

THE CATHOLIC
Spirit

Msgr. Peterson Taken to Final Rest



Colleen Rowan photo

At the end of the Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. Joseph L. Peterson, V.G., at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 17, Bishop Mark Brennan, clergy, family, and friends take him to his final rest.

By Colleen Rowan

In our sorrow at the loss of Msgr. Joseph L. Peterson, V.G., consolation can be found in this: “We knew a good man. We knew a good priest who put God’s people first.” Bishop Mark Brennan shared these words in his homily at the Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. Peterson at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 17. Concelebrating the Mass were 40 of monsignor’s brother priests. Nine deacons participated and the cathedral was filled with faithful and women religious from around the state.

Msgr. Peterson served all over West Virginia and would have celebrated his 50th anniversary of priesthood on April 19, 2025.

“For nearly 50 years, he gave himself generously to God’s people,” Bishop Brennan said.

He was a pastor in various parishes, the bishop said, and came out of retirement twice when he was needed—first to serve as rector of the cathedral in 2019 and then again last April to serve as vicar general of the diocese, a position he held until his passing on Sept. 12 at the age of 75.

Although he only knew Msgr. Peterson for five years, Bishop Brennan saw in him many of the qualities of which the Lord speaks in the Beatitudes “which bring God’s blessings, kindness to the needy, mercy to the afflicted, gentleness in dealing with sinners; a desire to promote unity and peace in the church; the spiritual poverty of putting others’ interests ahead of his own.”

Consolation can also be found, Bishop Brennan said, “in the belief that our separation from

our brother and friend is not permanent but only a pause in our relationship, that the separation will end when the Lord fulfills his promise to come back and raise the dead to new life. Then with him, Msgr. Joe, and all the saints we shall give glory to God and share in the eternal banquet as we behold our God to whom we looked to save us. That is the promise that God made on his holy mountain. Be of good heart, serve God according to your state of life, and look forward to the wonderful life God has promised to which Msgr. Joe Peterson preached.”

At the end of the Mass, Bishop Brennan asked Father T. Mathew Rowgh to assist in the final commendation.

See “Peterson” on Page 3

Inside: Law Enforcement and First Responders ‘Share in Christ’s Work to Overcome Many Forms of Evil,’ Bishop Says at Blue Mass, Page 4



FBI Investigating Apparent Assassination Attempt on Donald Trump

By Gina Christian, OSV News (OSV News) — Former president Donald J. Trump was the target of an apparent assassination attempt Sept. 15, weeks after being wounded in a previous attack during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

Campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said Trump was “safe following gunshots in his vicinity” as the former president played golf at the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Suspect Ryan Wesley Routh was taken into custody after fleeing the golf course in an SUV. Secret Service agents stationed ahead of Trump on the course spotted Routh hiding in shrubbery with an AK-style rifle fitted with a scope, and “immediately engaged” with the suspect, said Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw in a Sept. 15 news conference.

A GoPro camera and backpacks were also discovered where Routh had been positioned, the sheriff said.

Bradshaw said the Secret Service had alerted his agency to shots fired at 1:30 p.m. and “immediately sealed off the area.”

An unnamed witness helped law enforcement track down Routh’s vehicle, a black Nissan model the witness photographed, said Bradshaw.

Routh was apprehended while driving on I-95 into Martin County and was identified by the witness, said Bradshaw.

The FBI is investigating the incident as an apparent assassination

attempt.

Trump released a statement Sept. 15 saying, “There were gunshots in my vicinity, but before rumors start spiraling out of control, I wanted you to hear this first: I AM SAFE AND WELL! Nothing will slow me down. I will NEVER SURRENDER.”

President Joe Biden said in a Sept. 15 statement he was “relieved that the former President is unharmed.”

On July 13, Trump sustained a graze wound to his ear when 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks fired at the former president during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. Crooks, who had scaled a building just outside the rally area, was killed by Secret Service agents. Former fire chief Corey Comperatore was also killed while shielding his wife and daughter from gunfire. Two other rally attendees were wounded.

“As I have said many times, there is no place for political violence or for any violence ever in our country, and I have directed my team to continue to ensure that Secret Service has every resource, capability and protective measure necessary to ensure the former President’s continued safety,” said Biden in his Sept. 15 statement.

Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, in a statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on June 18, said that “more and more it has become abundantly clear

that violent behavior — both physical and verbal — is now seen by many as an acceptable means for carrying out political or ideological disputes.”

Archbishop Gudziak, who chairs the USCCB’s Committee for Domestic Justice and Human Development, noted that “people in public office are receiving more death threats than ever before, some of which turn into physical attacks.

“About half of Americans expect there will be violence in response to future presidential elections results,” said the archbishop.

Yet “America can do so much better,” he stressed. “There is no good reason to resort to violence to resolve political issues. ... Practically speaking, political violence does not ensure positive or lasting change.”

“We pray and urge all Christians and people of good will: abstain from political violence of any kind!” Archbishop Gudziak urged. “Instead, ‘pursue what leads to peace and building up one another’ (Rom. 14:19) through dialogue, seeking justice.”


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


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://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, click “Diocese”, then “Offices,” then “Office of Safe Environment.”

	September 20, 2024	Office: 1322 Eoff St. Mailing: PO Box 230 Wheeling, WV 26003 (304) 232-0444	thecatholic spiritwv.org dwc.org
	Vol. 55, No. 37		

Publisher: Bishop Mark E. Brennan.....
Executive Editor: Colleen Rowan, Ext. 347.....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. 

Published every Friday by e-mail and printed 10 times a year (see schedule, right). All issues sent to each registered Catholic household free of charge. Donations to help offset the cost of producing The Catholic Spirit are welcomed. Out-of-diocese subscriptions are \$25 annually. The Catholic Spirit intends its news reports to be fair and accurate in every regard. The opinions of correspondents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Catholic Spirit. Submission of news releases, stories and color photos welcomed and encouraged. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

The Catholic Spirit’s Print Schedule for 2024

(Digital issues will continue to be published by date every Friday, delivered by e-mail and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org)

This is the new print publication schedule for The Catholic Spirit. Each print issue is named for a memorial, feast day, or celebration of the Church within the month of publication. The following provides the name of the issue; the date of the memorial, feast day, or celebration; and the publication date of the issue.

Our Lady of the Rosary
Memorial, October 7

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is October 4

Advent

First Sunday of Advent, December 1

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is November 22

Christmas

Feast Day, December 25

The Catholic Spirit publication date for this issue is December 20

Peterson...

Cont'd from Page 1

The designated concelebrants of the Mass were Very Rev. Sebastian E. Devasya, V.E.; Very Rev. Donald X. Higgs, Assoc. V.E., V.F.; Very Rev. Walter M. Jagela, Assoc. V.F.; Father Penu-maka Manikyalarao; and Father Martin Smay. Deacon of the Word was Deacon Steve Wharton; Deacon of the Eucharist was Deacon Doug Breiding; and master of ceremonies was Father John Soplinski. Gift bearers were Patty Purpura, secretary in the Office of the Vicar General; and Tina High, executive assistant to the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy.

