THE CATHOLIC Spirit

Pope Leo Says, 'It Is Not Yet Too Late' to Care for Creation

By Josephine Peterson

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Leo XIV began the five-week Season of Creation by calling on the faithful to step away from the frenzy of daily life to "hear the melodious voice of creation," stressing that "it is not yet too late" to repair humanity's relationship with the environment.

Celebrating Mass on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in the gardens of the papal villa and the Borgo Laudato Si' ecology project in Castel Gandolfo, Sept. 1, the pope said contemplating creation and its Creator should lead people to recognize their responsibility for protecting it.

"Thus, as we become conscious of our shortcomings and failures, we can renew our commitment to restoring the relationships among all creatures according to the will of their Creator," he said.

The theme chosen for the 2026 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation echoes the biblical call to "beat swords into plowshares" and connects armed conflict with environmental destruction.

In a June 2 statement, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development said that "the now widespread awareness of the impact of war on natural resources has not led to the creation of adequate institutions or to responsible decisions aimed at preventing conflicts and resolving disputes peacefully."

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St. Mary Central and Notre Dame Students Celebrate Italian Heritage in Clarksburg

Courtesy photos

Clarksburg's St. Mary Central School and Notre Dame High School were proudly represented at the city's Italian Heritage Festival Pasta Cookout, officials of the schools said. "We loved seeing our students who are part of the Italian Heritage Festival dancers (above, left) sharing their talents and celebrating their heritage with our community," officials of the schools said in an Aug. 31 post on Facebook. "A special shout out to Pre-K student Autumn Payne (above, right) who proudly led the Pledge of Allegiance! We are so proud of our students for representing St. Mary's and Notre Dame and being part of this wonderful Clarksburg tradition!"

In the Next Print Edition, Sept. 11
Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Bishop Menjívar attends Solemn High Mass in Charles Town | 25th Anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks | St. Gianna Pro-Life Ministry Growing in Wheeling

Labor Day a Call to Build Communion, Equity Amid Challenges of AI, Says Bishops' Chairman on Domestic Justice and Human Development

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — This year's Sept. 7 observance of Labor Day underscores Pope Leo XIV's call to be "builders of communion" while safeguarding human dignity, as artificial intelligence "reshapes our economy and our work," said Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of Louisville, Kentucky.

The archbishop reflected on the nature of work and labor in a Sept. 1 statement, speaking in his role as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

First established in New York City in 1882, the annual holiday — which developed from labor activist movements of the late 19th century — "is an opportunity to celebrate workers and honor the dignity of work," said Archbishop Fabre.

He stressed that "work is more than a way to make a living," but rather — as Catholic teaching affirms — "a form of participation in God's creation."

In his message, the archbishop drew particular attention to "young people and vulnerable communities who face uncertainty in today's economy."

While "traditional economic indicators tell us the economy is growing," hiring itself "has slowed, especially for unemployed workers," and "unemployment remains high for Black workers," said Archbishop Fabre, citing a June analysis from the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Pointing to research from Washington University, the archbishop said that "roughly one-quarter of the labor force are low-wage workers," with 72% percent lacking stable jobs.

In addition, the Urban Institute's WorkRise initiative has found that people of color make up more than half of the low-wage workforce, the archbishop said.

The economic landscape directly impacts decisions on childbearing. Archbishop Fabre observed that a 2025 Brigham Young University survey found "more than 70% of Americans believe having children is unaffordable, an increase of 13 points in just the last year."

Archbishop Fabre highlighted "widespread concern" that artificial intelligence "will lead to higher unemployment and to fewer jobs that can support a family."

Young people, he said, "have been the most impacted so far and also experience the most anxiety about AI's impact on their work."

"We must listen to the experiences of workers, families, young people, and communities of color as they struggle to find stability," said Archbishop Fabre.

The archbishop emphasized the timeliness and importance of "Magnifica Humanitas," Pope Leo's May 2026 encyclical, which stressed the primacy of Catholic social teaching and human dignity in the development and application of AI.

The encyclical, which affirmed longstanding papal teachings on labor and the common good, warns that "although AI presents new opportunities, it also risks

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The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

2026 Print Dates:

Triumph of the Cross, Sept. 11

Month of the Rosary, Oct. 9

Advent, Nov. 20

Christmas, Dec. 18

There are 10 print editions in 2026. At left are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on thecatholicspiritwv.org.

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

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Creation ...

Cont'd from Page 1

In his homily during the Mass, Pope Leo said the call to transform weapons into instruments that sustain life remains urgent.

"What has been used for destruction can be redirected toward life, toward the care of the poor, the nourishment of the hungry, and the safeguarding of creation," he said, quoting his message for the day.

