

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## Will it ever end?

**By Archbishop William E. Lori, OSV News**

Recently, there has been a spate of political violence in our country. The slaying of two Minnesota legislators. Killing innocent children gathered for a school Mass in Minneapolis. The slaying of Charlie Kirk. The list goes on. It is endless and depressing. We ask: Will it ever end?

As these tragedies unfold, the responses are predictable. Calls for prayer are met with public ridicule. Politicians decry the extreme rhetoric for a few days but return to it as surely as night follows day. As calls for an end to violence mul-

tiply, in that same proportion it seems, do incidents of violence multiply. Will it ever end?

What are we, as Catholics, to make of this? Do we have some magic formula, a wand to wave, that will calm the stormy waters of our culture, restore civility and minimize political violence to what are deemed "acceptable" levels?

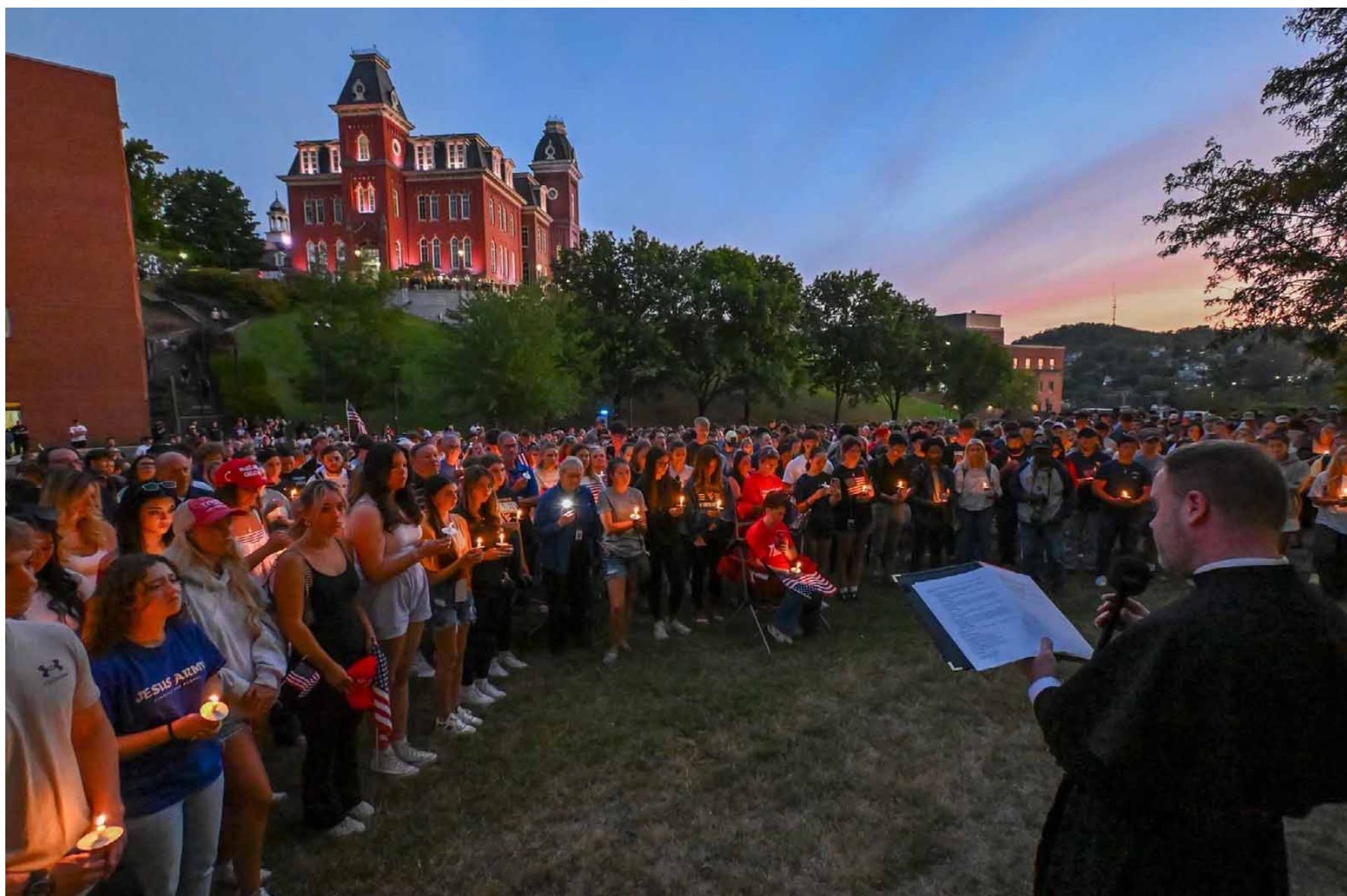
Any faithful Catholic knows how to distinguish between faith and magic, prayer and wishful thinking, empty rhetoric and constructive action. There are approximately 62 million

Catholics in the United States and nearly 540,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. What if, as a community of faith, we united in making a difference?

An immediate objection comes to mind: Catholics, some say, are as politically divided as other groups. Some studies also show that many Catholics don't vote on the basis of their religious faith, which is regrettable, but not paralyzing. Despite our political differences, there are things we can and should do together.

**See "End" on Page 2**

## Campus Ministry Director Joins WVU Students at Prayer Vigil for Charlie Kirk



Courtesy photo

Giving the opening prayer at a prayer vigil for Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk on West Virginia University's campus in Morgantown is Father Brian Crenwelge, pastor of St. John University Parish in Morgantown and director of Campus Ministry at WVU. More than 1,000 people attended the vigil.

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# End ...

## Cont'd from Page 1

First is to pray for unity and peace, both foreign and domestic. Writing these words, I can almost hear the chant of the Greek chorus, "What good does that do?" Prayer, after all, doesn't usually result in God's direct intervention in human affairs. Isn't it ineffectual?

No, it isn't. We pray not to change God's mind but to have God change ours. We pray so that God's grace will enlarge our hearts in love, including love of enemies. The Lord could not have been more clear. If we want his forgiveness we need to forgive others. Prayer changes hearts and there are a lot of hearts that need to be changed, including mine.

Second, as a church we can demonstrate something fundamental to democracy: how to hash out disagreements without resorting to violence. How sad when we Catholics attack one another, aping the language of our ideologically divided culture. If the church is itself the sacrament of unity and charity, then we need to curb our speech, and more.

The "more" is something called "synodality" — conversation in the Holy Spirit. Synodality is not about changing the church's teaching but about learning to listen to one another. It's not easy. I spent a month in Rome in October 2024 as a delegate to the Synod on Synodality. Daily conversation in the Holy Spirit was hard work. By the middle of the month, all the delegates were exhausted and begging for a break. But healing wounds of sin and division is never easy. As a synodal church, we can demonstrate a better way.

Third is constructive action. For all our problems, the church everywhere remains an engine of charity and a champion of justice. Consider, for example, two initiatives: First, our local efforts to promote mental health, to recognize the signs of mental illness and to help link those in need to resources. Second, consider our annual gun-buyback initiative. More than 1,000 guns have been removed from our streets. Much more is underway, but you get the idea. Prayer leads to action.

When will it end? The reign of sin will not be fully vanquished until the end of time. In the meantime, with God's grace, we can make a critical difference.

(Archbishop William E. Lori is the 16th archbishop of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.)

**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](http://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](http://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 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](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability." Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://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](http://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.

## 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](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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Office: 1322 Eoff St.  
Mailing: PO Box 230  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
(304) 232-0444

[thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org)  
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**Publisher:** Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....  
**Executive Editor:** Colleen Rowan, Ext. 347.....[crowan@dwc.org](mailto:crowan@dwc.org)  
**Advertising:** contact Colleen Rowan  
**Freelance Writers:** Martina Hart, John Sherwood  
**Member:** Catholic Press Association, West Virginia Press Association, National Press Photographers Association, Inc.



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## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2025

There are 10 print editions in 2025. Below are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on [thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org).

**2025 Print Issues and Dates:** Month of the Rosary, October 10; Advent, November 21; Christmas, December 19

# Memorial Mass to Honor Sister Constance Dodd

*Devoted Shepherdess of the Poor and Homeless*

By Joyce Bibey

**WHEELING**—The life of the late Sister Constance Dodd, SM, who served as the director of the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center (the 18th Street Center) in Wheeling, will be honored and celebrated at a memorial Mass at 1:30 p.m., Oct. 1 at the center.

