

THE CATHOLIC

Spirit

Getting Vaccinated and Wearing Masks are ‘Genuine Acts of Love,’ Bishop Brennan Says

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA—“Getting vaccinated and wearing a good mask are genuine acts of love by which we protect our neighbor and our own health,” Bishop Mark E. Brennan said in a video message to the Catholic faithful of West Virginia. “We should do these two things to enhance the health of and safety of our family members, friends, and the most vulnerable.”

Bishop Brennan’s message was released on the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s social media Aug. 27. He began his message by saying that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the Mountain State with large increases of the number of persons infected, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The bishop encouraged everyone to pray for all those affected by the virus and for an end to the pandemic, and said that all can act boldly in the face of this “mortal threat.”

Bishop Brennan emphasized that vaccines are now fully approved and widely available and give substantial protection to those who are vaccinated. Wearing masks in public settings and large indoor gatherings, he said, adds further protection.

“Some object that vaccinations and wearing masks interfere with their personal freedom. Our freedom is a very limited but real participation in God’s freedom, and like God’s, is meant always to be used to do good,” the bishop said.

“I urge you to choose to do good to your neighbor and to yourself by being vaccinated and wearing a protective mask in appropriate settings,” the bishop said. “No one among us would choose to watch a family member or friend suffer and possibly die if we had the power to stop it. We do have the power, to a great degree, to counteract a deadly virus by getting vaccinated and wearing a mask. As we continue to navigate through these difficult times, we pray for patience and a strong resolve to do what is best for everyone.”

The bishop also reminded everyone, in his message, that the Lord Jesus has taught all to love their neighbor as themselves.

Bishop Brennan released his message days after asking everyone to wear masks in all of the diocese’s churches. His request was made Aug. 25 and was prompted by the surge

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Courtesy Photo
Bishop Mark E. Brennan confirms Jackson Wills at Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield Aug. 29. Also pictured is Wills’ sponsor Alex Aiello and Very Rev. Sebastian Devasya, V.F., pastor. In a video message two days before the confirmation, Bishop Brennan said: “Getting vaccinated and wearing a good mask are genuine acts of love... .”

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Diocesan Pilgrimage in Honor of St. Joseph

Second Sundays in September–November

By Joyce Bibey

Celebrate the Year of St. Joseph with faithful from across the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston by making a pilgrimage to significant churches in the state named for the Guardian of the Redeemer and Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Consider embarking on your St. Joseph pilgrimage at one of three notable churches under his patronage with Mass and special tours of the churches on the second Sunday of each month from September to November (Sept. 12, Oct. 10, and Nov. 14). See Sunday Pilgrimage Mass times below:

- St. Joseph Church, 225 S. Queen Street, Martinsburg. Mass to be celebrated at 10:30 a.m.
- The Cathedral of St. Joseph, 13th and Eoff Streets, Wheeling. Mass to be celebrated at 10:30 a.m.
- St. Joseph the Worker Parish, 229 California Avenue, Weirton. Mass to be celebrated at 11 a.m.

Bishop Mark Brennan encourages Catholics in West Virginia to visit the churches, chapels, and missions in the diocese named in honor of St. Joseph. This act of faith and spiritual renewal will gain a plenary indulgency (under the usual conditions: sacramental confession, reception of Holy Communion, prayer for the intentions of the pope, and total detachment from all sin, including venial sin) for all the faithful who visit a pilgrimage site.

The faithful are also invited to join fellow Catholics in the Parkersburg Vicariate for a special pilgrimage to St. Joseph Chapel at 101 W. Penn Avenue, Pennsboro from 3-5 p.m. on Sunday Sept. 12. Volunteers will lead a rosary at 3:45 p.m. followed by the Litany to St. Joseph, and silent prayer. A tour of the church and reception will follow.

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Diocesan Official Appointments

Bishop Mark E. Brennan has made public the following appointments:

Very Rev. John S. Ledford, V.F., is appointed pastor of St. John Parish in Benwood and St. James Parish in McMechen, effective September 1, 2021. This appointment is in addition to his current assignment as pastor of St. Jude Parish in Glen Dale and does not change his place of residence.

Father Nye "Joseph" Wiley is appointed parochial vicar of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wheeling with residence at the parish rectory, effective September 14, 2021. St. Alphonsus Parish will be under the administration of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. This appointment is in addition to his current assignment as chaplain to Central Catholic High School in Wheeling.

In consultation with Very Rev. Father Battula Jaya Raj, H.G.N., provincial superior of the St. John Paul II Province of the Heralds of Good News, **Father Narisetti Sateesh, H.G.N.**, is appointed vice rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling with residence at the cathedral rectory, effective September 1, 2021.

In consultation with Very Rev. Father Battula Jaya Raj, H.G.N., provincial superior of the St. John Paul II Province of the Heralds of Good News, **Father Laladi Pradeep Kumar, H.G.N.**, is appointed parochial vicar of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Hunting-

ton and St. Stephen Parish in Ona with residence at the parish rectory in Ona, effective September 1, 2021.

In consultation with Very Rev. Father Battula Jaya Raj, H.G.N., provincial superior of the St. John Paul II Province of the Heralds of Good News, **Father Mallela Praveen Kumar, H.G.N.**, is appointed parochial vicar of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg with residence at the parish rectory, effective September 1, 2021.

In consultation with Very Rev. Dr. Joby Kavungal, R.C.J., provincial superior of the St. Thomas Quasi Province of the Rogationists Fathers in India, **Father Doney Palakuzhayil, R.C.J.**, is appointed parochial vicar of St. John Parish in Benwood and St. James Parish in McMechen with residence at the parish rectory in McMechen, effective September 1, 2021.

Father Jose Mauricio Henriquez is appointed parochial vicar of St. Mary Parish in Morgantown with residence at the parish rectory, effective September 1, 2021. He is also appointed chaplain of J.W. Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown.

Father Biju Parampil is appointed administrator of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Logan, St. Edmund Chapel in Man, and Sacred Heart Parish in Williamson with residence at the parish rectory in Logan, effective September 19, 2021.

To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

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 Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment," then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator: please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988.

In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability," then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit: 304-293-6400.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, please go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese," then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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Diocesan Pastoral Council Conducting Pastoral Needs Survey

By Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA—The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is conducting a pastoral needs survey. With the title, “Let Your Voices be Heard,” the survey was spearheaded by the DPC’s Pastoral Concerns Subcommittee and invites the Catholic faithful to share their insights and opinions on meeting needs in the diocese.

“We hope our people in the pews will take this opportunity and let their voices be heard on various topics,” said Gina Boggess, one of the eight members of the subcommittee. Once completed surveys are received, committee members will compile the information and present the overall results to Bishop Mark E. Brennan and the Diocesan Pastoral Council at the next scheduled meeting in October.

The survey is available online and in paper form in both English and Spanish. To complete online, visit the diocese’s website at <https://dwc.org/pastoral-needs-survey/>. Boggess said that churches sent paper forms of the survey to their homebound parishioners and others. Paper forms of the survey are also available in churches, and parishioners can simply fill them out and place them in collection baskets at Masses or return them to parish offices.

Boggess noted that most surveys are being completed by those over the age of 60, and that for the survey to be truly effective they must hear from youth and young adults as well.

Boggess, who is a member of Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton, said that after the results of the survey are in subcommittee members will explore, investigate, prioritize, and recommend future pastoral undertakings based on the needs and concerns of the Catholic population in West Virginia.

“We also plan to share with priests a summary of the results from their church,” she went on to say. “We hope the results will provide valuable insight into the hearts and minds of their parishioners. In addition, the results can be used as a tool and guide by the priests and their pastoral council when planning and making decisions concerning those they serve.”

Paul Buede of St. James the Greater Parish in Charles Town who also serves on the subcommittee, said members are excited to be part of a unique opportunity to provide a platform for the people of the diocese to share what has worked well in their parishes, what hasn’t or isn’t working well, and any other feedback.