The Handbell Choir of St. Michael Parish in Wheeling, where Msgr. Peterson served as pastor from 2016 to 2018, joined the cathedral choir to provide music for the Mass. The Handbell Choir was under the direction of Chad Carter, chancellor of the diocese and organist and Liturgical Music director at St. Michael's.

Msgr. Peterson's journey to final rest began the night before the Mass of Christian Burial in Weirton at Sacred Heart of Mary Parish. A vigil was celebrated at the church that evening by Father Higgs.

Throughout the years, Monsignor served all over West Virginia. He spent the longest time of his priesthood as pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Huntington from 1990 to 2004. During this time, he was also dean of the Huntington Deanery.

Msgr. Peterson's obituary states the following: He



A portrait of Msgr. Joseph L. Peterson, V.G., stands by the altar at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling at his Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 17.

Colleen Rowan photo

served as chairman of the diocese's Building and Renovation Commission and served on the Clergy Personnel Committee, Board of Directors and the Trustees of the Priests' Health and Retirement Association, Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Consultors, Diocesan Finance Council, the Bishop's Executive Staff, and the Executive Committee of

the Presbyteral Council.

As a deacon, he served at Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield from 1974 to 1975. Following his ordination to priesthood, he was associate pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Wheeling from 1975 to 1978 and St. Peter Parish in Fairmont from 1978 to 1979. He served as rector of the Wheeling Seminary House of Studies from 1979 to 1984, as direc-

tor of the diocese's Office of Vocation Ministries in Wheeling from 1980 to 1984, and promoter of justice for the Diocesan Tribunal in 1981. He was pastor of Wheeling's St. Mary and St. Ladislaus parishes from 1984 to 1990. He then headed to the southern region of the diocese in Huntington to serve as pastor of Our Lady of Fatima in 1990. In 2004, he was appointed

pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Parkersburg and vicar forane of the Parkersburg Vicariate. From 2006 to 2007, he was temporary administrator of St. John Parish in St. Marys and Christ our Hope Parish in Harrisville. In 2008, he served as temporary administrator of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Parkersburg and St. Monica Mission in Lu-beck.

In 2012, he was re-appointed vicar forane of the Parkersburg Vicariate serving until 2016. He then became pastor of St. Michael's in Wheeling in 2016 and was then appointed rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling in 2019. He also served as vicar forane of the Wheeling Vicariate from 2018 to 2021. He retired from active ministry in 2020 and was appointed as vicar general of the diocese in 2023.

Msgr. Peterson's family said he was an avid gardener and ham radio operator. He loved his family and loved spending time with them. He loved celebrating holidays with family, especially Christmas.

He was preceded in death by his parents John and Eleanore Peterson. He is survived by his siblings, Marianne Widmeyer (Les); Charles A. Peterson; John Peterson (Rhinda); Richard Peterson; and Christine Nesbitt (Jack); as well as seven nieces, two nephews, one great niece, and three great nephews.

Interment was in New Cumberland Cemetery in New Cumberland.

The Mass was livestreamed on the diocese's Facebook page.

NOVENA TO THE
Infant Jesus of Prague

Theme: Bringing Others to Christ

SEPTEMBER 9 TO NOVEMBER 4, 2024
NINE CONSECUTIVE MONDAYS
7:00 P.M.

"The More You Honor Me, The More I Will Bless You."

THE Cathedral of St. Joseph

 CATHOLIC DISTANCE UNIVERSITY

CDU partners with the diocese to offer **free** non-credit continuing education courses for catechists and those involved in parish ministry.

Visit www.pathlms.com/cdu to browse the courses and register. Use the access code,

CDU20DIOCESEWC

when setting up your account to receive your free tuition! cdu.edu

Law Enforcement and First Responders 'Share in Christ's Work to Overcome Many Forms of Evil,' Bishop Says at Blue Mass



Colleen Rowan photos

Clockwise from top left: Bagpiper Zac Gordon leads the procession at the beginning of the Blue Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling Sept. 14; Bishop Mark Brennan greets Wheeling Mayor Denny Magruder and his wife Barbara after the Mass; processing into the cathedral are Lou Vargo, director of the Wheeling-Ohio County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, and his wife Pat; Retired Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Wheeling Ed Geisel and his wife Mary; the worship aid for the Mass; and former Stone Church Volunteer Fire Department EMTs Barbara and Jerry Kulpa. Jerry is also a retired dispatcher for Ohio County.

By Colleen Rowan

The police and firefighters and first responders, whom we honor this night and pray for, their role contributes to overcoming evil," Bishop Mark Brennan said in his homily at the Sept. 14 Blue Mass in Wheeling. "And you who exercise those safety professions stand against physical evils such as fires and injuries and moral evils such as crime. You do not do so in the abstract but in the concrete situations you encounter every day. You do it with the constant risk that evil may strike you down as it did Jesus while you are trying to save people's lives and establish peace

and security in our neighborhoods."

The annual Blue Mass was celebrated by the bishop at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. The parish co-sponsors the Mass each year with the Knights of Columbus Charles Carroll Assembly 1185 of Wheeling.

A procession of first responders at the beginning of the Mass was led by Zac Gordon playing "Highland Cathedral" on the bagpipes. Honored guests in the procession included Lou Vargo, director of the Wheeling-Ohio County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, and his wife Pat; as well as Barbara and Jerry Kulpa. Jerry is a retired

dispatcher for Ohio County and they were both EMTs for Stone Church Volunteer Fire Department. Retired Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Wheeling Ed Geisel and his wife Mary were also among honored guests and were the gift bearers for the Mass. Attending the Mass were Wheeling Mayor Denny Magruder and his wife Barbara.

In his homily, Bishop Brennan said that human beings are supposed to use God's gift of free will to do good, but they often use this freedom to do evil things. "From betrayals of marriage vows to abortion to street violence and wars, we have produced much evil in a world that God pro-

nounced good," Bishop Brennan said. What can be done to overcome this profound derailment of God's plan for his creatures? he asked.

"This is where Jesus Christ enters in," the bishop said. "He is the very son of God who assumed a true human nature and lived among us. He came to overcome the dominion of evil. Like a giant sponge, he soaked up all of the world's evil by accepting the cruel suffering of the cross and an unjust death."

In Matthew 16:24, Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

See "Blue" on Page 5



Blue...

Cont'd from Page 4

"If we want to be his disciples and benefit from his victory over sin and death," the bishop said, "we have to imitate his willingness to suffer unjustly and die to our selfishness."

The bishop then noted Mark 8:35—"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

The Lord assures us that this is God's way, the bishop said, "that we extend through time and space Jesus's victory over evil. We become like little sponges soaking up evil by not responding to violence with violence, by not responding to lies with lies, by not responding to betrayals with further betrayals. We refuse to spread evil. Jesus tells us to stand up to the injustices and lack of mercy in our world no matter what it costs us."