Militaries account for about 5.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to water pollution, soil contamination and waste generation, according to a joint study by the UK-based Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory. The World Wide Fund for Nature estimated that the first three years of the Russia-Ukraine war alone generated the equivalent of about 230 million metric tons of carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas that traps heat from sunlight, warming the planet.

Pope Leo also focused on access to clean water in his September prayer intention, released Sept. 1 by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network.

Thanking God for the gift of water, the pope prayed for the "right of every brother and sister to drink without fear and without inequality."

"Forgive us for turning it into a commodity, forgetting that it is a universal gift, a right without borders, meant for all your children," he prayed. "We see with pain so many brothers and sisters who lack clean water, who walk for miles to find it, who become ill due to its scarcity."

During the Mass, Pope Leo said passages from the Book of Wisdom and Psalm 18 encourage Christians to recognize God through the "beauty and power of creation."

"All creation speaks to us of the greatness of its Creator, if only our eyes and hearts remain open to such a great mystery," he said.

By looking with wonder at the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, the pope said, Christians can better understand the greatness of God's love for humanity.

"If the Lord does not fail to bestow such splendid beauty upon plants and animals and provide for all their needs, how much more attentive will he be to the needs of his beloved sons and daughters," he said.

The Season of Creation runs from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. The Catholic Church's observance of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation was established by Pope Francis in response to an initiative of Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. The Orthodox Church has observed Sept. 1 as a day of prayer for creation since 1989.

The 2026 season will conclude as the Church marks the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, who is the patron saint of ecology.

Pope Leo closed his homily by reciting portions of St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures:

"Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun... Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars... Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind... Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water... Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire... Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us."

Call ...

Cont'd from Page 2

normalizing a vision that is anti-human," said Archbishop Fabre.

"Pope Leo expressly acknowledges the great risks of AI for workers: de-skilling, surveillance, rigid and repetitive tasks, reduced agency and creativity, unemployment, job insecurity, concentrated power, and increased inequalities," said the archbishop. "Furthermore, AI relies on low-wage workers, who are often hidden and who endure harsh conditions, caught in an exploitative supply chain."

Archbishop Fabre admitted that humanity faces a difficult and "daunting" task in grappling with AI's sweeping impacts on labor.

Among the challenges are the need "to ensure just development of AI systems, with worker participation, transparency and accountability; to protect good jobs, offer retraining where needed, and correct the power imbalances that are exacerbated by technology," he said.

"And yet, we have been here before," he said, noting that Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical "Rerum Novarum," written in response to the Industrial Revolution, has helped the Church to bring "the sacredness of the human person to the questions of work and labor for these last 135 years."

Archbishop Fabre also referenced the USCCB's 1986 pastoral letter, "Economic Justice for All," which is now marking its 40th anniversary.

"Much of the teaching of this document remains relevant for our shared project in the United States," said Archbishop Fabre. "As we confront this latest challenge, we invite all to be partners in this work."

That partnership — spanning "the Church, government, labor unions, civil society groups, corporations, and others" — will help ensure that "innovation and development is for the benefit of all, not just a few, and that each person can contribute to the Kingdom of God through their work," said Archbishop Fabre.

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

NOTES: The USCCB statement is also found here: https://www.usccb.org/resources/labor-day-statement-2026

