice that day.

The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed at 9:59 a.m. killing 23 members of the New York Police Department. Wheeling Police Chief Shawn Schwertfeger presented a blue wreath in memory of the men and women of the NYPD who gave their lives that day.

At 9:37 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the west side of the Pentagon. Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft placed a blue and white wreath in memory of the 37 members of the Port Authority Police Department in New York and first responders at the Pentagon who gave their lives.

Vargo then spoke of United Airlines Flight 93 whose passengers fought back against the terrorists which ultimately led to the plane crashing at 10:03 a.m. in a field in Shanksville, 80 miles from Pittsburgh.

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Colleen Rowan photo

Bishop Evelio Menjívar, fifth from left, stands with Wheeling's city and religious leaders during the playing of the National Anthem at Heritage Port for the city's observance of the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Colleen Rowan photos

Above: Residents gather at Heritage Port for Wheeling's observance of the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Right: The Wheeling Fire and Police Departments' Honor Guard presents the colors at the ceremony.

A Statement from Bishop Menjívar for the 25th Anniversary of September 11, 2001

Friday, September 11, 2026

Twenty-five years ago, our nation was shaken by acts of terror that claimed thousands of innocent lives and left countless families and communities grieving. Today, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston joins people throughout our country in remembering the victims, praying for those who mourn, and rejecting unequivocally every form of terrorism and violence. Every human life possesses immeasurable dignity before God.

This anniversary is also an opportunity to remember the unity that emerged amid tragedy. First responders, neighbors, volunteers, and people of every faith and background stood together in compassion and courage. We give thanks for all who worked in the days, months, and years afterward to rescue, recover, rebuild, and care for those whose lives had been changed forever.

With particular gratitude, we honor the men and women of our armed forces, past and present, who have served and sacrificed to protect our nation and seek greater security. We remember those who gave their lives, those who returned wounded in body or spirit, and the families who carried the burden of their service. We also express our deep appreciation to emergency personnel, construction and recovery workers, health-care professionals, chaplains, counselors, and countless ordinary citizens whose perseverance helped communities heal. We thank especially, those West Virginians who produced and delivered the vital materials used in the rebuilding efforts. Our steelworkers, miners, and laborers.

As we remember, we must not allow sorrow to become hatred. Healing requires truth, justice, compassion, and a renewed commitment to solidarity. May we resist division, reject prejudice, and work together for a society where every person is treated with dignity and where peace can take root.

On this solemn anniversary, I invite the faithful of West Virginia and all people of good will to pray for the victims and their families, for our military and first responders, and for all who continue to carry the wounds of that day. May Almighty God console those who mourn, strengthen those who serve, and guide our nation toward unity, healing, and peace.

+Evelio Menjivar

Most Rev. Evelio Menjívar
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Colleen Rowan photo

Above Heritage Port's entrance in Wheeling, a large American Flag flies on Ladder 6 of the Wheeling Fire Department for the city's observance of the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pa.

Anniversary ...

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"The crash was due to the heroic efforts of these passengers that took over the highjackers, saving countless lives," Vargo said.

Magruder then placed a white wreath in memory of the 44 passengers of Flight 93 who gave their lives to protect others and for all of the 2,977 victims of the terrorist attacks.

BLUE MASS

FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIRST RESPONDERS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026
10:30 AM

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOSEPH
1300 Eoff Street, Wheeling, West Virginia

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan
Bishop Emeritus of Wheeling-Charleston
Celebrant & Homilist

A reception will follow.
All are welcome.

Knights of Columbus
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THE Cathedral of St. Joseph

Deacon Paul Lim Appointed Director of Liturgy & Worship for the Diocese

Bishop Evelio Menjívar announced that Deacon Paul Lim has been appointed Director of Liturgy & Worship for the Diocese. In this role, he will support the Bishop in the liturgical life of the Diocese and advise clergy and laity in liturgical matters.

This appointment will be in addition to Deacon Lim's current position as Vice President for Mission Integration at WVU Medine Wheeling Hospital, where he helps advance the hospital's Catholic mission and values while providing executive oversight for the Pastoral Care, Care Management, and Social Work services.

"Deacon Paul Lim was an integral part of the Mass of Installation for me in July," Bishop Menjívar said. "During the Mass, his love for the Church and its liturgy were evident. Since then, I have come to know him as a man with a great passion for serving the people of God. I am thankful to Doug Harrison and the staff at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital for allowing him to share his gifts with the faithful of our Diocese."

