

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## The Memory of a Vianney-Like Priest Lay Hidden in the West Virginia Mountains

By Kevin Wells, courtesy of The Catholic World Report

Few coal miners wanted anything to do with the stranger in the black cassock who arrived in town in 1933. It was the Great Depression in West Virginia—food was scarce and shifts were irregular. So nerves were raw in the pits when miners spoke about unionizing against deadly conditions. The last thing anyone wanted, as they emerged at sundown, was a young Catholic priest pressing his unfamiliar ways upon them.

Father Charles Carroll understood he was an outsider. In Anmoore, Wendel, Philippi, Brownton, Rosemont, Galloway, and Bridgeport, most families were rock-ribbed Appalachian Protestants—Bible-only believers who trusted Scripture, not Rome. The Catholic population was thin in this remote stretch of north-central West Virginia, where cold creeks cut through mountains and rolling green hills, and streams meandered into hollows.

See "Priest" on Page 3

## 'A Big Ray of Hope'

ABLE Families, Established by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling, Celebrates 32 Years in Kermit



Colleen Rowan photo

Some of the children in the ABLE Families Afterschool Program in the Mingo County town of Kermit are pictured with Marlene Spaulding, executive director of the organization, on March 9.

By Colleen Rowan

"A big ray of hope." That's what ABLE Families is to the small, Mingo County town of Kermit, the organization's executive director Marlene Spaulding said. Established by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling 32 years ago, this organization has been a lifeline to children and families in need.

"Everybody's welcome here," Spaulding said. "No matter where you're from, what your background is, I just want everybody to always feel welcome to come here."

Mingo is one of West Virginia's poorest counties, situated on the Tug Fork River bordering Kentucky. At ABLE, which stands for—Affirming, Believing, Learning, and Empowering—families find guidance and support, while children find a safe place after school and in the summer months where they can flourish. All of this is provided free of charge as ABLE continues to be a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph.

One of the organization's main components is the Afterschool Program.

"We have 30 kids who come every day," Spaulding said. Here, kids in kindergarten to 8th grade enjoy a hot meal, get help with homework, and

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## Inside:

Catholic Sharing Appeal  
Raises More Than  
\$3.3 Million, Pages 9-11



Pioneering Priests, the  
Cornerstone of the Catholic  
Church of WV, Page 13




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

## The Catholic Spirit's Print Schedule for 2026

There are 10 print editions in 2026. Below are the names of the issues and the publishing dates. Please note, the publishing dates may or may not be on feast days. Digital issues are published every Friday, delivered by e-mail to subscribers, and posted on [thecatholicspiritwv.org](http://thecatholicspiritwv.org).

### 2026 Print Dates:

The Annunciation of the Lord, March 13 (Solemnity, March 25)  
 Easter, April 10 (Easter Sunday, April 5)  
 Month of Mary, Mother of God, May 15  
 Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 12  
 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 14  
 Triumph of the Cross, September 11  
 Month of the Rosary, October 9  
 Advent, November 20  
 Christmas, December 18

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





The Olive Branch is a program created to help individuals who are separated or divorced. It is designed to offer information and resources to aid in achieving personal and spiritual growth while navigating this complicated and painful process.

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 Retreat is FREE but reservations are required. Reserve your spot at [dwc.org/the-olive-branch](http://dwc.org/the-olive-branch).

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## Priest ...

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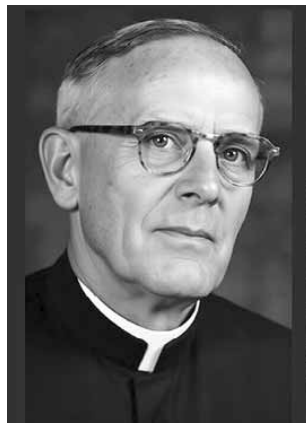
### Embracing the cost of the priesthood

The Ku Klux Klan had a presence in this forgotten corner of the state, even in Fr. Carroll's no-stoplight parish town called Grasselli, later known as Anmoore. Many of its members saw the Catholic Church as a foreign cult and an intrusion that threatened their settled country ways and established patterns of worship.

The newly ordained priest saw cross burnings with his own eyes. More than once, Fr. Carroll dodged rocks hurled at him outside his new mission church, St. Francis Borgia. Rude words and curses followed him, too, shouted from the open windows of the few passing cars that ground their way up the hillsides.

It seemed the perfect time for the slender Wheeling native to expedite and carry out the directive Bishop John Swint had given him: shutter St. Francis Borgia and the failing mission churches, lock their doors for good, and wait for reassignment to a safer area in West Virginia that might receive the graces the zealous priest was eager to pour out. Until his work was complete, Fr. Carroll was instructed to devote his days to care for the sick and dying as chaplain of St. Mary's Hospital in Clarksburg.

Priests like Father Carroll, though, see through a different lens. Growing up in a large, devout Catholic family of Irish lineage, "Charlie" came early to see Jesus Christ as a life poured out from the Cross, a libation emptied to the last drop of his Blood. By the time he entered minor seminary at St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland, he had begun to be-



Fr. Charles Carroll (1903-1989) in his later years; right: Fr. Carroll with a parishioner in 1950.



Images courtesy of Kevin Wells

lieve that unless he accepted the cost of priesthood—unless he embraced the sacred and sacrificial pattern of the Slaughtered Lamb—his vocation would always remain hollow at the core.

When he was ordained on June 10, 1933, he shaped the burden of his priestly identity around a single, uncompromising idea: he would try to become like the mysterious first priest of the Old Testament, Melchizedek: Fr. Carroll would make his own life an offering and a sacrifice. He often told his parishioners, "Love is the complete giving of oneself to the person or persons beloved, without ever counting the cost to self."

With that understanding of what his priesthood demanded, it was no surprise that Fr. Carroll asked his bishop for permission to remain as the administrator of St. Francis Borgia, despite the threats, isolation, and long odds to establish a Catholic foothold. He asked for the chance to breathe life back into the remote and rural mission churches. Given the time and space, he hoped his prayers, penances, and efforts might help him find common ground and forge relationships with the Protestant community.

And then he told his

Bishop Swint one more thing: He wanted to try to raise a mission school—a Catholic home for children scattered across the mountainous county—who were raised in the faith but were cut off and separated by the terrain, where many potholed gravel lanes were virtually impassable, or too treacherous to carry them to a distant Catholic school.

Knowing the young priest's shepherding heart, Bishop Swint decided to give him a grace period to salvage the bleak situation. He granted his request to remain for a period to try to build a Catholic school and to get to work on the scattered mission churches.

### "Let the little children come to me..."

Thereafter, folks far and near began to see an emerging St. John Vianney-like image of poured-out love. The tireless French cure', named the Patron Saint of Parish Priests by Pope Pius XI in 1929—just four years before Fr. Carroll's ordination—seemed to rise from his tomb and slip into the skin of Fr. Carroll. As the Cure' of Ars understood that the youth needed to be catechized, loved, and educated after Robespierre's bloody Reign of Terror, Fr. Carroll turned to the youth submerged within West Virginia's rugged landscape

for the same reason. Through toil, poverty, and pain, too many children had been amputated from the Catholic Faith.

The Cure' of Ars, though, had an advantage Fr. Carroll lacked: Vianney's students each lived in his same small farming village; Fr. Carroll's hoped-for spiritual children were spread out across mountains and valleys and scattered among families dozens of miles away from his small parish in Grasselli. These were the seemingly forgotten children, many of whom lived in poverty, for whom Fr. Carroll carried an ache in his heart.

He saw Jesus's command in the Gospel of Matthew at a deeper level: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." To Fr. Carroll, these overlooked, poorly educated, and little ones of the hills and hollows were the children Jesus commanded his disciples to permit coming to Him two thousand years later. These children, too, needed the chance to rest their heads against Christ's Sacred Heart.

But how to get to these children? Practically, Fr. Carroll knew he had to traverse many miles to find, gather, and transport them up and down winding

roads and old mining lanes. But that was only one of his problems; he also needed to build a school and find instructors to care for, catechize, and educate the children.

He convinced the diocese to purchase an old casino, which became the brand new St. Francis Borgia School in 1934. Thereafter, he located a band of willing and good-hearted nuns from the Sisters of St. Joseph to instruct the elementary students he prayed would begin to filter in, one by one, to his empty school.

Then, it could be argued, Fr. Carroll had come to his greatest dilemma: he had to find a way to bring children to school. He imagined that a mountain-tested, smaller-sized bus with, hopefully, weather-resistant tires, would do the trick. With all of his remaining funds, he purchased an undersized but sturdy bus-like vehicle—more like an oversized suburban—that he knew an able and experienced bus driver could negotiate up and down roads to get to rural outposts.

With his money depleted, Fr. Carroll could not pay a full-time bus driver.

So he took the wheel.

In the days, years, and decades that followed—through the Depression,

See "Priest" on Page 4

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## Priest ...

Cont'd from Page 3

World War II, and into the long postwar stretch—the priest with the collar and the steering wheel rose well before dawn to make his way up and down lonely and withering backcountry roads. Along forgotten lanes called Brushy Fork, Corbin Branch, Saltwell, Langtown, and dozens more, he gathered his new students one by one.

Each day, he drove ninety or more miles across Harrison County, grinding up ridgelines and down into hollows to bring children to a Catholic school their parents had never imagined possible. Snow and ice, thick mountain fog, and driving rain made the coal-dusted two-lane roads perilous, but Fr. Carroll—rosary always clutched close—became known as an unfailingly punctual, cheerful, and beloved bus driver.

Within a year of St. Francis Borgia School opening, 76 students filled the classrooms.

### A servant who worked constantly for souls

His bus, school, and paternal love are only part of the priest's tale. The many who love and remember him here regard Fr. Carroll, who died on December 6, 1993, at the age of 89, as the "John Vianney of West Virginia." They believe him to be a true saint, as deeply holy and sacrificial as any priest they have ever known.

"He was on the run constantly," said former parishioner James Molina. "I don't think he slept at all—

and if he did, it was just for a few hours. ... When I was a young boy, I prayed for Fr. Carroll to be healthy and live forever because he was helping my family and everyone else to such a heroic and selfless degree."