Sister died on Aug. 8 in the care of her religious sisters in Michigan.

Sister Constance served Catholic Charities West Virginia, working with the poor and homeless from 1996 to 2008.

Under her leadership, the center expanded its outreach serving 108,751 meals to shut-ins, providing 16,670 lunches at the center, and filling 8,651 food orders in a year's time.

Sister Constance also established a walk-in clinic at the center, where a doctor and nurse volunteered their time. Prescriptions, therapy, and hospital care were provided at no cost. Additionally, dental and eye care were also provided by volunteer doctors Sister Constance secured to help.

She also entered into a joint project with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill to establish a "drop-in" center for the mentally ill in the area.

If she or one of her staff had an idea she ran with it, including seeking a volunteer hairdresser for the men, women, and children her center served.

The Sept. 13, 2008, issue of The Catholic Spirit announced her departure from the position to work in the Marist Sisters' retirement home in a suburb of

Detroit.

She was born on June 4, 1933, in Ballindoon County Sligo, Ireland. When she was 21, she answered God's call and entered the Marist Sisters, the order that ran the boarding school she had attended. She came to serve in the US in 1956. She taught and served as principal at St. Albert the Great School in Dearborn Heights, Mich.

Her vocation journey took her to Quebec, Canada, before the Marist Sisters called her to Rome to work in their administration offices handling charitable service in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.

She returned to the US and began working in Wheeling for the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center in 1996.

According to her obituary, she loved the Catholic Charities West Virginia ministry and working in Wheeling particularly, "and was in many ways the face of service to the most disadvantaged of the area. She said once that, at the end of each day, she could say: 'The hungry were fed today. The poor were clothed. The sick were visited.' During her time at the center, she received from Pope Benedict XVI the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal, the highest honor a non-cleric can receive in the Church. She valued even more highly the honorary doctorate she received from Wheeling Jesuit University for her committed service to the poor."

For her official obituary go to: Sr. Constance Dodd, SM Obituary (2025) - Warren, MI - Chas. Verheyden, Inc. Funeral Home & Cremation Service - Warren

# Catholic Charities West Virginia to Host 29th Annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

**WHEELING** — Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) is thrilled to announce the return of its annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser. The event takes place on Sunday, Sept. 21, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Neighborhood Center on 18th Street in Wheeling.

Tickets are \$12 each. Dine-in and carry-out options are available. Tickets are on sale now at [www.ccwva.org/event/ccnc-spaghetti-dinner-2025](http://www.ccwva.org/event/ccnc-spaghetti-dinner-2025) or on site at 125 18th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003.

Now in its 29th year, the spaghetti dinner offers attendees an opportunity to gather, connect, and enjoy a day filled with delicious food and community spirit. All funds raised support the vital work of the Neighborhood Center, which has been serving people in need for more than 50 years.

"The spaghetti dinner is a tradition that brings our community together," said CCWVa Northern Regional director Ashlie Kotson. "Each meal represents hope, compassion, and our commitment to care for our neighbors. We are so thankful for the way the community continues to show up and support this mission year after year."

CCWVa is recruiting volunteers for the fundraiser. Interested individuals should contact Kotson at (304) 232-7157 or by email at [akotson@ccwva.org](mailto:akotson@ccwva.org).

The event is sponsored by Victory Toyota Highlands and

Dr. Bala, and includes a raffle, a new Wall of Giving, and an online auction featuring an experience package valued at more than \$1,000. The auction winner will receive a one-night stay in a two-bedroom Treetop Villa at Grandvue Park, a round of golf for four at Oglebay, four tickets to the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, and a two-night getaway at Oglebay's Wilson Lodge.

Since 1969, Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center has been a place of welcome, hope, and support for individuals and families in Ohio, Marshall, and Belmont counties. Through food programs, utility assistance, and comprehensive social services, the center offers both immediate aid and long-term support that honors each person's dignity and potential.

Don't miss the best spaghetti in town! Ticket information, auction details, and a preview of raffle prizes can be found online at [www.ccwva.org/event/ccnc-spaghetti-dinner-2025](http://www.ccwva.org/event/ccnc-spaghetti-dinner-2025).

## About Catholic Charities West Virginia

Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) serves neighbors in need regardless of faith, family, or background, with a mission to provide caring and compassionate services and work toward lasting and meaningful change. CCWVa is committed to enhancing the lives of those they serve with dignity, compassion, and hope.



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# Faithfulness to Christ's Love

## *Inspires Courage, Service, and Self-Giving Love*



Courtesy photo

Father Dennis R. Schuelken, Jr., celebrated a Blue Mass in honor of the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Weirton on the 24th anniversary of the terrorist attacks. He and fellow clergy are pictured after the Mass with local law enforcement, fire department personnel, EMTs, and members of the military.

### By Joyce Bibey/Courtesy of FaithInWV

Jesus taught us that a true friendship with Him means we follow His command to love one another with self-giving love (John 15:12-17).

This is the love He has for us. Moreover, He calls us to “bear lasting fruit” through this love. How do we do that? By living in God’s love always - good works, virtues, and transformed lives that draw others closer to Him.

Always? Yes, even in the hardest of time. A great example can be seen in the acts of first responders.

Every act of courage, whether saving a life, calming someone in crisis, or protecting a community, plants seeds of hope, safety, and compassion that can ripple far beyond the moment. This reflects Christ’s command to love one another.

As he does every year, Father Dennis R. Schuelken, Jr., pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, School, and Day Care, and also pastor of Sacred Heart of Mary Parish, all in Weirton, celebrated a Blue Mass in honor of the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and in gratitude for the steadfast service of law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, military members, and all first responders who safeguarded our families and neighborhoods.

The students from the grade school and Madonna High School were joined by the local community for the special Mass, Concelebrated by Father Binu Sebastian, of St. Paul Church and School; Father Justin Golna of St. John Parish, Wellsburg; Father Gerald Muoka, of St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee, and pastor at Madonna H.S.; and Father Luke Iyengar.

This sacred liturgy not only recalled the heroism of 9/11 but also lifted up in prayer the countless men and women who, each day, embodied selfless courage by placing themselves in harm’s

way to protect, defend, and serve both our community and our nation.

Through prayer and song, the community prayed for a world that upholds faith, family, and a shared commitment to live together in peace.

Father Schuelken’s homily was based on John 15:12-17:

*Laying Down Our Lives...*

*No one has greater love than this than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*

*Life is about love, and love is about laying down our lives, it’s a choice of self-sacrifice.*

*A good sacrifice brings life in others and in ourselves—in this world, and in the next.*

*It’s God’s presence that inspires and brings peace through God’s witness of light. We recognize God’s witness of light that shines!*

*It’s Christ’s light that runs into a place of fear with courage to bring hope.*

*It’s Christ light that presses forward into lawlessness to restore order.*

*It’s Christ’s light that pushes back against sickness and injury to bring healing.*

*It’s Christ’s light that protects and defends humanity.*

*This is Christ’s call for each and every one of us—to be His instruments of God’s peace.*

*With deep gratitude, we honor those professions, who by their very nature, bring this light—Christ’s light into places of darkness.*

*Whether it’s the trauma of planes flying into buildings, or the violence of silencing a discussion of truth, we honor those whose actions bring hope, order, healing and safety.*

*With this deep thanks to God, we honor you and the witness of Christ’s light that you bring: firefighters, law-enforcement officers, EMTs and members of the military. May you exercise wisdom, courage, and charity in the midst of very often confusion and chaos. And may*

*God’s light shine in us all, each of us are called to be Christ’s instruments of peace.*

His homily was followed by a moment of silence, and then the meditation song sung by St. Joe’s and St. Paul’s musicians in a duet with harmony – the Prayer of St. Francis:

*Make me a channel of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred let me bring your love.*

*Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord*

*And where there’s doubt, true faith in you.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

*Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope*

*Where there is darkness, only light*

*And where there’s sadness, ever joy.*

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek*

*So much to be consoled as to console*

*To be understood as to understand*

*To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned*

*In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life.*

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek*

*So much to be consoled as to console*

*To be understood as to understand*

*To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned*

*In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life.*

[Note: The words are from a prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (however, it cannot be traced earlier than 1912, when it was published as author unknown, in a French magazine *The Little Bell/The Holy Mass League*, founded by Fr. Esther Bouquerel). The theme of the prayer/hymn is based on the writing of the Prophet Isaiah (Chapter 61) and Christ’s teachings echoed throughout the New Testament. Composer Sebastian Temple turned the prayer into a hymn in 1967.]