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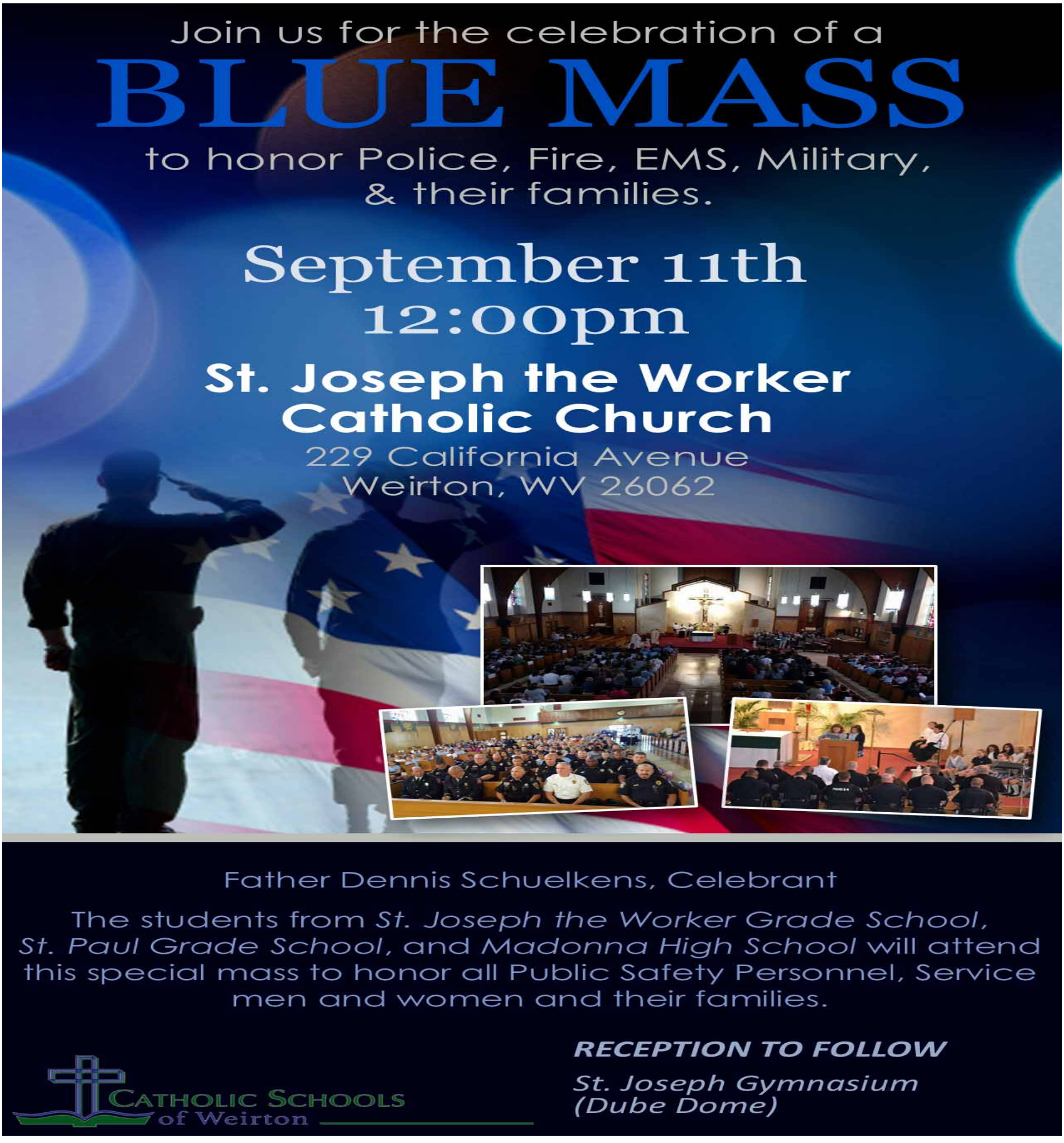
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& their families.
September 11th
12:00pm
St. Joseph the Worker
Catholic Church
229 California Avenue
Weirton, WV 26062
Father Dennis Schuelkens, Celebrant
The students from St. Joseph the Worker Grade School, St. Paul Grade School, and Madonna High School will attend this special mass to honor all Public Safety Personnel, Service men and women and their families.
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
St. Joseph Gymnasium
(Dube Dome)
Catholic Schools of Weirton

Misa en Español
Sunday, September 13
2:30 p.m.
Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala
Celebrant & Homilist
A reception will follow.
We invite you to bring a favorite dish to share.
THE Cathedral of St. Joseph

Diocese Welcomes New Priest and Sister

Sister Cheryl Clemons, OSU, PhD, serves as Executive Director of the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality and is an Ursuline Sister of Mount Saint Joseph, Maple Mount, KY. She holds a Certificate in Spiritual Direction, Supervision, and leading the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, an MA in Theological Studies from the University of Dayton, and a PhD in Historical Theology-Systematics from The Catholic University of America, with minors in Medieval Church History and Feminist Theology.

She has taught at Catholic Theological Union's Hesburgh Sabbatical Program, Washington Theological Union, The Catholic University of America (undergraduate), and the University of Dayton (graduate summer programs), as well as parish and high school settings for nearly 40 years. Her topics include social justice, the Trinity, sacraments, Scripture, prayer traditions, and Loving God with the Mind: Cardinal John Henry Newman.

Sister Cheryl has led retreats for individuals from various faith traditions (laity, religious orders, and clergy) weekend, week-long, silent, seasonal, and thematic-covering subjects such as women in the Bible, 12-Step spirituality, and the Paschal Mystery. She has been a keynote speaker for national Ursuline gatherings, presented at RCIA sessions, and spoken on topics ranging from the role of Mary and the saints to church history and the Eucharist.

Her leadership roles include service within her order, as Owensboro Diocesan Director of Social Concerns, and as Vice President for Academic Affairs/Academic Dean of Brescia University. She is also the editor of the three-volume Ursuline Book of Prayer.

I am **Father Nidheesh Jacob,** a priest of the Missionary Diocese of Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, India. I was ordained to the priesthood on March 19, 2001, on the Solemnity of St. Joseph.