By the mid-1940s, as the mission churches and his school began to flourish, Fr. Carroll—and his now-famous transport bus—had become widely known among mining families, town mayors, Protestant ministers, shop owners, and nearly everyone else in the region. He was beloved for his sense of humor. Stories lingered of how, as a new priest, he had been forced to create a humble makeshift church out of an abandoned pool hall and saloon—posing for photographs with First Communicants in ivory dresses and suits and ties beneath an old sign that read: "Beer, Fireworks, and Camel Cigarettes."

Perhaps it was this good-natured spirit that caught the attention of Michael Benedum, an oil wildcatter and, at the time, one of the wealthiest men in America. Bridgeport's mayor, a Catholic named Joe Deegan, mentioned to Benedum—himself a devout Methodist—that Fr. Carroll dreamed of one day building a new parish by his small new home located at the very heart of the mining communities in Bridgeport.

When Benedum learned that Fr. Carroll was making little headway in building a new parish, he arranged a meeting on a life-changing day in 1953. Benedum had persuaded his Methodist pastor to

grant Fr. Carroll first right to purchase the old Bridgeport United Methodist Church off Main Street. An agreement was reached in short order. Fr. Carroll—who for nearly a decade had been celebrating home Masses in his humble Bridgeport dwelling—became the founding pastor of All Saints Catholic Church in 1953, a parish community that remains vibrant today, in 2026.

Patrick Whalen grew up at All Saints, where Fr. Carroll became a fixture for him at the new school and parish. "He had an uncanny ability to always know how his children were doing; it was common and routine for him to give words of praise for accomplishments of all the youth he pastored," Whalen said. "He had no limits. He was a servant who worked constantly for souls, and ran from church to church to celebrate Masses, confessions, novenas, stations of the Cross, funerals, baptisms, and weddings. He always found the time to make unscheduled visitations to the sick and dying."

### An American Saint?

Because of this heroic witness of priesthood and his tireless spiritual labor on behalf of souls, Bishop Mark Brennan of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has approved the development of a new guild to begin the cause that he—and many others—hope will lead to Father Carroll's canonization.

This month, two of Fr. Carroll's former altar boys will travel to California to be certified for the newly

formed Center for Sainthood, where the men will be trained in understanding the inner workings of the canonization process. They represent the guild in which Bishop Brennan and countless others believe will result in Fr. Carroll being recognized as an American saint.

Whalen is part of that guild. "Fr. Carroll was filled with what I saw as a divine energy," he said. "In the midst of his non-stop schedule and traveling through over 900 square miles of his pastorate, he was always 'present' to everyone for whatever time he was able to spend with them. Looking back, when he wasn't traveling in his school bus or car, he seemed to live in his sacristy, in his confessional, and on the altar at Mass."

Even if he is never canonized, Fr. Carroll is considered by thousands in West Virginia to be one of the most enduring and legendary figures in their state's history. What he accomplished for God, West Virginians, and the spread of the Catholic faith into formerly hostile areas borders on the incomprehensible.

Within just a few years of being granted a stay by his bishop, Fr. Carroll established St. Francis Borgia as a parish and rebuilt seven mission parishes within three contiguous counties. Two of his early mission churches, in Philippi and Bridgeport, began with the celebration of Masses in homes. These small and intimate Masses led to the current-day parishes, St. Elizabeth and All Saints.

See "Priest" on Page 5

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# Priest ...

**Cont'd from Page 4**

His new school thrived from the start, in large part because of the many thousands of miles he drove each year so that children could be unshackled by remoteness and led to a deeper love for Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith.

## A life focused on the Eucharist, the Mass, and the salvation of souls

Meanwhile, Fr. Carroll had begun to break down thick walls and factions in the same manner he split the seams of mountains; he just pushed forward to bring Catholics and Protestants together. He forged friendships with Protestant pastors and cultivated ecumenical bonds with non-Catholics through food drives, outreach efforts, and community gatherings—picnics, Italian meals, and events open to all. His spaghetti dinner became known as the social event of the year throughout the rural mining communities. Believers of all stripes, with calloused hands and large appetites, commingled over plates of pasta as they shared stories from the mines.

Hundreds of folks Fr. Carroll touched in these parts of West Virginia say it was his Christ-like magnanimity, tirelessness, self-deprecating humor, and selflessness that allowed him to conquer calcified and widespread anti-Catholic prejudices. His old parishioners say his life revolved around the Eucharist, the celebration of Mass, and a devoted prayer life. They say that he knew he could not be a priest constantly on the move if he was not first nourished by devotion to Christ

and his mission to build the Kingdom of God.

“He reminded us of the wonder and awesome gift we had in our small rural churches,” Molina recalled. “He would tell us, ‘Jesus lives among us and for us in the tabernacle of the altar. He invites us to come, we who are weary and heavily burdened, so He might refresh us.’”

While Fr. Carroll loved his Boston Red Sox, he had no hobbies except, folks here say, his fight for the salvation of souls. He lived simply and almost always turned down gifts or ended up giving them to the poor. When he saw that local children had no extracurricular outlets, he organized a baseball league that would endure for decades. He became widely known for supporting families in need with food, clothing, and financial support with the money that kept coming to him. Townsfolk understood that he was a saintly man who would be a dutiful steward of their resources. Still, because he never asked anyone for money, no one truly knew how he managed to sustain so many of West Virginia’s poor, lonely, and struggling.

He became famous on West Virginia’s roads for taking his trusty bus off hours to pick up anyone he saw stranded on the roadside—no matter who they were or

what state they were in.

“My grandfather was an Italian immigrant who worked in the coal mines and couldn’t speak much English,” said Stephen Pishner, an All Saints parishioner in Bridgeport. “He was walking alongside the road one day when Fr. Carroll stopped to give him a ride. My grandfather said he was too dirty and full of soot from the coal. He didn’t want to get on the bus to make it dirty. Fr. Carroll insisted that he get on and let him give him a ride home. He didn’t see a dirty immigrant coal miner; he saw a member of the Body of Christ.”

### “He just seemed to know.”

Many here say Fr. Carroll’s interior life of prayer was so intimate—perhaps even mystical—that he possessed foreknowledge of events yet to unfold. Throughout his forty-nine years of priestly service in north-central West Virginia (1933–1982), there were several occasions when he appeared at precisely the moment he was needed, without having been summoned.

“He had a sixth sense about him,” said Al Quagliotti, a former parishioner at Sacred Heart mission church in Brownton. “There



Courtesy photo  
Fr. Charles Carroll (1903-1989) is pictured in this undated photo.

are so many stories that I’ve heard where he would show up to give last rites to people who were on death’s door—but no one had called him. He just seemed to know.”

This supernatural vision was inseparable from his priestly heart. It is for this reason that many in the region, whose lives he changed, believe he may one day be canonized a saint and perhaps become known as the Curé of the Appalachians.

“He is our St. John Vianney. Like the holy French priest-saint, he never stopped serving God and souls,” Quagliotti said. “Just as John Vianney transformed a remote and overlooked town that opposed, disliked, and threatened him—Fr. Charles Carroll managed the same in an uncannily similar way.”

“This rural part of West Virginia will never be the same. Fr. Carroll’s legacy of resiliency, intense faith in God, and unrelenting priestly service will be forever woven into the fabric of West Virginia.”

(This story was published in The Catholic World Report on Feb. 12, 2026.)

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## Hope ...

**Cont'd from Page 1**

have fun with their friends. "We try to do field trips when we can," Spaulding added.

The kids arrive by school bus through a partnership with Kermit K-8 School. When it's time to leave, they board ABLE's two 15-passenger vans and are brought back home. This is a vital part of the program, Spaulding said, because many of the families do not have transportation.

"Out of all 30 of our kids in the after school, 14 of them are raised by their grandparents," she said. This is a trend for many areas of West Virginia because of parents' addiction. Kermit was the epicenter of the U.S. opioid crisis which exploded more than 10 years ago and devastated the community.

"Parents have either overdosed or they're in jail or just walked off and left their kids," Spaulding said. "We have one great-grandparent who's raising their grandkids... they're close to 80 years old."

The program is led by Afterschool Facilitators Will Newsome, Katelyn Brewer, and Angel Estep. On a March 9 visit to ABLE, Newsome gave The Catholic Spirit a run down of the daily schedule: After saying the blessing and sharing a meal together, the kids have circle time where they sit on the floor and talk about their day. Facilitators then work with the kids on their math, spelling, and reading or any other homework they may have. Even if they don't have homework, the staff will have some type of school-related work for them, usually spelling words. The kids then move on to crafts.

"But today we'll go straight from circle time and homework to the park," Newsome said. It was a beautiful sunny, 70-degrees in Kermit that day and the kids were excited to get out and enjoy it.

The Afterschool Program is not income-based but the majority of the kids enrolled live in poverty, while some of the kids have parents who work. Spaulding said the program also has a waiting list.

Along with the Afterschool Program is ABLE's Summer Camps, which open up a whole new world of experiences to the children. ABLE partners with different schools, namely Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Ohio, and Sacred Heart Academy in Louisville, Ky. Students from these all-girls Catholic high schools team up with

ABLE staff to facilitate the camps.

"They stay here for five days and do everything from science camp to art camp to gymnastics camp to cooking camp... We just have random topics,"

Spaulding said. Last year, ABLE added Fruits of the Spirit Camp.

"We taught kids about love, joy, and peace and how to implement those things into their day," Spaulding said.

"I was really proud of that camp."

The third component of ABLE is In-Home Family Education for pregnant women and mothers of children

**See "Hope" on Page 7**



## HAPPY 32<sup>ND</sup> BIRTHDAY TO A.B.L.E. FAMILIES!



In the past year, your donations have helped us impact hundreds of lives in our community across 3 programs:  
Home Visitation, Afterschool, and Summer Camps.

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LUKE 6:38 "GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU. GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER AND RUNNING OVER, WILL BE Poured INTO YOUR LAP."



### HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

**FAMILIES SERVED: 109  
HOME VISITS: 1,759  
COMMUNITY EVENTS: 12  
OUTREACH SESSIONS: 58**

### AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

**KIDS ENROLLED: 30  
MEALS SERVED: 5,250  
HOURS DEVOTED TO  
HOMEWORK: 159**

### SUMMER CAMPS

**CAMPERS ENROLLED: 106  
MEALS SERVED: 1,050  
OVERNIGHT TRIPS: 1  
VOLUNTEERS: 41**

[ablefamilies.org](http://ablefamilies.org)



Colleen Rowan photo

From left: James Ambrun, Kaden Hinkle, and Ra'Mello Warren talk after their meal at ABL Families Afterschool Program in Kermit on March 9.

## Hope ...

### Cont'd from Page 6

up to 4 years old. According to the organization's website, ABL offers the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) Program, which is accredited by Vanderbilt University, "designed to improve maternal and child health, parenting skills, and child development."

The program is manned by seven home visitors, a supervisor, and a data collector who conduct the home visits with pregnant women and children.

"They set goals with them, they link them to resources," Spaulding said, "and help them better their lives."

The home visiting program also uses the PAT (Parents as Teachers) program. ABL's website states, "Parents as Teachers use the approach to partner, facilitate, and reflect. It is an evidence-based program that we are more than proud to be a part of. We do not perform, prescribe, refer for, or encourage abortion. We do not affiliate with any group that does. I support the right to life for all, including the unborn."

ABL also has Supper in a Sack, its award-winning, seven-week nutrition education program that includes instruction in nutrition, hands-on meal preparation, food budgeting, sit-down lunches, and seminars on improving life skills. The ABL Families

site includes a state-of-the-art kitchen facility for all on-site sessions, the website states.

ABL's In-Home Family Education program has many success stories, and Spaulding is one of them. She sought assistance in the program at age 20.

"I had a 4-year-old already and a newborn and I came here for their home visitation program," Spaulding said. Once she completed the program, staff asked if she would be interested in becoming a home visitor. After serving in that role for several years, she was promoted to supervisor.

Years later, an unexpected opportunity came to her. After ABL had been led by women religious since its founding—Sister Janet Peterworth, OSU, as the first director who was succeeded by Sister Patricia (Pat) Murray, IBVM—Spaulding was asked to consider be-



Colleen Rowan photo

ABL Families Afterschool Facilitator Katelyn Brewer quizzes Kylin Hinkle on her spelling words on March 9.



Colleen Rowan photo

ABL Families Afterschool Facilitator Angel Estopp talks with children about their day during circle time on March 9.

coming executive director.

Spaulding is not Catholic and was not sure how she would lead a Catholic ministry which was previously led by women religious. But Sister Pat knew just what to do. Through her invitation, Spaulding embarked on an immersion trip to France where she learned about the Catholic Church, the Congregation of St. Joseph, and the ministry of the sisters.

"I remember coming home and saying to my husband 'that trip just made me feel like I could do anything,'" said Spaulding, who was inspired to take on the role and has been the executive director for the last 11 years, with the first year as interim.

Matthew Bowles, president of ABL's Board of Directors, spoke of the importance of this organization and the impact it has made.

"ABL's work reflects a deep and enduring commitment to strengthening children and families in Mingo County," he said. "Marlene and her staff are quietly engaged every day confronting the causes of poverty and alleviating some of that pain, but their work is so personal and conducted with such care that it just looks like love.

"Ask anyone who has been involved with ABL and they will tell you that it is

truly inspiring. I'm profoundly grateful for ABL's work and example, as well as for the steadfast support of the sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph and for all those across West Virginia who support ABL's mission!"

Spaulding is also grateful to the donors who have and continue to support ABL Families.

"They've been faithful for 20 years," she said. "I always hand write 'thank you's' to everybody. I want to take time to do that. I just think it's important."

She is also grateful for ABL's "supportive" Board of Directors and to Sister Pat and Sister Janet, with whom she stays in touch. And always a phone call away is Theresa

Denton, executive director of CSA ministries.

For more information about ABL Families or how to support this ministry, visit <https://ablefamilies.org>.



Colleen Rowan photo

Bracie Justice works on her spelling words at ABL Families Afterschool Program March 9.



Colleen Rowan photo

ABL Families Afterschool Facilitator Will Newsome helps Steven Stacy with his spelling words on March 9.

# Pope Urges Peace, Warns of Wider Middle East Conflict

By **Junno Arocho Esteves**

**(OSV News)** — Pope Leo XIV called for an end to the war in Iran and warned that the conflict could drag more countries in the Middle East into instability.

Speaking to pilgrims after praying the Angelus prayer March 8, the pope said that developing news from Iran and from across the Middle East has caused “deep dismay.”

“Amid episodes of violence and devastation, and the widespread climate of hatred and fear, there is also the concern that the conflict may widen and that other countries in the region, including Lebanon, may once again sink into instability,” he said.

According to The Associated Press, Israeli forces struck an oil storage facility

in Tehran, as well as targeted assaults in southern Lebanon against commanders of the Lebanese branch of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards.

Iran has continued striking U.S. allies in the Gulf, including Bahrain, where it fired missiles at a desalination plant. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi defended the attack, arguing that the “U.S. set this precedent” after it struck a desalination plant in Iran, AP reported.

The pope’s concern for Lebanon came as government officials confirmed that the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah militants resulted in the deaths of 394 people, including 83 children.

Since the start of the war Feb. 28, at least 1,230 people in Iran, about a

dozen in Israel and six U.S. service members have been killed, AP said.

In his appeal, Pope Leo called on Catholics to pray so that “the roar of bombs may cease, that the weapons may fall silent, and that a space for dialogue may open in which the voice of the peoples can be heard.”

“I entrust this supplication to Mary, Queen of Peace,” the pope said. “May she intercede for those who suffer because of war and guide hearts along the paths of reconciliation and hope.”

Less than a day after the start of the war, the pope called for diplomacy to “regain its proper role” and that “the well-being of peoples, who yearn for peaceful existence founded on justice, be upheld.”

At his Angelus address March 1, sev-

eral hours after the U.S. and Israel revealed that Iran’s supreme leader, 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed, the pope expressed his concern, highlighting that “stability and peace are not achieved through mutual threats, nor through the use of weapons, which sow destruction, suffering, and death, but only through reasonable, sincere, and responsible dialogue.”

“Faced with the possibility of a tragedy of immense proportions, I make a heartfelt appeal to all the parties involved to assume the moral responsibility of halting the spiral of violence before it becomes an irreparable abyss,” the pope warned.

(Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News.)

## Bishops’ Annual CRS Collection ‘More Vital Than Ever’ Amid Wars and Disasters Overseas

By **OSV News**

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. bishops’ annual Catholic Relief Services Collection, which helps some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in need in the United States and worldwide, will be taken in most U.S. dioceses at Masses the weekend of March 14-15.

The collection benefits six agencies and offices affiliated with the Catholic Church, including CRS, the flagship international relief and development agency for the Catholic Church in the U.S.

“The Church in the United States was built on ministry among immigrants. We help all who are marginalized, including victims of war and disaster overseas. The Catholic Relief Services Collection combines all these kinds of assistance,” said Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg of Reno, Nevada, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on National Collections.

“Our Lord tells us to love our neighbors — those we know, those we don’t and those we think are very different

from us. The Catholic Relief Services Collection is one way that we show that love. Today it is more vital than ever,” the bishop said in his March 2 statement.

The collection is also accepting online gifts at [igivecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS](http://igivecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS).

Of nearly \$13.5 million distributed from the collection in 2024, nearly \$8 million went to CRS working in places affected by war and natural disaster, according to a USCCB news release. The CRS Collection has become more critical in light of last year’s deep cuts to humanitarian aid by the U.S. federal government that have left a chasm for the Catholic Church and other international aid agencies to fill.

In July 2025, the U.S. Agency for International Development effectively ceased to exist, with 85% of its programs cut, as a result of the cost-cutting efforts of tech titan Elon Musk, then head of President Donald Trump’s Department of Government Efficiency. Musk bragged about “feeding

USAID into the woodchipper,” but academic demographers have estimated the sudden loss of funding to groups carrying out humanitarian aid led to as many as 300,000 people dying within six months.

The Lancet, a peer-reviewed British medical journal published since 1823, estimated USAID assistance has saved more than 91 million lives, including that of 30 million children, over the past two decades. But it forecast that if USAID-funding levels were not restored, “a staggering number of avoidable deaths could occur by 2030”: 14.1 million people, with over 4.5 million being children younger than 5.

The other recipients of the CRS Collection are:

— The Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., or CLINIC: provides training and support to a network of more than 400 Catholic and community-based immigration law providers in 49 states.

— The USCCB Secretariat of Migration, formerly the Department of Migration and Refugee Services: assists dioceses in

carrying out their ministries to newcomers, publishes educational resources, and promotes policies “that affirm the life and dignity of immigrants and refugees.”

— Two initiatives of the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church: pastoral ministries to migrant workers, travelers and seafarers through its Subcommittee on the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers, and its Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs, which helps the Church address the unique pastoral needs across many boundaries of language and tradition.

— The USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace: engages in advocacy on behalf of the poor around the world and works with policymakers and government officials to end violent international conflicts through its international justice and peace program. Created in early August 2024, the secretariat serves a number of USCCB committees, including the Committee on International Justice and Peace.

— Holy Father’s Relief Fund: helps Pope Leo XIV rush aid to areas of the world in crisis.

Bishop Mueggenborg said, “Together, these agencies help victims of war and natural disaster, support sustainable economic development overseas, advocate for international peace and human rights, help refugees and immigrants in the United States to obtain legal support, offer pastoral support to a wide variety of people who migrate for work and build cross-cultural understanding.”

Donate to the CRS collection here:

[igivecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS](http://igivecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS).

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# Catholic Sharing Appeal Raises More Than \$3.3 Million

By Colleen Rowan

**WEST VIRGINIA** — Through the generosity of the faithful, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's 2025 Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA) raised more than \$3.3 million, surpassing its \$2 million goal.

"The Catholic Sharing Appeal brings together Catholics from every corner of West Virginia to live out our shared mission," said Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the diocese. "It allows larger and smaller parishes alike to support ministries and outreach efforts that no single parish could sustain on its own, reminding us that we are stronger when we act together as one Church."