“It’s always good to know what works, but it’s also critical to understand the gaps, so our bishop and his team can better minister to our diocese,” Buede said. The diocese, he continued, has great diversity of many demographic factors, but also of spirituality. “We have people who feel more connected to Christ through more charismatic prayer and worship, but also those who are more connected to Christ through more traditional liturgy and prayer, and everything in be-

tween,” Buede said. “Part of the great difficulty, I imagine, for our shepherds, is trying to ensure that to the extent possible, people are engaged as much as they can be, but that all of this diversity stays licit, true to the faith, and truly spiritually beneficial. I know that is difficult, so helping paint that picture or draw that map can only help them in that mission.”

At the same time, Buede said, different parts of the diocese and parishes struggle with different problems, “so it’s important to draw that map so the bishop can ensure his resources are best targeted to provide the support needed in the right places.”

Serving with Boggess and Buede on the Pastoral Concerns Subcommittee are Linda Abrahamian of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsburg; James Archer of All Saints Parish in Bridgeport; Kevin Britt of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Moundsville; Denise Klug of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in New Martinsville; Colleen O’Brien of St. Michael Parish in Vienna; and Father Jeelson Stephan, MCBS, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in New Cumberland and Sacred Heart Parish in Chester.

“Our primary focus is the relationship between the church and society,” Boggess said of the subcommittee. “This focus encompasses: building up the Catholic community, effective parish social outreach, ecumenism, evangelization, and the relationship between churches/vicariates and the diocese.”

Before they could offer any sugges-

tions or guidance to Bishop Brennan, Boggess said Pastoral Concerns Subcommittee members knew they first had to get feedback from the their fellow Catholics. “So, we decided to go straight to the source in the form of a survey,” she said, noting that they had consulted Bishop Brennan and Msgr. Eugene Ostrowski, V.G. “They were very open to the idea and expressed their desire to gain a better understanding of the faithful on specific issues as well as to identify the needs and concerns that our people have relating to the church and living out their Catholic faith,” she said.

The subcommittee enlisted the help of the vicars, vicariate pastoral councils, church pastoral councils, and office staff to promote the survey through bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements, and informational e-mails. Boggess said that diocesan staff have been extremely helpful in constructing and promoting the digital survey.

“I would personally like to acknowledge the Pastoral Concerns Committee for their hard work and dedication,” Boggess said. “Their love and passion for our church in West Virginia is inspiring! The Pastoral Concerns Committee would like to convey our gratitude to everyone who has helped with this endeavor! Thank you to each and every person who has completed the survey. We encourage those who have not completed the survey to please take a few minutes and let your voice be heard!”

Bishop ...

Cont’d from Page 1

of Covid cases in West Virginia. That afternoon, pastors and parishes were asked to place a sign with the following or similar message at each entrance of their churches: “Until further notice, Bishop Brennan asks that all those in attendance at Mass wear a mask, other than young children under the age of 2.

“Thank you for your cooperation in this act of Christian Charity.”

The bishop asked that the signs be placed before the weekend’s Masses and encouraged pastors and parishes to share the message through their communication channels, including the parish bulletins, announcements, social media, and websites. They began posting the message on their social media sites that evening.

At his Aug. 30 press briefing, West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice reported another large jump in COVID-19-related hospitalizations across the state, with 640 West Virginians now hospitalized. This was an increase from 579 cases reported in his previous briefing just three days before.

An Aug. 30 press release from the governor’s office stated that of the patients currently hospitalized, 203 are in the ICU. West Virginia’s all-time record of COVID-19

patients in the ICU at one time is 219, the release stated. The total number of active COVID-19 cases in West Virginia has now reached 16,372, an increase of over 2,600 new cases in three days and the state’s highest number of active cases in nearly seven months, the release stated.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources’ County Alert System map now shows that 35 counties are currently red and 18 are orange.

“We have a lot, lot, lot to look at and be concerned about,” Justice said at his press briefing. “There is no other pathway out of this other than to be vaccinated.”

Last month, Pope Francis offered a video message that was part of a global effort by the U.S.-based nonpartisan, nonprofit Ad Council and the COVID Collaborative’s “It’s Up To You” campaign to increase people’s confidence in COVID-19 vaccines by reminding them that the vaccines are safe, effective, and save people’s lives.

“Being vaccinated with vaccines authorized by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love — love for oneself, love for one’s family and friends, love for all people,” he said in a public service announcement released Aug. 18 in Rome.



Colleen Rowan Photo
Rod and Mary Ann Miller, along with fellow parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling, wear masks for the Saturday evening Mass Aug. 28 following Bishop Mark E. Brennan’s request that all wear masks in churches of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Catholic Distance University Has Great Offerings This Fall

A Free Online Apologetics Seminar, and Opportunities to Begin Degree or Certificate Program Online

WEST VIRGINIA—Fall is a great time to enroll in a free online seminar at Catholic Distance University in Charles Town.

The Art of Evangelization through Apologetics runs from Oct. 4-25. Popular author, Catholic radio guest, and instructor Allan F. Wright will share the good news of Jesus Christ whose teachings entrusted to the church encompass truth, beauty, and goodness. Learn to communicate to others a faith that is both relevant and foundational for one's life. Gain the confidence to share the Gospel in an engaging and natural way and appreciate why being a credible believer is the most effective apologetic tool.

Thanks to CDU's partnership with the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, any parishioner in the diocese can enroll in the seminar without charge by using the following promotion code at checkout: CDU20. DIOCESEWC. To register, visit <https://cdu.catalog.instructure.com/courses/66849/enrollment/new>.

Catholic Distance University's Fall II term offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses that are perfect for beginning one's academic degree or certificate program. Classes begin Oct. 25, so apply soon to be admitted and eligible to register.

Degrees offered include an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Catholic Studies, a Bachelor's degree in Theology, a

Master's degree in Theology, and a Master's degree in Theology and Educational Ministry. Certificate options include the undergraduate Catechetical Coordinator certificate and graduate certificates in Sacred Scripture,

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Learn more at cdu.edu or contact Admissions Director Todd at admissions@cdu.edu; or 1-888-254-4CDU.

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Blue Mass to be Celebrated on Eve of 20th Anniversary of 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

By Colleen Rowan

WEIRTON—On the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the Catholic community of Weirton will honor their heroes—police, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, members of the military, and their families.

A Blue Mass will be celebrated for them at noon on Sept. 10 at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Weirton by Very Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens, Jr., V.E. Joining in the celebration will be students from the Catholic schools of Weirton—Madonna High School, St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, and St. Paul School.

The Blue Mass is celebrated at St. Joseph the Worker Church each year at this time to pray for and to thank those who put their lives on the line for others.

“The first responders, police, firefighters, EMS, etc., and the military, and all those who run into a tragic situation when everyone else is running out, are to be commended and continually lifted up in the public setting,” Father Schuelkens said. “If we do not, as a community, honor the heroic and sacrificial disposition of these careers, then we will lose their dutiful and life-giving service.”

Across the nation, faithful will be praying for and remembering the close to 3,000 people

killed 20 years ago in the terrorist attacks in New York, at the Pentagon, and in a field near Shanksville, Pa. Many who were killed were police, firefighters, and other first responders.

In his homily at last year’s Blue Mass, Father Schuelkens said that on that day, they give thanks to the Lord for those individuals who say yes to God’s call of protecting others, for those who say: “‘Yes, I will defend, and I will protect, and I will help even at the risk of my own life.’ We give thanks because there are law enforcement officers, there are firefighters, there are first responders, and there are people in the military who say, ‘I’ll step forward, I’ll take the risk.’”

Young Adults Invited to Encounter Love

An Enriching Event on Building Strong Relationships

By Joyce Bibey

MORGANTOWN—St. John University Parish and the Mountaineer Catholic Campus Ministry invite young adults from across the state to an event in Morgantown on the banks of the Monongahela River that aims to empower high school and college students.