In light of this, the bishop said, police, firefighters, and first responders contribute to overcoming evil.

Bishop Brennan remembered the sacrifices law enforcement and first responders and their families made in his time as an auxiliary bishop in Baltimore.

"I went to the funeral of a Catholic firefighter who died trying to put out a raging fire," he recalled. "I have talked with the son of a police officer who died trying to get people out of one of the Twin Towers the terrorists destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001."

At Wheeling's Heritage Port stands a monument to firefighters who have died in service to the people of the city as a reminder of their sacrifice, the bishop said.

For those who risk their lives for others today, Bishop Brennan said, "While we fervently pray that God will protect you from harm, we and you know the danger exists in the evil you are trying to overcome and could kill you. Nonetheless you don't run away but continue to serve the public and for this we are grateful."

For those who want to follow Jesus in freedom from sin and death, faith must not remain inert but be energetic in good works, Bishop Brennan said. He pointed to the second reading for the Mass: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ... So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-18).

Bishop Brennan continued, saying: "Our police, firefighters, and first responders are engaged in good works that reveal their faith in Jesus who, as St. Peter later said... 'went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him'" (Acts of the Apostles 10:38).

"You who serve us in those safety professions," the bishop said, "are not merely following orders to get a paycheck but you're sharing in Christ's work to overcome many forms of evil."

The bishop recalled the words of President John F. Kennedy who said, "On earth, God's work must truly be our own."

"I hope you sense the larger purpose of your work and trust that God is with you," the bishop said to law enforcement and first responders. "We all confront the mystery of evil doing its will in a world that God made good. Our Christian faith is that God is stronger than all moral and physical evils and has already defeated them in principle through the saving work of his son. But like an army that has lost a battle but is still fighting as it retreats, evil demons and evil people are still capable of afflicting us. We must have the confidence that sustained by God's grace we can fight back and share in Christ's victory as we refuse to let evil have its way. When we are willing to deny our selfish impulses and take up the cross of suffering on behalf of others, we die to self but live to God. A just and merciful God will not forget us and will receive us with open arms when our earthly work is done."

Mansuetto
Roofing & Sheet Metal

N.F. Mansuetto & Sons, Inc.
Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors

Serving West Virginia, the Ohio Valley and the Catholic Community

Since 1945
Three Generations of Family Management
116 Wood Street
Martins Ferry OH 43935
740-633-7320

SAVE THE DATE

P.A.C.E.
CONFERENCE

Parish Administration & Collaborative Education

OCT 16-17

2024

St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston

Look for more information/registration details to be posted at www.dwc.org

Catholic in Recovery

To start this ministry in your parish, contact:
Kathleen Barton, Director of Social Ministry
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
(304) 233-0880, Ext. 289; kbarton@dwc.org

Catholic in Recovery is a nonprofit organization that seeks to serve those suffering from addictions and unhealthy attachments.

St. Paul School Celebrates 100th Anniversary



Courtesy photo

WEIRTON—Bishop Mark Brennan cuts the ribbon at the 100th anniversary celebration at St. Paul School in Weirton Sept. 15. With him are, from left, Father Binu Sebastian, MCBS, pastor of the school and St. Paul Parish in Weirton; Jennifer Hornyak, superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston; Principal Jamie Lesho; and Weirton Mayor Harold Miller. The celebration began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Brennan at the church. He then blessed the school and cut the ribbon to begin the open house that featured memorabilia and photo stations as well as refreshments and games.

We Are Now A Full Service Hardware Store!
 We Also Specialize in Plumbing, Heating & Cooling
Do It Best
Lou W. Nau, Inc.
 69 Edgington Lane, Wheeling Phone (304) 242-6311
 louwnau.doitbest.com

**JOHNSON
 BOILER WORKS, INC**
 53 Marshall St.
 Benwood, WV 26031
 (304) 232-3070
 Steam Boiler Repairs

Jarvis-Williams Funeral Homes
 Weldon P. Williams, FD & LIC
 "Boots" Jarvis, Co-Owner & Sec
 1224 S. Bridge Street,
 New Martinsville, WV
 (304) 455-3456
 309 N 4th Avenue,
 Paden City, WV
 (304) 337-2311

SEASON OF CREATION THROUGH MUSICAL PRAYER AND PRAISE



Date: September 23, 2024

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Mount St. Joseph Chapel



Chad Carter

**Music Director and Organist
Chancellor of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston**

Chad Carter, a Wheeling native. Graduated summa cum laude from Wheeling Jesuit University in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History; in 2001, he graduated from WJU with a Masters in Business Administration.

In 2009, he became Chancellor of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Since 1993, Chad has worked at various parishes as music director and organist.



Anna Harsh

**Award-winning choreographer
Artistic Director of Allegro Dance Company**

Driven by her dedication to holistic wellness, Anna is not only a certified Pilates Instructor but also an E-RYT200 Yoga Instructor. She believes in the power of mindful movement and its ability to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

With a dynamic background in movement and expression, she holds a Masters of Arts Degree in Communication from West Virginia University and a Bachelors of Arts degree in Dance from Slippery Rock University.



Stephen Pishner

**Director of Music and Liturgy
Composer and Emerging Recording Artist**

Stephen is a 1990 Graduate of WV Wesleyan, holding a Bachelors in Music Education with an emphasis in Pipe Organ. He is the Director of Music and Liturgy at All Saints Catholic Church in Bridgeport WV and is a published composer with G.I.A. Publications Inc., Chicago Ill.

Stephen is a singer, keyboardist, composer and emerging recording artist and is best defined as an eclectic energetic musician. He hopes that every note he plays and sings will lift people up and put some joy into the mix of their day, at least while the music lasts.

Free Will Offering

Reserve your spot today!

Contact Anna Marie Troiani at 304-907-0171
or email at: atroiani@csjoseph.org

Twelfth Annual West Virginia Prison Chaplains Retreat Held in Charleston

CHARLESTON — The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Prison Ministry, under the direction of Father William Kuchunsky and Deacon Rue Thompson, hosted the 12th Annual West Virginia Prison Chaplains Retreat at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston Aug. 29. This was made possible with the Office of Prison Ministry working in collaboration with the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation and their Staff from the Commissioner's Office.

The prison chaplains are responsible for providing service to the inmates of their facilities that includes many different religions. The topic of the retreat each year is centered around the concept of providing service to others, while at the same time hold tight to your own faith in Christianity.

The presenter for the retreat this year was Sue Smith, Dominican Sister of Hope associate. Smith based her presentation and discussion upon the biblical story about Joseph and his coat of many colors, and how he gave much service to so many people of different religions in Egypt. Her very interesting presentation was well received by everyone present.