The pledges made by the 3,730 donors of the appeal will support many diocesan programs and ministries including faith formation, Catholic education, and outreach to those in need. The CSA also benefits parishes and missions at the local level by returning funds to help them

**"The Catholic Sharing Appeal brings together Catholics from every corner of West Virginia to live out our shared mission."**

*—Heidi Sforza, director of Annual Giving for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston*

meet needs such as upgrades to the church, paving parking lots, or construction projects, to name few.

A total of 63 parishes or missions surpassed or reached their CSA goal. Coming in second on

the list of parishes to surpass goal by percentage and eighth in raising the most funds was Holy Rosary Parish in Buckhannon.

"My parishioners are very generous with their money and talents," said Father Edward Tetteh, SVD, pastor. "We will use CSA money to finish the new parish center project."

Father Tetteh, who marks his sixth year as pastor of Holy Rosary in June, continues to be impressed with the active participation of his parishioners. Through their generosity and that of the diocese; his religious order, the Society of the Divine Word; and even non-parishioners of the community, "Holy Rosary Parish continues to be a beacon of hope in Upshur County. We support Upshur Parish House, pregnancy center, Mountain CAP, and many needy and poor folks that ask for assistance." He also said Mass, Eucharistic adoration attendance, and more have started to increase, "To God be

**See "Appeal" on Page 11**

## Listening to the Spirit this Lent

Lent is the perfect opportunity to continue to celebrate both the 175th anniversary of our diocese and the 50th anniversary of the Appalachian pastoral letter *This Land is Home to Me*. Two months ago, Bishop Mark Brennan extended an invitation to the entire diocese to participate in the Catholic Committee of Appalachia's (CCA) initiative commemorating this letter by using the same conversation method that was used during the Synod on Synodality. To participate is simple. The Catholic Committee of Appalachia has already provided all that a small group needs here: <https://www.ccappal.org/conversationsinthespirit> and Dr. Rodica Stoicoiu ([rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com](mailto:rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com)) and Mrs. Deborah Stollery ([deborah.stollery@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.stollery@gmail.com)) are here to assist you.

Why might you participate? As Bishop Brennan noted in his previous letter, these experiences of Conversations in the Spirit designed to

hear the cries of the poor will

- be a sign of our unity,
- demonstrate a concern for the poor today,
- to listen attentively to the insights of those currently serving the poor,
- to understand how the themes from the first pastoral letter are or are not relevant today

to consider how the Spirit might be calling your parish to respond to the cries of the poor

A final reason to participate is to add your parish's efforts to the rest of the diocese in carrying out an element of the Diocesan Evangelization Plan while learning how to carry out this deep listening to the Spirit that is synodality. Together as one church, diocesan and universal, by gathering as parish families in this way, we can learn what it means to be synodal while serving those whom Christ held close to his heart. Hence, we invite you to enter more deeply into the Lenten spirit as one communion, to listen to the cry of the poor.

**I am  
the Light  
of the World**

*John 8:12*

**CATHOLIC  
SHARING APPEAL**

*Let's carry His light together.*

[DWC.ORG/CSA](https://www.dwc.org/csa)

## 2025 Catholic Sharing Appeal Parish/Mission Goal Report

Parish/Mission	Total Raised	Goal	Precent of Goal
All Saints Parish, Bridgeport	\$21,795.00	\$45,100.00	48%
Annunciation of Our Lord Parish, Fort Ashby	\$9,477.49	\$10,900.00	87%
Ascension Parish, Hurricane	\$29,350.00	\$24,000.00	122%
Assumption Parish, Keyser	\$19,293.78	\$18,400.00	105%
Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston	\$46,635.42	\$72,000.00	65%
Blessed Sacrament Parish, South Charleston	\$13,935.00	\$42,500.00	33%
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling	\$53,073.88	\$16,400.00	324%
Christ Our Hope Mission at St. Joseph Chapel	\$1,445.00	\$1,600.00	90%
Christ the King Parish, Dunbar	\$2,300.00	\$7,600.00	30%
Corpus Christi Parish, Wheeling	\$25,143.87	\$25,800.00	97%
Epiphany of the Lord Parish, Moorefield	\$5,950.00	\$5,600.00	106%
Good Shepherd Parish, Glenville	\$2,010.00	\$1,400.00	144%
Holy Family Parish, Richwood	\$3,475.00	\$3,200.00	109%
Holy Redeemer Parish, Spencer	\$5,435.00	\$5,400.00	101%
Holy Rosary Mission, Sistersville	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	100%
Holy Rosary Parish, Buckhannon	\$91,263.00	\$13,100.00	697%
Holy Spirit Parish, Monongah	\$10,892.50	\$11,800.00	92%
Holy Trinity Parish, Nitro	\$12,585.00	\$8,200.00	153%
Immaculate Conception Parish, Clarksburg	\$421,940.29	\$79,400.00	531%
Immaculate Conception Parish, Fairmont	\$91,979.85	\$21,200.00	434%
Immaculate Conception Parish, Montgomery	\$900.00	\$9,800.00	9%
Immaculate Conception Parish, New Cumberland	\$9,870.00	\$8,600.00	115%
Mater Dolorosa Parish, Paden City	\$2,040.00	\$6,200.00	33%
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Huntington	\$81,385.23	\$35,600.00	229%
Our Lady of Grace Parish, Romney	\$9,410.04	\$9,100.00	103%
Our Lady of Mercy Mission, Parsons	\$1,800.00	\$5,300.00	34%
Our Lady of Peace Parish, Wheeling	\$8,305.00	\$26,500.00	31%
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Stonewood	\$20,514.13	\$33,800.00	61%
Our Lady of the Hills Parish, Elkview	\$6,550.00	\$5,600.00	117%
Risen Lord Mission, Clay	\$2,900.00	\$1,600.00	181%
Sacred Heart Mission, Point Pleasant	\$100.00	\$3,500.00	3%
Sacred Heart Mission, Powhatan	\$3,500.00	\$2,500.00	140%
Sacred Heart Mission, Rainelle	\$705.00	\$2,500.00	28%
Sacred Heart Mission, Salem	\$2,065.00	\$2,700.00	76%
Sacred Heart of Mary Parish, Weirton	\$6,815.00	\$15,600.00	44%
Sacred Heart Parish, Bluefield	\$37,280.00	\$25,200.00	148%
Sacred Heart Parish, Chester	\$41,193.00	\$15,700.00	262%
Sacred Heart Parish, Huntington	\$21,320.00	\$10,400.00	205%
Sacred Heart Parish, Princeton	\$36,104.11	\$18,600.00	194%
Sacred Heart Parish, Williamson	\$7,330.47	\$6,500.00	113%
St. Agnes Parish, Charleston	\$18,210.90	\$16,900.00	108%
St. Agnes Parish, Shepherdstown	\$11,909.00	\$49,300.00	24%
St. Alphonsus Parish, Wheeling	\$33,532.50	\$11,200.00	299%
St. Ann Parish, Shinnston	\$3,524.00	\$14,400.00	24%
St. Anne Parish, Webster Springs	\$3,600.00	\$2,300.00	157%
St. Anthony Parish, Charleston	\$3,975.00	\$10,300.00	39%
St. Anthony Parish, Fairmont	\$11,185.00	\$19,100.00	59%
St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee	\$11,355.00	\$22,300.00	51%
St. Anthony Parish, Ridgely	\$2,430.00	\$4,400.00	55%
St. Augustine Parish, Grafton	\$12,635.00	\$7,400.00	171%
St. Barbara Mission, Chapmanville	\$0.00	\$1,100.00	0%
St. Bernadette Mission, Hedgesville	\$30,555.00	\$22,700.00	135%
St. Boniface Parish, Camden	\$7,353.72	\$5,400.00	136%
St. Brendan Parish, Elkins	\$2,430.00	\$17,800.00	14%
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ronceverte	\$6,715.00	\$5,000.00	134%
St. Charles Borromeo Parish, White Sulphur Springs	\$28,655.87	\$8,700.00	329%

Parish/Mission	Total Raised	Goal	Percent of Goal
St. Edward the Confessor Mission, Terra Alta	\$3,280.00	\$3,200.00	103%
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Franklin	\$3,810.00	\$2,700.00	141%
St. Elizabeth Mission, Elizabeth	\$12,005.00	\$2,500.00	480%
St. Elizabeth Parish, Philippi	\$740.00	\$4,300.00	17%
St. Francis de Sales Parish, Beckley	\$37,065.50	\$45,000.00	82%
St. Francis de Sales Parish, Morgantown	\$260,278.64	\$82,200.00	317%
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Logan	\$4,065.00	\$6,900.00	59%
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, St. Albans	\$12,590.17	\$21,500.00	59%
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Moundsville	\$15,259.00	\$21,000.00	73%
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg	\$315,757.56	\$25,800.00	1,224%
St. James Parish, McMechen	\$1,880.00	\$4,600.00	41%
St. James the Apostle Parish, Clarksburg	\$2,345.00	\$11,700.00	20%
St. James the Greater Parish, Charles Town	\$204,618.05	\$78,800.00	260%
St. John Neumann Parish, Marlinton	\$6,860.00	\$3,800.00	181%
St. John Parish, Benwood	\$22,816.38	\$5,200.00	439%
St. John Parish, St. Marys	\$16,740.00	\$7,400.00	226%
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Summersville	\$16,920.00	\$15,700.00	108%
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Wellsburg	\$45,140.00	\$18,200.00	248%
St. John University Parish, Morgantown	\$49138.39	\$45,900.00	107%
St. Joseph Mission, Proctor	\$4,300.00	\$5,800.00	74%
St. Joseph Parish, Huntington	\$17,030.20	\$70,000.00	24%
St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg	\$86,795.00	\$57,100.00	152%
St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Weirton	\$18,865.00	\$47,800.00	39%
St. Jude Parish, Glen Dale	\$20,010.00	\$8,900.00	225%
St. Leo Parish, Inwood	\$52,206.51	\$27,100.00	193%
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Cheat Lake	\$27,154.71	\$26,400.00	103%
St. Margaret Mary Parish, Parkersburg	\$33,740.00	\$45,600.00	74%
St. Mark the Evangelist Mission, Bartow	\$1,450.00	\$1,600.00	91%
St. Mary Parish, Petersburg	\$6,200.00	\$5,100.00	122%
St. Mary Parish, Star City	\$25,140.00	\$47,400.00	53%
St. Mary Queen of Heaven Parish, Madison	\$3,456.51	\$2,000.00	173%
St. Matthew Parish, Ravenswood	\$6,330.00	\$12,100.00	52%
St. Michael Parish, Vienna	\$44,440.56	\$29,200.00	152%
St. Michael Parish, Wheeling	\$224,220.34	\$69,000.00	325%
St. Monica Mission, Lubeck	\$8,645.78	\$2,800.00	309%
St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft	\$6,905.00	\$3,800.00	182%
St. Patrick Parish, Coalton	\$975.00	\$4,700.00	21%
St. Patrick Parish, Hinton	\$10,109.71	\$6,100.00	166%
St. Patrick Parish, Mannington	\$7,100.00	\$7,100.00	100%
St. Patrick Parish, Weston	\$74,466.34	\$24,400.00	305%
St. Paul Parish, Weirton	\$6,880.00	\$29,000.00	24%
St. Peter Claver Parish, Huntington	\$15,080.00	\$6,700.00	225%
St. Peter Parish, Farmington	\$725.00	\$5,900.00	12%
St. Peter Parish, Welch	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	100%
St. Peter the Fisherman Parish, Fairmont	\$86,165.38	\$24,100.00	358%
St. Sebastian Parish, Kingwood	\$6,079.86	\$11,300.00	54%
St. Stephen Parish, Ona	\$560.00	\$8,100.00	7%
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Thomas	\$8,641.25	\$13,700.00	63%
St. Thomas Parish, Gassaway	\$5,940.75	\$5,300.00	112%
St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Berkeley Springs	\$6,505.00	\$13,200.00	49%
St. Vincent de Paul Parish, New Martinsville	\$6,715.00	\$21,600.00	31%
St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Wheeling	\$105,434.20	\$42,800.00	246%
St. Zita Mission, Masontown	\$5,120.00	\$6,000.00	85%
Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Oak Hill	\$23,612.50	\$17,200.00	137%