On Oct. 16, Mountaineer Catholic presents Encounter Love, featuring popular Catholic speakers Lisa Cotter and Father Joe Freedy.

It will be a day to fuel the hearts and minds of young adults, as they are energized by two dynamic speakers, uplifted with music, empowered with spiritual reflection, and fed via a fabulous food truck, said Colleen Criste, campus minister for St. John University Parish at West Virginia University.

Blending practical insights, sound theology, and a bit of humor, Cotter will address high schoolers, college students, and young adults about authentic friendships, dating, and marriage, Criste shared.

Cotter is a strong Catholic mother of three, podcaster, and founder of Made to Magnify, a ministry to “help people become saints.”

She and her husband, Kevin, have worked with FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) ministry, a group of missionaries that evangelize college campuses; and co-authored “Dating Detox: 40 Days of Perfecting Love in an Imperfect World”. The book is the result of a summer the couple spent interviewing young adults who transitioned from what is often a toxic modern dating arena to understanding God’s plan and following it freely to find love.

Her presentation in October will

highlight how developing true, authentic friendships and relationships may be difficult, but with the right mindset you can build stronger relationships with more meaning knowing the keys to God’s grace and plan.

Father Freedy has worn many hats in his career so far as a priest in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

He is the founder of Dry Bones Ministries, a group whose mission is to revitalize the faith of and build a future for Catholics in Pittsburgh. He is also the assistant director of Evangelization for his diocese and the chaplain for two high schools in Allegheny County.

A native of Bethel Park, Pa., he earned a scholarship to play Division I football at the University of Buffalo, where he was the starting quarterback for three years. Throughout his college career he discerned a calling to the priesthood and entered St. Paul Seminary in Pittsburgh and the North American College in Rome, studying at the Gregorian University and John Paul II Institute. He was ordained in 2008. Prior to his current position he was a parish priest in Wexford and the vocation director for his diocese.

The day will also feature the St. John’s Praise and Worship Band made up of WVU students.

After lunch will be a transition into Eucharistic procession and adoration, “which is the authentic love of Jesus Christ among us,” Criste said.

The event, held in the WVU Amphitheater at Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, 185 Garrett Street will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person (lunch provided by Nature of Fire food truck is included).

Sponsorship opportunities are also available to cover costs for students or groups wanting to attend the day, Criste said. Attendees can park at the Wharf District Parking Garage. Afterwards, event goers are invited to linger in Morgantown and go to Mass at St. John University Parish at 5 p.m. The church is in

walking distance of the speaking venue.

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and more information contact Criste in the office of campus ministry at (304) 296-8231, ext. 12, or e-mail her at: colleen.criste@mountaineer.catholic.com.

Encounter Love

We all desire meaning and purpose in our relationships, but achieving that kind of depth can seem like a lost art. Join popular young adult speaker Lisa Cotter and guest speaker Fr. Joe Freedy as they break down what's keeping you from the freedom to love and be loved!

Oct. 16
WVU Amphitheater
185 Garrett Street
Morgantown, WV

Lisa Cotter
madetomagnify.com

Fr. Joe Freedy
drybonespgh.org

Tickets: \$15 at [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Lunch included with ticket purchase provided by Nature of Fire Food Truck

Sponsored by: St. John University Parish
Mountaineer Catholic

Texas' 6-Week Abortion Ban is Law after Supreme Court Fails to Block It

By Carol Zimmermann, Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Texas bill banning abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy became law Sept. 1 when the U.S. Supreme Court did not act on an emergency request to put the law on hold.

The law, signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, became effective at midnight central time Sept. 1. It is one of the strictest abortion measures in the country, banning abortions in the state after a fetal heartbeat is detectable. The law has an exception for medical emergencies but not for rape or incest.

Court watchers on both sides of the issue kept vigil at the Supreme Court into the night waiting for an order that never came.

Abortion providers in the state had argued that the law would prevent about 85% of abortions in the state and will likely cause many clinics to close.

The Supreme Court could still act on the providers' emergency request; it just did not respond before the law went into effect.

A unique part of the Texas law is that private citizens can enforce it by suing abortion providers and anyone involved in facilitating abortions.

Currently, at least 12 other states have legislation banning abortions early in pregnancy, but these bans have been blocked by courts.

"Hopefully, this law will begin saving the lives of tens of thousands of Texas babies and we look forward to the day that babies' lives will be spared across America," said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life.

She also applauded the efforts of the Texas Right to Life and "pro-life Texans who have been devoted to providing a voice for the voiceless. We praise all of our state affiliates who have diligently and tirelessly worked with state legislators to protect unborn babies by passing laws that protect children whose hearts have begun to beat," she said in a Sept. 1 statement.

Two months after the law was signed, abortion providers challenged it in court, saying it violated patients' constitutional right to end a pregnancy before viability, when a fetus is said to be able to survive on its own.

The Supreme Court has consistently ruled that states cannot restrict abortion before the 24-week mark. This fall, the court will take up a Mississippi abortion ban after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

Those appealing the state law filed a motion in late August that was denied by the district court. They turned to the U.S. Court of

See "Law" on Page 15

Archbishop Broglio Prays for Dialogue, Respect for Human Life after Bombing

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, called for prayers and respect for human life following the bombing outside of an airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, that claimed the lives of 170 Afghan citizens and 13 U.S. service members.

The archbishop, who was in San Diego Aug. 27 to attend a diocesan convocation, said in a statement that he joined the assembled priests "to pray for the repose of the souls" of the lost U.S. soldiers "and the consolation of their families."

"Together we beg the Prince of Peace for a time of dialogue and a profound respect for the priceless value of human life," the statement

said. The terrorist attack outside of the airport Aug. 26 occurred as hundreds of people gathered in hope of being evacuated on one of dozens of flights arranged in the days following the rapid advance of the Taliban as it regained control of the Afghan government. U.S. forces were deployed to facilitate evacuations and to keep order among the throngs of people.

The U.S. military has carried out two attacks on members of the Islamic State in Afghanistan, known as Islamic State Khorasan, which has claimed responsibility for the airport bombing.

President Joe Biden, first lady Jill Biden and several U.S. officials paid respect to the U.S. troops killed in the bombing as their bodies were re-

turned home in a ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware Aug. 29.

Also in response to the attack, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore said he was heartbroken by "the senseless loss of precious life."

"Acts of terror are an attack against all of us and have no place in a civilized or just society," he said in a statement released by the archdiocese Aug. 26. "Please, I urge the members of our Archdiocese of Baltimore to join our Holy Father, Pope Francis and our global community to pray for peace and an open dialogue that creates a path to solutions and not to more death and suffering." He also urged the faithful to "remember all of the victims, their families and loved ones."

Dioceses Emerge from Hurricane Ida's Wrath as Others Prepare to Help

By Rhina Guidos, Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Charities in and around the areas of Louisiana and Mississippi affected by Hurricane Ida — one of the most powerful storms to hit the continental U.S. since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 — are collecting donations as they prepare to help with the yet-unknown damage caused by the late August storm.

In a televised Aug. 30 meeting with President Joe Biden, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said he estimated that close to 2 million are without electricity in the region, though news reports said about 1 million were affected.

Many remained without cellphone service and although just one death had been confirmed by midday Aug. 30, Edwards said the death toll likely will rise.

Many Masses Aug. 29 had been suspended in the region as residents prepared to ride out the storm or had evacuated.

Edwards said the damage was "catastrophic" as news outlets showed flooded and destroyed homes, torn roofs and water running through Louisiana streets like a rushing river.

Biden said he asked the Federal Aviation Administration to work with electric providers in Louisiana and Mississippi to use surveillance drones "to assess Ida's damage to energy infrastructure."

Though the hurricane had torn through much of Louisiana as a Category 4 storm on Aug. 29, the following day it was heading, as a downgraded tropical storm, but still life-threatening, toward Mississippi and then Tennessee, where flooding was the main concern.

