

Faith IN WV

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

THANKSGIVING 2024



*"Be thankful
ahead of time."*

-Bl. Solanus Casey



Happy Thanksgiving! It's our time to put aside our challenges and burdens to focus on what we are grateful for – but don't let it stop there! Blessed Solanus Casey would tell us to keep that mindset every day. Then he would take it a step further and tell us to "Thank God ahead of time" for the blessings to come and the crosses we will be given to carry.

Blessed Solanus Casey was an American priest who brought hope and peace to countless people of all faiths and all walks of life. This Capuchin friar, who served in Detroit, Harlem, Yonkers, and other bustling cities, was called a rescuer of souls. He was blessed with a gift to know exactly what to say to give comfort, confidence, and hope to those who sought his counsel.

"Worry is a weakness from which very few of us are entirely free," he said. "We must be on guard against this most insidious enemy of our peace of soul. Instead let us foster confidence in God, and thank Him ahead of time for whatever he chooses to send us."

Sure, it is easy to give thanks and have a grateful heart, when you are content and things are going your way, but thanking God in times of suffering, while it may be difficult, is necessary. We need to "appreciate" more, he said. Throughout his life, conversations, and teachings he demonstrated the importance of sadness and struggles. He said those moments quickly make us recall simpler and easier times, and have us on our knees begging for them to return. However, in those times we need to thank God for those earlier days as well as present challenges, and have faith that God will prevail, when we keep Him in focus.

"Courage, therefore, and with the soul's eye fixed on the goal of eternity, struggle on," he said, while reminding people to be clear about their priorities, and be strong in their will to attain heaven despite the fears they face. His wisdom:

"Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks."

Blessed Solanus was born Bernard "Barney" Casey on Nov. 25, 1870, in the farming town of Oak Grove, Wisconsin. He attended high school at St. Francis High School Seminary in Milwaukee with hopes of being a diocesan priest, but he struggled with the German classes the seminary required. He was advised to consider a religious order. So, in 1897, he entered the novitiate of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in Detroit. He was ordained in 1904 as a "simplex priest," and was happy with that even though it meant he was restricted from preaching sermons and hearing confession.

Blessed Solanus took on the role of "doorkeeper" at the Detroit monastery he was assigned. He was the first person visitors to the parish and monastery would see, and quickly became a well-loved friar, consoler, and counselor, because of his sincere and compassionate character. He served for more than 50 years in New York, Detroit, and Indiana.

Blessed Solanus Casey shared with his brother friars and religious that his one wish in life was to be conscious at the time of death. The wish came true, for at the moment of his death at 11 a.m. on July 31, 1957, he was able to say, "I give my soul to Jesus Christ." Notice we shared with you not only the date, but also the hour he died. That's because it was the exact 53rd anniversary of his first Mass. More than 20,000 people attended his funeral.

For more on Bl. Solanus Casey – his life and road to sainthood – visit the Solanus Casey Center, online at: WWW.SOLANUSCASEY.ORG

Blessed Solanus Casey, pray for us!

The Bread of Life

EUCHARIST MEANS *Thanksgiving*



DIocese OF
WHEELING-CHARLESTON www.dwc.org
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As we continue our focus on the Eucharistic Revival in the Church, make the connection of the Eucharist and Thanksgiving – “It is right and just.”

We say it during the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer. Sound familiar?

Even if you take a secular look at the word Eucharist - the origin of the word - it comes from the Greek word eucharistia, which means thanksgiving.

When Bishop Mark Brennan is asked what Eucharist is, he repeatedly states, “The Eucharist is nothing less than Jesus Christ in Person.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church combines these two meanings into one, noting we as faithful in the Church believe the Eucharist is truly the Body of Christ, “the source and summit of the Christian life... For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself (CCC 1324),” and it “is called Eucharist because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. (CCC 1328).”

As we receive the Eucharist, let your heart be embraced by God and filled with pride and joy, knowing Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. Let us remember at that moment, when we receive his Body and Blood, we are united with him, and we become the Body of Christ, as St. Paul reminds us.

The second reading for Thanksgiving Day Mass, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, St. Paul emphasizes the significance of our encounter with the Lord and the importance of seeking a continuous encounter, preparing to be with him for eternity.

Let us receive Him in the Eucharist and be that dwelling place for Him so we can work for good in our lives and the lives of others.

Every time you approach the sanctuary to receive Christ in the Eucharist, receive Him and give thanks for all your blessings received and those you will receive by His Grace. Remain grateful to Him for saving us from sin and death, receiving eternal life with Him in heaven.