Courtesy photo

Local law enforcement, fire department personnel, EMTs, and members of the military are pictured during the Blue Mass on Sept. 11.

# Bishop Blesses New Pre-K Structure on St. Joseph School Campus in Martinsburg



Meg H. Partington photo

**Bishop Mark Brennan and Deacon Patrick Michel chat with prekindergartners at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg, after the bishop blessed the new prekindergarten building on the school's campus.**

**By Meg H. Partington**

**MARTINSBURG** — Bishop Mark Brennan sprinkled holy water on the newest structure on the campus of St. Joseph School, blessing a symbol of growth in Catholic education being experienced throughout West Virginia.

With the bishop was Superintendent Jennifer Hornyak who visited the Martinsburg campus on Sept. 8 and 9. The first day began with him celebrating Mass for students in grades six through nine at St. Joseph Parish, then participating in a reception for the first freshman class the school has had since the late 1960s. St. Joseph High School opened for the 2025-26 academic year with 14 ninth-graders and will add a grade each year until its enrollment includes 12th-graders.

Bishop Brennan and Hornyak then spent time with the school's youngest students (toddlers through 4-year-olds) and the bishop read from the 1989 edition of "Book of Blessings" after dispensing holy water around the exterior of the new modular unit on the campus. The blue structure houses four classrooms, two for the PK Jr. classes of 3-year-olds and two for the 4-year-olds. A total of 63 students use the building at 113 E. Stephen Street, along with four teachers and four aides. Each room is 720 square feet and includes a bathroom, walk-in closet and kitchenette. There are two additional bathrooms in the hallway and space for an administrative assistant, plus a data room and janitorial closet.

"We are really thankful to have pre-K across the street together," said Abby Hjort-Michel, pre-K director at St. Joseph School. Before, the 3- and 4-year-olds were in the main building at 110 E. Stephen St., while the students who were 2 and younger were in the building at 115 E. Stephen St.

A contract was signed in January to begin the prekindergarten expansion project, which includes playground improvements. Over the summer, the teachers who were moving into the mobile unit had to clear out their classrooms and store the contents

in the gym. Staff members and parent volunteers moved everything across the street and assembled smartboards so the rooms would be ready to receive students for the first day of school in mid-August.

"We have a brand new building. That's such a positive," Hjort-Michel said, adding that the most difficult part of the project was having so little control over each of the moving parts, including work being done by contractors, electricians, plumbers and inspectors.

"I have felt supported throughout the whole process by the diocese, the school, the city of Martinsburg," Hjort-Michel said. "We're really thankful for the entire SJS community."

Many of SJS' preschool teachers had to work in the new building before air conditioning and electricity were hooked up and came in on weekends to get ready for the new school year.

"I thank them for all their dedication and hard work," Hjort-Michel said.

She went on to say that the sizable undertaking could not have taken place without financial support from the diocese and donations, particularly from the Shoriak Family Fund, which was established by the grandparents of two students at SJS. Through the charitable trust, donations are made to the schools and churches dear to them because of connections to themselves and their grandchildren, as well as to other nonprofits they hear about who are seeking financial support.

In 2023, the Shoriak fund provided \$5,000 toward a playground renovation behind SJS' main school building and in 2024, it contributed \$10,000 for a sandbox project for the preschool campus. Between 2024 and 2025, that funding source contributed a total of \$3,700 for Brightwheel - child care management software to help teachers keep track of attendance and document activities with photos and videos.

The growth in prekindergarten and addition of ninth grade at St. Joseph School match the enrollment upswing at Catholic schools across the dio-

cese for the last five years, Bishop Brennan said. He said there are more than 4,850 students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade in diocesan educational institutions. At St. Joseph School, enrollment has grown from nearly 280 students for the 2020-21 school year ranging from ages 2 through eighth grade to nearly 490 in 2025-26 from toddlers to ninth grade.

"Parents appreciate that there's a moral and spiritual foundation in Catholic schools," Bishop Brennan said.

Bishop Brennan said he spoke to several students who attended Catholic schools, but graduated from other institutions. When comparing them, he was told, "Our Catholic school was quiet, it was orderly and we could learn," characteristics that were lacking in public schools.

He said the growth began after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Some parents appreciated that we got back into in-person instruction as soon as we could (earlier than many public schools)" while following safety protocols, Bishop Brennan said.

He said the uptick in student population began before West Virginia started offering the Hope Scholarship, which allows families to use the state's portion of their education funding for tuition, home-school curriculums and other qualifying expenses. Enrollment has continued to rise since that funding source became available. According to the Hope Scholarship website ([hopescholarshipwv.gov](http://hopescholarshipwv.gov)), the fund is expected to provide more than \$5,200 per child for the current school year.

The bishop concluded the first day of his visit with blessing a Holy Family statue gifted to the school by its eighth-grade Class of 2024 and visiting students in grades kindergarten to six. Day two found Brennan and Hornyak celebrating Mass with students in grades kindergarten to five and visiting students in the campus' middle/high school building.

## Annual Interfaith Prayer Service on Mental Illness to be Held in Wheeling

**WHEELING**—St. Michael Parish in Wheeling will again join NAMI Greater Wheeling in hosting an interfaith service to pray for individuals and families living with mental illness. The event will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the church.

The annual prayer service has been a part of St. Michael Parish's stewardship activities for more than 20 years. Everyone who attends the vigil will have the opportunity to light a prayer candle in honor of a friend or loved one with mental illness. "Please join us!" organizers said.



Courtesy photo  
St. Michael Parish in Wheeling is shown during last year's NAMI Greater Wheeling interfaith service.

## Procession of Our Lady of Guadalupe Set for September 21 in Clarksburg

**CLARKSBURG**—On Sunday, Sept. 21, parishioners and visitors of Immaculate Conception Church will gather outside of the parish hall at 12:30 p.m. for a procession with the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The Hispanic Community of Immaculate Conception Parish will process with the statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe down Coach Joe Marra Way, turning right onto Monticello Street, and then up Pike Street to Jackson Square in downtown Clarksburg.

National Hispanic Heritage Month extends from Sept. 15-Oct. 15.

From 1-6 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 21, the Clarksburg Latino community of Harrison County will celebrate the "Fiesta Hispana," a family event with food, fun, and music. All are welcome to participate in the procession and the afternoon fiesta. "Join us and support our Hispanic brothers and sisters," organizers said.

"Fiesta Hispana" is sponsored by "Conexion Hispana WV" an organization based in Harrison County, supporting the Hispanic community in West Virginia through advocacy, education, and community development.

For more information about the organization go to: [https://www.conexionhispanawv.com/?page\\_id=63](https://www.conexionhispanawv.com/?page_id=63).

**LET'S CELEBRATE**  
**FIESTA HISPANA**

- SEP 21, 2025
- 01:00PM - 06:00PM
- JACKSON SQUARE, CLARKSBURG, WV

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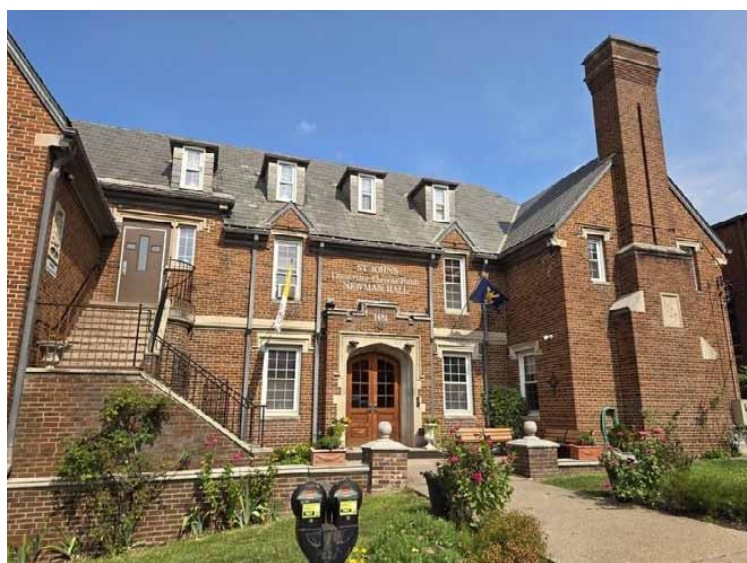
**FOOD AND MUSIC**

# 100 Years of Newman to be Celebrated in Morgantown

St. John University Parish's Newman Hall on the campus of West Virginia University is celebrating its centennial anniversary. Opened in 1925, the Newman Hall has served as a center of prayer, fellowship, and activities for Catholic students for decades. Originally built as a dormitory for Catholic college-age men as well as a chapel for all Catholic students on campus, the center has had an impact on countless lives through the years.