As levees in Louisiana seemed to have stood up of Ida's wrath, many on social media urged the public to keep in mind that help would be needed in small agricultural towns, not just for damage to New Orleans.

Catholic dioceses and organizations said they were mobilizing to help as soon as conditions allowed.

"Our local #disasterresponse teams will be ready to hit the ground when it's safe to do so," tweeted Catholic Charities of Baton Rouge, a few hours after the storm hit New Orleans. The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, in an Aug. 30 message on its website and social media channels, said its schools "will be closed until further notice." The New Orleans archdiocese announced, too, that its schools and main administrative offices, would be closed until at least Labor Day.

In a Facebook video Aug. 30, Peter Finney, editor of the Clarion Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, said Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, who remained at his residence during Ida, was trying to contact pastors to assess the extent of the damage to churches and schools.

"There's nothing really right now to report, but he'll have much more of an understanding today," Finney said. "He asked for prayers for the entire community and please stay safe."

Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana in Lake Charles offered 900 meals for Hurricane Ida evacuees, remembering how they, too, had been helped by neighboring states during last year's hurricane season.

The Diocese of Beaumont, Texas, which suffered damage from Hurricane Laura in late August 2020 said Bishop David L. Toups "has invited all of our priests and faithful ... to pray and intercede for our brothers and sisters in Louisiana. We stand with them in prayer during the storm and will stay by them to assist in recovery." It's hard to know how the hurricane and subsequent storm will affect states in the southern U.S. that already were experiencing a shortage of hospital beds and equipment, including oxygen, because of rising COVID-19 rates.

The day after the hurricane, Lady of the Sea General Hospital in Galliano, Louisiana, reported that part of its roof had been ripped off by Ida's winds.

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After Afghanistan Withdrawal, Pope Denounces Attempts to Impose Democracy

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In his first interview since undergoing surgery in July, Pope Francis criticized Western attempts to impose democracy on other countries in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal in Afghanistan.

In a 90-minute interview with COPE, the radio network owned by the Spanish bishops' conference, broadcast Sept. 1, the pope commented on the United States' "20 years of occupation and then leaving" Afghanistan.

However, he mistakenly attributed a quote to German Chancellor Angela Merkel that criticized attempts to impose democracy in other countries; it was said by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"It's necessary to stop the irresponsible policy of enforcing its own values on others and attempts to build democracy in other countries based on outside models without taking into account historic, ethnic and religious issues and fully ignoring other people's traditions," Putin said during an Aug. 20 meeting with Merkel in Moscow.

"Concise and conclusive," the pope said about the quote. "I think this says a lot; and everyone can interpret it as they wish. But there I felt a wisdom in what this woman said." In April, President Joe Biden announced a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops in Afghanistan by Sept. 11. However, as Taliban fighters took control of the country, Biden sped up the withdrawal and ordered the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan to conclude Aug. 31.

As throngs of people desperate to leave the country crowded a gate of the Hamid Karzai International Airport Aug. 26, a suicide bomber detonated an explosion, killing at least 169 civilians and 13 U.S. service members. The Islamic State's affiliate in Afghanistan, known as Islamic State Khorasan, claimed responsibility for the deadly attack, saying the suicide bomber was targeting Afghan collaborators with the U.S. Army. In the interview, the pope said that while the reasons for withdrawing Afghanistan were legitimate, the way it was carried out did not take into account "all the

eventualities."

"I don't know whether there will be a review or not, but certainly there was a lot of deception, perhaps on the part of the new authorities," he said. "I say deceit or a lot of naïveté; I don't understand."

Nevertheless, the pope said that the situation in Afghanistan is yet another sign that "we live in a world of wars" and "that as pastor, I must call Christians to a special time of prayer."

"I am going to try to ask for what the church always asks for in times of great difficulty and crisis: more prayer and fasting," he said. "Prayer, penance and fasting, which is what is asked for in moments of crisis."

Pope Francis also addressed concerns about his health and the subsequent rumors that circulated regarding his possible retirement. While he receives daily news reports, the pope said he "found out much later ... that there was something about me resigning."

"Whenever a pope is ill, there is always a breeze or a hurricane of conclave," he said. The pope was admitted to Gemelli hospital July 4 to undergo "a scheduled surgical intervention for a symptomatic diverticular stenosis of the colon."

He underwent a three-hour left hemicolectomy, which is the removal of the descending part of the colon, a surgery that can be recommended to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the in-

testine or colon become inflamed or infected. Pope Francis told COPE that since his recovery, he leads "a totally normal life" and that "now I can eat everything, which was not possible before" the medical procedure.

"I still have the post-operative medications because the brain has to register that it has 33 centimeters less intestine. And everything is managed by the brain, the brain manages our whole body, and it takes time to register it," he said.

Pope Francis also commented on his recent apostolic letter "Traditionis Custodes" ("Guardians of the Tradition.")

The document declared the liturgical books promulgated after the Second Vatican Council to be "the unique expression of the 'lex orandi' (law of worship) of the Roman Rite," restored the obligation of priests to have their bishop's permission to celebrate according to the "extraordinary" or pre-Vatican II Mass and ordered bishops not to establish any new groups or parishes in their dioceses devoted to the old liturgy. Furthermore, priests currently celebrating Mass according to the old missal must request authorization from their bishop to continue doing so and for any priest ordained after the document's publication July 16, the bishop must consult with the Vatican before granting authorization. Pope Francis said he regarded Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 apostolic letter, "Summorum Pontificum,"



CNS Photo/Courtesy COPE

Pope Francis speaks during an interview with Carlos Herrera of COPE at the Vatican in late August.

which allowed priests to celebrate the "extraordinary form" of the Mass according to the rite published in 1962, to be "one of the most beautiful and human pastoral things" done by his predecessor. Nevertheless, 13 years after its promulgation, an evaluation involving all bishops from around the world was necessary, he explained.

"The concern that appeared the most was that something that was done to pastorally help those who have lived a previous experience was being transformed into ideology," the pope said. "That is, from a pastoral thing to ideology. So, we had to react with clear norms; clear norms that put a limit to those who had not lived that experience." The pope said he worked with "traditionalist people of good sense" in drafting "Traditionis

Custodes" and that it emphasized pastoral care "with some good limitations."

"For example, that the proclamation of the Word should be in a language that everyone understands; otherwise it would be like laughing at the word of God," he said. "Little things, but yes, the limit is very clear."

"If you read the letter well and read the decree well, you will see that it is simply a constructive reordering with pastoral care, and it avoids an excess of those things that are not," he added.

During the interview, Pope Francis addressed a wide range of topics, including the charges of financial malfeasance against Cardinal Angelo Becciu, the Vatican's efforts to fight against corruption and clergy sexual abuse, and relations with China.

Pope Addresses Vatican Reforms Aimed at Curbing Corruption, Abuse

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While financial reforms in the Vatican are progressing steadily, cases involving corruption and malfeasance in the Eternal City are "a disease that we relapse into," Pope Francis said.

In a wide-ranging interview broadcast Sept. 1 by COPE, the Spanish radio station owned by the Spanish bishops' conference, Pope Francis said changes made in the Vatican's financial laws have allowed prosecutors to "become more independent" in their investigations.

"Let's hope that these steps we are taking ... will help to make these events happen less and less," he said.

During the interview, the pope was asked about the Vatican trial against 10 individuals and entities, including Cardinal Angelo Becciu, former prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, on charges ranging from embezzlement to money laundering and abuse of office.

The charges stemmed from a Vatican investigation into how the Secretariat of State used \$200 million to finance a property development project in London's posh Chelsea district and

incurred millions of dollars in debt. At the time, then-Archbishop Becciu served as "sostituto," the No. 3 position in the Vatican Secretariat of State.