For 25 years, my priestly ministry in India has taken me through a variety of pastoral and leadership assignments—as a missionary & parish priest, Youth Director, School Principal & Manager, Minor Seminary Rector & Director of Major Seminarians, and Vicar General of the Diocese, with a special responsibility for the missionary personnel of the Diocese. These experiences have enriched my priesthood and deepened my love for God's people.

I hold a Diploma in Theology, a Bachelor's degree in Education, and a Diploma in Counselling.

In June 2026, the Lord brought me to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for a new chapter of priestly service. I am presently serving as Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg. I look forward to walking with the people of this beautiful diocese, sharing faith, friendship, and the joy of the Gospel.

I am grateful to God for bringing me here and am happy to be part of this wonderful Catholic family!

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Back to School Fun in Weirton

Courtesy photos

Students at St. Joseph the Worker School in Weirton shared in back to school fun Sept. 3. Clockwise from above: Father Dennis Scheulkens and students have fun running races while Principal Recheal Fuscardo and Father Gerald Muoka join students on the inflatables.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston set the school-year theme to "Grow in Grace" this year, and Father Dennis Scheulkens helped St. Joseph the Worker School in Weirton expand on that theme and incorporate its individual school theme. St. Paul points out that runners in a race strive to win an earthly crown that perishes. Father Dennis has taught the students that, "As followers of Christ, we strive to grow in grace through our commitment to prayer, Sacraments, fellowship, and service. In this effort, St. Paul reminds us to 'run so as to win!'" school officials said.

The school definitely took the Scripture theme, "Run so as to win" — 1 Corinthians 9:24, seriously Sept. 3! The school's Kick-Off Event started with school-wide races against Father Dennis! Each grade level had their chance to hit the track, and "WOW did our students bring the energy!" school officials said.

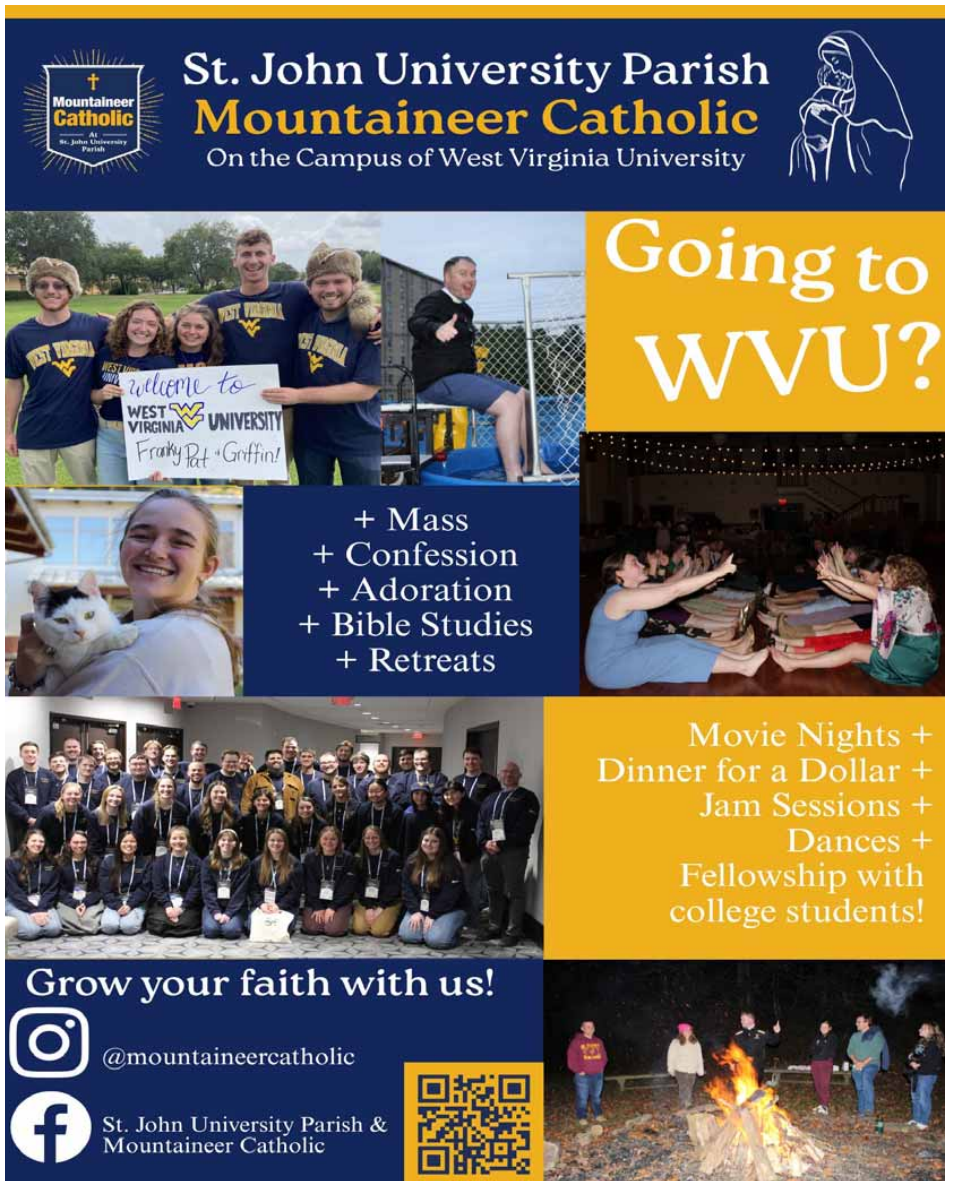
The fun didn't stop there! Students and Principal Recheal Fuscardo got to RUN through not one, but TWO inflatable obstacle courses. "We even had Father Gerald Muoka join in on the fun! And, of course, no St. Joe's celebration would be complete without a delicious ice cream sundae bar, generously provided by our amazing Parent Group!