Yet, the history stems prior even to 1925. In 1893, a group of Catholic students at the University of Pennsylvania formed a club for social activities, religious lectures, and discussions and named it the "Newman Club" after Cardinal John Henry Newman. In 1916 Bishop Patrick Donohue of Wheeling requested Father Peter Flynn of St. Theresa's Catholic Church (now St. John's parish center) to assume responsibility for the spiritual welfare of Catholic students at WVU. Father Flynn organized the first Catholic group of WVU students. The "Newman Club" held monthly meetings in the St. Francis Parochial School, that was located on the grounds of St. Theresa's.

Before he became Bishop of Wheeling in 1922, Father J.J. Swint, while still pastor of St. Patrick's in Weston took special interest in the Newman Club. As bishop, he appointed in 1924 Monsignor James F. Newcomb chaplain of the Newman Club and began soliciting funds for the construction of Newman Hall. The Knights of Columbus pledged \$75,000 and the Catholic Daughters of America contribute about \$15,000. Construction began in 1924 and was completed and ready to be used by September of 1925. On January 13, 1926, Newman Hall was dedicated at an 8:30a.m. Mass with Bishop Swint present. At 10 a.m. Bishop Swint addressed a



St. John University Parish's Newman Hall on the campus of West Virginia University in Morgantown is celebrating its centennial anniversary. Here are a few photos of the center and parish and the faithful over the years.

Courtesy photos

WVU convocation and received congratulations from WVU President Frank B. Trotter for the "handsome new building."

Newman Hall had dormitory space for 25 male students; the chapel could accommodate about 180 persons. As WVU enrollment grew, Sunday Mass was celebrated both in the chapel and the first-floor lounge. From 1943-1944, Newman Hall was occupied by as many as 80 members of 1546th Army Specialized Training Unit, studying at WVU.

In 1956, Father Eugene Schmitt, the last of the Diocesan Chaplains at Newman Hall, was replaced by the Paulist Fathers, who were to serve there until 1998.

Before long, it was decided that another chapel would have to be built in order to accommodate the growing Catholic popula-

tion at WVU. In 1961, St. John's Chapel was completed and dedicated by Archbishop Swint. Finally, on May 4, 1966, the Newman Hall was formally declared a canonical parish of the Diocese of Wheeling as St. John's University Parish.

Father Brian Crenwelge, the current pastor and director of Campus Ministry at St. John University Parish, can personally attest to the importance of the center. "I came to WVU as a freshman in 2008. I remember my mom marched me down to Newman Hall during orientation and introduced me to the priests and secretary so that I would know where the church and center were. St. John's became my temporary home while at WVU. I bonded with fellow Catholic students and even became an officer for the Newman Club. It was during my time at West Vir-



ginia University that I began to strongly consider the priesthood. The campus ministry and community at St. John's helped in a significant way in that discernment."

Countless of the diocese's priests as well as seminarians have been a part of the campus ministry at the Newman Hall over

the years. This past summer, 11 weddings of recent graduates were celebrated at St. John's.

"Bishop Swint once remarked that he saw St. John's and the Newman Hall as crucial to the future of Catholicism in West Virginia," Father Crenwelge said, "I can see this lived **See "Newman" on Page 8**

# Newman ...

Cont'd from Page 7

out day by day here. Through our campus ministry program under the guidance of campus minister, Sammy Lopez, we strive to have our students encounter and fall in love with Christ and His Church. I hope that the seed we plant in their faith lives gives them a foundation that will continue to blossom for the rest of their lives. Newman Hall has weekly events for the students as well as now houses Joan and Joe Coffee shop on the lower floor. The original chapel in Newman Hall has been adapted into an Adoration Chapel that is available to the students for prayer at all hours."

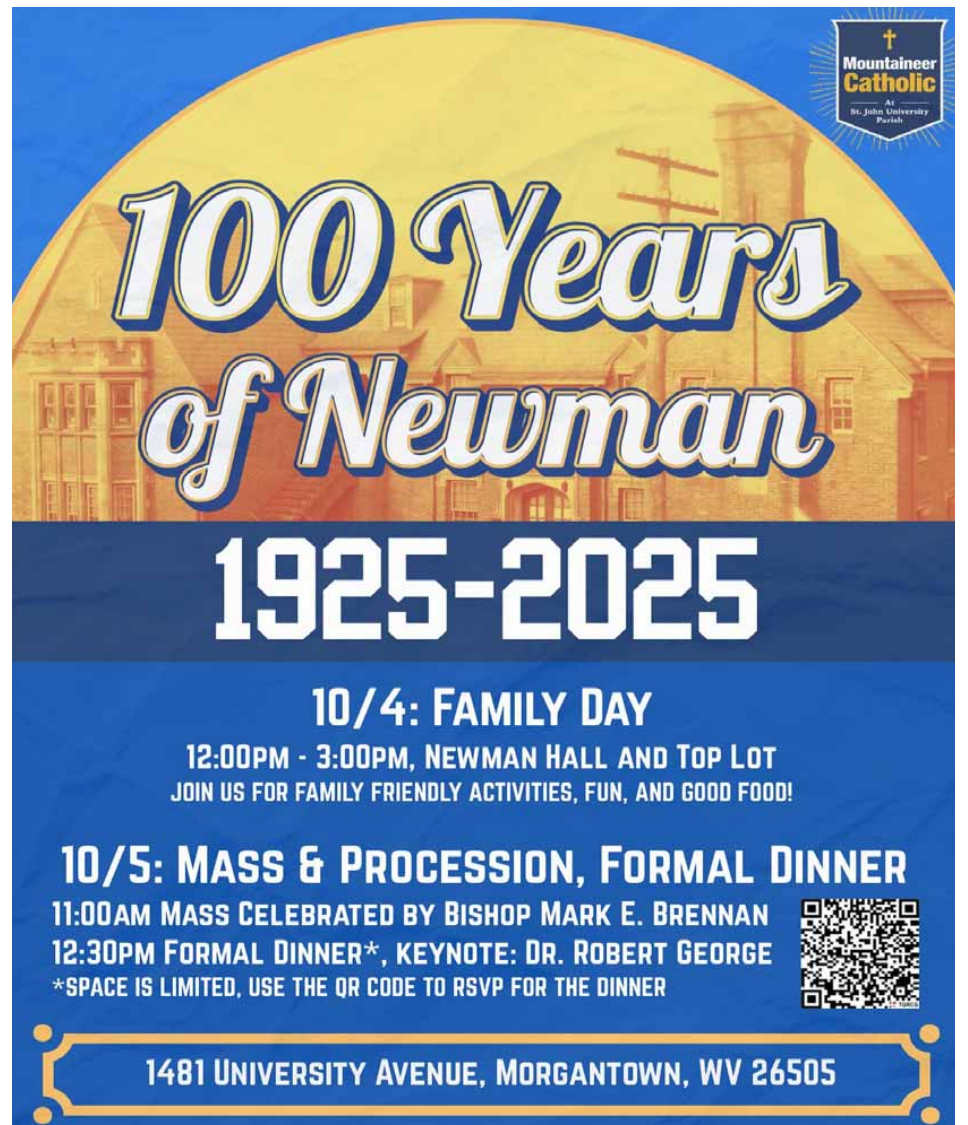
Sabrina Vignola, a junior at WVU currently, chose to come to the university because of the active Newman Hall. "My faith life was a huge factor in choosing which college I wanted to attend, and I already had a friend at WVU," she said. "I toured the Newman Center and saw a group of students on fire for Christ and each other, making the active decision to live out their faith, even in college. I knew I had found my home."

In order to celebrate its centen-

nial, St. John's will be having three main events. On Saturday, Oct. 4, there will be a Family Day from 12 p.m.-3 p.m. in the St. John's parking lot and Newman Hall. It will consist of carnival games, food, and inflatables to celebrate the gift of St. John's to the Morgantown community.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, Bishop Brennan will celebrate the 11 a.m. Mass at St. John's in honor of the centennial. Following the Mass, there will be a formal banquet in the parish center (formally St. Theresa's Church). Dr. Robert E. George will be the keynote speaker. Dr. George is a Morgantown native, professor at Princeton University and has led the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and has served on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the President's Council on Bioethics.