After Deacon Thompson made a few housekeeping remarks before the start of the retreat, Rev. CJ Rider, deputy director of Re-Entry and Offender Activities, opened the day



Those attending the retreat are, from left, in the first row: Assistant Commissioner Anne Thomas; Dianna Vinscavich, Lakin; Michael Bockarie, Regional Jails Region 2; Rev. CJ Rider, deputy director of Re-Entry and Offender Activities; David Snyder, Pruntytown; Ben Adams, St. Marys; Daniel Arbogast, Huttonsville; Sue Smith, Dominican Sister of Hope associate. In the second row, from left, are: Deacon Rue Thompson, co-director of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Prison Ministry; Darryl Christian, Stevens; and Ryan Seabolt, Salem. In the third row, from left, are: Todd Corley, Huttonsville; Father William Kuchinsky, director of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Prison Ministry; Danny Cunningham, Charleston; Tim Meadows, Parkersburg; Terry Mayhew, Catalyst Ministry; Allen Linder, Eastern Regional; Mike Taylor, Northern; Commissioner William Marshall; and Robert Totten, The Answers Ministry.

Courtesy photo

with a timely reflection.

As usual, the St. John XXIII Pastoral Center Staff provided a wonderful buffet luncheon for the re-

treat participants, and were joined by Commissioner William Marshall and some other staff members from the Corrections Central Office.

They came to speak a few words of appreciation and encouragement to the chaplains for their dedication to their ministries.



Courtesy photo

West Virginia Prison Chaplains Retreat attendees are shown.

Daily Living
with Fr. Chapin
Sunday Mornings

6:30 WTOV FOX 9	Wheeling-Steubenville
7:30 WOWK CBS 13	Huntington-Charleston
8:00 WBOY NBC 12	Weston-Clarksburg-Fairmont
6:30 WOAY ABC 4	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
8:30 WVNS FOX 59	Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill (Lewisburg)
11:00 WDVM 25	Hagerstown-Washington D.C.

Plus watch online at - www.mydailyliving.com and YouTube

Panhandle 800.504.7054
CLEANING & RESTORATION
Wheeling • Morgantown • Charleston
Pittsburgh • Sarasota
FIRE SMOKE WIND MOLD SEWAGE WATER
PanhandleCR.com

**“CALL THE RESTORATION COMPANY
THE MOUNTAINEERS CALL”**

ALTMAYER 304-232-0330
FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATORY
"THE PRE-ARRANGEMENT FUNERAL HOME"

Wheeling Chapel 1400 Eoff Street Wheeling, WV 304-232-0330	South Wheeling Chapel 3828 Jacob Street Wheeling, WV 304-232-5444	Elm Grove Chapel 154 Kruger Street Elm Grove, WV 304-242-0330
Benwood-McMechen 214 Marshall Street McMechen, WV 304-232-1710	Moundsville 118 Grant Avenue Moundsville, WV 304-845-4560	Beck-Altmeier 204 West Main Street St. Clairsville, OH 740-695-0475

James E. Altmeier, Jr. President
James E. Altmeier, Sr. Chairman
Eugene T. Foley Vice President

www.altmeyer.com

THE ST. JOSEPH MEN'S GROUP
INVITES YOU TO A:

ROSARY RALLY



3pm, Oct. 13, 2024

Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
1114 Virginia St E, Charleston, WV

FR. PHILLIP SZABO - HOMILIST



Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart



LEWIS GIANOLA PLLC

Webster J. Arceneaux • Matthew R. Bowles • James A. Gianola
John F. Gianola • Sandra H. Kinney • Mark A. Sadd

Charleston | Morgantown
A West Virginia law firm www.lewisgianola.com



MICHAEL J. TUPTA, D.D.S.

Dentistry That Makes You Smile

1701 Oakhurst Drive
Charleston, WV 25314
304-744-4150

MyDentistInCharleston.com

Accepting New Patients



LANDSCAPING and SUPPLY LLC

Mowing • Landscaping • Patios • Retaining Walls

Supply Yard

Chris Duplaga, Owner
140 Peninsula Street, Wheeling
www.topnotchlandscape.com



office@topnotchlandscape.com (304) 233-0332

Place your ad here

Vatican Sees Spiritual Value of Medjugorje, Doesn't Judge it Supernatural



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

Pilgrims pray around a statue of Mary on Apparition Hill in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in this 2011 file photo.

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With some prudence, Catholics can benefit spiritually from the messages and spiritual practices associated with the alleged apparitions of Mary in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, said the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“This does not imply a declaration of the supernatural character of the phenomenon,” nor does it mean that the tens of thousands of alleged messages from Mary published by the supposed “seers” are authentic, the dicastery said in a long “Note About the Spiritual Experience Connected with Medjugorje,” released Sept. 19.

With the approval of Pope Francis, the dicastery did, however, recognize “the abundant and widespread fruits, which are so beautiful and positive,” associated with devotion to Mary, Queen of Peace, and with pilgrimages to Medjugorje.

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, presented the note at a news conference Sept. 19. He said he had not met with the alleged visionaries, but that once the notification was prepared, he wrote to the six of them with some “suggestions” about the future. He provided no further details.

The cardinal also showed reporters the official “nihil obstat” — a declaration of no objection — issued by Bishop Petar Palic of Mostar-Duvno, the diocese where Medjugorje is located, authorizing public devotion there to Mary, Queen of Peace.

While it is possible that a pope could go further and make a declaration about whether the alleged apparitions and messages have a supernatural origin, Cardinal Fernández said he

asked Pope Francis if he wanted to move in that direction and the pope said, “Not at all.”

The devotions in Medjugorje began after six young people, aged 10 to 16, said Mary began appearing to them in June 1981. Three of them say they still have apparitions of Mary each day, while the other three have them only on special occasions.

The Vatican’s positive judgment of the spiritual experience connected to Medjugorje highlighted: “abundant conversions; a frequent return to the sacraments, particularly, the Eucharist and reconciliation; many vocations to priestly, religious and married life; a deepening of the life of faith; a more intense practice of prayer; many reconciliations between spouses; and the renewal of marriage and family life.”

“It should be noted that such experiences occur above all in the context of pilgrimages to the places associated with the original events rather than in meeting with the ‘visionaries’ to be present for the alleged apparitions,” the dicastery added.

The 10,000-word notification looked in-depth at hundreds of the “alleged messages,” highlighting the positive, orthodox character of most of them while cautioning that some contain questionable theological affirmations or appear to be more a reflection of the young people’s thoughts than what the church would expect from Mary.

Archbishop Aldo Cavalli, the resident apostolic visitor to Medjugorje, is charged with determining whether to allow the publication of alleged messages revealed in the future or alleged messages from the past that have not yet been published, the notification said.

At the news conference, Cardinal Fernández said the wording of some of the messages is “not exactly from St. Thomas Aquinas.” As an example, he pointed to one about the faithful departed being happy when Masses are celebrated for them, a statement which could give the impression that even those in purgatory can be happy.

A key principle in the church’s evaluation of phenomena like Medjugorje, the note said, is that “when one recognizes an action of the Holy Spirit in the midst of a spiritual experience, it does not mean that everything belonging to that experience is thereby free from all imprecisions, imperfections, and areas of possible confusion.”