"Our Kick-Off Event was filled with faith, fun, and SO much school spirit," school officials said. "What a fantastic way to kick off another incredible year together! There truly is NO PLACE like St. Joe's!"

WVU Quarterbacks Take a Tour of Morgantown's St. Francis de Sales Church

Courtesy photo

MORGANTOWN—On Aug. 26, Pat White, a parishioner of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Morgantown, brought a few friends to church. After the Senior Luncheon, Pat and Rich Bell gave the West Virginia University quarterbacks a tour of St. Francis de Sales. They are pictured above inside the church. There were questions, conversations, pictures—and a chance for these young men to see the church "that means so much to so many of us," parish officials said. They were invited to come back anytime. And Pat just might bring some of them back with him one Sunday. "We're grateful for Pat—not only for the ways he serves our Mountaineers, but for the way he and his wonderful family share their faith and love for this parish," officials said. "Our doors are always open."



Catholic Aid Worker in Nepal Sees 'Long Road' to Recovery after 'Unprecedented' Disaster for Region

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — Devastation from Aug. 26 flooding and mudslides along the Nepal-China border is staggering, and the road to recovery will be long, a Catholic aid worker now on the ground in that nation told OSV News.

"What we are actually witnessing is unprecedented in these areas," said Senthil Kumar Gurunathan of Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' official humanitarian and development agency.

Gurunathan, CRS country representative for India, spoke with OSV News by phone from Kathmandu hours after landing in Nepal's capital to assist Caritas Nepal in responding to the disaster. CRS and Caritas Nepal are part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church's global humanitarian agency network.

At least 955 people have been killed and over 4,470 remain missing following an Aug. 26 glacial collapse in Nepal's Langtang National Park. Debris from the 5.2 magnitude event flowed more than 60 miles, resulting in what the U.S. Geological Survey called "catastrophic impacts downstream" in communities along the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi rivers.

Video and photographs from the region show rapid surges of water and mud churning through the river channels, sweeping away communities. Victims — many of them part of tour groups and Hindu pilgrimages — include hundreds of foreign nationals from some 32 nations, with some 85 Americans still missing.

Determining the number of casualties has been further complicated by the Chinese government's information restrictions in China and Tibet, which preclude access by foreign journalists.

In his Aug. 30 Angelus address, Pope Leo XIV offered continued "prayers for those affected by the terrible flood that struck Nepal and Tibet.

"Let us pray for those who have lost their lives, for the injured, those missing, for the families and rescue workers," said Pope Leo. "May the concern of everyone help to alleviate the suffering and provide the necessary aid to the people affected."

Gurunathan said that "villages and towns have been washed away," and that "the flood situation and the damage is still evolving."

"We are very focused on the pressing needs, the essential needs," which are "food, water, sanitation and shelter," said Gurunathan.

OSV News photo/Monika Malla, Reuters

A man sticks photographs of his missing relative amid the pictures of missing and deceased people pasted on the wall outside Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal, Aug. 31 following flash floods and mudslides.

Getting such aid to those impacted by the disaster is a challenge, he admitted.

"Many of the main roads have been washed away, either fully or partly," Gurunathan said. "So what we are trying to do is to find alternative routes, working with local people to see what are the existing motorable roads. These may not be the main roads, but these are lifesaving roads, still intact."

Gurunathan, whose agency has launched a donation campaign for relief efforts, said his team is "also closely coordinating with the government" to "see how we can airlift some of the relief material to those areas which are completely cut off, and where there isn't a road connection."

The CRS and Caritas Nepal teams are "trying to assess the needs continuously," he added.

Longer-term efforts will continue to focus on "shelter," "restoring water lines" for safe drinking water and helping communities rebuild "their livelihoods," he said.