Cardinal Becciu was forced to offer his resignation to the pope in September 2020, after he was accused of embezzling an estimated 100,000 euros of Vatican funds and redirecting them to Spes, a Caritas organization run by his brother, Tonino Becciu, in his home Diocese of Ozieri, Sardinia.

The pope told COPE he authorized the Vatican's investigation into the

See "Reforms" on Page 15

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Cathedral of St. Joseph Planning Domestic Violence Awareness Events

By Joyce Bibey

WHEELING—Bishop Mark Brennan will be the celebrant at a special Mass in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 10 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. Following Mass there will be a workshop to raise awareness of domestic violence in the Great Hall of Central Catholic High School.

While Bishop Brennan will be speaking about family peace and threats to it during his homily, the workshop after the Mass will feature presenters from local and national

agencies.

The workshop presenters include representatives from Catholics for Family Peace and the Wheeling YWCA, along with Shelly Ernest, victim/witness coordinator of the Ohio County Prosecutor's Office. In addition, B.L. Edmundson, a licensed outpatient mental health therapist certified in treatment of additions, and Erica Hartley, of Vance Presbyterian Church, will also speak and be on hand to answer questions.

Bishop Brennan was the featured homilist for the Annual Domestic

Violence Awareness Mass last year organized by the national office of Catholics for Family Peace and the USCCB's Secretariat Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. The purpose of these events is to inform the Catholic community on ways to promote family peace, prevent and respond to domestic abuse, provide resources, and encourage prayer for all families. The initiative provides education, resources, and research that help pastoral leaders, clergy, and parishioners recognize domestic abuse and respond with compassion. To learn more, please visit

www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of abuse, please know that there is hope, help, and healing. For information on local resources, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233; TTY: 800-787-3224.

The Oct. 10 program in Wheeling will also be shared on the Cathedral of St. Joseph's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/wheelingcathedral> and dwc.org.

Reservations are requested by calling (304) 975-3230.

Charleston Serra Establishes Fund to Support Seminarians in Memory of Father Leon Alexander

CHARLESTON — The Serra Club of Charleston has established a permanent fund in support of men studying for the Catholic priesthood. The organization has contributed nearly \$4,000 as the seed funds.

The new fund is named for the late Father Leon Alexander, a priest of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, who died in 2021.

"Father Leon was a dedicated and joyful priest who served the church and a host of Catholics for many years even after his retirement," said Joe Deegan, an officer of the Serra Club of Charleston who as one of his parishioners at Blessed Sacrament Parish in South Charleston knew the priest well. "Father Leon remained a dedicated pastor and priest until his last day of life. Many other priests in the West Virginia church held Father Leon in high regard and often sought his advice on personal and church matters."

The Father Leon Alexander Burse for Seminarians was created in consultation with the Office of Vocations

of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. The diocese and the Serra Club of Charleston are planning its first disbursements for seminarians discerning the priesthood for service to the local church.

Father Alexander was pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish for over 20 years and had also served several parishes in the diocese. Father Alexander was born in Huntington, where he was a member of St. Joseph Parish. He attended St. Charles College in Catonsville, Md., and St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph H. Hodges at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling May 14, 1966.

Father Alexander founded the diocese's youth camp, Camp Tygart (now Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Camp) in Huttonsville, and served as director from 1965 to 1971. He served as associate pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Beckley from 1966 to 1968 and of Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksburg in 1968. He was director of Youth for the diocese from 1968 to 1971 and then served



Father Leon Alexander

as associate pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in St. Albans from 1971 to 1972. He went on to serve as pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Montgometry from 1972 to 1981, Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield from 1981 to 1986, Blessed Sacrament from 1986 to 2006, and St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown from 2006 to 2010.

Father Alexander served as



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dean of the Bluefield Deanery from 1981 to 1986 and vicar forane of the Charleston Vicariate from 1986 to 2006. He retired from active ministry in 2010. He also served as temporary administrator of Ascension Parish in Hurricane from 2018 to 2019.

Father Alexander served on Presbyteral Council, the Clergy Personnel Committee, and the Priests Health and Retirement Board. He was best known for his time spent at Camp Tygart in Huttonsville.

The Serra Club of Charles-

ton, founded in 1951, is part of Serra International, an international organization dedicated to fostering priestly and religious vocations.

Donations to the Father Alexander Burse are deductible for federal income tax purposes and may be made to "Serra Club of Charleston" and mailed to P. O. Box 1746, Charleston, WV 25326.

See www.serracharleston.org for more information about the Serra Club of Charleston.

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Central and St. Michael's Teachers Honored as Teachers of the Year

By Colleen Rowan

WHEELING—Two of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Catholic school teachers were among three recipients of the Wheeling Chamber of Commerce's Teachers of the Year award.

They are Marcy Hartzell, vice principal and middle school language arts and religion teacher for grades seven and eight at St. Michael Parish School in Wheeling; and Tom Perdziola, chairman of the Department of Mathematics at Central Catholic High School in Wheeling.

Hartzell started at St. Michael's as a substitute teacher in 2010. The next year she came on as a full-time teacher for the fifth grade. She said she feels very overwhelmed and grateful to receive the award.

"St. Mike's is a great place to work," Hartzell said, and emphasized the support from stakeholders, parents, the parish, as well as Father Carlos Melocoton, pastor of the school and St. Michael Parish, and Principal Kim Burge. Hartzell has also had many great mentors at the school, she said, including former principal Sis Richardson. Hartzell said that she and her fellow teachers collaborate and work to make each other better.

"I feel very supported by my co-workers," she said. "They will challenge me and help me to grow. This is an awesome place to be."

She and her family are members of St. Michael Parish. She is a graduate of Catholic Central High School in Steubenville, Ohio, and of Franciscan University of Steubenville, where she received her undergraduate in elementary education. She then went on to attend Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and taught in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Her family moved to Wheeling in 2003, and



Marcy Hartzell



Tom Perdziola

she began volunteering at the school.

She and her husband Jamie have been married for 28 years and have four children: Peter, 25; Lucy, 24; Margaret, 18; and Andrew, who just began his junior year at Wheeling Central. Her other children are graduates of Central and all four attended St. Michael's as well.

"I am very lucky, any teacher from Central Catholic is just as deserving," Perdziola said of his award. He has been teaching for 38 years, and this is his fifth year at Central.

Perdziola lives in Bethel Park, Pa., and is a member of St. Louise de Marillac Parish. He is grateful to have received the award and to teach at Central.

"I teach at Central Catholic because I believe that it is the best!" Perdziola said. "I recently beat cancer. The reason why I beat it was my students at Central Catholic. A fellow teacher, Pam Hartman said to me, 'When you have that many students praying for you God will listen and you will beat it.' I want to thank the students at Central Catholic for saving my life and allowing me to teach again!"

"I also want to thank my family for never leaving my side!"

Infant of Prague Novena Begins at Cathedral Sept. 13

WHEELING—The Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling will celebrate the annual Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague beginning this year on Monday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m.

The novena will be prayed on nine consecutive Monday evenings concluding on Nov. 8. Each week consists of Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, a homily given by a guest priest, music, and prayers to the Infant of Prague. The theme for this year is "Called to Be Holy". Everyone is invited to attend this beautiful devotion. God has been astonishingly generous in blessing those who have been devoted to His Infant Son.

Special Emergency Collection to be Held Sept. 4-5 in All Churches to Support Humanitarian Efforts in Haiti

Confirmation Schedule Fall 2021

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant

Tuesday, September 7, 2021: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Stonewood, 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 19, 2021: Ascension Parish, Hurricane, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 24, 2021: St. Thomas Parish, Gassaway, 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, October 30, 2021: St. Patrick Parish, Mannington, 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 7, 2021: Immaculate Conception Parish, Fairmont, 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, November 10, 2021: Combined Confirmation: Holy Redeemer Parish, Spencer, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Mission, Elizabeth; at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Mission, 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 20, 2021: St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg, 5:00 p.m.