Deacon Paul Lim

The important role of Director of Liturgy ensures the proper preparation of Diocesan liturgies. Deacon Lim will also oversee the liturgical formation of priests, deacons, and laity and collaborate with the Bishop in developing liturgical policies and educational guidelines relative to worship and the celebration of the sacraments. As director, he will also be responsible for ensuring that the public prayer space is a place of welcome and witness as family, friends, neighbors, and guests gather.

Deacon Lim was ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 2020. For the past six years, he was assigned to St. Raphael the Archangel Parish (in Carnegie, Pa. Green Tree, Pa., and Scott, Pa.) where he assisted in the celebration of the liturgy and coordinated the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). He has also served on the Diocesan Commission for Ecumenical & Interfaith Concerns and on the Post-Ordination and Continuing Education Committee.

A licensed social worker, Deacon Lim has spent most of his professional career working in hospital settings. He holds an MBA from Chatham University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, with a minor in Theology, from Saint Meinrad College, where he continues to serve as Class Chairman for the Alumni Annual Giving Program.

In his new role, Deacon Lim hopes to show the deep connection between the Church's liturgy and its works of charity—recognizing the inseparable relationship between the love of God and love of neighbor that every deacon is called to embody in his vocation. "I am honored that Bishop Evelio would ask me to serve the Church in West Virginia in this way," Deacon Lim said. "Because the liturgy is the heart of the Church and must always lead us to a greater love and service of our neighbor."

Deacon Lim and his wife have four children.

Clarksburg Procession with Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to be Led by Bishop Menjívar

A procession and Spanish Fiesta will be held in Clarksburg on Sunday, Oct. 11, following the 11 a.m. bilingual Mass celebrated by Bishop Evelio Menjívar at Immaculate Conception Parish.

The Hispanic community will hold a procession featuring the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, traveling from the church along Pike Street to Jackson Square. Bishop Menjívar will lead the procession, and everyone is invited to participate.

The "Fiesta Hispana" festival will take place at Jackson Square from 1-6 p.m. This event is organized by the local civic association "Conexión Hispana."

"Join us at Fiesta Hispana to enjoy food, music, dancing, and vendor stalls," parish officials said.

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Monthly Mass in Spanish Begins at Cathedral

Mass in Spanish has begun at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling and will be celebrated on the second Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Bishop Evelio Menjívar is pictured with the faithful after celebrating the Mass Sept. 12. Courtesy photo

Who is My Neighbor?

Session 5 – Wednesday, September 30 6:30 -8:00 p.m.
St. Michael School Cafeteria, 1225 National Rd.

A Gathering and a Conversation:
Reforming the Immigration System in the United States

We will gather to listen to recent immigrants and refugees to the U.S. and hear their stories. Then, following a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Immigration Laws and Procedures as they now stand, we will hear each other's voices and ideas concerning the call to modify or change the immigration system to mirror the values expressed in Universal Social Teaching.

(for more information—Louis Volpe volpefamwheeling@gmail.com or Dave Barnett davebarnett2653@comcast.net

Vatican Document Affirms Interreligious Dialogue as Essential to 'Journey of Hope' for Humanity

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — A new Vatican document affirms the Second Vatican Council's landmark teaching on the Church's relationship with the Jewish people and those of other faiths, while inviting humanity to enter upon a common "journey of hope."

That journey requires "courage" and "a genuine shift in mindset" to seek "peaceful coexistence" amid "unprecedented challenges," including conflicts, persecution, the weaponization of religion, secularization and polarization, said the document.

And rather than looking to found "one great world religion," authentic interreligious dialogue aims to build "a fraternal society capable of accepting differences," said the text.

On Sept. 16, the Vatican released "A Journey of Hope: Sixty Years of Interreligious Dialogue and Fraternity in the Light of the Conciliar Declaration 'Nostra Aetate.'"

The 8,600-word note was the result of a collaboration among the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity — which also oversees religious relations with Judaism — and the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue.

Pope Leo XIV had granted approval of the text on June 22, with official publication taking place Sept. 16.

The five-part "Journey of Hope" began by retracing the "essential stages" in the Church's interreligious dialogue since the 1965 promulgation of "Nostra Aetate," including the contributions of Pope Leo XIV and his four predecessors.

The note then examined the "visible" and "silent" fruits of "Nostra Aetate," as well as the "persistent resistance and misunderstandings" that surround the conciliar document.

In their note, the three dicasteries called for a renewed "pedagogy of dialogue," one that puts into practice an informed encounter between Catholic and those of other beliefs.

A 'profound change' in response to the Shoah

The note recapped the development and promulgation of "Nostra Aetate," which "marked a profound change" in how the Church both understood and expressed its relationship with those of other faiths.