### Top 10 Parishes/Missions That Raised the Most Funds

- 1) Immaculate Conception Parish, Clarksburg
- 2) St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg
- 3) St. Francis de Sales Parish, Morgantown
- 4) St. Michael Parish, Wheeling
- 5) St. James the Greater Parish, Charles Town
- 6) St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Wheeling
- 7) Immaculate Conception Parish, Fairmont
- 8) Holy Rosary Parish, Buckhannon
- 9) St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg
- 10) St. Peter the Fisherman Parish, Fairmont

### Top 10 Parishes/Missions to Surpass Goal by Percentage

- 1) St. Francis Xavier Parish, Parkersburg
- 2) Holy Rosary Parish, Buckhannon
- 3) Immaculate Conception Parish, Clarksburg
- 4) St. Elizabeth Mission, Elizabeth
- 5) St. John Parish, Benwood
- 6) Immaculate Conception Parish, Fairmont
- 7) St. Peter the Fisherman Parish, Fairmont
- 8) St. Charles Borromeo Parish, White Sulphur Springs
- 9) St. Michael Parish, Wheeling
- 10) Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling

## Appeal ...

Cont'd from Page 9

the glory!"

See the lists of the top 10 parishes/missions that raised the most funds and the top 10 to surpass goal by percentage at the top of this page.

"It is truly a joy to work alongside our pastors and dedicated appeal volunteers as we find meaningful ways to best support the unique needs of their parishes and ministries," Sforza said. "Their leadership and commitment are at the heart of the Catholic Sharing Appeal's success."

# Vatican Releases Synod Report on Women's Role in Church Leadership

By Courtney Mares

**ROME (OSV News)** — The Vatican has published the final report of the synod study group examining women's participation in the Church, which calls for expanded roles for women in Church governance and leadership in roles not including ordained ministry.

The 75-page document, published in English and Italian on March 10, discusses women's leadership in the Church, but not the specific question of a possible female diaconate.

It is the third of 15 final reports expected from the study groups of the Synod on Synodality in the coming weeks. Cardinal Mario Grech, the secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, has characterized these reports as "working documents" which will be used to form proposals submitted to the pope for consideration. In the document, the study group calls for "new spaces" for women to exercise leadership in evangelization and administration in collaboration with ordained ministers.

"Alongside the sacramental path and distinct from it, there is also a charismatic path that can be fruitfully pursued to open new spaces of participation for the lay faithful, particularly for women," it states. "It follows that even in the exercise of governance within a Diocese, opportunities of this kind may arise and should be employed."

The report argues that laywomen possess distinct charisms from the Holy Spirit that demand recognition.

"Today laywomen have the right to affirm their participation in the mission of the Church not only on the basis of their equal human and Christian dignity but also on the basis of the charisms given by God," it says.

"A new evangelization has become urgent," it adds, "One that depends less exclusively on priestly resources and is enriched by the presence and contributions of women."

The synod study group calls for theology and canon law to "explore new forms of exercising authority grounded in the Sacrament of Baptism and distinct from those deriving from Holy Orders, so that adequate canonical forms may be found to make effective the participation of women in roles of leadership within the Church."

"There is no reason or impediment that should prevent women from carrying out leadership roles in the Church," the report states.

The document also recommends a "reformulation of the areas of competence of the ordained ministry," suggesting that redefining those boundaries "could open the way to recognize new spaces of responsibility for women in the Church."

Notably, the report does not address the specific question of a possible female diaconate, a controversial topic of debate within the Synod on Synodality. During the second session of the synod, Pope Francis reactivated a commission studying women's access to the diaconate under Cardinal Giuseppe Petrocchi. That commission's conclusions, published in December 2025, stopped short of recommending the female diaconate but approved by a wide margin a proposal to broaden women's access to instituted ministries, like that of catechist.

Drawing on Scripture and Church tradition, the report invokes both the Virgin Mary and St. Mary Magdalene as paradigms for female authority in the Church. "Mary is the supreme model of the charismatic dimension. Though she does not belong to the hierarchical structure, she possesses within the Church a unique authority and spiritual fruitfulness," it states.

The document also notes that Christ chose a woman, Mary Magdalene, to first announce the Resurrection, "The Apostles themselves received this proclamation from her."

The report outlines appointments made by both Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV as evidence that women can and already do lead at the highest levels of the Church.

It cites the Apostolic Constitution "Praedicate Evangelium," which allows the possibility for a laywomen to head a Vatican dicastery, "depending on the power of governance and the specific competence and function of the Dicastery or Office in question."

At the same time, the report states that women working in the Roman Curia have indicated "that certain attitudes marked by clericalism persist" in which "women, even in positions of responsibility, sometimes struggle to be

involved and listened to on equal footing with male colleagues, particularly in interactions with ordained ministers."

The study group highlighted Pope Leo XIV's appointments of Trappistine Mother Martha Elizabeth Driscoll, and Sister Iuliana Sarosi, a member of the Congregation of the Mother of God, as consultants to the Dicastery for the Clergy and of Cristiana Perrella as president of the Pontifical Insigne Academy of Fine Arts and Letters of the Virtuosi al Pantheon. The report also cited Pope Leo's comments in an interview in July 30 in which he said that "the role of women in the Church has to continue to develop" and expressed his intention to continue "in the footsteps of Francis, including in appointing women to some leadership roles at different levels in the Church's life."

The synod final report is organized in three parts. The first recounts the history of the study group and the second offers a "synthesis of the themes" emerging from the synodal process.

The third part is an extensive appendix containing six sections: female figures in the Old and New Testaments; significant women in Church history; contemporary testimonies of women in Church leadership; the Marian and Petrine principles; ecclesial authority; and the contributions of Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV.

Among the examples of women highlighted by the document are St. Catherine of Siena, St. Joan of Arc, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Maria Montessori, and Servant of God Dorothy Day.

(Courtney Mares is Vatican editor for OSV News.)

## BLESSED BY THEIR MISSION:

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK MARCH 8-14

For 52 weeks a year our religious sisters stand with the poor and immigrants, teach children, fight injustice, heal the sick, share spirituality, empower women, defend the planet, promote peace, create community, offer hope, and much more.

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*Oh, loving and merciful God,  
May the lives of our religious sisters inspire others to join them in membership and mission. Bless all women religious, that they might be faithful in their call to make our world a better place with their gifts and talents you have given them.*

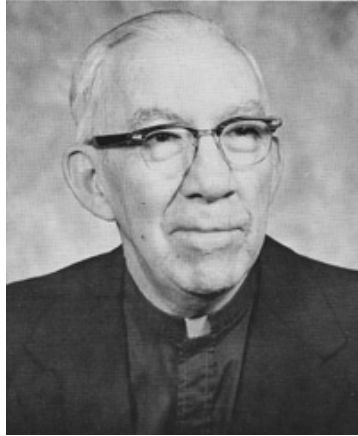
*Show grace for all who are discerning a call to vowed religious life, and all those who support women religious and their good works so that their lives and ministries continue to be a source of hope to all of your creation. Also bless all those served by women religious, whose lives are more hopeful, more peaceful, and more loving, because of the work of the religious sisters in their lives. Amen*



# Grit and Grace

## Pioneering Priests, the Cornerstone of the Catholic Church of WV

The following article honoring the 175th Anniversary of our diocese is based on a historical record written by Fr. James Francis Tierney's "Biographical Notices of The Earliest Wheeling Priests," when he was at Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, and archived documents of the diocese.



Father James Francis Tierney

Trailblazing missionary priests and the determined leadership of Bishop Richard Vincent Whelan laid the foundations of the Catholic Church in WV.

Just before being ordained a priest in 1937, Fr. James Francis Tierney, wrote his dissertation for St. Mary's Seminary about more than 70 early priests of WV, a state with the "most varied topography" and "almost unrivaled scenic beauty."

Tierney, a native of Weston, later served parishes across West Virginia for 45 years, including Beckley, Weirton, Grant Town, Huntington, Fairmont, and Farmington.