All are invited to join in the celebrations. Former priests who have served at St. John's will join for the Mass and banquet as well. St. John's hopes to welcome any former students to return to their college home for the celebration. To RSVP to the banquet, please either call the parish office at (304) 296-8231 or go to [mountainercatholic.com](http://mountainercatholic.com).

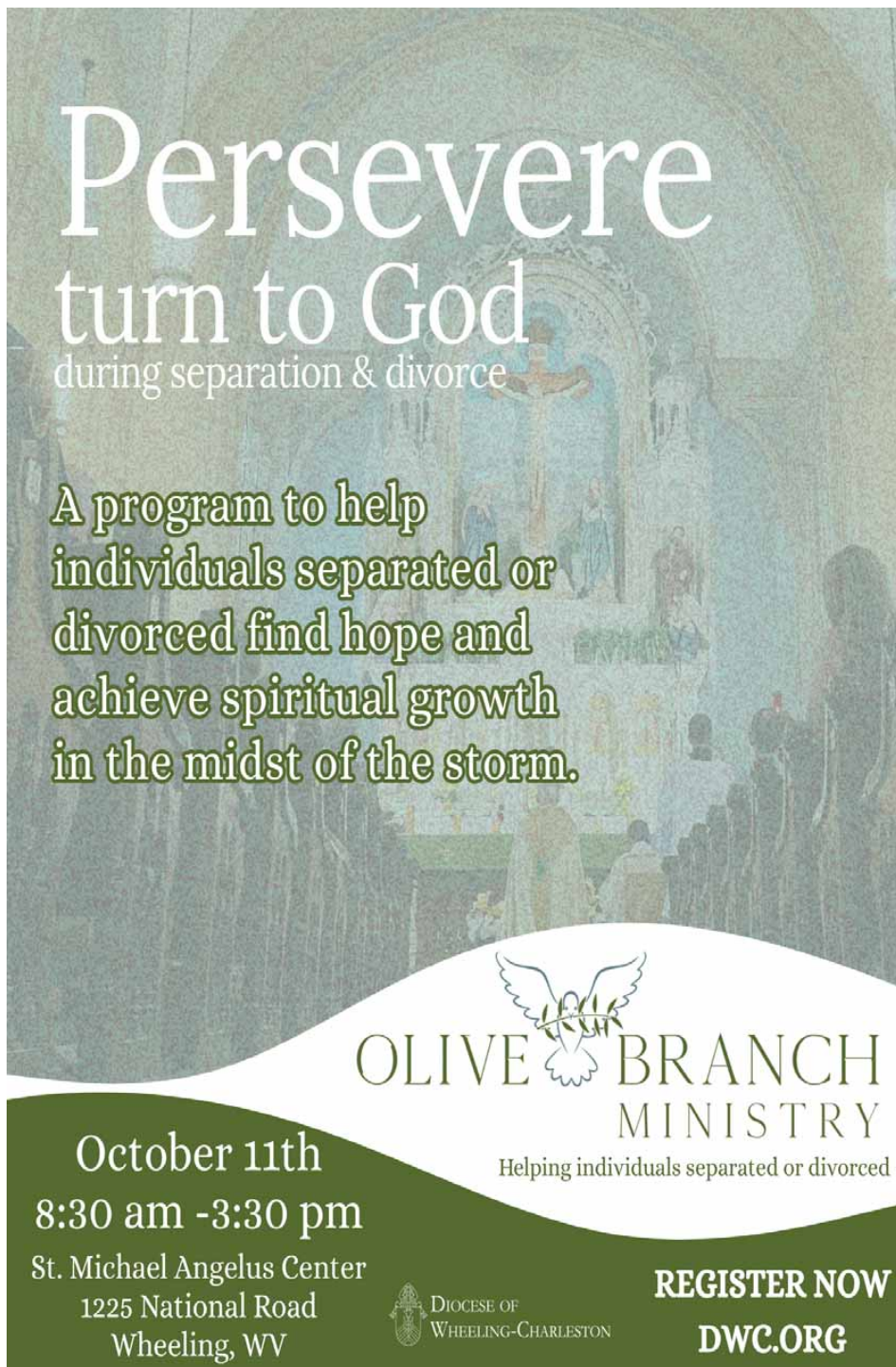


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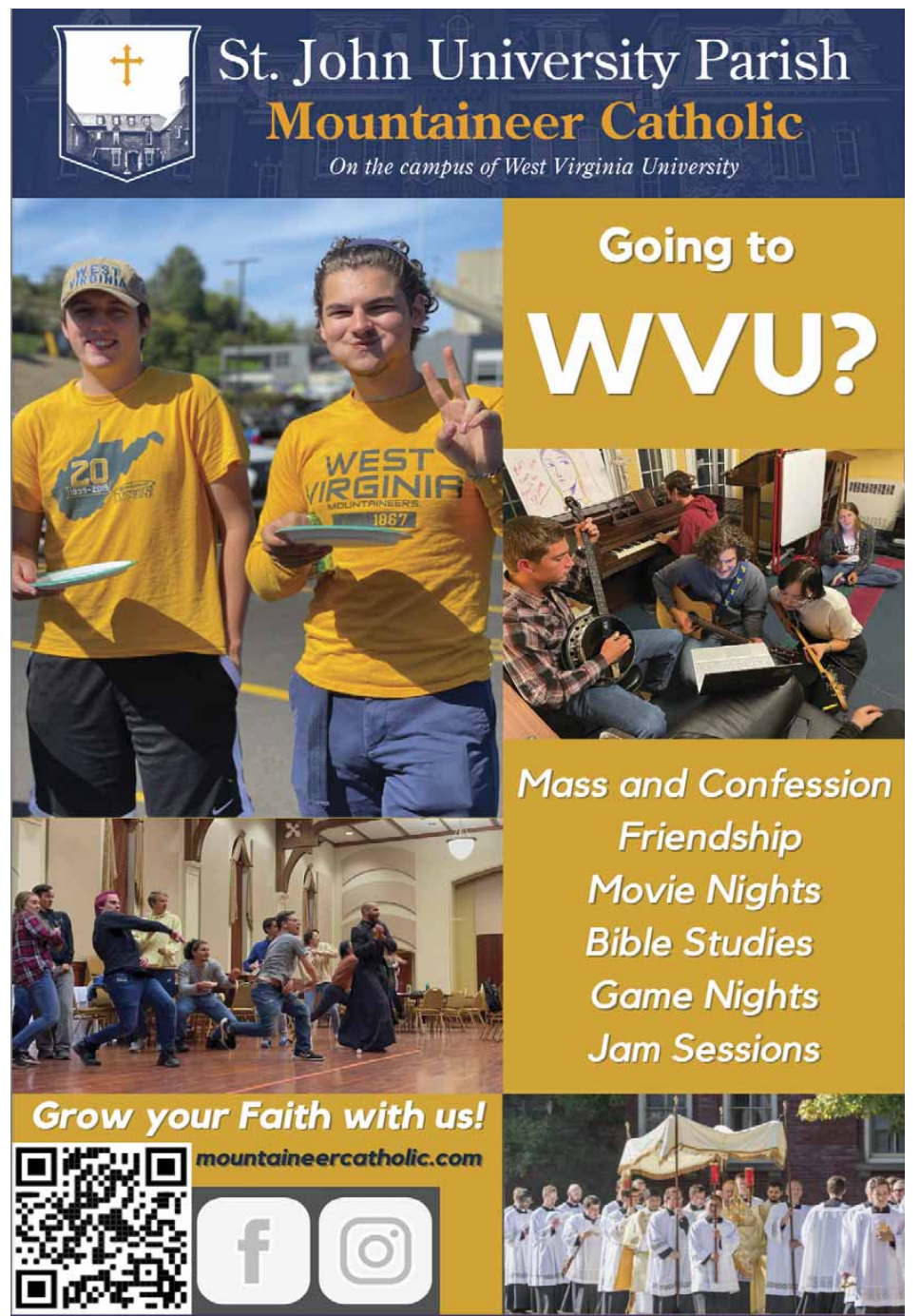
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# Knights of Columbus Support Mothers Through ASAP Program



From left, John Dudzik and GK Phil Emmerth of the Knights of Columbus Carroll Council #504 present a \$10,000 check to Chris Jacobs and Annette Legg from WellSpring Pregnancy Center in Moundsville.