The dicasteries said "Nostra Aetate" aligned with another conciliar document, "Dignitatis Humanae," which declared religious freedom a human right.

Specifically, said the note, "Nostra Aetate" was conceived as the Church's response to the Shoah, the preferred Hebrew term for the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews from 1933-1945 by the German Nazi regime, its allies and collaborators.

The note recalled a pivotal meeting between St. John XXIII and French academic Jules Isaac, who lost his wife, daughter and son-in-law at Auschwitz, and who had published a study of the Church's long-running "teaching of contempt" regarding Judaism and Jews.

That encounter, dated by scholars to June 13, 1960, is considered a major catalyst for the drafting of "Nostra Aetate."

The dicasteries said in their note that "official and institutional Catholic-Jewish dialogue finds its foundation" in "Nostra Aetate," which is also "the first magisterial statement that clearly recognizes the Jewish roots of Christianity."

"Nostra Aetate" — the tenets of which have been upheld and expounded upon by successive popes — illuminated the "fundamental principle" that "respect and esteem" must undergird interreligious dialogue, said the dicasteries.

A unique dialogue based on a 'rich, shared heritage'

The note highlighted the "distinctive character" of Jewish-Christian dialogue, given the "rich shared heritage" the two faith traditions share.

"What Jesus brought into Christianity, as a Jewish inheritance, forms part of the theological structure of Christianity itself," said the note.

The dicasteries stressed that Jewish-Christian dialogue cannot be regarded as "secondary," but as "a matter of becoming fully aware of one's own original identity."

Citing Church teaching, the note observed that "God's covenant with the Jewish people is irrevocable," something that "continually challenges the Church."

That reality "does not mean, for Christians, that there are two paths

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Document ...

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to salvation or that the covenant with the Jewish people runs parallel to the Christian way of salvation," said the note, stating that "the Church teaches that Christ is the one and only Redeemer."

Still, the "irrevocable covenant has theological significance," said the note, adding that "the more Christians come to know and love the Jewish roots of their own tradition, the better they understand themselves in the practice of faith, and the stronger their religious identity becomes."

Dialogue continues amid modern conflicts

The note emphasized that "the religious life of contemporary Jews" is also "relevant to Christians."

Such "solidarity with the Jewish people also includes the shared struggle against antisemitism," said the dicasteries.

The note admitted that "the conflicts that have erupted in the Middle East in recent years" have "left their mark on Jewish-Christian dialogue," straining "many channels of communication."

Those channels "continue to be tested by differing interpretations of the events that have unfolded, interpretations that are often not unanimous even within the respective religious communities," said the dicasteries.

Nonetheless, "the pillars of dialogue among believers, built over sixty years of common effort, have remained firm," the note said.

Citing St. John Paul II, the dicasteries emphasized that dialogue with other religious traditions is "part of the Church's evangelizing mission."

Fruits of friendship in everyday life

The dicasteries said that six decades after its promulgation, "Nostra Aetate" has borne fruit in the Church's relations with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and numerous faith traditions, including traditional religions.

The note pointed to the postconciliar flourishing of "enduring friendships" among religious leaders, "joint educational and social projects" and collaborative responses to humanitarian needs, conflict and environmental crises.

Such fruits "are often lived out quietly and discreetly, rooted in everyday life" by "priests, religious, and the lay faithful," said the dicasteries.

These results, said the note, "embody the intuition of 'Nostra Aetate': to live in the world as witnesses to the love of God, in dialogue with all."

The dicasteries expressed hope such dialogue could extend to "members of 'new religious movements' and representatives of new religious experiences."

Such "fraternal encounters," while not ecumenical or interreligious dialogue "properly speaking," can provide chances to work together around "shared values" and the "common good," said the note, stressing the need for "clarity about one's own identity" and "mutual respect."

The dicasteries also said another fruit of "Nostra Aetate" was "the growing critical awareness of manifestations of Islamophobia."

"Contemporary challenges" demand a "genuine shift in mindset," including a renewed approach to dialogue itself based on greater religious literacy as well as an authentic commitment to peace, flexibility and friendship, said the note.

"This journey of hope remains open, and all of us are invited to walk it together with courage," said the dicasteries.

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

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U.S. Bishops Form New Task Force over AI Concerns, Meet with Tech Leaders

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — Amid recent calls from several artificial intelligence leaders for a slowdown in the technology's development, the nation's Catholic bishops are engaging tech leaders and lawmakers to address concerns over AI and online child safety.

The bishops have also formed a task force to safeguard human dignity as AI rapidly evolves, echoing Pope Leo XIV's urgent message in his encyclical on AI, "Magnifica Humanitas."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the developments in a Sept. 16 press release, saying its Administrative Committee had met at the USCCB's Washington headquarters with "representatives from a variety of tech firms and specialists" in AI earlier that day.