Affirming the spiritual value of an alleged apparition or a specific devotion, it said, does not exclude the possibility of “some error of a natural order, not due to bad intentions, but to the subjective perception of the phenomenon.”

For example, it said so many of the messages have Mary allegedly insisting people listen to her that they can give the impression that the alleged messages are more important than the Bible.

“This often-repeated appeal probably comes from the love and generous fervor of the alleged visionaries who, with goodwill, feared that the Blessed Mother’s calls for conversion and peace would be ignored,” the note said. “This insistence becomes even more problematic when the messages refer to requests that are unlikely to be of supernatural origin, such as when Our Lady gives orders about specific dates, places, and practicalities and when she makes decisions about ordinary matters.”

In fact, in many of the messages, the dicastery said, Mary “asks that her messages be listened to, but she also subordinates them to the incomparable value of the Word revealed in the Holy Scriptures.”

The dicastery drew particular attention to the alleged messages’ description of Mary as “Queen of Peace” and how they rightly offer “a vision that is theocentric and very rich in the true meaning of peace. According to this understanding, peace signifies not only the absence of war; it also has a spiritual, family, and social meaning.”

“A constant call to abandon a worldly lifestyle and excessive attachment to worldly goods appears in the messages, along with frequent calls for conversion, which makes true peace in the world possible,” it said.

Cardinal Fernández said that with a little “good sense,” most Catholics will be able to distinguish between the alleged messages that are

See “Medjugorje” on Page 11

Zambito
Flooring
AMERICA
We have it ALL!

5095 National Road, Triadelphia, WV
304-547-1800
www.flooringamericawestvirginia.com

Pope Encourages Ecumenical Efforts to Find Common Date for Easter

By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Easter belongs to Christ, not to people deciding where it falls on a calendar, Pope Francis said.

“Easter does not take place by our own initiative or by one calendar or another. Easter occurred because God ‘so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life,’” the pope said.

“Let us not close ourselves within our own ideas, plans, calendars or ‘our’ Easter. Easter belongs to Christ!” he said during an audience at the Vatican Sept. 19.

The pope was speaking to a delegation of members of the “Pasqua Together 2025” initiative. The ecumenical initiative, founded in 2022, calls on Orthodox and mainline Christian churches to celebrate Easter on a common date.

The year 2025 will mark both the Holy Year for the Catholic Church and celebrations of the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, which gave birth to the Nicene Creed, affirmed the full divinity of Christ and set a formula for determining the date of Easter, that is, the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

However, the Julian calendar, which is what Christians used in the fourth century and many Orthodox churches still use, was out of sync

with the actual solar year, so March 21 — generally assumed to be the date of the northern hemisphere’s spring equinox — gradually “drifted” away from the actual equinox.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII, relying on the work of astronomers, reformed the calendar, dropping 10 days and making the equinox fall on March 21 again. Today Catholics and most Christians in the West follow the Gregorian calendar.

Easter will fall on the same day on the Julian and Gregorian calendars in 2025, however.

The “Pasqua Together 2025” initiative seeks to use the coincidence as an opportunity to invite the churches to find ways of reconciliation to overcome the division.

In his speech to the delegation, the pope praised the initiative and encouraged them to “avoid letting the important occasion of 2025 pass by in vain.”

“On more than one occasion, I have been asked to seek a solution to this issue, so that the common celebration of the day of the Resurrection may no longer be an exception, but rather become the norm,” he said.

“I therefore encourage those who are committed to this journey to persevere and to make every effort in the search for a shared agreement, avoiding anything that may instead lead to further divisions among our brothers and sisters,” he said.

Medjugorje...

Cont’d from Page 10

spiritually beneficial and those that are imprecise or simply unimportant, like one in which Mary tells the young people her birthday is Aug. 5 and not Sept. 8, as celebrated on the church’s calendar.


Asked if he had ever been to Medjugorje, the cardinal said he had during a trip to Europe with two confreres to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their ordinations, which would have meant the trip was in 2011 or 2012. The cardinal said he had not wanted to go — he preferred Venice or Florence — but one of the priests was a “fanatic” and they gave in.

Although the bus journey was not easy, the cardinal said what he found in Medjugorje was “an environment of prayer and peace” and a desire among the pilgrims to change their lives.




COLEMAN'S FISH MKT.

Established 1914
Centre Wheeling Market House
304-232-8510
110 Years





Learn more and sign up!



DOMINICAN ROSARY PILGRIMAGE



September 28, 2024
Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC

Visit rosarypilgrimage.org and follow us @dominicanrosary


St. John University Parish
Mountaineer Catholic
On the campus of West Virginia University

Going to **WVU?**






Mass and Confession
Friendship
Movie Nights
Bible Studies
Game Nights
Jam Sessions

Grow your Faith with us!



mountainercatholic.com

Moms Urge Catholic Parents to Wait Until 8th and Delay Children's Cellphone Use

By **Katie Zakrzewski, OSV News**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (OSV News) — As studies reveal the negative effects of smartphones on the health and well-being of elementary and middle schoolers, central Arkansas parents are taking a pledge to delay giving their children smartphones.

Two parishioners and parents at Our Lady of the Holy Souls School in Little Rock have started a chapter of the national program Wait Until 8th, an organization based in Austin, Texas, that encourages parents to pledge to wait until eighth grade before giving their children smartphones. The organization — www.waituntil8th.org — has resources and information to help other parents with their commitment.

Tricia Wilson and Grace Squires each have three children. Wilson has a stepson in college, a senior at Catholic High School in Little Rock and a daughter in kindergarten, while Squires has children in first grade, preK4 and in day care. The two began this initiative in early July as they walked out of Mass, talking about the challenges of parenting.

"I was telling Grace, isn't it just interesting what our kids can do?" Wilson said. "We were reminiscing about the old days when we grew up, when kids played outside until dark. ... The hardest part as a mom is, you don't want your kid to be left out."

Squires told Wilson about a program she had heard of a program in Kansas City, Kan., called Wait Until 8th and the two decided to start a local chapter.

Since July 7, they have already had more than 250 pledges from parents who say they will not give their children smartphones until eighth grade.

"We are calling on parents to delay equipping their children with smartphones until the end of eighth grade," Wilson told the Arkansas Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Little Rock. "This means no smartphones before high school, no social media before 16, phone-free schools and more outdoor play and childhood independence."

"I want better for my children, especially my daughter," Squires said. "I know as a young girl how much pressure

there is to fit in, how you can get wrapped up in the bullying or miscommunication that can go along with growing up. In high school, I was on the receiving end of bullying, and I remember how low I was at that point in my life."

Squires said many young people are so focused on their smartphones that they struggle to connect with the people around them.

"I see kids hanging out together in public and all of them are so wrapped in their phones they aren't even in the present having fun with whom they are with now," Squires said. "I want to take our children back to the days of growing up like when we did. More outdoor time, more one on one face time playing ... and just giving our children a play-based childhood that they so deserve. Let's let kids be kids a little longer."