The agency is also committed to addressing the trauma inflicted by the disaster, said Gurunathan.

"Focusing on mental health is going to be a key priority for us moving forward," as part of a "coordinated effort" with the Nepalese government, he said.

"It's going to be a long road for recovery," said Gurunathan. "So I think it's going to be important to actually express solidarity with the people affected in Nepal, and see how we can help them rebuild their lives."

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

AI in the Catholic Classroom: As a New School Year Starts, What Role Does It Play?

By Kimberley Heatherington

(OSV News) — It autocorrects your e-mails. It enables Siri and Alexa to respond to your questions or commands. It recommends what to watch next on your streaming service. It helps you find your way with navigation apps. It can generate images, videos, term papers and even novels.

It's AI — artificial intelligence — and its rapid ascent as part of everyday life also includes the sphere of Catholic education.

So as the new school year begins, OSV News spoke with educators and thought leaders wrestling with the question of just how AI works — or doesn't work — in the Catholic classroom.

"A few years ago, most conversations were about cheating, policies and whether students should be allowed to use AI tools," Meaghan Crowley-Sullivan told OSV News. She's a developer of curriculum and professional learning at Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles' Innovation in Digital Education & Leadership Institute, known as iDEAL.

"Those questions haven't disappeared; they've matured," she explained. "We're seeing more schools asking, what does good teaching look like in this new digital age? What do students need to learn? What should we be protecting — not only in our instruction, but also in the way we're approaching instruction? And ultimately, what does human formation look like in an AI-shape world?"

Crowley-Sullivan said an emphasis on inclusion has also emerged, while it's simultaneously become obvious parents could use some help from schools.

"They're helping parents understand what these technologies are, and what their children are encountering," Crowley-Sullivan noted. "And how they can establish healthy norms and have more meaningful conversations around AI at home."

Nor is it just students and parents who need guidance.

"When we're teaching teachers how to use this and think about how to incorporate it into their classroom, we lean heavily into that 'human in the loop' conversation," said Shannon Tabaldo, director of iDEAL.

"Human-centered AI is just a tool — it's there to give you additional resources and capacity you've never had before," she continued. "But you're still the expert. We always center on the human with Catholic schools — we always go back to, what are we really trying to do with this tool?"

Crowley-Sullivan and Tabaldo — both parents themselves — have increasingly seen AI used for personalized learning.

Students can critique an AI-generated paper or image, or ask it to turn their poetry attempts into perfect iambic pentameter; AI can easily generate grade- and reading level-specific materials or simulate a "conversation" with an historic figure; teachers can use it to assess student learning patterns, and personalize small group and other instruction.

"The Catholic approach isn't about being afraid of technology or refusing to innovate," emphasized Crowley-Sullivan. "It's very much about discernment, recognizing the possibilities, and asking whether we can use this in ways that promote our values."

OSV News photo/Bob Roller

First-graders Connor Nguyen and Jasper Zhao work in a science, technology, engineering and math program, or STEM, at Assumption of the Virgin Mary School in Pasadena, Calif., Jan. 15, 2025. At the start of a new school year, Catholic educators describe how they are making use of AI and responding to its challenges.

Crowley-Sullivan ably echoes Pope Leo XIV's opinion of AI's role in education, recently expressed in his landmark encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence."

"Rapid technological transformations reveal just how unprepared we are on the educational level. Educating people about the use of AI, then, involves teaching them to decide when and for what purpose it ought not to be used," the pontiff wrote. "The speed and ease with which answers or summaries can be obtained risk extinguishing the desire to ask questions."

"Schools are not called to follow the pace of the digital world," the pope advised, "but to offer that which the digital sphere by itself cannot provide, namely a shared time for learning and developing trustworthy relationships."

In response to such concerns, Crowley-Sullivan developed the "Catholic Companion Framework for Technology and Innovation," to help educators, leaders and families navigate emerging technologies. In use by dioceses across the country and downloaded globally, she will soon present it in the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia — just outside Washington — to assist AI integration in its 51 schools, for almost 13,000 students.

Leslie Lipovski — assistant superintendent for student learning and teaching excellence in the diocese — told OSV News the diocese formed a working group to help shape AI policy.

"In kindergarten through eighth grade, we're talking about AI literacy only — students are not logging into ChatGPT and using it," said Lipovski. "But even kindergartners know about AI. So

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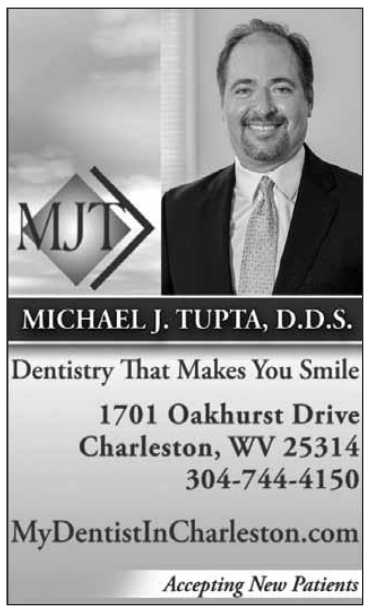

Classroom ...