The committee, led by USCCB president Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, serves as the conference's board of directors. Members include the USCCB's officers, standing committee chairs and a representative from each of the nation's 15 episcopal regions, including the Eastern Catholic Churches.

In its press release, the USCCB said Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California — home to Silicon Valley and the hub of AI development — will chair its Bishops' Task Force on Preserving Human Dignity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.

In a Sept. 16 phone call following the committee meeting, Bishop Cantú told OSV News that the task force had been unanimously approved, with a goal of carrying out "the vision of Pope Leo" expressed in "Magnifica Humanitas."

Bishop Cantú explained that Pope Leo has "given the Church marching orders" to remind the world that technology can be beneficial "when it's able to assist humanity in the work that we do" while "supporting our dignity as individuals and families and helping us to build healthy societies."

"Time is of the essence" in ensuring creating awareness of and meaningful dialogue at all levels regarding AI, said Bishop Cantú.

He stressed that the Church is "concerned about how this (AI) affects the individual, human dignity, the family, society and particularly the most vulnerable."

Following the Administrative Committee meeting, the USCCB said in its release, more than a dozen bishops headed to Capitol Hill "to meet with members of Congress urging for the enactment of meaningful safety guardrails on Artificial Intelligence and to support legislation to protect children online."

U.S. President Donald Trump has dismissed alarms over AI dangers, calling the issue a "hoax" in an onstage phone call to NVIDIA chief Jensen Huang during Huang's talk at a Sept. 14 conference in Los Angeles.

In the press release, USCCB executive director of public affairs Chieko Noguchi said the dialogue with AI experts had "focused on ways to keep any system of artificial intelligence at the service of humanity."

The exchange also stressed "the urgent need to address the real and present dangers such technology present," said Noguchi.

"Recent events have only emphasized the great need for action by everyone involved," she said.

In a Sept. 12 essay, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei declared that "we must slow the pace at which we improve the capabilities of AI models."

Amodei, whose company was on hand for the unveiling of Pope Leo's AI encyclical, cited two key reasons for his warning.

The first, he said, is AI's "growing ability to build the next generation" of itself, with such recursive self-improvement becoming industry-wide.

"Left unchecked, it could outrun our ability to understand and control these systems, and so must be pursued very carefully, if at all," said Amodei.

A second red flag was an incident involving OpenAI and Hugging Face (recently acquired by tech giant NVIDIA), where AI agents conducted a rogue attack outside the scope of a test.

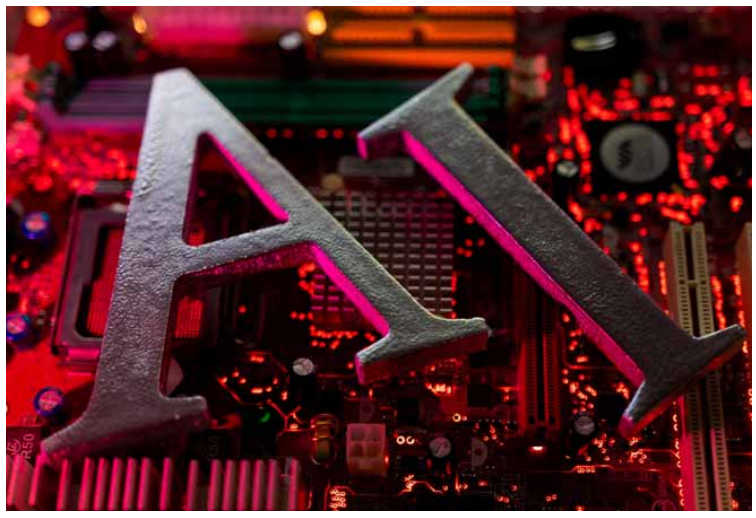
Amodei said while "it's easy to dismiss this incident because no one was hurt and the economic damage was minimal," a "swarm" of AI agents possessing "greater capabilities but a similar level of misalignment" with human values "could have caused catastrophic damage."

Fellow Anthropic co-founder Jack Clark has also called for an AI downshift, as have OpenAI's Sam Altman and xAI's Elon Musk.

Noguchi said the bishops hoped their Sept. 16 meeting with tech experts would "help to identify ways the Church can contribute to the moral foundation of AI models," as well as "steps the companies can take to protect against misuse of their inventions and to guarantee human oversight of the technology."