Courtesy photo Steve Roth (left) and Ed Yahn of the Knights of Columbus Council #12195 present a contribution for the Gabriel Project of Marshall County to Cathy Frame, a representative of the organization.

The Knights of Columbus' Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) program continues to provide vital support to mothers and children in West Virginia. Launched in 2022, the program offers financial assistance to pregnancy resource centers, maternity homes, and other organizations serving expectant mothers.

This past year, councils across the state collectively raised over \$21,000 through fundraising efforts, including the Baby Bottle Campaign. With a 20% match ap-

plied by the West Virginia State Council, total contributions exceeded \$25,000.

Carroll Council #504 donated \$10,000 to WellSpring Pregnancy Center in Moundsville, a nonprofit offering free pregnancy testing, counseling, parenting education, and material support to families. Council #12195 contributed to the Gabriel Project of Marshall County, which provides emotional, spiritual, and practical support, including baby supplies and mentoring for mothers in need.

## A message from the West Virginia Knights of Columbus State Council

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# 'Healing and Hope' Initiative Tackles Mental Illness Crisis at Local Level, Say U.S. Bishops

**By Gina Christian, OSV News**

**(OSV News)** — The nation's Catholic bishops have launched a new effort to more closely engage the faithful in addressing the issue of mental health, particularly at the local level.

In a Sept. 16 press release, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced its "Healing and Hope" initiative as a "new component" of the USCCB's National Catholic Mental Health Campaign.

Unveiled in October 2023, the campaign is spearheaded by Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, who leads the USCCB's Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

Several organizations partnered with Archbishop Gudziak and Bishop Barron in developing the campaign — among them Catholic Charities USA, the Catholic Health Association, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability and the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers.

In their introductory message for the effort, the two prelates said their goals were threefold: to raise greater awareness of the issue, to remove the sense of stigma for those suffer-

ing from mental illness, and "to advocate a clear message to all: everyone who needs help should get help."

The "Healing and Hope" initiative takes its name from the campaign's introductory statement by Archbishop Gudziak and Bishop Barron, who stressed that "anyone who is suffering from mental illness or facing mental health challenges" remains "a beloved child of God, a God of healing and hope."

"Healing and Hope" — which is aimed at both those who suffer from mental illness, and those who support them — will feature three new elements to back that message.

A revived digital campaign for the effort will include bishops' reflections, posted to the USCCB's social media platforms, that will "invite all people into deeper conversation on the realities and stigmas of mental health," said the USCCB in its release.

In addition, bishops, clergy, religious and lay people will gather for state-level conferences on "local mental health realities," with the first such event scheduled to take place early next year in New Jersey, said the release.

Parishes are being encouraged to "raise awareness of mental health" by observing "Mental Health Sunday" and praying at Masses during the Oct. 11-12 weekend, which follows World Mental Health Day on Oct. 10.

Resources for Mental Health Sunday are available at [usccb.org/mental-health-sunday](http://usccb.org/mental-health-sunday)

The USCCB also urged faithful to pray the conference's Novena for Mental Health, the nine days of which commence on World Mental Health Day and conclude on Oct. 18, the feast of St. Luke, the evangelist and a patron of health care, who in the Letter to the Colossians is referenced as "the beloved physician" (Col 4:14).

Each day of the novena, which opened the USCCB campaign in October 2023, focuses on a particular aspect of mental health, addressing stigma, social relationships, and the impact of factors such as racism and poverty. Saints and others invoked during the novena include St. Dymphna, patron of those with mental illness; St. Martin de Porres, who experienced racial discrimination throughout his life; and Dorothy Day, a servant of

God who twice attempted suicide as a young woman.

Novena materials can be found online at [usccb.org/mental-health-novena](http://usccb.org/mental-health-novena).

Close to 60 million U.S. adults, or one in five, experienced mental illness in 2021, with more than 14 million of them reporting a serious condition and well over 19 million battling both substance abuse and mental illness concurrently, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

The nation's youth have been particularly hard hit: In 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy issued an advisory on the issue, citing data that showed in 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness, a 40%

spike since 2009.

Among U.S. adults, anxiety disorders (19.1%) top the annual list of reported mental health conditions, followed by major depressive episodes (8.3%) and post-traumatic stress disorder (3.6%), according to data cited by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Bipolar disorder (2.8%), borderline personality disorder (1.4%), obsessive-compulsive disorder (1.2%) and schizophrenia (less than 1%) each represented less than 3% of reported conditions, said the organization on its website.

Those experiencing a mental health crisis can call 911 or call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which also offers support in Spanish.

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

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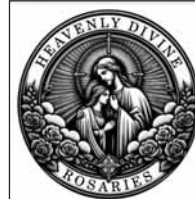


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# Palestinians are Living in ‘Unacceptable’ Conditions, Pope Says

**By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — As tens of thousands of Palestinians were fleeing their homes as Israel launched a major new ground offensive in Gaza City, Pope Leo XIV expressed his “profound closeness to the Palestinian people in Gaza.”

They “continue to live in fear and survive in unacceptable conditions, forced once again to leave their lands,” he said to applause at the end of his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square Sept. 17.

“Before the Almighty Lord who commanded, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ and in the presence of all of human

history, every person always has an inviolable dignity to be respected and protected,” he said.

The pope renewed his appeal “for a ceasefire, the release of hostages, a negotiated diplomatic solution and full respect for international humanitarian law” while inviting everyone to join him “in heartfelt prayer that a dawn of peace and justice may soon arise.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had said the long-planned operation to occupy Gaza City was aimed at Hamas’ “last major stronghold.” Heavy airstrikes hit portions of the city Sept. 16 as Israeli troops began a gradual push from the outskirts.

While many parts of Gaza City

were already destroyed during the war in 2023, about a million Palestinians had still returned to their homes, often in the rubble or in bombed-out buildings, according to the BBC.

The Israel Defense Forces estimated 350,000 people had fled the city by Sept. 16, and more than half a million remain, the BBC reported. People were told to head south to a coastal part of the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory determined that Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza.

“It is clear that there is an intent

to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria set forth in the Genocide Convention,” said Navi Pillay, commission chair, Sept. 16.

Danny Meron, Israel’s Ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, rejected the commission’s findings, saying the report “falsely accuses Israel of genocidal intent,” which cannot be substantiated, and it “promotes a narrative serving Hamas and its supporters in attempting to delegitimize and demonize the state of Israel.”

The report urged Israel and all countries to fulfil their obligations under international law “to end the genocide” and punish those responsible.

# Pope Welcomes Burch as New U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See

**By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Pope Leo XIV welcomed Brian Burch as the new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See Sept. 13, accepting his letters of credential and a chocolate cake topped with a metallic red sign saying, “Happy Birthday Pope Leo XIV.”

Homemade cards for the pope’s 70th birthday Sept. 14 sat alongside the cake, apparently made by some of Ambassador Burch’s nine children, who also met the pope.

Burch’s audience with the pope had its very formal moments, too, as the 50-year-old ambassador, wearing a black tailcoat, presented Pope Leo with a letter from President Donald Trump introducing Burch as the 13th U.S. ambassador to the Holy See.

Pope Leo and Burch then met privately in the library of the Apostolic Palace.

In a series of posts on X, the embassy described the private meeting as “warm and constructive,” saying it including discussion of “an array of global challenges including conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and the war in Gaza.”

“They also touched on protecting religious freedom, the Vatican’s relationship with China, and the AI revolution,” the embassy said.

The two also spoke about “the tragic assassination of U.S. advocate Charlie Kirk,” the embassy said. Kirk, a conservative political activist and founder of the Republican-aligned Turning Point USA, was shot and killed Sept. 10 during a speaking engagement in Orem, Utah.

“Pope Leo underscored that our political differences can never be resolved with violence and told Ambassador Burch that he was praying for the widow of Mr. Kirk and his children,”

the embassy added.

The ambassador “described the meeting as extraordinarily friendly, like talking to a friend back home in Chicago,” the posts continued.

Burch also introduced Pope Leo to his wife, Sara, and their nine children, daughter-in-law and granddaughter.

In December, even before taking office, Trump announced on Truth Social that he was going to nominate Burch as ambassador to the Vatican.

“Brian is a devout Catholic, a father of nine, and President of CatholicVote. He has received numerous awards, and demonstrated exceptional leadership, helping build one of the largest Catholic advocacy groups in the Country,” Trump wrote. Burch “represented me well during the last Election, having garnered more Catholic votes than any Presidential Candidate in History!”