Recall that in receiving Him in the Eucharist you are intimately united with Christ, so keep talking to him, pouring out your worries and doubts and let the Bread of Life nourish your mind, body, and soul.

Thanksgiving blessings to all!

The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and just.

Pray with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love



Significance of the Advent Wreath

Happy First Sunday of Advent!

The Advent wreath, it is a tangible reminder of our preparation and anticipation of the birth of Christ. It has evolved through the centuries and across cultures and faiths. Each element is symbolic of aspects of the Christmas story and our faith.

Traditionally the candles used are three purple and one pink. Purple, the color associated of royalty, represents prayer, penance, and works of mercy we take on during the season. The pink (rose) represents joy. This candle is lit on Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent), which means “rejoice” and marks the halfway point until Christ’s birth.

Depending on culture or tradition the weeks represent hope, peace, joy, and love, or hope, faith, joy, and peace. It is a matter of semantics really. The overall meaning and respected custom are universal. Each are impressive and reverent of our anticipation of Christ’s birth. Think of your advent wreath as a beautiful reminder to pray faithfully with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Some traditions name the candles. The first candle is called the prophet’s candle, representative of the prophecy of the birth of a Messiah in Isaiah, and signifies hope. The second candle, the Bethlehem candle, represents the humble town, seemingly at the time to be insignificant. However, God chose this town proving even the least is important to our Creator. This candle represents peace. The third candle is the shepherd’s candle and recalls the shepherds and their joy. According to Scripture, it was the shepherds who were first told about Christ’s birth (Luke 2:8-14). The fourth candle is known as the angels candle, a candle of love, symbolic of when they sang out, “Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of goodwill.”

Regardless of your advent wreath appearance, the most important element is in the pause for prayer and reflection. It prompts us to remember Scripture, the prophecy, Mary’s

acceptance, and why Christ came to dwell among us. Let us remember that God is always present in our life and sent his only son to restore light and peace within and for us.

Advent Wreath Blessing and Prayers

Dear Jesus, as we light the candle(s) on this Advent wreath, may the light of your presence bring joy to our hearts. Bless our family and our friends, and be with all those who are in need this holiday season. Amen.

First Week - Hope

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Second Week - Peace

Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.

Third Week - Joy

Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

Fourth Week - Love

All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Countdown to Christmas Challenge

As we begin the Advent season take a moment for yourself, spending time with Christ in the Gospel of Luke. Consider it a countdown to Christmas challenge!

Luke's Gospel has 24 Chapters, fittingly if we begin our journey walking with St. Luke on Dec. 1, reading one chapter a day, we will complete the Gospel on Christmas Eve. This countdown to Christmas with St. Luke's Gospel has popped up on Christian blog and social media posts the last couple years.

Before we begin this challenge, let's get to know St. Luke.

Saint Luke was not one of the original 12 Apostles. However, he is considered one of the most dedicated followers after Christ's ascension. He left his profession as a physician to become an evangelist with the other Apostles, after Saint Paul's preaching inspired him.

He was intelligent and loved being emersed in the life of Christ. His writings make it obvious that he not only enjoyed talking to countless people who knew Jesus and witnessed His miracles, but also that he was in search of the facts – the truth. Saint Luke is referred to as one of the Church's first historians.

He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, which make up nearly a fourth of the New Testament. Saint Luke is a beautiful writer taking the reader through his messages and stories with such description the reader can envision and imagine themselves within them.

We can read St. Luke's words as if he were speaking personally to us. In fact, the Gospel of Luke (as well as the Acts of the Apostles) were letters written to his friend and Roman dignitary Theophilus, who must have asked the Apostle to detail the facts of the life of Christ.

Even though the world was male-dominated, St. Luke preached and wrote about how Jesus went out of his way to bring God's love to women, the poor, and all who were among the most forgotten and cast-out members of society.

It is believed that the story of our Savior's birth that St. Luke presents, was based on his personal conversations with Our Blessed Mother Mary.

His first lines in Chapter 1 of his gospel notes that he wrote it "after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write and orderly account for you... so that you may know the truth..." (Luke 1:3-4).

Throughout his writings he relates the teachings of Jesus with the early church as told in Old Testament. Writing as one who presents facts to convince others that we should

all know and love Jesus – our God – St. Luke illustrates Christ's mercy, healing, and compassion.

Saint Luke urges us to be Christian disciples and model ourselves after Jesus, and for us to seek salvation and peace through prayer. He even used Jesus as the example in Luke 23:34, when Jesus asked forgiveness of his crucifiers.