Cont'd from Page 10

we're asking, what is AI? How can it be used — for good or bad?"

In high school, Lipovski said, teachers are "very careful about how they use it. I've got some teachers who say, 'We're going to go back to paper and pencil — that's how we're writing essays right now.' But we also have teachers who are embracing it, and showing the kids how to use it responsibly."

The Diocese of Arlington employs PowerSchool — a cloud-based student information system that manages data, grades, attendance, and communication between educators, students and families — as well as LUMA, an intelligent classroom assistant developed by cyber-educator Michael Hargadon that supports both teachers and students.

AI awareness has been evolving, according to Lily Abadal, a partner at Catholic school consultants Partners in Mission, a professor at the University of South Florida and faculty fellow with a project at the University of Notre Dame called DELTA — Human Formation in the Age of AI.

"For the first couple of years after ChatGPT was released, it seemed to a lot of people that it might just be a trend," Abadal said. "They also were not necessarily aware of how it actually worked, and the extent to which students had both access to it, and the kind of things they were capable of producing with it."

"It's obviously something that can make things go faster and easier," she continued. "But there are places in which faster and easier is not good, and not formative in terms of how it shapes students. We learn things are oftentimes not easy — and we have to be able to sit with the hard, in order to learn the Catholic virtues we want students to be formed in throughout their time in Catholic education."

"One of the best gifts we can give students in terms of how to interact with AI," Abadal concluded, "is to show them where technology belongs in their life, and where it does not."

Stephen Eschenfelder — director of campus ministry at Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School in Spring Hill, Florida, in the Diocese of St. Petersburg — plans to invite Abadal to speak at a future AI conference.

And as a former seminarian with a degree in moral philosophy, who teaches leadership and sacraments classes, he has some very specific ideas about the use of AI in education.

"There has to be a boundary with AI — and I think that turning to God in prayer has to be the boundary," he emphasized. "I cannot use this thing as a medium to have a prayer life, and to have a connection with God. In our theology classes, when we have reflections, a lot of students are using AI. So we have to switch things up, and how we give assignments — because it's reflective material. Some of it is gathering data — but a lot of it is, what do you think about this? How do you feel about this?"

"Students are not in touch with their emotions," Eschenfelder suggested, "because they're relying on artificial intelligence and social media to give them their emotions."

Eschenfelder also finds himself concerned by the potentially "massive iceberg of change" on his students' professional horizon, noting "their jobs could be very much changed by artificial intelligence in a few years."

A student once sheepishly revealed to Eschenfelder that his slide show presentation was AI-generated.

"They robbed themselves of the ability to learn something," said Eschenfelder, who also found students expressing amazement that he would pen a novel on his own rather than just ask AI to write it. "They couldn't understand that," he said, with a hint of exasperation.

Nonetheless, all agreed AI is here to stay.

"We are going to have to adapt schools and teaching, and learning. It's going to look completely different," suggested Lipovski. "Our goal as Catholic schools is to hang on to that humanity — because the teacher is the most important part; the teacher is necessary to guide the students when it is appropriate to use AI, and when it is not appropriate."

"They need that humanity," she concluded. "We can't just turn this over to machines."

(Kimberley Heatherington is an OSV News correspondent. She writes from Virginia.)

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Department of Faith Formation

Papa León: Aún no es demasiado tarde para cuidar la creación

Por Josephine Peterson

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El Papa León XIV dio inicio al Tiempo de la Creación, de cinco semanas de duración, instando a los fieles a alejarse del frenesí de la vida cotidiana para "escuchar la melodiosa voz de la creación en la que Dios, autor de todas las cosas, nos habla", y destacó que "No es aún demasiado tarde" para reparar la relación de la humanidad con el medio ambiente.

Al celebrar la Misa con motivo de la Jornada Mundial de Oración por el Cuidado de la Creación en los jardines de la villa papal y del proyecto ecológico Borgo Laudato Si' en Castel Gandolfo, el 1 de septiembre, el Papa señaló que contemplar la creación y a su Creador debería llevar a las personas a reconocer su responsabilidad de protegerla.

"Así, de la toma de conciencia de nuestras faltas y de nuestros errores, nace un compromiso renovado por restaurar las relaciones entre las criaturas según la voluntad de su Artífice", dijo.