Burch served as president of CatholicVote, a right-leaning political advocacy organization, from 2008 until his nomination as ambassador.

Born July 7, 1975, in Phoenix, he earned a bachelor’s degree in political philosophy from the University of Dallas.

He was confirmed as ambassador by the U.S. Senate Aug. 2 in a vote of 49-44

along party lines.

The Vatican and the U.S. government announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations Jan. 10, 1984.

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# U.S. Bishops Deepen Commitment to Fight Racism with New Permanent Body

**By Gina Christian, OSV News (OSV News)** — The U.S. Catholic bishops have deepened their commitment to combating racism, by making permanent a subcommittee dedicated to working for racial justice and reconciliation in society.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced Sept. 10 that its Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism — established in 2017 under then-USCCB president, and now retired, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, Texas — has been made a permanent USCCB body.

The move, approved by the USCCB's administrative committee Sept. 9, will place the committee, now named the Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation, under the conference's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

That committee's mandate "includes Catholic social teaching on issues of domestic concern such as poverty, housing, the environment, criminal justice, and other

challenges that often have a disproportionate impact on communities of color," said the USCCB in its Sept. 10 media release.

USCCB president Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, said the subcommittee "continues the important work of the temporary ad hoc committee."

The bishops had formed the racism ad hoc committee just days after the violent Aug. 11-12, 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, at which white supremacists protested the planned removal of Confederate statues there, following two city council votes. Amid clashes between rally participants and counterprotestors, James Fields drove his vehicle through a crowd of the latter, killing paralegal Heather Heyer and injuring dozens. Fields is now serving two life sentences.

In his Sept. 10 statement, Archbishop Broglio — who referenced the USCCB's 2018 pastoral letter against racism, "Open Wide Our

Hearts" — said, "As we call for a genuine conversion of heart that will compel change at both individual and institutional levels, I invite all Catholics to join us as we carry forward this work to recognize and uphold the inherent dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God."

"I speak on behalf of the bishop members, staff and consultants of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism in expressing gratitude for the transition of our committee to a standing subcommittee so that the important work of evangelization of the faithful and the community at large may continue in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," said retired Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago, who has been serving as chair of the committee.

With the new subcommittee set to begin work after the USCCB's November plenary assembly, members will have plenty to do.

According to a Gallup poll released Aug. 20, 64% of U.S. adults

believe racism against Black people is widespread, with 83% of Black adults and 61% of white adults expressing this view.

Police interactions are seen as the "most racially inequitable" among six possible scenarios, said respondents.

At the same time, Gallup found that "68% of U.S. adults think civil rights have improved in their lifetime."

Human Rights Watch said that "racial justice remained a pressing human rights concern in the United States in 2024."

While the U.S. "ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination nearly 60 years ago," the nation "has done far too little to implement its provisions," said HRW, adding that "living legacies of slavery and the slaughter and dispossession of Native peoples remain largely unaddressed."

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

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# Parents of Annunciation Shooting Victim Say Daughter's Progress is a 'Miracle'

By **Kate Quiñones, Catholic News Agency**

Less than three weeks after the Annunciation Catholic School shooting in Minnesota that killed two children and injured 21 during Mass, the parents of a 12-year-old girl who was shot in the head say her progress has been "miraculous."

When Sophia Forchas arrived at the hospital with a critical gunshot wound in her head, the doctors warned her parents that her life was in the balance.

"Doctors warned us she was on the brink of death," Forchas' parents, Tom and Amy Forchas, said in a statement. "In that darkest hour, the world responded with faithful devotion and fervent prayer."

As news of the shooting spread, people around the world offered prayers for the victims and the community in prayer services, online, and in the quiet of their own homes.

In the early days after the shooting, Forchas' condition "was changing minute to minute," according to a Sept. 5 update from her parents.

A GoFundMe page organized by Michelle Erickson on the Forchas' behalf has raised more than \$1 million for Sophia's recovery and to support her family with counseling services.

Sophia's younger brother was also inside the school during the shooting, according to Erickson. Sophia's mother, a pediatric critical care nurse, "arrived at work to help during the tragedy, before knowing it was her children's school that was attacked and that her daughter was critically injured," according to the GoFundMe page.

Sophia's parents asked the world for prayers — and the world responded. The Forchases say they have heard from people from Athens to Minneapolis who are praying for their daughter.

In the wake of the tragedy, the Forchas family said that "rays of hope emerged" last week.

Sophia's doctor said she "was showing signs of resilience," the family said. "Her progress to this point is being called miraculous. We are calling it a miracle."

"We thank you for all the prayers, love, and unwavering support from across the globe," the Forchas family said. "The road ahead for Sophia is steep, but she is climbing it with fierce determination."

"She is fighting not just for herself, but for every soul who stood by her in prayer," they continued. "Please continue to keep Sophia in your hearts and prayers. She is a warrior! And she is winning!!"

## 'Shattered and heartbroken, but not lost'

This week, hundreds gathered to support the family of 10-year-old Harper Moyski, one of the two children killed in the shooting. Fletcher Merkel, 8, also died in the attack. Twenty-one other people, mostly children, were also injured.

Mike Moyski and Jackie Flavin, Harper's parents, called her a "light" in their remarks at a celebration of life on Sept. 14 at Lake Harriet Bandshell in Minneapolis.

"She taught us something profound, that light doesn't always mean being strong on your own," Flavin said, according to a report by CBS News. "Sometimes it really means being soft enough to let love in."

"Harper didn't do anything halfway. She was extra in the very best way," Flavin said. "She just packed so much joy and imagination into her short 10 years, and thank God. Thank God she made it all count."

Harper's mother said the last few weeks "have felt like being dropped at the bottom of the ocean, where it is pitch dark, and the pressure is crushing and no human is really meant to survive it."

But in the midst of their suffering, Harper's parents said they feel grateful for the support.

"There's just so much love and support lighting our path that we haven't felt lost," Flavin said. "Shattered and heartbroken, but not lost."

"You've lifted us up during the hardest days of our lives, and we are so grateful," Moyski said.

## Aftermath of a tragedy

Annunciation Catholic School students are returning to school with a modified schedule this week, according to an announcement by the school's leaders. The school will have supportive activities as well as extra security and support staff.

The church where the shooting took place will have to be reconsecrated, according to the archdiocese.

Reconsecration is a Catholic ritual used to purify a sacred space after it has been desecrated.

Father Matthew Crane, a canon lawyer in Minnesota, explained that as part of the rite, "the sanctuary is stripped in a manner consistent with Good Friday."

"After the procession, much like the rite for initially dedicating a church, the celebrant, usually a diocesan bishop, blesses holy water and then sprinkles the people and walls with it," Crane said. "Penitential

prayers are offered, and the altar is only dressed with cloth and candles after these rituals have concluded."