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Radiant Presence is a Present

WVU Campus Minister hopes to radiate Christ's love

By Joyce Bibey

Walk into her office and you'll be greeted with a heartwarming smile. Catch up with her and her family during an outdoor adventure and you'll be treated to her contagious laughter. Yet the most attractive and impressive thing about Colleen Roderique Criste may be her beautiful heart and glowing spirit—an asset that is benefiting countless young adults at the St. John University Parish Newman Center in Morgantown.

Criste grew up a cradle Catholic in a strong and faithful family, but until two years ago she didn't realize how much her upbringing, raising 8 children in this ever-changing and challenging world, and committing to take time for herself for continuing education of mind and spirit would inspire her to be so inspirational in her role as director of programs for Campus



Courtesy Photo

Colleen Criste with her spiritual mentor, Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, Franciscan University president.

Ministry at WVU.

She was born and raised in southern New Jersey, but up until two years ago, when she moved to Morgantown for her husband's job, she called southern Virginia home.

"I grew up surrounded by priests and religious," she said. "It was a regular thing for us to have priests over for dinner, joining us on family vacations, and having private Masses in our home. I never realized how unusual that was!"

Her father Ray Roderique was a deacon, known as Deacon Ray Rodrigue (taking the original ancestral spelling of his last name). He and her mother Mary Kathleen were prayer ministry leaders in their

community. Her uncle, Father Ed O'Connor, was an author and theology professor at Notre Dame University. Her aunt, Sister Maria, was a nun with the Sisters of Mercy. Her brother, Father Ray Roderique, is a priest for the Diocese of Newark, and two of her cousins, Father Jon Mary Foster and Mother Magdalene Foster, founded and belong to an order called the "Mission of Divine Mercy" in Texas.

"I would describe my faith as a blend of constancy and flux, if that makes any sense," she said. "From a very early age I knew who Jesus was and I had a strong personal relationship with Him. However, no matter how religious the upbringing, it cannot replace the fact that you must embrace faith and walk in it for yourself. No one can do it for you."

Her journey through life led her into and through heartbreaking challenges, but thankfully she had the heart and mind to listen to people who let Christ speak to her through them.

"I rebelled and rejected the church for many years," she said of her young adult life. "I didn't attend Mass and lived a life bent on self-destruction. It wasn't until I reached my lowest point, when I desired death more than life, that I got down on my knees and begged God to help me. I made a promise to Him that night. I said, 'God, if you are real, if you will change my life, I promise I will serve You every day for the rest of my life.' That was the beginning of everything. Three days later, I attended Mass for the first time in years. It was at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Lynchburg."

As fate would have it, Holy Cross is where she ended up meeting her future husband Dan Criste "in the 'Donut Line' after Mass. We were married one year later, and have 8 children: Daniel, Jacob, Mary, Isaac, Abby, Joshua, Elijah, and Aaron. We also have 2 babies in heaven: Joseph and James."

When the family moved to Morgantown, they joined St. John's Parish. It was a year later in July of 2020, when she took on the role of Campus Minister at the invitation of Father Brian Crenwelge.

"I was hesitant at first, because I had never done campus ministry before—never even



Courtesy Photo

Students from WVU enjoying a Ladies Tea at Campus Minister Colleen Criste's home.

considered it," Criste said. "But then I remembered a prophetic word that had been given to me just days after moving to Morgantown by a Catholic Evangelist named Mary Bielski. She went out of her way to share this message with me. — 'The Holy Spirit is telling me to tell you that God has called you into a new mission field. Your new mission will be ministering to young adults, specifically young adult women, and it will flourish!'"

Criste met Bielski at a Steubenville Power and Purpose Conference. Between sessions Bielski, whom she'd never met before approached her thinking they'd been acquaintances. "I assumed she was just some enthusiastic person from the audience," Criste remembered. "It wasn't until the next day that I discovered she was actually one of the keynote speakers for the weekend and had the gift of prophecy! I still get goosebumps when I recall her words!"

"I had no idea at the time how any of what she said could happen."

Needless to say, Criste was baffled. "We knew almost no one when we moved here," she said. "We had few friends or anything that could even remotely lead to what she had said. But then, the campus minister's job offer happened, and I accepted it; trusting in the God Who has proved Himself again and again and has never failed."

Her typical day at the Mountaineer Catholic Newman Center is graced with a mini parade of co-eds stopping by her door to say "Hello."

"Colleen has been such a Godsend in so many ways to our Newman Center," said

Father Crenwelge. "She brings a warm, motherly presence to our students. Many of them affectionately call her 'Mom.' I'll walk by her office countless times a day, and she is with a student, listening to his or her relationship or family struggles."

The informal title "Newman Mom" is cherished by Criste. "I love each and every one of the students as if they were my own," she said. "I care about the things that are troubling them or weighing them down. We will often just sit and pray together, and they will leave with a little less stress and more peace. We laugh a lot too!"

No matter what life throws at you, God is always there waiting to help, Criste said, adding that it is important to look outside of who we are and remember whose we are so we can help others. One of her favorite bible verses is Isaiah 30:15 – "in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." It reminds her "Although I may not be the strongest, most confident person, God can still use me," she said.

"What motivates me every day is knowing that we have a finite amount of time on this earth to make a difference, but we also have the most incredible opportunity to be the instruments that God uses to change lives forever," Criste said. "If we can help young adults now to know the love of God for them, His forgiveness,

and His mercy, then we have done our jobs well. They will leave the campus of WVU better, stronger, and holier, and that can only impact the church in the best possible way!"

She said we all need to rely on Jesus and call upon him to "use us to serve others." In doing so, we also need to seek spiritual advisors to keep us motivated. "One of my strongest spiritual mentors is Father Dave Pivonka, president of Franciscan University of Steubenville," Criste said. "He continues to inspire me with his humility and deep dependence on the Holy Spirit to do the work he has been called to do."

She wholeheartedly believes she is an effective campus minister because of the power of the Holy Spirit. "To be perfectly honest, I wake up every morning feeling a little nervous about the day," she said. "I recognize the gravity of this role, and I don't always feel equipped to do it. But then I think of this quote: 'God does not choose the ones who are equipped, He equips the ones He chooses.' I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me with His grace, strength, and gifts; to minister to the students through me. Not by my strength, but by His. Not my will, but His. In the end, my hope is that every person I have encountered in life will know that they were loved."

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



Working Toward a Common Goal



Courtesy Photo

From left: Jeanne Costello of CCWVa, Mary French of Helping Hands, and Holly Redman of CCWVa, gather in front of the Helping Hands donation shed.

By Trina Bartlett, CCWVa Eastern Regional Director

The Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) Romney office has been making changes and forming partnerships to serve clients more efficiently.

“We are happy to be sharing office space with the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation,” said Holly Redman, CCWVa Case manager. “Both of our organizations have a mission of improving our community.”

CCWVa is also partnering with Helping Hands, a secondhand store with the experience and re-

sources to clean, sort, store, and distribute used clothing donated to CCWVa. CCWVa clients will receive clothing vouchers to continue receiving donated clothing for free.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org.

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God’s love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.



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THE YEAR OF *St. Joseph* MARCH 19, 2021 - MARCH 19, 2022

Cluster Pilgrimage to the Cathedral of St. Joseph



Courtesy Photo

On Aug. 7 (pre-mask requirement), members from the cluster of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in New Martinsville, Mater Dolorosa Parish in Paden City, Holy Rosary Mission in Sistersville, and St. Joseph Mission in Proctor are gathered with their pastor, Msgr. Kevin M. Quirk, on their pilgrimage to the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. During their pilgrimage, Father Justin Golna preached the votive Mass of St. Joseph. The pilgrims prayed the Litany of St. Joseph and then had a 1.5-hour tour of the cathedral. This was part of the cluster's celebration of the Year of St. Joseph.

Pilgrimage ...