The discussion is a timely one — recent studies have shown the negative impact smartphones have on students, not just for academic performance but for mental and physical health.

Wilson said many parents worry about their children's ability to contact them or 911 in an emergency. But Wilson said a basic cellphone is just as effective.

"Wait Until 8th has a mobile phone comparison, so there are phones that you can get that are like the old school flip phones that do not have web capabilities," Wilson said. "They're not meant for apps. They are meant to call 911 or call your parents."

Theresa Hall, superintendent of Catholic schools, said the research weighs heavily in favor of waiting to give children smartphones.

"I do like the fact that this initiative is being shared with the parents because it will be easier for students to accept not getting a smartphone at an earlier age if it becomes a norm," she said. "Parents have to make decisions based on what is best for their child."

"Among the most intuitive things that Catholic High has done over the years is ban cellphones in school," Steve Straessle, head of school at Catholic High School, told Arkansas Catholic. "When others were arguing that kids need them because they are 'supercomputers in their pockets' and they could access



OSV News photo/Katie Zakrzewski, Arkansas Catholic **Briley Parker of Mena, Ark., and Noa Lessenberry of Bella Vista, scroll on their phones before a youth event at St. John Center in Little Rock Aug. 18.**

educational information at a touch, we hesitated because we were concerned that kids would be less interested in education and more interested in entertainment. It turns out our intuition proved correct."

"Now we see the results of extreme youth smartphone use: sleep deprivation, social deprivation, attention fragmentation and addictions," he added. "Moderation is the key, as it is in most things. And, telling a child they must wait until they're more mature to receive a smartphone is just plain ol' good parenting."

Josh Salman, director of campus ministry at Mount St. Mary Academy in Little Rock, said during the past school year, students started turning in their phones at the beginning of the school day, and that teacher would hold onto it until the end of the school day.

"Really with COVID, we saw a big rise in cyberbullying and social media use that was negative, a lot of blows to self-esteem," Salman said. "And by doing this, we've seen a lessening of pressure on our students. They actually feel like they're not worried about what's happening at home or outside of school, and they can really focus on school. I think

that's been a positive thing, of us taking up the phones."

Abner Sierra, 17, a parishioner at St. John Church in Russellville and student at Russellville High School, said he is supportive of waiting to give children phones.

"My parents were a lot like that," Sierra said. "Honestly, a lot of us, we try to grow up too fast, and cellphone usage isn't the biggest priority. We need to enjoy our youth, our teen years."

However, Sierra opposes efforts to ban phones in high schools. One reason is because Abner is involved in his father's business and helps him with customer service and processing payments.

"With my phone locked up, I can't be there for my family," Sierra said. "I understand that students do abuse it every now and then, so maybe have stricter phone rules in the classroom, but pouching them up is just not the way to go."

Larry Desiderio, 17, a member of St. John Church in Hot Springs and senior at Catholic High School in Little

Rock, said his school has been strict about phones and is glad to see public high schools following in the same steps.

"Just being able to talk to somebody without having to pull out their phone ... it shows the difference. At lunch (at CHS), you see people talking," Desiderio said.

Desiderio said when he was in elementary school, he and his parents pledged that he wouldn't get a phone until high school. Both sides kept their pledge, and Desiderio is thankful for it.

"The effect of phones on mental health is so devastating," said Isabel Vacca, 17, a parishioner of St. Agnes Church in Mena and student at Mena High School. "It has caused us not to speak to each other. It's caused us to result to bullying faster when we can hide behind that screen."

Even though Mena High School only recently started a phone ban, Vacca can already see the difference.

"We've only been in school for three days so far, but I think I've talked to more people and I've seen more people talking to each other than ever before," she said. "We have conversation starters at our tables at lunch, and we're just talking. People are playing card games and board games, and it's funny that we're resulting to things that we did as kids. People are getting coloring books and digital cameras, and we're enjoying each other's company."

To join the pledge, visit waituntil8th.org/take-the-pledge.

RICH & SHIRLEY'S QUICKPRINT
RSQP.net
 PRINT & DESIGN
 (304) 233-7433
 92 16th Street,
 Wheeling, WV

Foodservice Equip-
 ment, Supplies, Dis-
 posables, Janitorial
 and more



1 Fourteenth Street,
 Wheeling, WV 26003
 304-233-2270
 Stop in or call us today!

Now is the
 time to
 Talk!

Kepner
 FUNERAL HOMES
 CREMATORY

304.232.5110 | KepnerFuneral.com
 James B. Kepner President | Melissa Hill COIC



Let Us Pray,

Use me God,

show me how to give generously,

pray purposefully,

and serve joyfully

for a purpose greater than myself.

Amen.



You can provide vital support to various ministries & initiatives, such as social outreach programs, tuition assistance, parish food pantry initiatives, & community outreach endeavors by supporting the Catholic Sharing Appeal.

Make an Impact Today! Visit:
dwc.org/CSA



Irish Road Bowling Festival to be Held in Glen Dale Sept. 21

GLEN DALE—The 13th Annual, Knights of Columbus, Moundsville Council 1907 - Irish Road Bowling Festival will be held Sept. 21 at St. Jude Park in Glen Dale. The events of the day start with team sign up at 10 a.m. and bowling will begin at 10:30 a.m.; limiting the total number of bowlers at 400.

The cost is \$35 per person which includes food, drinks, music, and course transportation. The profits made from the Knights of Columbus, Moundsville Council 1907 fund raisers go right back into the communities to assist families and children. The Knights have collaborated with the Marshall County Fun Fair in a great cooperation to serve and to benefit children and families all over Marshall County.

"We started by helping over 1,800 children in Marshall County with many needs, including backpacks for kids along with school supplies to start the school year, a food program to provide food for approximately 150 children each week, and assisting nearly 100 families in need during these dire times," council officials said.

"Working together we are planning a give away to help families, 'Coats for Kids,' and 'Caring Tree' for the area children."

The Moundsville Council 1907 will continue to sponsor two senior students each month at John Marshall High School in Glen Dale for the students of the month, along with assisting with Special Olympics, The Russell Nesbitt Center, The Gabriel Project, and the Body and Soul soup kitchen, just to name a few things.

"For us to get out there to help and serve those in need, we need support from our communities in the Ohio Valley, churches, organizations and businesses to support our fundraising events," council officials said.

To sign up just show up early on Saturday morning to register your team. This year's event is in memory of Larry Freeland, past chairman of the Irish Road Bowling Festival.

For more information, contact Lou Richmond, Grand Knight of Knights of Columbus Moundsville Council 1907, by e-mail to LouRichmondWV@aol.com or by calling (304) 830-3388.