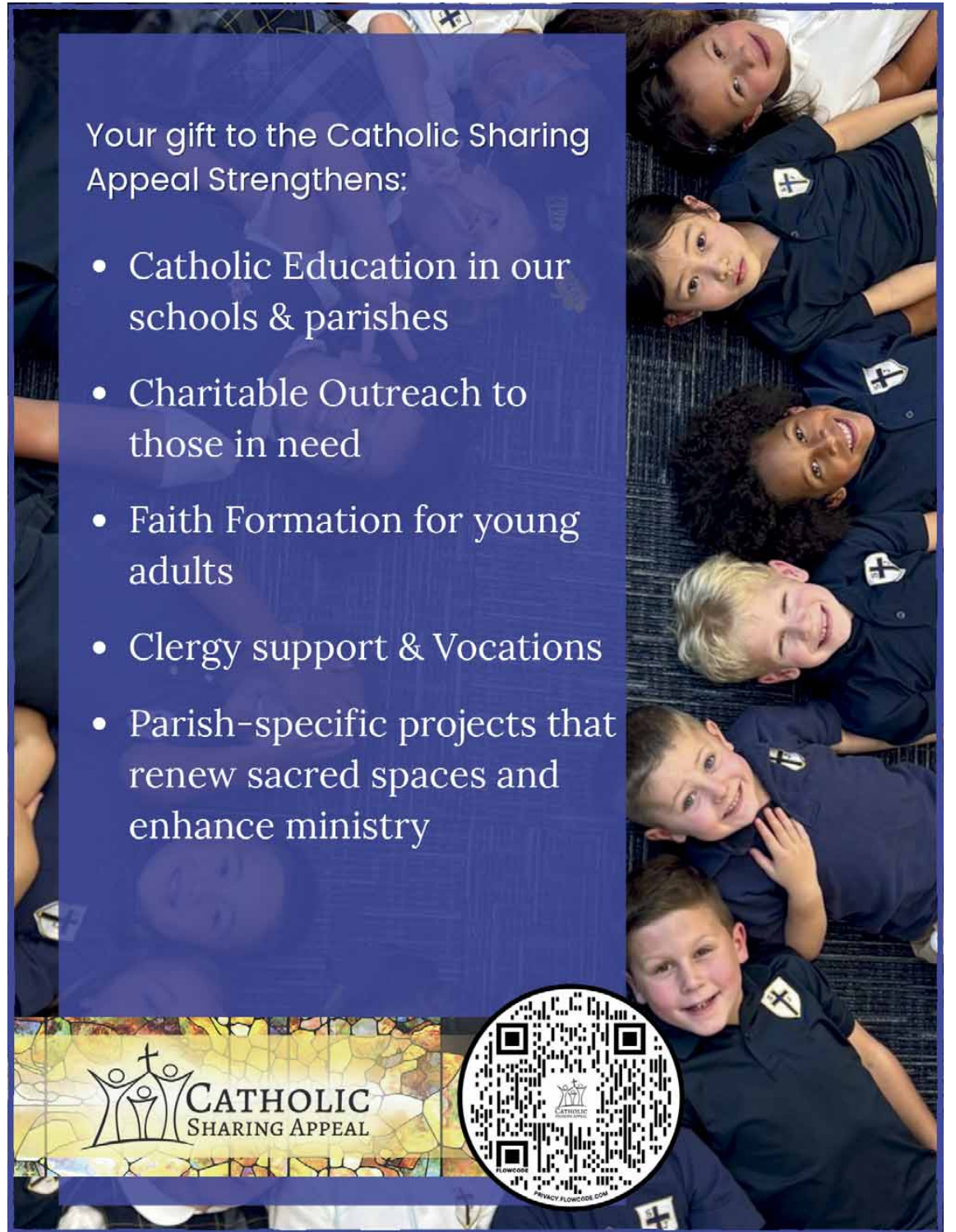
Crane said the "spiritual effects" include "purification and reparation."

Crane, who has attended a reconsecration in the past, said he "was surprised at how, by virtue of participating in that ritual, I felt connected to and comfortable in the building and place."

"I would hope that in Annunciation, or any Catholic community, the ritual of reconsecration would grant the community a profound sense of being once again at home in a house of God," he said.

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# Los obispos de EEUU refuerzan su compromiso contra el racismo con un nuevo subcomité permanente

Por Gina Christian, OSV News

**(OSV News)** — Los obispos católicos estadounidenses han reforzado su compromiso contra el racismo al convertir en permanente una subcomisión dedicada a trabajar por la justicia racial y la reconciliación en la sociedad.

La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB por sus siglas en inglés) anunció el 10 de septiembre que su Comité Ad Hoc contra el Racismo, creado en 2017. Esta medida se tomó bajo la presidencia del entonces presidente de la conferencia, y ahora jubilado, cardenal Daniel N. DiNardo Galveston-Houston, Texas, se ha convertido en un organismo permanente de la USCCB.

La medida, aprobada por el comité administrativo de la USCCB el 9 de septiembre, situará al comité, ahora denominado Subcomité para la Promoción de la Justicia Racial y la Reconciliación, bajo la autoridad del Comité de Justicia Doméstica y Desarrollo Humano de la conferencia.

El mandato de ese comité "incluye la doctrina social católica sobre cuestiones de interés nacional, como la pobreza, la vivienda, el medio ambiente, la justicia penal y otros retos que a menudo tienen un impacto desproporcionado en las comunidades de color", afirmó la USCCB en su comunicado de prensa del 10 de septiembre.

El presidente de la USCCB, el arzobispo Timothy P. Broglio, de la Arquidiócesis para los Servicios Militares de los Estados Unidos, dijo que el subcomité "continúa la importante labor del comité ad hoc temporal".

Los obispos habían formado el comité ad hoc contra el racismo pocos días después de la violenta manifestación "Unite the Right" (Unir a la derecha) celebrada los días 11 y 12 de agosto de 2017 en Charlottesville, Virginia, en la que los supremacistas blancos protestaron contra la retirada prevista de las estatuas confederadas de la ciudad, tras votos del consejo de la ciudad.

En medio de los enfrentamientos entre los participantes en la manifestación y los contramanifestantes, James Fields condujo su vehículo a través de una multitud de estos últimos, matando a la asistente legal Heather Heyer e hiriendo a decenas de personas. Fields cumple ahora dos cadenas perpetuas.

En su declaración del 10 de septiembre, el arzobispo Broglio, que hizo referencia a la carta pastoral de la USCCB contra el racismo de 2018, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism" ("Abramos nuestros corazones: El incesante llamado al amor - Carta pastoral contra el racismo", dijo: "Al pedir una auténtica conversión del corazón que impulse el cambio tanto a nivel individual como institucional, invito a todos los católicos a unirse a nosotros en esta labor de reconocer y defender la dignidad inherente de cada persona creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios".

"Hablo en nombre de los obispos miembros, el personal y los consultores del Comité Ad Hoc contra el Racismo para expresar mi gratitud por la transición de nuestro comité a un subcomité permanente, de modo que la importante labor de evangelización de los fieles y de la comunidad en general pueda continuar en el espíritu

del Evangelio de Jesucristo", dijo el obispo auxiliar emérito Joseph N. Perry, de Chicago, quien ha sido presidente del comité.

Con el nuevo subcomité listo para comenzar a trabajar después de la asamblea plenaria de la USCCB en noviembre, los miembros tendrán mucho que hacer.

Según una encuesta de Gallup publicada el 20 de agosto, el 64% de los adultos estadounidenses cree que el racismo contra los negros está muy extendido, y el 83 % de los adultos negros y el 61% de los adultos blancos y el 64% de adultos hispanos expresan esta opinión.

Las interacciones con la policía se consideran "las más injustas desde el punto de vista racial" entre seis posibles escenarios, según los encuestados.

Al mismo tiempo, Gallup descubrió que "el 68 % de los adultos estadounidenses cree que los derechos civiles han mejorado a lo largo de su vida".

Human Rights Watch (HRW) afirmó que "la justicia racial seguía siendo una preocupación urgente en materia de derechos humanos en Estados Unidos en 2024".

Aunque Estados Unidos "ratificó la Convención Internacional sobre la Eliminación de todas las Formas de Discriminación Racial hace casi 60 años", la nación "ha hecho muy poco para aplicar sus disposiciones", afirmó HRW, añadiendo que "el legado vivo de la esclavitud y la matanza y despojo de los pueblos nativos sigue sin abordarse en gran medida".

(Gina Christian es reportera multimedia de OSV News.)

## 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 Estados Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web [www.repostbishopabuse.org](http://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 eclesiales 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 Am-

biente 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](http://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, Diocese 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 ofrece 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](http://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.

# Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Confirmation Schedule, Fall 2025 Bishop Mark Brennan, Celebrant

Sunday, Sept. 28: St. James the Apostle Parish, Clarksburg, 11 a.m.

Thursday, Oct. 9: St. Anthony Parish, Fairmont, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 18: St. Anthony Parish, Charleston, 5 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 19: Sacred Heart Parish, Huntington, 9 a.m.

Saturday, Nov. 15: St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 18: St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 6: St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee, 4 p.m.

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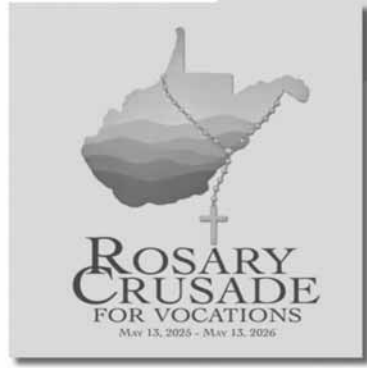
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**To start this ministry in your parish, contact:**  
Kathleen Barton, Director of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston  
(304) 3233-0880, Ext. 289; [kbarton@dwc.org](mailto:kbarton@dwc.org)

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6:30 WOAY ABC 4 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)  
9:30 WVVA NBC 6 Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)  
9:30 DC News Now Hagerstown-Washington D.C.  
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