Cont'd from Page 2

It is important to note that St. Joseph Parish in Huntington will host an event honoring the patron of the diocese and the Universal Church in the spring. Additional pilgrimages to missions and chapels under the patronage of St. Joseph will be announced in the

weeks and months ahead.

Pope Francis declared a Year of St. Joseph for the whole Church, which began Dec. 8, 2020, and will conclude on Dec. 8, 2021. Bishop Brennan has extended the Year of St. Joseph in our diocese to conclude on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, beloved father, guardian of the Holy Family, and humble servant of God, through the solemnity on

March 19, 2022.

The culmination of the Year of St. Joseph will be celebrated with Mass and other special events at the Co-Cathedral of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

"May our faith in God and our devotion to His great servant, St. Joseph, bring us closer to Jesus Christ and one another," Bishop Brennan said.

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Vacunarse y usar máscaras son 'verdaderos actos de amor', dice el obispo Brennan

Por Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA—“Vacunarse y usar una buena máscara son actos genuinos de amor mediante los cuales protegemos a nuestro prójimo y nuestra propia salud”, dijo el obispo Mark E. Brennan en un mensaje de video a los fieles católicos de Virginia Occidental. “Debemos hacer estas dos cosas para mejorar la salud y la seguridad de nuestros familiares, amigos y los más vulnerables”.

El mensaje del obispo Brennan se publicó en las redes sociales de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston el 27 de agosto. Comenzó su mensaje diciendo que la pandemia de COVID-19 continúa devastando el estado de la montaña con un gran aumento del número de personas infectadas, hospitalizaciones y muertes. .

El obispo animó a todos a rezar por

todos los afectados por el virus y por el fin de la pandemia, y dijo que todos pueden actuar con valentía ante esta “amenaza mortal”.

El obispo Brennan enfatizó que las vacunas ahora están completamente aprobadas y ampliamente disponibles y brindan una protección sustancial a quienes están vacunados. El uso de máscaras en entornos públicos y grandes reuniones en interiores, dijo, agrega más protección.

“Algunos objetan que las vacunas y el uso de máscaras interfieren con su libertad personal. Nuestra libertad es una participación muy limitada pero real en la libertad de Dios, y como la de Dios, siempre debe usarse para hacer el bien”, dijo el obispo.

“Le insto a que elija hacer el bien a su vecino ya usted mismo al vacunarse y usar una máscara protectora en los

entornos apropiados”, dijo el obispo. “Ninguno de nosotros elegiría ver a un familiar o amigo sufrir y posiblemente morir si tuviéramos el poder para detenerlo. Tenemos el poder, en gran medida, de contrarrestar un virus mortal al vacunarnos y usar una máscara. A medida que continuamos atravesando estos tiempos difíciles, oremos por paciencia y una firme determinación de hacer lo mejor para todos”.

El obispo también recordó a todos, en su mensaje, que el Señor Jesús les ha enseñado a todos a amar al prójimo como a sí mismos.

El obispo Brennan dio a conocer su mensaje días después de pedirles a todos que usen máscaras en todas las iglesias de la diócesis. Su solicitud se realizó el 25 de agosto y fue motivada por el aumento de los casos de Covid

en Virginia Occidental. Esa tarde, se pidió a los párrocos y parroquias que colocaran un letrero con el siguiente mensaje o un mensaje similar en cada entrada de sus iglesias: “Hasta nuevo aviso, el obispo Brennan pide que todos los asistentes a la misa usen una máscara, excepto los niños pequeños debajo de la edad de 2.

“Gracias por su cooperación en este acto de caridad cristiana”.

El obispo pidió que los letreros se coloquen antes de las misas del fin de semana y alentó a los párrocos y parroquias a compartir el mensaje a través de sus canales de comunicación, incluidos los boletines parroquiales, anuncios, redes sociales y sitios web. Comenzaron a publicar el mensaje en sus sitios de redes sociales esa noche.

Encuesta sobre las necesidades pastorales del Consejo Pastoral Diocesano

Por Colleen Rowan

WEST VIRGINIA— El Consejo Pastoral Diocesano (DPC) de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston está llevando a cabo una encuesta de necesidades pastorales. Con el título “Deje que se escuchen sus voces”, la encuesta fue encabezada por el Subcomité de Preocupaciones Pastorales del DPC e invita a los fieles católicos a compartir sus puntos de vista y opiniones sobre cómo satisfacer las necesidades de la diócesis.

“Esperamos que nuestra gente en las bancas aproveche esta oportunidad y permita que sus voces sean escuchadas sobre varios temas”, dijo Gina Boggess, una de los ocho miembros del subcomité. Una vez que se reciban las encuestas completadas, los miembros del comité recopilarán la información y presentarán los resultados generales al Obispo Mark E. Brennan y al Consejo Pastoral Diocesano en la próxima reunión programada en octubre. La encuesta está disponible en línea y en papel, tanto en inglés como en español. Para completar en línea,

visite el sitio web de la diócesis en <https://dwc.org/pastoral-needs-survey/>. Boggess dijo que las iglesias enviaron formularios impresos de la encuesta a sus feligreses confinados en sus hogares y a otras personas. Los formularios impresos de la encuesta también están disponibles en las iglesias, y los feligreses pueden simplemente completarlos y colocarlos en cestas de recolección en las misas o devolverlos a las oficinas parroquiales.

Boggess señaló que la mayoría de las encuestas están siendo completadas por personas mayores de 60 años, y que para que la encuesta sea realmente efectiva, también deben escuchar a los jóvenes y adultos jóvenes.

Boggess, quien es miembro de la parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Princeton, dijo que después de que los resultados de la encuesta estén en el subcomité, los miembros explorarán, investigarán, priorizarán y recomendarán futuras empresas pastorales basadas en las necesidades y preocupaciones de la población católica en Virginia Occidental.

“También planeamos compartir con los sacerdotes un resumen de los resultados de su iglesia”, continuó diciendo. “Esperamos que los resultados proporcionen información valiosa sobre los corazones y las mentes de sus feligreses. Además, los sacerdotes y su consejo pastoral pueden utilizar los resultados como una herramienta y una guía al planificar y tomar decisiones sobre aquellos a quienes sirven”.

Paul Buede de St. James the Greater Parish en Charles Town, quien también forma parte del subcomité, dijo que los miembros están emocionados de ser parte de una oportunidad única de proporcionar una plataforma para que la gente de la diócesis comparta lo que ha funcionado bien en sus parroquias, lo que no funciona o no funciona bien, y cualquier otro comentario. “Siempre es bueno saber qué funciona, pero también es fundamental comprender las brechas, para que nuestro obispo y su equipo puedan administrar mejor a nuestra diócesis”, dijo Buede.

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 eclesísticas 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 Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. 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 Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de www.dwc.org, en “Rendición de cuentas”, luego “Informar mala conducta” o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida. Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.

Make the Brave Choice to Lead a Simpler, Eco-Friendly Life, Pope Says

By Carol Glatz Catholic, News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — People should change the way they eat, travel and use natural resources, energy and products so they minimize their harm to the earth, Pope Francis said.

“Let us pray that we all will make courageous choices, the choices necessary for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, taking inspiration from our young people who are resolutely committed to this,” the pope said.

In a video message released by the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network Sept. 1, the pope offered his prayer intention for the month of September, which he dedicated to “an environmentally sustainable lifestyle.”

Sept. 1 also marked the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which also kicks off the celebration of the Season of Creation, which runs to Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. The theme this year is “A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God,” Pope Francis said during his general audience at the Vatican Sept. 1.

He told those gathered that he, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, an early leader

in the Christian ecology movement, and Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury “have prepared a message that will be issued in the coming days.”

“Together with our brothers and sisters of different Christian denominations, let us pray and work for our common home in these times of grave crisis for the planet,” he said at the general audience.

The pope also confirmed that “in principle” he was scheduled to attend the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, in November, during an interview aired Sept. 1 with COPE, the radio network owned by the Spanish bishops’ conference.