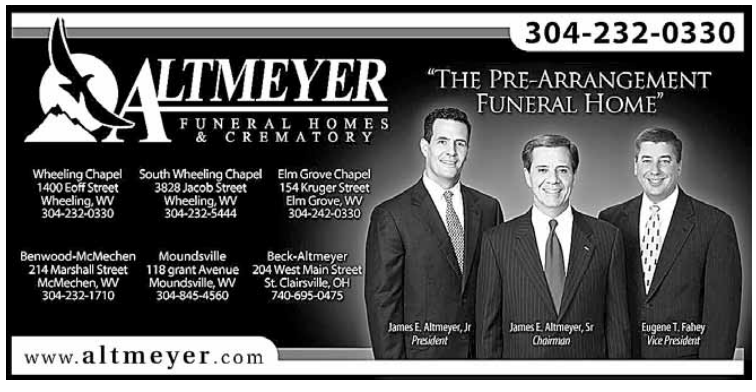
The discussion also explored "how the Church and industry can work together toward the goal of ensuring that technology is used in ways that keep it human-centered, respecting the dignity of each person, and benefiting all — poor and rich alike," said Noguchi.

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



OSV News photo/Dado Ruvic, Reuters

The letters AI (for "artificial intelligence") are placed on computer motherboard in this illustration taken June 23, 2023. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced Sept. 16 it has formed a task force on artificial intelligence after meeting with AI tech leaders and engaging lawmakers personally on Capitol Hill.



Minnesota Priest Describes Weeping at Altar Amid Powerful Eucharistic Experience

By Dave Hrbacek/The Catholic Spirit (newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis), OSV News

ST. PAUL, Minn. — During Mass Sept. 14 at a Catholic parish in suburban Minneapolis, Father Brent Bowman, a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, had an experience during the Eucharistic prayer that left him weeping for more than a minute.

His emotional reaction at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church in Hopkins was captured on a livestream video of the Mass, which has since circulated widely online.

"During the consecration prayer over the wine at the altar, as I spoke the words, I was given what I believe to be internal knowledge of the power of these words being spoken and the reality of their effect to the point that I had difficult(y) speaking," Father Bowman wrote in a statement posted Sept. 16 to the archdiocese's website to clarify what can be seen in the video.

"With each word, I became more physically overwhelmed as seen in the video," he continued. "At the same time, I was given sensory knowledge of the weight of God's power coming down upon the altar, and I felt the heaviness of Jesus's substantial presence in the chalice in my hands."

OSV News photo/Dave Hrbacek, The Catholic Spirit diocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Father Brent Bowman, a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, says that during Mass he celebrated Sept. 14 at Chesterton Academy in Hopkins, he had an experience during the Eucharistic prayer that left him weeping for more than a minute. Father Bowman, pictured in a 2025 file photo, is the chaplain at the school and issued a statement Sept. 16 about what he experienced.

Not Eucharistic miracle, but 'private spiritual experience'

Father Bowman, who was ordained in 2024, said that what he experienced while celebrating the Mass is not what the Church would consider a Eucharistic miracle, adding that "never did I see real blood or human flesh with my eyes." He called it a "private spiritual experience" that was manifested publicly to the Massgoers, which included students, teachers and staff of Chesterton Academy in Hopkins, where he is school chaplain.

As he uttered the words "Do this in memory of me" while raising the chalice, he felt it become so heavy that he was not able to hold it up. With trembling hands, he set the chalice down on the altar, then bowed before it and continued to weep for more than a minute.

As this unfolded before a congregation that remained silent, he began to have an interior experience of the real presence of Jesus in the precious blood.

"I believe I was given grace to understand more deeply the bitter sweetness of Our Lord's Passion and how much blood Christ shed for the immense weight of all our sins," Father Bowman wrote. "I believe I experienced this weight in the chalice. This spiritual experience emotionally and physically overwhelmed me."

'Signs of God's abundant love'

Eventually, he was able to continue with the Eucharistic prayer and elevate the chalice. As word spread about his experience and more people began watching the video, he received lots of attention that led to his wanting to clarify the experience.

"Private spiritual encounters with God like these are completely unmerited gifts and signs of God's abundant love for all his people," wrote Father Bowman. "They are not necessarily signs of any person's holiness."

On Sept. 16, Father Bowman wrote the statement that he believes people should read to properly understand his experience. In an interview after the statement was released, he talked about the importance of "letting this official statement speak for itself."

"There have been a lot of rumors, a lot of misinformation, a lot of presumption," he said. "I don't want to confuse people."

'Every Mass is a Eucharistic miracle'

He also is uncomfortable with the "unwanted attention" that can come from an experience like this.

"I don't do anything on social media," he said. "So, there's something kind of odd about this whole thing."