Director of Music Ministries Needed

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart located in Charleston, West Virginia is looking for a pastoral musician. Responsibilities include overseeing the selection of music for liturgies, substituting for our organist, directing the choir, cantoring when necessary, preparing worship aids and expanding our current music program. Candidates should have a BA degree or higher in a music field, or other field, if musically trained, excellent organ/keyboard/choral conducting skills and vocal technique and be familiar with music notation software. A practicing Catholic is preferred but not required; candidates must be of the Christian faith with willingness to learn about and genuinely support others in their Catholic faith. Conversant with a variety of liturgical styles including contemporary, classical, and traditional. Must demonstrate a commitment to use a blended approach to liturgical music that encourages the assembly to sing. Working hours are flexible and include weekends and some evenings. Complete job description available upon request. Please send résumés to: Bernadette McMasters Kime, Office of Worship and Sacraments, P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 or email bkime@dwc.org

Résumé submissions will be accepted until the position is filled.

Full-Time Maintenance Worker Needed

St. Joseph School in Martinsburg is in need of a full-time, experienced maintenance worker. Responsibilities include sweeping; mopping; dusting; emptying trash cans; cleaning restrooms, doors and windows; vacuuming; cleaning out flower beds; shampooing carpets; and stripping floors. The hours are 4 to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday. The pay starts at \$14 per hour, based on experience. We are an equal-opportunity employer committed to excellence through diversity.

Please email a letter of introduction and résumé to Principal Maria Byrd at mbyrd@sjsvw.org.

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE – Fall 2024 Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Saturday, September 21: Sacred Heart, Chester; 5 p.m.
Saturday, September 28: St. Mary, Petersburg; 4 p.m.
Sunday, October 6: St. Agnes, Shepherdstown; 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, October 20: Ascension, Hurricane; 11 a.m.
Sunday, October 27: All Saints, Bridgeport; 10 a.m.
Saturday, November 9: St. Peter the Fisherman, Fairmont; 10:30 a.m.
Saturday, November 16: Sacred Heart, Williamson; 7 p.m.
Tuesday, November 19: St. Anthony, Follansbee; 6 p.m.

**The higher level of
care I need...
and everyone is so kind.**



Welty
Home for the Aged

304-242-5233
www.weltyhome.org

MILLS GROUP
ARCHITECTURE ■ PLANNING ■ PRESERVATION

SERVING THE DIOCESE OF
WHEELING-CHARLESTON'S PARISHES
AND SCHOOLS FOR OVER 25 YEARS

DWC PARISHIONERS VICTOR GRECO, JULIE DOERR AND ALEXIS BEHRENS

VISIT US @ MILLSGROUPONLINE.COM

El Vaticano aprueba la experiencia espiritual en Medjugorje, sin confirmar su sobrenaturalidad

Por Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Siendo prudentes, los católicos pueden beneficiarse espiritualmente de los mensajes y prácticas espirituales asociadas con las supuestas apariciones de la Virgen María en Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, dijo el Dicasterio Vaticano para la Doctrina de la Fe.

"Esto no implica una declaración del carácter sobrenatural del fenómeno en cuestión", ni significa que las decenas de miles de supuestos mensajes de María publicados por los supuestos "videntes" sean auténticos, dijo el dicasterio en un largo documento titulado "La Reina de la Paz: Nota sobre la experiencia espiritual vinculada a Medjugorje", que fue publicado el 19 de septiembre.

Con la aprobación del Papa Francisco, el dicasterio reconoció, sin embargo, "los abundantes y difundidos frutos, tan bellos y positivos, asociados a la devoción a María, Reina de la Paz, y a las peregrinaciones a Medjugorje."

El cardenal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefecto del dicasterio, presentó la nota en una rueda de prensa el 19 de septiembre. Dijo que no se había reunido con los presuntos videntes, pero que, una vez preparada la notificación, escribió a los seis con algunas "sugerencias" sobre el futuro. No dio más detalles.

El cardenal también mostró a los periodistas el "nihil obstat" oficial -- una declaración de no objeción -- emitida

por el obispo Petar Palic de la Diócesis de Mostar-Duvno donde se encuentra Medjugorje, autorizando la devoción pública a María, Reina de la Paz.

Aunque es posible que un pontífice pueda ir más allá y hacer una declaración sobre si las supuestas apariciones y mensajes tienen un origen sobrenatural, el cardenal Fernández dijo que le preguntó al Papa Francisco si quería avanzar en esa dirección y el Papa dijo que no.

Las devociones en Medjugorje comenzaron después de que seis jóvenes, de entre 10 y 16 años, dijeran que la Virgen María comenzó a aparecerseles en junio de 1981. Tres de ellos dicen que siguen teniendo apariciones de María cada día, mientras que los otros tres dicen que María sólo se les aparece en ocasiones especiales.

El juicio positivo del Vaticano sobre la experiencia espiritual relacionada con Medjugorje destacaba: "abundantes conversiones; frecuente retorno a la práctica sacramental (Eucaristía y reconciliación); numerosas vocaciones a la vida sacerdotal, religiosa y matrimonial; profundización de la vida de fe; una práctica más intensa de la oración; numerosas reconciliaciones entre los esposos y la renovación de la vida matrimonial y familiar".

"Cabe mencionar que tales experiencias se producen, principalmente, en el contexto de las peregrinaciones a los lugares de los hechos originales, más que du-

rante los encuentros con los 'videntes' para asistir a las presuntas apariciones", añadió el dicasterio.

La notificación, de alrededor de 10.000 palabras, analizaba en profundidad cientos de los "presuntos mensajes", destacando el carácter positivo y ortodoxo de la mayoría de ellos, al tiempo que advertía de que algunos contienen afirmaciones teológicas cuestionables o parecen más un reflejo de los pensamientos de los jóvenes que lo que la Iglesia esperaría de María.

El arzobispo Aldo Cavalli, visitador apostólico residente en Medjugorje, es el encargado de determinar si se permite la publicación de presuntos mensajes revelados en el futuro o de supuestos mensajes del pasado que aún no han sido publicados, según la notificación.

Por otra parte, hay que recordar que, cuando se reconoce una acción del Espíritu Santo para el bien del Pueblo de Dios "en medio de" una experiencia espiritual desde sus orígenes hasta nuestros días, los dones carismáticos (*gratiae gratis datae*) —que puedan estar vinculados a ella— no exigen necesariamente la perfección moral de las personas implicadas para poder actuar.

Un principio clave en la evaluación eclesial de fenómenos como Medjugorje, decía la nota, es que "cuando se reconoce una acción del Espíritu Santo en medio de una experiencia espiritual, eso no significa que todo aquello que pertenezca a esa experiencia esté exento de toda imprecisión, imperfección o posible confusión".

Afirmar el valor espiritual de una supuesta aparición o de una devoción específica, dijo, no excluye la posibilidad de "algún error de orden natural no debido a una mala intención, sino a la percepción subjetiva del fenómeno".

Por ejemplo, dijo que los mensajes en los que María supuestamente insiste en que la gente la escuche pueden dar la impresión de que los presuntos mensajes son más importantes que la Biblia.