“In principle, the program is that I go. It all depends on how I feel at the time,” he said.

“But, in fact, my speech is already being prepared, and the plan is to be there,” he said, adding that he hoped the summit would increase governments’ commitments “and bring us more in line” with what action is needed to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The world’s adults need to be inspired by and follow the lead of today’s young people, who are at the forefront of caring for the environment, the pope said

in the rest of his video message for the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network.

Speaking about his monthly intention for September, the pope said, “It makes me very happy to see that young people have the courage to undertake projects for environmental and social improvement, since the two go together.”

“We adults can learn much from them, because in all matters related to care for the planet, they are at the forefront. Let us take advantage of their example and reflect on our lifestyle, especially during these moments of health, social and environmental crisis,” he said.

“Let us reflect on how the way we eat, consume, travel, or the way we use water, energy, plastics, and many other material goods, is often harmful to the earth,” he said.

He said, “Let us choose to change. Let us advance with young people toward lifestyles that are simpler and more respectful of the environment.”

Young people “aren’t foolish because they are committed to their own future. This is why they want to change what they will inherit at a time when we will no longer be here,” the pope said.

Reforms ...

Cont’d from Page 7

property deal as a sign that he was “not afraid of transparency or the truth.”

“Sometimes it hurts a lot, but the truth is what sets us free,” he said.

Regarding Cardinal Becciu, the pope said he hopes “with all my heart that he is innocent,” adding that the Italian prelate was “a collaborator of mine and helped me a lot.”

Cardinal Becciu is someone “whom I have a certain esteem for as a person, that is to say, my wish is that he turns out well,” he said. “In addition to the presumption of innocence, I want everything to turn out well. In any case, justice will decide.”

When asked by COPE about the Catholic Church’s efforts to fight against clergy sexual abuse, Pope Francis praised the efforts made by Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Cardinal O’Malley, he said, was among those who spoke about the sexual abuse crisis “with courage,” especially when “it fell to him to settle the matter in Boston, and it was not easy.”

“The Commission for the Protec-

tion of Minors, which was Cardinal O’Malley’s invention, is now functioning,” he said.

The pope said sexual abuse is “a serious, global problem,” and he criticized governments that have failed to stop the production of child pornography, which he called “demonic.”

“I sometimes wonder how certain governments allow the production of child pornography,” he said. “They cannot say they do not know. Nowadays, with the intelligence services, everything is known. A government knows who in their country produces child pornography. For me, this is one of the most monstrous things I have ever seen.”

Pope Francis also said he is reviewing the proposed apostolic constitution for reforming and governing the Roman Curia.

The document, “Praedicate Evangelium” (“Preach the Gospel”) — which will replace “Pastor Bonus,” St. John Paul II’s 1988 constitution reforming the Curia — “is nearly finished” and there are only a few things that require “tweaking,” he said.

The pope added that his read-through of the apostolic constitution was delayed due to his surgery in July.

“The last step is for me to read it — and I must read it because I have to sign it, and I have to read it word for word — and it is not going to have anything new in terms of what is being seen now,” he said.

The proposed merging of dicasteries in the document have either happened or have already been announced, he said.

Pope Francis was asked about the Vatican’s renewal of an agreement with the Chinese government regarding the appointment of bishops.

The 2018 provisional agreement, the text of which has never been made public, outlines procedures for ensuring Catholic bishops are elected by the Catholic community in China and approved by the pope before their ordinations and installations, according to news reports at the time.

Among the harshest critics of the

Vatican’s agreement with China was the U.S. Trump administration, including former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Prior to the agreement’s renewal, Pompeo tweeted that “the Vatican endangers its moral authority, should it renew the deal.”

The pope said that like many who criticize his decisions regarding China, “when I was a layman and priest, I loved to show the bishop the way” to do things.

Nevertheless, he said, the Vatican “should not give up on dialogue,” and “closed-mindedness is never the way.”

“What has been achieved so far in China was at least dialogue, some concrete things like the appointment of new bishops, slowly,” the pope said. “But these are also steps that may be questionable and” with varying results.

Law ...

Cont’d from Page 6

Appeals for the 5th Circuit, which granted their request to put the district-court proceedings on hold but denied the challengers’ request to expedite the appeal, which led them to seek emergency relief from the Supreme Court Aug. 30.

Scotusblog, which reports on the Supreme Court, said the Texas attorney general and other defenders of the state’s abortion law had urged the Supreme Court to stay out of the dispute, saying the court is limited in its power to grant relief before laws have actually been enforced. They argued that courts can bar people from doing something, but they have no power to “expunge the law itself.” In late March, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, the public policy arm of the state’s bishops, said it was “thrilled to report” Senate passage of pro-life bills supported by the conference and said they were considered top priorities.

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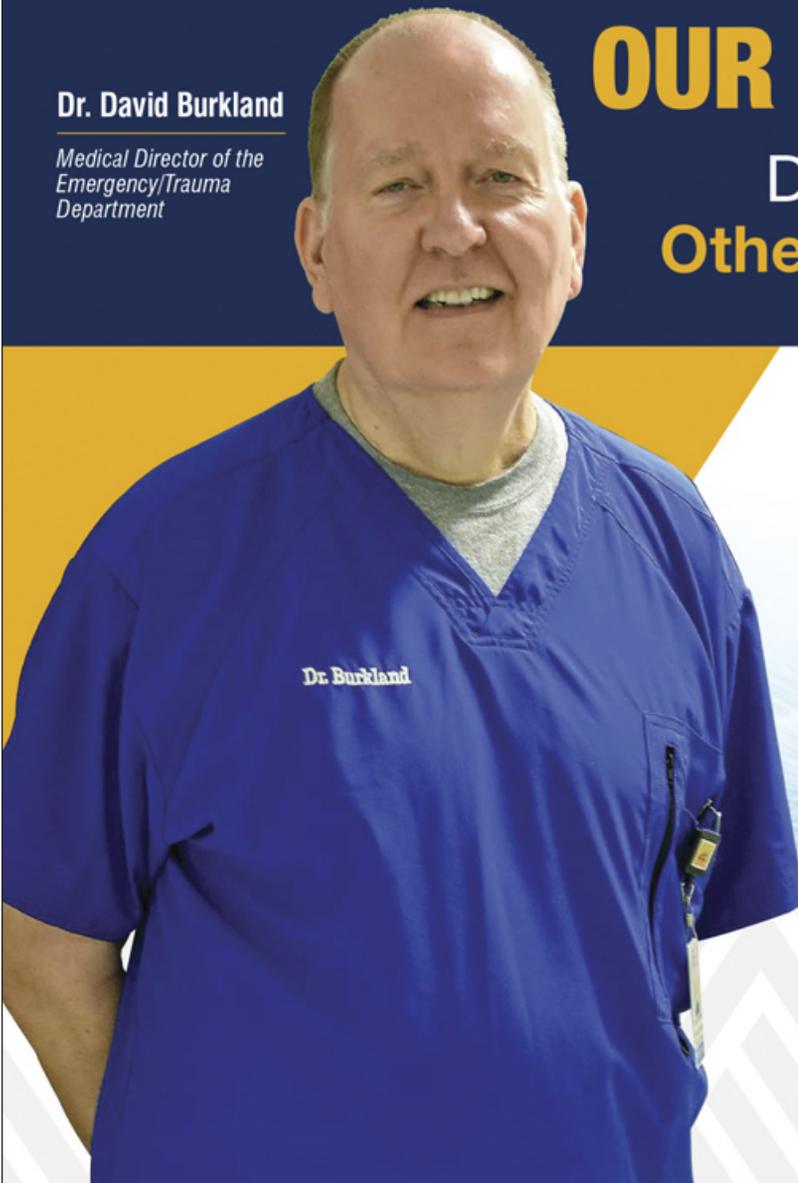
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