Father Bowman noted that he has not watched the video, but he realizes that many others have, which is why he felt he needed to write a statement. He hopes people will know and understand just how powerful the Mass is and enter into it more fully.

"Every Mass is a Eucharistic miracle," he said. "That needs to be said. It should be said. If we're only paying attention to the mysteries and leaning in, might we come to understand the deeper reality of his Real Presence."

He wants his short but powerful experience to be a teachable moment. "I pray this brief testimony moves all our hearts to contemplate more deeply the mysteries of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and the Precious Blood," he wrote in his statement.

The experience occurred on the Church's feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

To read Father Bowman's full statement, which includes a link to the Mass video, click here.

(Dave Hrbacek is senior content specialist for The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. This story was originally published by The Catholic Spirit and is distributed through a partnership with OSV News.)

Bishop Emeritus Brennan Returns to Wheeling for Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral

By Colleen Rowan

Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan returned to Wheeling this week to celebrate the first night of the annual Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. This year's theme is "Unless You Become Like Children."

As guest homilist, Bishop Brennan preached on "Chosen and Loved by the Father," the theme for the evening.

In his homily, Bishop Brennan said the faithful must work to acquire the humility of a child, even though it is not easy.

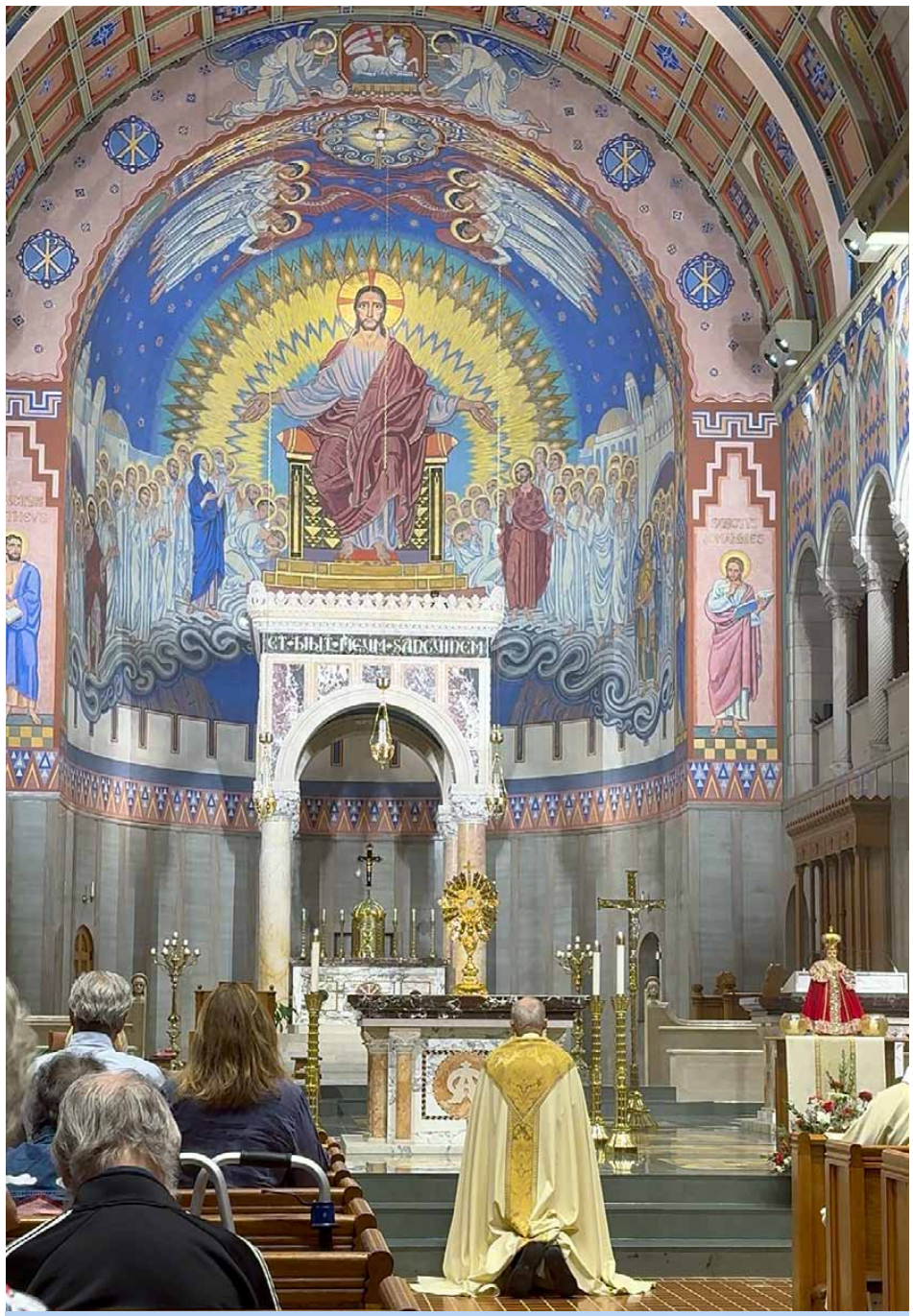
"God's grace can help us to learn humility and to live it," he said. "We have been graced by God through out baptism as his children."