"Esta exhortación, tan repetida, procede probablemente del amor y del generoso fervor de los presuntos videntes que con buena voluntad temían que las llamadas de la Madre a la conversión y a la paz fuesen ignoradas", dice la nota. "Esta insistencia se convierte aún más problemática cuando los mensajes se refieren a peticiones de improbable origen sobrenatural, como cuando la Virgen impone órdenes sobre fechas, lugares, aspectos prácticos, y toma decisiones sobre cuestiones ordinarias".

De hecho, en muchos de los mensajes, dijo el dicasterio, María "exige que sus mensajes sean escuchados, pero al mismo tiempo los somete al valor inigualable de la Palabra revelada en las Sagradas Escrituras".

El dicasterio llamó especialmente la atención sobre la descripción que hacen los presuntos mensajes de María como "Reina de la Paz" y sobre cómo ofrecen acertadamente "una visión teocéntrica y muy

rica de la paz, que no significa solamente la ausencia de guerra sino que tiene un sentido espiritual, familiar y social".

"En los mensajes aparece una invitación constante a abandonar un estilo de vida mundano y un apego excesivo a los bienes terrenos con frecuentes invitaciones a la conversión, que hace posible la verdadera paz en el mundo", señaló.

El cardenal Fernández dijo que, con un poco de "sentido común", la mayoría de los católicos sabrán distinguir entre los supuestos mensajes que son espiritualmente beneficiosos y los que son imprecisos o simplemente carecen de importancia, como uno en el que María dice a los jóvenes que su cumpleaños es el 5 de agosto y no el 8 de septiembre, como se celebra en el calendario eclesial.

A la pregunta de si había estado alguna vez en Medjugorje, el cardenal dijo que sí, durante un viaje a Europa con dos sacerdotes para celebrar el 25 aniversario de sus ordenaciones, posiblemente en 2011 o 2012. El cardenal dijo que no había querido ir -- ya que hubiera preferido visitar Venecia o Florencia --, pero uno de los sacerdotes era un "fanático" y cedieron.

Aunque el viaje en autobús no fue fácil, el cardenal dijo que lo que encontró en Medjugorje fue "un ambiente de oración y paz" y un deseo entre los peregrinos de cambiar sus vidas.

"Rezamos, y nos hizo bien", dijo.

Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:

La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar www.reportbishopabuse.org para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite www.reportbishopabuse.org.

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

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

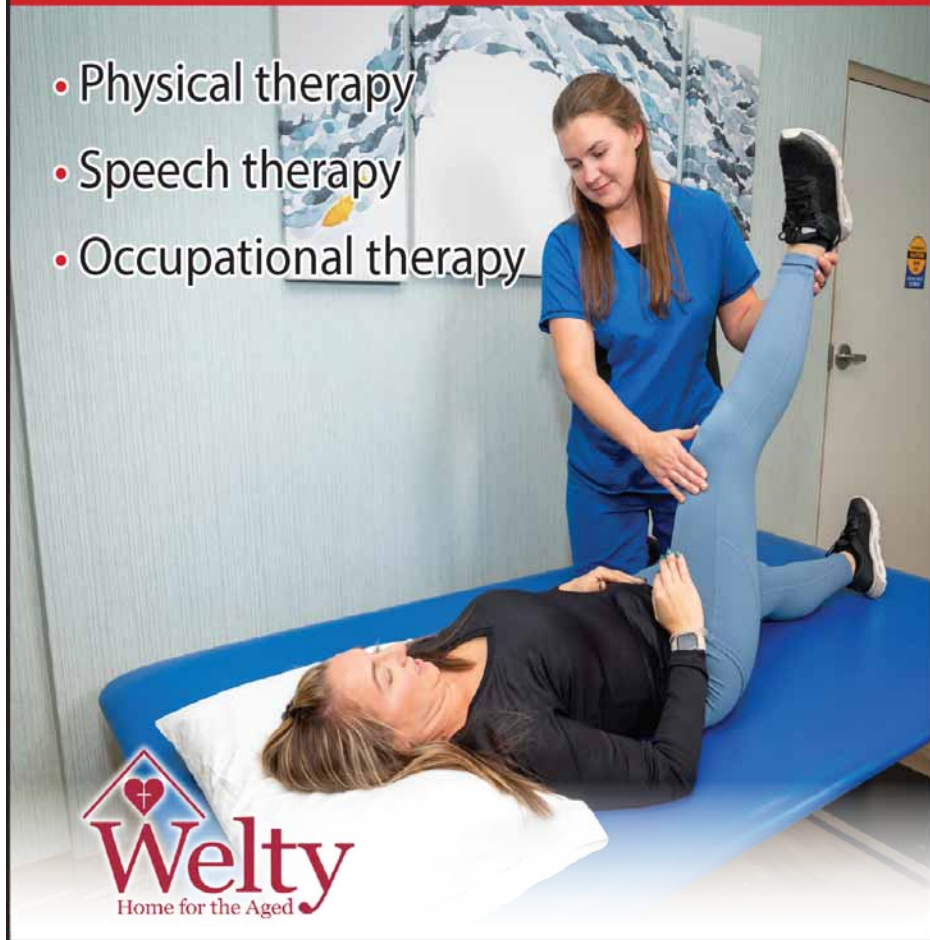
304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en www.dwc.org, haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis: llame a la Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa 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 Niños: 304-293-6400.

Ask your doctor to refer you to Good Shepherd for:

- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy



GOOD SHEPHERD 304.242.1093
 NURSING HOME www.weltyhome.org



Have You Heard?

GOD IS DOING SOMETHING NEW—AND HE IS CALLING YOU TO BE A PART OF IT!

Jesus desires to heal, renew, and unify the Church and the world. How will he do it? By uniting us once again around the source and summit of our faith—the Holy Eucharist. The National Eucharistic Revival is the joyful, expectant, grassroots response of the entire Catholic Church in the U.S. to this divine invitation.

Scan the code below to learn more about the exciting journey ahead, and sign up for weekly updates on what's happening in this unprecedented national movement!



eucharisticrevival.org

ESTABLISHED LEADER IN STRUCTURAL HEART CARE

THE MOST ADVANCED TREATMENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

The nation-leading cardiologists and surgeons of the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program at Wheeling specialize in problems with the heart's valves, walls, or chambers.

We have a multidisciplinary team of experts, including interventional cardiologists, **cardiac and vascular surgeons, dedicated nursing staff, and other specialists**, to ensure our patients receive the most comprehensive care available for common and complex structural heart conditions.

The WVU Heart and Vascular Institute Structural Heart Program is the only program in West Virginia that offers eight specialized, structural heart procedures and is one of the few programs in the United States (and the only one in West Virginia) offering cerebral embolic protection during transcatheter aortic valve replacement (Protected TAVR) and transcatheter mitral valve replacement.

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

OUR TEAM



David Michael Campsey MD
Interventional Cardiology



Deepak Hooda MD
Interventional Cardiology



Sushant Sharma MD
Cardiology

Learn more at: MyWVUHeart.com

Appointments: 304-243-8362

WVU Heart & Vascular Institute