His dissertation documented that organized parish life in Wheeling began in the early 19th century. Records show Rev. Francis Rolf performing the first recorded baptism there in 1829. For more than a decade afterward, Catholics received only intermittent pastoral care, often seeing a priest just once or twice a month as clergy traveled long circuits across the rugged western Virginia mountains. Earlier missionary efforts had centered in the Eastern Panhandle, where Irish priest Father Denis Cahill evangelized along the Potomac Valley in the late 1700s.

The Church's presence expanded when the Diocese of Richmond Bishop Richard Vincent Whelan and Jesuit Father James Ryder brought Catholicism to the western region. The duo traveled far and wide to bring Mass and sacraments to Catholics "scattered through the territory." As the result Whelan assigned priests to Wytheville, Summersville, and Kingwood.

By 1846, Bishop Whelan moved his base from Richmond to Wheeling, and his first recorded baptism there in the notes is dated November 2, 1846.

### Call Across the Atlantic: Brutal Honesty

While the populations grew thanks to roads and rail, supplying clergy in western Virginia was becoming an impossible task. Priests were given assignments covering at least a 100-mile radius and traveled by horseback or on foot. Bishop Whelan was also exhausting the hospitality of bordering priests and knew he had to attract priests and seminarians from outside of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

So, putting pen to paper, he wrote to seminaries in Ireland and France, knowing he had to be brutally honest to attract young men who not only embraced a strong relationship with Christ, but also a strong backbone to endure the hardships required. His recruitment pitch to All Hallows Seminary in Dublin, Ireland said:

"Catholics are very few and generally very scattered... a priest may have a circuit of 100 miles in diameter... (This country is) exceedingly mountainous, with bad roads, and a very uncultivated population. (Any missionary) must expect a life of great labour and fatigue, much exposure to the cold, heat, and rain... a very indifferent diet, and lodging, but little respect for his dignity... a compen-



Rev. Dr. James A. Ryder, S.J.

sation barely adequate to support him....

"I wish no one to be taken by surprise ...if they select my Diocese, I shall regard their character and honor compromised if afterwards they flinch, and I shall even refuse an exeat where there is no other good controlling motive."

And with that, strong willed, evangelizing priests came. They took him se-

riously; seminarians and priests came and continued for more than 180 years.

### The Diocese of Wheeling

In 1850, the Holy See granted Whelan's repeated request to divide the Richmond diocese (which was formerly part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore until 1820) to create the Diocese of Wheeling with Whelan installed as its first bishop at the age of 41. The Eastern panhandle remained part of the Diocese of Richmond (prior to 1820 it was part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore).

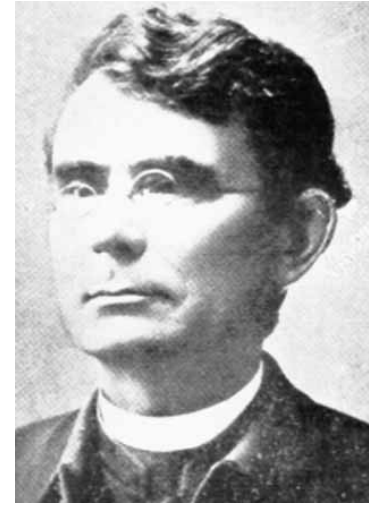
The diocese quickly grew—from about 7,000 Catholics and a dozen churches in the mid-1850s to nearly 20,000 Catholics and more than forty churches by 1870.

### Bishop Whelan's In-House Seminary

It would take time for the Irish priests to come, so Bishop Whelan's task of securing priests for the region would continue to be difficult. So, the forward-thinking bishop rolled up his sleeves and worked on a solution, opening a seminary in his home in the early 1850s.

It was the second time the gritty young bishop opened a seminary. The first – St. Vincent Seminary – was opened in Richmond. However, diocesan administrators there insisted it have a large property and new facilities. Those hefty costs were to the seminary's demise, and it closed soon after its inception because of lack of funding.

The Wheeling seminary trained future priests for



Father Joseph W. Stenger

more than 20 years.

There were four seminarians in its first year. He wasn't going to accept just anyone. His notes stated, "none need apply who cannot produce the strongest recommendations for piety and ability."

In addition to their studies, the seminarians taught children in the cathedral school. Among its notable graduates were Fr. Henry F. Parke, ordained in 1851 and would go on to serve as Vicar General for the Wheeling diocese; and Monsignor Thomas A. Quirk ordained in 1870 by Whelan and quickly become known to be much like his servant leader, knowing no limits – doing whatever it took to bring Christ to the most remote areas to build up the Church.

In a late 1800's sermon about Bishop Whelan, Fr. Joseph W. Stenger said, Bishop Richard Vincent Whelan combined personal strength, high standards, and "stern virtues". However, he also maintained a Christ like compassion, **See "Grace" on Page 14**



Photo illustration by Joyce Bibey

## Grace ...

**Cont'd from Page 13** showing mercy when others only criticized them and him. Even if the recipient was ingrateful, the thick-skinned bishop continued to give the lost soul grace, even priests. Going on to say, "neither the remonstrances (objections) of his own priests, nor the opinion of others, nor even the ingratitude of the unworthy man who abused his goodness, had the slightest effect in extinguishing... this nobly folly (seemingly foolish but admirable mercy toward sinners)."

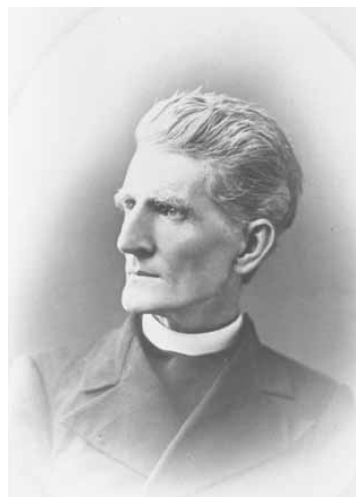
### **Profiles of Pioneering Priests by Tierney**

**Very Rev. Henry F. Parke**, born in Ireland in 1823, immigrated to America as a young man and converted to Catholicism after meeting an Irish priest, Father Edward Fox, in Wytheville, who encouraged him to enter the priesthood. His initial assignments stretched from Wheeling to Wytheville before he was named Vicar General and the pastor for the Catholic families in Parkersburg. He served St. Francis Xavier in Parkersburg for much of his life until his final years he served at Mt. de Chantal in Wheeling. Upon the death of Bishop Whelan on July 7, 1874, Fr. Parke served as administrator of the diocese until Bishop John Kain was installed as the diocese's sec-

ond bishop.

He was described as "a small little man... extremely active; he was an engaging conversationalist.... An instance of his charity is given in connection with a small-pox epidemic in Parkersburg, when Father Parke is known to have baptized, fed, and cared for a victim; and then finally with his own hands had to bury him."

Father Parke died tragically on Holy Thursday, April 9, 1895. On his way to Chrism Mass at the Cathedral a brick wall collapsed and killed him.



Father Henry F. Parke

**Monsignor Thomas A. Quirk** was born in Clonmel, County of Tipperary, in southern Ireland, on March 7, 1844. He was educated in England before coming to America. He was in seminary studies at St. Sulpice in Paris, when he met Bishop Whelan. He was the only seminarian there to commit to the Diocese of Wheeling. After his ordination in Wheeling on August 31, 1870, Fr. Quirk served in Wheeling at the Cathedral for his first nine months before going to serve in Parkersburg, Guyandotte and Huntington. The latter he wrote, "There was no church in Huntington when I got there; we had Mass in the roundhouse and in a shanty. Neither was there any available money. I went to a lumber dealer and explained. He answered that I was to have all the materials I wanted. Thus, within six months I had a church and school; the church was used for twenty years...." He served the Huntington faithful for 12 years, purchasing the property for the present-day St. Joseph Church prior to his departure.



Monsignor Thomas A. Quirk

From there he served in Lewis County. The people loved and respected him as the man who built the Church in those hills from

the ground up. Even in his 90s, he was described as "one of the ablest and most remarkable priests ever in the Wheeling Diocese, or... our whole country."

### **The Legacy**

From scattered missions to vibrant parishes, the Church in West Virginia grew through the enduring power of grit and grace. These pioneering priests met every hardship with courage and every challenge with faith, trusting that God would guide their work. Today their legacy remains alive in every Mass celebrated and every soul drawn closer to Christ. May their spirit continue to inspire the Church for generations to come.

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# Rite of Election

AJ Emery photo

State Trooper David Tallamy, a catechumen from St. John the Evangelist Parish in Summersville, signs his name in the Book of the Elect at the Rite of Election at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston Feb. 22. With him is his godparent Sheriff Deputy Matt Barbers. The Rite of Election was also held Feb. 28 at St. Leo Church in Inwood and March 1 at St. Alphonius Church in Wheeling. Bishop Mark Brennan presided at the three services. The journey of the 210 catechumens and 251 candidates from 55 parishes in West Virginia will culminate at the Easter Vigil as they receive the sacraments — baptism, first Communion, and confirmation for the elect and first Communion and confirmation for candidates — at their parish churches.



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**HOLY THURSDAY  
PILGRIMAGE**  
**APRIL 2, 2026**  
**6 ALTARS OF REPOSE AT  
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1 HOLY NIGHT**  
**Bus departs from Cathedral  
at 9:00 p.m.**  
  
*Please register by March 30  
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or by calling 304-233-0880, ext. 261*



## CURSILLO INFORMATIONAL SESSION

**Where: Bless Sacrament Parish, So. Charleston**



If you are unable to attend in person, let us know, and you can join via Zoom.  
For the Zoom link, please email: [Cursillo@dwc.org](mailto:Cursillo@dwc.org) or you can leave a message at the following phone number — it is checked frequently — 304-233-0880, Ext. 480.



### Is the Holy Spirit calling you to a richer relationship with God?

- Cursillo is a Catholic movement that encourages Christians to deepen their faith and become better evangelizers in their community.
- Those who have “lived” Cursillo say it is an experience of living and sharing with others in a loving and caring Christian community.
- It is not a theoretical course but, an experience that must be lived. It is said to be life-changing experience, which brings with it the discovery of the basis of Christianity and its fundamental significance to life.
- It is an experience that can change your relationship with Christ.
- The motto of Cursillo is make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.