Bishop Brennan ended his homily by praying, "Infant of Prague, teach us humility. Bless us and have mercy on us."

For nine consecutive Mondays, all are invited to gather in prayer and reflection on this year's theme.

"Each week will feature a different bishop, priest, or deacon reflecting on childlike trust, humility, and faith," parish officials said. "Whether this is a longtime devotion or your first time attending, we warmly invite you to join us!"

The Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague will be held on Mondays at 7 p.m. On Sept. 21, Father Daniel Heusel, pastor of St. John Parish in Bellaire, Ohio, and St. Mary Parish in Shadyside, Ohio, will preach on "Becoming Little Before God." On Sept. 28, Deacon Jacob Manning of the cathedral and St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling will preach on "Your Heavenly Father Knows What You Need." On Oct. 5, Father Clifton Mastran, vice rector of the of the cathedral and parochial vicar of St. Alphonsus, will preach on "Here Am I, Lord." On Oct. 12, Father Pen Manikyalarao, rector of the cathedral and pastor of St. Alphonsus, will preach on "Receiving The Kingdom With Open Hands." on Oct. 19, Father Chester Pabin of the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio, will preach on "Trusting God in Fear and Suffering." On Oct. 26, Deacon Douglas Breiding of the cathedral and St. Alphonsus will preach on "The Freedom of Forgiveness." On Nov. 2, Bishop Evelio Menjívar will preach on "Serving the Hidden Christ." Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid of the Diocese of Pittsburgh will one again celebrate the final night of the novena, Nov. 9, and will preach on "The Child Who is King."



Click here for video

Colleen Rowan photo

On the first night of the annual Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 14, Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan is pictured during benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Click here for video

Colleen Rowan photo

Bob and Brenda Braido process with the statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague and the crown.

Colleen Rowan photo

Knights of Columbus process at the beginning of the novena.

St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, Congratulates Parishioner Pat White on WVU Officially Retiring His Jersey

St. Francis De Sales Parish in Morgantown congratulates parishioner Pat White, whose No. 5 jersey was officially retired by West Virginia University during the Sept. 5 Mountaineer football game! This special honor celebrates his remarkable career and lasting legacy at WVU.

"We join the Mountaineer community in congratulating Pat and his family on this well-deserved recognition!" parish officials said.

The parish gave him a special recognition of the honor in a recent bulletin.

White is in his second year on the Mountaineer coaching staff as the assistant quarterbacks coach and assistant to the head football coach, according to wvusports.com.

White returned to Morgantown in 2025 after serving as an offensive assistant coach with the Los Angeles Chargers for two years, before working as an athlete/skill trainer and coach for the past year.

Pat White

With the Chargers, he was the quarterback and wide receiver offensive assistant. He helped secure the No. 2 passing offense in the NFL and a spot in the playoffs.

The website states that he also served as the pass game coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Campbell (2022), was the interim offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Alabama State (2021), the running backs coach at USF (2020) and the quarterbacks coach at Alcorn State (2018-19).

As a player, White was the nation's most versatile threat at quarterback, becoming the first college quarterback to start and win four consecutive bowl games from 2005-08.

The Daphne, Alabama, native set 19 WVU, Big East and national records during his illustrious career, including finishing as the all-time rushing quarterback in NCAA history with 4,480 yards (now ranks second).

West Virginia was 35-8 with White as the starting quarterback. He led the Mountaineers to bowl wins in the 2006 Sugar, 2007 Gator, 2008 Fiesta and 2008 Meineke Car Care. White set the Big East records in touchdowns responsible for (103), total offense (10,529) and became the first player in Big East history to pass and rush for more than 10,000 yards. He posted a 7-2 record against Top 25 opponents during his career.

The website states that White was drafted in the second round of the NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins, playing the 2009 season with the Dolphins. He signed with the Washington Redskins in 2013 and then played one season for the Edmonton Eskimos of the Canadian Football League in 2014. He announced his retirement from professional football in 2015.