El tema elegido para la Jornada Mundial de Oración por el Cuidado de la Creación de 2026 se hace eco del llamado bíblico "con sus espadas forjarán arados" y vincula el conflicto armado con la destrucción ambiental.

En un comunicado del 2 de junio, el Dicasterio para el Servicio del Desarrollo Humano Integral señaló que la conciencia, ahora generalizada, del impacto de la guerra en los recursos naturales no ha conducido a la creación de instituciones adecuadas ni a decisiones responsables encaminadas a prevenir conflictos y resolver disputas de manera pacífica.

En su homilía durante la Misa, el Papa León dijo que el llamado a transformar las armas en instrumentos que sostengan la vida sigue siendo urgente.

"Lo que ha sido utilizado para la destrucción puede ser redirigido hacia la vida: al cuidado de los pobres, al sustento alimentario de los hambrientos y al cuidado de la creación", dijo, citando su mensaje para ese día.

Las fuerzas armadas representan alrededor del 5.5% de las emisiones globales de gases de efecto invernadero y contribuyen a la contaminación del agua, la contaminación del suelo y la generación de residuos, según un estudio conjunto realizado por la organización Scientists for Global Responsibility, con sede en el Reino Unido, y el Observatorio de Conflictos y Medio Ambiente. El Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza (WWF, por sus siglas en inglés) estimó que solo los primeros tres años de la guerra entre Rusia y Ucrania generaron el equivalente a unas 230 millones de toneladas métricas de dióxido de carbono, un gas de efecto invernadero que atrapa el calor de la luz solar y calienta el planeta.

El Papa León también se centró en el acceso al agua limpia en su intención de oración de septiembre, difundida el 1 de septiembre por la Red Mundial de Oración del Papa.

Al dar gracias a Dios por el don del agua, el Papa oró por el "derecho de cada hermano y hermana a beber sin miedo, sin desigualdad".

"Te pedimos perdón por haberla convertido en mercancía, olvidando que es un regalo universal, un derecho sin fronteras, destinado a todos tus hijos", oró. "Vemos con dolor a tantos hermanos y hermanas que no tienen agua limpia, que caminan kilómetros para encontrarla, que enferman por su escasez".

Durante la Misa, el Papa León señaló que los pasajes del Libro de la Sabiduría y del Salmo alientan a los cristianos a reconocer a Dios a través de la "belleza y el poder de la creación".

"Toda la creación nos habla de la grandeza del Creador, siempre y cuando la mirada y el corazón se abran a tan grande misterio", afirmó.

Al contemplar con asombro a las aves del cielo y las flores del campo, dijo el Papa, los cristianos pueden comprender mejor la grandeza del amor de Dios por la humanidad.

"Si el Señor no deja de otorgar espléndida belleza y de proveer lo necesario a plantas y animales, ¡cuánto más estará atento a las exigencias de sus amados hijos e hijas!", afirmó.

El Tiempo de la Creación se extiende desde el 1 de septiembre hasta el 4 de octubre, fiesta de San Francisco de Asís. La celebración por parte de la Iglesia Católica de la Jornada Mundial de Oración por el Cuidado de la Creación fue establecida por el Papa Francisco en respuesta a una iniciativa del patriarca ecuménico ortodoxo Bartolomé de Constantinopla. La Iglesia Ortodoxa celebra el 1 de septiembre como día de oración por la creación desde 1989.

El Tiempo de la Creación de 2026 concluirá cuando la Iglesia conmemore el 800.º aniversario de la muerte de San Francisco de Asís, patrono de la ecología.

El Papa León cerró su homilía recitando fragmentos del Cántico de las Criaturas de San Francisco:

"Loado seas, mi Señor, con todas tus criaturas, especialmente el señor hermano sol ... Loado seas, mi Señor, por la hermana luna y las estrellas … Loado seas, mi Señor, por el hermano viento … Loado seas, mi Señor, por la hermana agua … Loado seas, mi Señor, por el hermano fuego … Loado seas, mi Señor, por nuestra hermana la madre tierra, la cual nos sustenta y gobierna".

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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.

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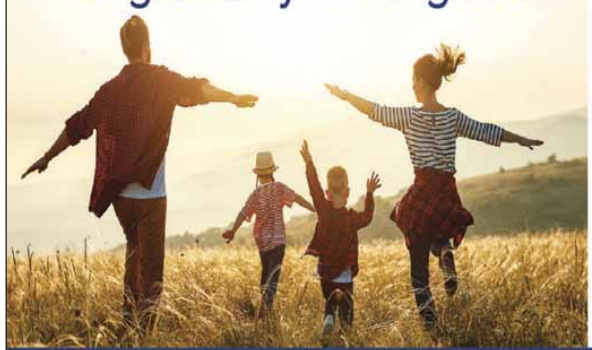

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