**March 28, 2026 – 10:00 am – 11:15 am**  
**305 E. St., Charleston, WV 25314**



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304-233-0880, Ext. 480 | [cursillo@DWC.org](mailto:cursillo@DWC.org) | [dwc.org](http://dwc.org) (Events - Cursillo)

# ‘The Story of All Stories’ Children’s Bible Vividly Conveys Salvation History

By **Kimberley Heatherington**

**(OSV News)** — It’s not your parents’ children’s Bible. Although — teases its publisher, Word on Fire Votive — if they buy it as a gift, they may try to keep it for themselves.

“The Story of All Stories: A Story Bible for Young Catholics” is the new children’s Bible parents and grandparents are buying for little ones, but find themselves captivated by its combination of alluring art and engaging storytelling.

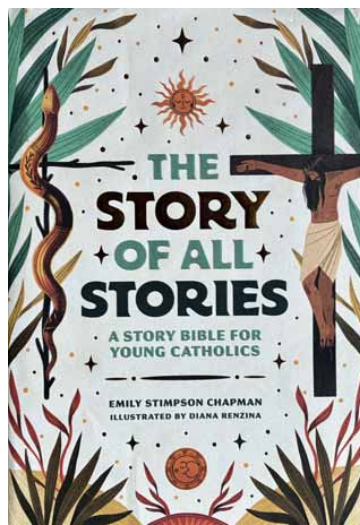
“It was something that a lot of Catholic parents had been asking me for when I came on as editor of the Votive imprint,” said Haley Stewart, who oversees the youth books division of Bishop Robert E. Barron’s Word on Fire evangelization organization, based in Elk Grove, Illinois.

“A lot of them were saying, ‘We want a really beautiful children’s Bible, because there’s nothing on the market that’s really captured our children’s imagination.’ And I have four kids, and I felt the same,” recalled Stewart. “So we began a conversation within the team at Word on Fire, and started to get excited about what we could create. And we knew pretty much immediately that Emily was the person we wanted.”

Emily is Emily Stimpson Chapman — best-selling Catholic author of over a dozen books, journalist, essayist and mother of three. Stewart was eager to cast Chapman as her chief storyteller for the new project, which would read like a storybook.

Chapman, however, took some convincing; her children were 1, 2 and 4 at the time, and she had sworn off of any such huge, time-consuming undertakings.

After Chapman told Stewart “no” twice, Stewart re-



OSV News photo/Maria Wiering  
This is the cover of “The Story of All Stories: A Story Bible for Young Catholics.”

sorted to a secret weapon: showing her the work of artist Diana Renzina, who would illustrate the Bible.

“As soon as I saw that, I knew I had to say yes — because I knew I was going to want that Bible in my house for my children,” said Chapman. “And if the writing was anything less than what I would have liked it to be, I was going to be kicking myself for the rest of my life. I said ‘yes’ as a mother.”

Renzina — a mostly self-taught, Latvian artist — works in a style that fuses her favorite folkloric inspirations with enchanting and vivid drawings on practically every page of “The Story of All Stories,” which was published in October.

“She has this way of blending fresh illustrations with ancient and mystical qualities in the way that she handles form, color and texture,” said Nicolas Fredrickson, Word on Fire’s brand director. “She conveys feelings of transcendence in these vibrant, exciting scenes. She consistently tells these deep mysterious stories through her work.”

That cohesion — in both art and story — is critical in a hardcover volume that runs 496 pages and covers Biblical events from Genesis to Revelation. Each chapter features main points and key connections — Biblical typology showing how Old Testament stories point to Jesus, Mary and the sacraments — as well as quotes from saints, popes and Church Fathers.

“It tells children the story of the Bible as one whole,” explained Chapman. “Most children’s Bibles are collections of random stories from the Bible, and they help kids to know a lot of the highlights, but they don’t help them to see the whole picture.”

That whole picture is, of course, nothing less than salvation. “Most children’s Bibles, both Catholic and non-

Catholic, don’t help children see God’s plan for salvation — the love that is not only behind every moment in salvation history, but the love that is working through salvation history to bring us to him,” Chapman said. “And when you see the whole plan — when you see the aerial view and what God has been doing in the lives of the patriarchs and the prophets and the apostles — you learn to see God’s hand in your life, too.”

Designed for ages 7-13, the narrative style and tone are accessible yet not oversimplified, and importantly, theologically accurate.

“We could not include every single story in the Bible, but we wanted it to have a fullness to it,” Chapman said.

Ultimately, the division is almost evenly half and half be-

tween the Old Testament and New Testament. An audiobook version — read by actor Jonathan Roumie who portrays Jesus in “The Chosen” — is also available.

With more than 400 five-star reviews on Amazon, the family imprimatur seems solidly assured. But both prelates and priests have also endorsed “The Story of All Stories.” Bishop Erik Varden of Trondheim, Norway, who recently preached Pope Leo XIV’s Lenten retreat, said it was “like a portable cathedral.”

“I hope it helps people to know and love Christ better, and want to follow him,” Chapman said. “I hope it helps them to know that the God who spoke to Abraham and Isaac and Joseph speaks to them, too — and that he loves them.”

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# Is the Holy Spirit Calling You to a Richer Relationship with God? Check out Cursillo

**By Joe Pangilinan, Lay Coordinator Cursillo, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston**

Is the Holy Spirit Calling you to a richer relationship with God?

Cursillo is a Catholic movement that encourages Christians to deepen their faith and become better evangelizers in their community. Priorities for evangelization are strengthened through Cursillo in two ways; first, Cursillo helps with continued formation with both OCIA graduates as well cradle Catholics. Second, Cursillo helps with parish renewal by equipping the faithful with both knowledge and zeal to proclaim the faith with confidence.

Those who have “lived” Cursillo say it is an experience of living and sharing with others in a loving and caring Christian community.

It is not a theoretical course but an experience



that must be lived. It is said to be a life-changing experience, which brings with it the discovery of the basis of Christianity and its fundamental significance to life.

It is an experience that can change your relationship with Christ.

The motto of Cursillo is make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.

There will be an information session on Saturday, March 28, at Blessed Sacrament Parish Center

in South Charleston from 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. (See ad on Page 15). If you are unable to attend in person, please email [Cursillo@dwc.org](mailto:Cursillo@dwc.org) or call 304-233-0880 ext: 480 and leave a message with your name and contact information and the link to view the session via Zoom will be provided.

There will be two Cursillo retreat weekends this summer. The men’s retreat is from the evening of Thursday, July 23, through Sunday afternoon, July 26, at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston. The women’s retreat is from the evening of Thursday, August 6, through Sunday afternoon, August 9, at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center.

Sponsor applications as well as candidate applications will be provided. For more information, please go to the Diocesan Cursillo website at [dwc.org](http://dwc.org) (Events-Cursillo) or click on the banner near the bottom of the page labelled Cursillo.

**Recovering Our Soul Connections:**  
*A Retreat for Women Who Have Been Sexually Abused*  
**Begins online April 1, 2026 and culminates in an in-person retreat**  
**May 28–May 31, 2026**  
 At The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality, Charleston, WV

*“It is a life-changing healing spiritual event led by dedicated and caring professionals which I strongly recommend to those in need.”*

To request an application or more information, please email us at [soulconnection366@gmail.com](mailto:soulconnection366@gmail.com) or visit [WVIS.org](http://WVIS.org)

**Register soon**

**Space is limited to 8 retreatants**

**Cost to retreatants is \$200**

**Scholarships are available!**



**Retreat Leaders**  
**Liz Deal**, Spiritual Director, West Virginia Institute for Spirituality, Charleston, WV.  
**Cindy Neely**, Spiritual Director, WVIS and St. Thomas More/ Newman, Chapel Hill, NC

Contributions from donors keeps the **cost to retreatants to \$200 each** If you would like to donate to support this effort, please contact Sally Orcutt ([sally.orcutt@wvis.org](mailto:sally.orcutt@wvis.org)).

Now is the time to Talk!

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# La colecta anual de los obispos para CRS es 'más importante que nunca' en medio de guerras y desastres en el extranjero

Por OSV News

**WASHINGTON** — La colecta anual de los obispos de EE.UU. para Catholic Relief Services (CRS), agencia que ayuda a algunas de las personas más pobres y vulnerables de Estados Unidos y de todo el mundo, se llevará a cabo en la mayoría de las diócesis estadounidenses durante las misas del fin de semana del 14 y 15 de marzo.

La colecta beneficia a seis agencias y oficinas afiliadas a la Iglesia Católica, entre ellas CRS, la principal agencia internacional de ayuda y desarrollo de la Iglesia católica en Estados Unidos.

"La Iglesia en Estados Unidos se fundó en el ministerio entre inmigrantes. Ayudamos a todos los marginados, incluidas las víctimas de guerras y desastres en el extranjero. La colecta de Catholic Relief Services combina todos estos tipos de asistencia", afirmó el obispo Daniel H. Mueggenborg, de Reno, Nevada, presidente del Comité de Colectas Nacionales de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos.

"Nuestro Señor nos dice que amemos a nuestro prójimo, tanto a los que conocemos como a los que no conocemos y a quienes consideramos muy diferentes de nosotros. La colecta de Catholic Relief Services es una forma de demostrar ese amor. Hoy en día es más vital que nunca", afirmó el obispo en su declaración del 2 de marzo.

La colecta también acepta donativos en línea en [givecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS](https://givecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS).

De los casi 13.5 millones de dólares distribuidos por la colecta en 2024, casi 8 millones se destinaron a CRS, que trabaja en lugares afectados por guerras y desastres naturales, según un comunicado de prensa de la USCCB.

La Colecta de CRS ha cobrado mayor importancia a la luz de los profundos recortes en la ayuda humanitaria realizados el año pasado por el gobierno federal de Estados Unidos, que han dejado un vacío que deben llenar la Iglesia católica y otras agencias de ayuda internacional.