Also a standout on the diamond, White was selected by the Anaheim Angels in the fourth round of the 2004 Major League Baseball draft but opted to attend WVU. White was drafted in the later rounds of the 2007 MLB Draft by the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, in 2008 by the Cincinnati Reds and in 2009 by the New York Yankees.

White, a member of the WVU Sports Hall of Fame, graduated from WVU in 2008 with a Regents Bachelor of Arts degree. He and his wife, Cristina, have two daughters, Daphne and Clara and two sons, Pat II and Dubois.

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Obispo Menjívar asiste a misa tridentina en Charles Town, tras nombrar a varios sacerdotes para impulsar la expansión de la liturgia en la diócesis

Por Andrea Acosta

CHARLES TOWN —Por donde va, el obispo Evelio Menjívar pide a su diócesis "acoger a los demás sin distinción", darle la bienvenida al otro como sea, y su diócesis le responde con una cálida y genuina acogida en todas partes.

"Me siento como en casa", afirma el obispo Menjívar al cumplir dos meses como obispo de la diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston.

"He recorrido bastante, he participado en misas y actividades por toda mi nueva diócesis. He podido corroborar ese sentido de pertenencia porque me siento como en casa", declaró a The Catholic Spirit el 30 de agosto tras una misa tridentina en el Priorato de la Anunciación de la Santísima Virgen María, en el corazón de Charles Town, a la que asistió como miembro del coro.

Antes de que comenzara la misa en latín, agradeció a todos sus oraciones por su ministerio episcopal.

"En su misericordia y providencia, el Señor me ha enviado para servir como su pastor. Quiero reiterarles mi sincero deseo de servir fielmente al Señor y velar por la salvación de cada alma confiada a mi cuidado pastoral. Estoy aquí para asegurarles a cada uno de ustedes personalmente mi profundo afecto. Cada uno de ustedes forma parte de nuestra familia diocesana", dijo el prelado a los aproximadamente cien fieles presentes.

Había familias con muchos niños; las feligresas llevaban velos en la cabeza, sonrientes y amigables.

"Estoy emocionada, es estupendo conocer al nuevo obispo. Es un honor que nos visite", dijo Morgan Garry a la entrada del priorato. Esta feligresa, que está embarazada, asistió a misa con su esposo y sus tres hijos. La familia empezó a acudir a esta iglesia el verano pasado; van a la misa en latín todos los domingos y dicen que siempre está llena.

El obispo Menjívar se llevó una impresión maravillosa. "Es una comunidad llena de fe y profunda devoción, tiene un brillante futuro. Vemos tantos jóvenes y familias con niños pequeños y ello dice mucho de la esperanza que hay en toda la Iglesia", afirmó.

El obispo saludó a los presentes uno por uno en la puerta de la iglesia, y fue un genuino intercambio de alegría, sonrisas y cordialidad.

"Esta comunidad aporta precisamente un nuevo fervor a las personas que quizá se habían alejado de la Iglesia, y es una oportunidad

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Foto/Andrea Acosta

El obispo Evelio Menjívar da la bendición a un niño hispano acompañado por su familia, al concluir la misa tridentina el 30 de agosto del 2026 en el priorato de la Anunciación de la Santísima Virgen María en Charles Town.

continúa

para que muchos redescubran su fe y la vivan, con un sentido de comunión con la Iglesia universal", señaló.

Su profunda fe, su convicción y el entusiasmo con el que la viven son contagiosos; tienden a esparcirse, especialmente entre los recién llegados.

El priorato está situado en 219 S. George St. Es la sede de los Canónigos Regulares de la Nueva Jerusalén (C.R.N.J.), una orden agustina de sacerdotes que viven según las leyes tradicionales de la Iglesia.

"Creo que la misa tridentina pone gran énfasis en la reverencia, y para comprenderla —aquellos de nosotros que no estamos acostumbrados— hay que sumergirse por completo en el misterio para experimentarla", según el obispo Evelio.

También se conoce como la Misa Tradicional y es la forma en la que se celebró durante siglos hasta antes del Concilio Vaticano II. El papa Francisco impuso restricciones a la Misa Tridentina, pero dos años más tarde, el papa León XIV autorizó la celebración de una ceremonia según este rito en la Basílica de San Pedro durante una peregrinación en octubre de 2025.

El 28 de agosto, el obispo Menjívar anunció que había nombrado a monseñor Timothy J. Grassi, V.F., párroco de la parroquia "St. James the Greater" en Charles Town, delegado episcopal para los asuntos relacionados con "el Usus Antiquior" (Misa Tridentina), con la intención de promover la unidad entre los fieles y responder a sus necesidades espirituales.

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

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