En julio de 2025, la Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID, por sus siglas en inglés) dejó de existir efectivamente, con un recorte del 85% de sus programas, como resultado de los esfuerzos de reducción de costos del magnate tecnológico Elon Musk, entonces jefe del Departamento de Eficiencia Gubernamental del presidente Donald Trump. Musk se jactó de "echar a USAID a la trituradora", pero los demógrafos académicos han estimado que la repentina pérdida de financiación de los grupos que llevaban a cabo ayuda humanitaria provocó la muerte de hasta 300.000 personas en seis meses.

La revista The Lancet, una publicación médica británica revisada por

pares que se edita desde 1823, estimó que la ayuda de USAID ha salvado más de 91 millones de vidas, incluidas las de 30 millones de niños, en las últimas dos décadas. Sin embargo, pronostica que, si no se restablecen los niveles de financiación de USAID, "para 2030 podría producirse un número asombroso de muertes evitables": 14,1 millones de personas, de las cuales más de 4,5 millones serían niños menores de 5 años.

Los demás beneficiarios de la colecta de CRS son:

— The Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. (CLINIC): ofrece formación y apoyo a una red de más de 400 proveedores de servicios jurídicos en materia de inmigración, católicos y comunitarios, en 49 estados.

— La Secretaría de Migración de la USCCB, anteriormente Departamento de Servicios de Migración y Refugiados: ayuda a las diócesis a llevar a cabo su ministerio con los recién llegados, publica recursos educativos y promueve políticas "que afirman la vida y la dignidad de los inmigrantes y refugiados".

— Dos iniciativas de la Secretaría de Diversidad Cultural en la Iglesia de la USCCB: ministerios pastorales para trabajadores migrantes, viajeros y marineros a través de su Subcomité para el Cuidado Pastoral de Migrantes, Refugiados y Viajeros, y su Subcomité para Asuntos de Asia y las Islas del Pa-

cífico, que ayuda a la Iglesia a abordar las necesidades pastorales únicas que trascienden muchas fronteras de idioma y tradición.

— La Secretaría de Justicia y Paz de la USCCB: se dedica a la defensa de los pobres en todo el mundo y colabora con los responsables políticos y los funcionarios gubernamentales para poner fin a los conflictos internacionales violentos a través de su programa internacional de justicia y paz. Creada a principios de agosto de 2024, la secretaria presta servicios a varios comités de la USCCB, entre ellos el Comité de Justicia y Paz Internacional.

— Fondo de Ayuda del Santo Padre: ayuda al Papa León XIV a enviar ayuda urgente a las zonas del mundo en crisis.

El obispo Mueggenborg afirmó: "Juntas, estas agencias ayudan a las víctimas de la guerra y los desastres naturales, apoyan el desarrollo económico sostenible en el extranjero, abogan por la paz internacional y los derechos humanos, ayudan a los refugiados e inmigrantes en Estados Unidos a obtener apoyo legal, ofrecen apoyo pastoral a una amplia variedad de personas que emigran por motivos laborales y fomentan el entendimiento intercultural".

Los feligreses pueden donar a la campaña de la Colecta de CRS aquí: <https://www.givecatholic.org/story/USCCB-CRS>.

## Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de menores:

La diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston te exhorta a denunciar cualquier delito ante las autoridades civiles. Para realizar una denuncia en contra de cualquier obispo en todos los Estados Unidos, favor de reportarlo en la página web [www.repostbishopabuse.org](http://www.repostbishopabuse.org). Y si, además, existen motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido alguna conducta sexual inapropiada favor de comunicarse con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y también puede realizar un reporte en la página web antes mencionada. **Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números varían según su ubicación. Si considera que alguien está en peligro inmediato, favor de llamar al 911. Para informar de forma confidencial sobre cualquier sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, favor de comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia, llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 1-800.352.6513. **Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis exhorta a informar primeramente a las autoridades civiles correspondientes, cuando la denuncia incluye un delito, y también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales correspondientes. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de menores por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, comuníquese directamente con la diócesis a los teléfonos 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880 para hablar con cualquiera de las siguientes personas asignadas: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; y si desea hablar en español con Sor Martha Gómez, ext. 264. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la diócesis al 304.230.1504 o a la línea

directa de abuso sexual de la diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de quejas están disponibles en línea en la página web [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), favor de hacer clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", en "Ambiente seguro" y en "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede enviar por correo en Estados Unidos a: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003. **Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** Favor de llamar a Erin McFarland, M.Ed., LPC, al 304.559.6742. Además de las vías mencionadas anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la diócesis se ha asociado con la compañía Navex Global que ofrece la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar cualquier inquietud adicional, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diacono, religioso, o empleado laico de la diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de la página web [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Rendición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es una herramienta de denuncia confidencial y anónima, ellos se encargarán de transmitir su denuncia directamente a las autoridades civiles y a las autoridades diocesanas correspondientes, y lo más importante al denunciar a través de ellos, la identidad de la persona que denuncia está protegida. **Enlaces e información:** Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de crímenes contra a menores: 304-293-6400.

# Confirmation Schedule

*Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Celebrant*

- Saturday, April 11: St. Agnes, Charleston, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, April 12: Our Lady of the Hills, Elkview, 8:30 a.m.
- Monday, April 13: Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling, 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 14: St. John University, Morgantown, 5:15 p.m.
- Saturday, April 18: St. James, Charles Town, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, April 19: Assumption, Keyser, 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 22: St. Francis de Sales, Morgantown, 6 p.m.
- Thursday, April 23: Corpus Christi, Wheeling, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, April 25: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Stonewood, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, April 26: St. Brendan, Elkins, 11 a.m.
- Friday, May 1: St. Francis de Sales, Beckley; 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, May 2: SS Peter & Paul, Oak Hill, 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday, May 3: St. Catherine of Siena, Ronceverte, 11 a.m.
- Saturday, May 9: Immaculate Conception, Clarksburg, 4:30 p.m.
- Sunday, May 10: St. Joseph the Worker, Weirton, 7 p.m.
- Monday, May 11: St. Michael, Wheeling, 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 13: Immaculate Conception, Fairmont, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 16: St. Vincent de Paul, Wheeling, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, May 17: St. Jude, Glen Dale, 9 a.m.
- Friday, May 22: Epiphany of the Lord, Moorefield, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 23: St. Leo, Inwood, 5 p.m.
- Sunday, May 24: St. Bernadette, Hedgesville, 11 a.m.
- Sunday, May 24: St. Joseph, Martinsburg, 4 p.m.
- Saturday, June 6: Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston, 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday, June 14: St. Matthew / Sacred Heart Mission, Point Pleasant, 11:15 a.m.
- Saturday, June 20: St. Sebastian, Kingwood, 6 p.m.

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**Sunday Mornings**

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

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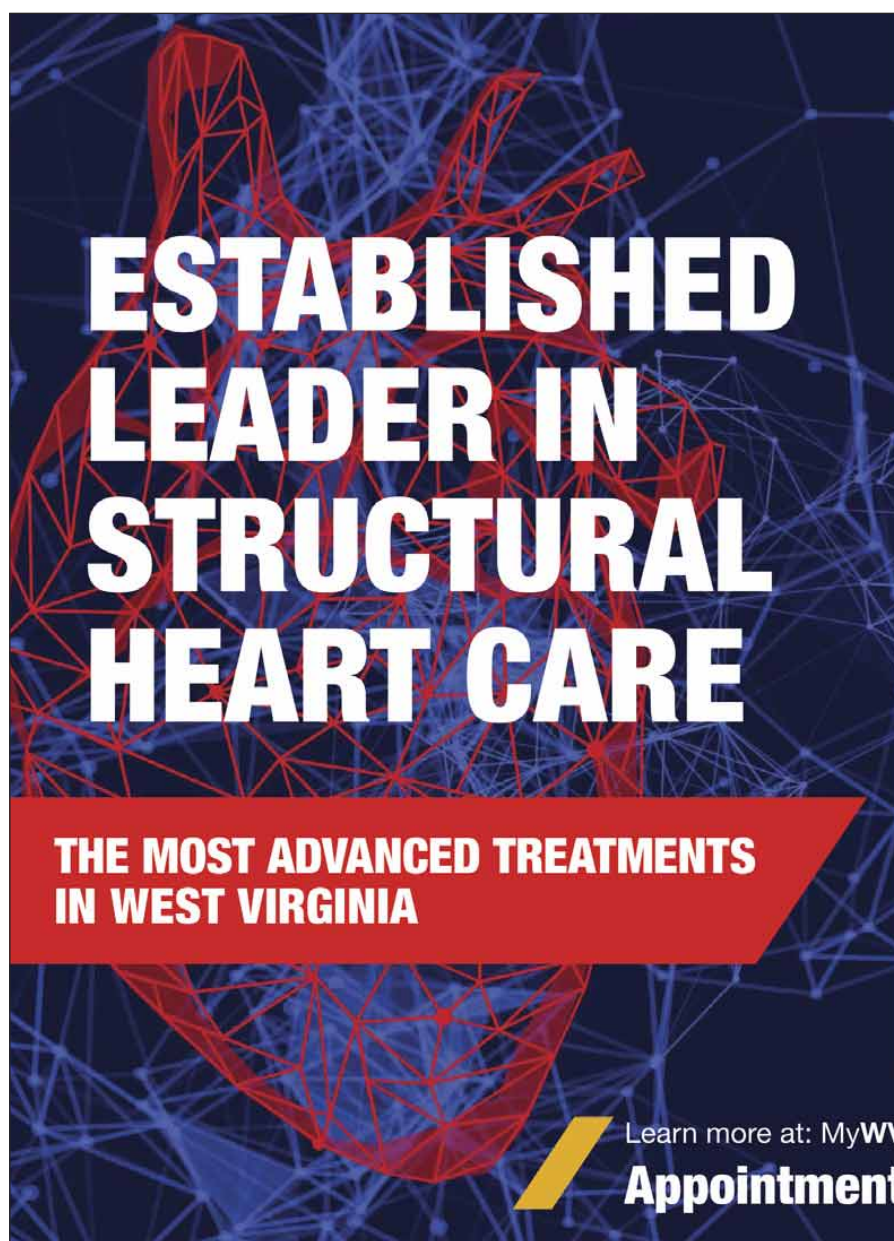
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David Michael Campsey MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Deepak Hooda MD  
Interventional Cardiology



Sushant Sharma MD  
Cardiology

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