So, let's take the countdown to Christmas challenge this Advent to do something for ourselves! Let us all be inspired by St. Luke, seeking to know as much as we can about the life of Christ and want to share that good news with others through our actions and words.



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

MODEL OF FAITH, HOPE, AND JOY



The Feast Day of St. Francis Xavier, December 3rd, is a time to recognize this great missionary and also consider our own works of evangelization and care for others at the beginning of Advent. He chose to mirror the good he saw in his parents and those who put God first.

In a quick summary of his life, St. Francis Xavier seemed pretty dynamic, happy, and confident; but he had his own struggles with depression and loneliness. His father died when he was just a young boy; in his teens he left home to study in Paris; while there his mother and sister died; and his other siblings were all married with families of their own. However, he chose to turn those negative energies into a challenge to be courageous with God as his navigator. He considered his faith as the greatest gift from his reverent parents. He chose to be a fisher of men and share his love of Christ.

He earned degrees in philosophy and theology. While studying at the University of Paris, he met St. Ignatius Loyola. They became close friends. In 1534, together with five other men they founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit order). In 1537, St. Francis Xavier was ordained a priest.

An unnamed fellow Jesuit said, “I have never met anyone more filled with faith and hope, more open-minded than Francis. He never seems to lose his great joy and enthusiasm. He talks to both the good and the bad. Anything he is asked to do, Francis does willingly, simply because he loves everyone.”

He chose that attitude. Despite what had to have been dangerous and often miserable travel and living conditions, he focused on God to keep him balanced and grateful. Not every stop or plan was successful for him, but he remained determined.

He believed that we can face any challenge and danger as long as we love God. In his words: “In this life, we find our greatest comfort living in the midst of danger, that is, if we confront them solely for the love of God.”

On his feast day, let us pray we are enthusiastic, adventurous, and passionate about evangelizing as he was. Do not be afraid to share the love of Christ in your words and actions, mirroring those who nurtured that love in you.

Saint Francis Xavier Parish’s (Moundsville) Father Priyesh Sebastian M.C.B.S., shares this prayer:

St. Francis Xavier,
missionary of God’s love, watch over our family
with your compassionate heart.
guide us to live in faith, hope, and charity,
serving one another with kindness and humility.
Teach us to bring Christ’s light to our home
and share His love with all we meet.
Intercede for us, that we may follow
your example of trust in God
and courage in life’s journey.
Amen.

St. Francis Xavier, pray for us!

Editor’s note: The portrait in this post is by Tianna Williams from Sacred Art by Tianna.

THE FEAST DAY OF ST. BARBARA

DECEMBER 4

Editor's note: The image with this article features a statue of St. Barbara that graces the St. Alphonsus Parish Hall in Centre Wheeling.

Saint Barbara is a third century Christian martyr from Nicomedia (now Turkey/Lebanon region).

On December 3 the Church honors St. Barbara, who is considered the most important patron saint of mining, artillerymen, and builders.

She was the stunningly beautiful daughter of the anti-Christian Royal Bithynian Dioskurios of Nikomedia (a region that is now Turkey and Lebanon). He locked her up in a tower after she proclaimed she was Christian. This just made her will stronger. When a bathhouse was being constructed for her, she convinced the builders to add a third window. For St. Barbara this was to pay tribute to the Trinity.

She eventually escaped her tower and ran into the mountains. Legend has told that a giant rock formation opened up for her so she could hide. However, a shepherd eventually discovered her and turned her over to her father. She refused to denounce her faith, and her own father had her beheaded in 306 AD. Immediately after, a forceful lightning bolt hit Dioskurios and instantly killed him, leaving nothing of him except ashes and the sword that murdered St. Barbara.

Miners around the world honor her and call for her intercession and protection. Many areas of the world greet their shift replacements with the German "[Glück Auf](#)" (meaning 'luck open') referring to the rock that opened up for St. Barbara. The greeting is a way for the miners to ask the rock to open and give them its ore. The German expression carried over to other regions including the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, or Slovenia.

Saint Barbara is invoked against thunderstorms, fire, lightning, sudden death, and for artillerymen. The latter because centuries ago cannons used in battle were unreliable and would easily misfire or explode.

The US armed services - Army and Marines - give her special distinction. The United States Army Field Artillery Association and the United States Army Air Defense



Artillery Association maintain the Order of Saint Barbara as an honorary military society of the United States Army Field Artillery and the United States Army Air Defense Artillery. Members of both the United States Army and United States Marine Corps, along with their military and civilian supporters who meet high criteria are eligible for membership.

The Early Church of the 15th Century considers her one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers (along with George, Blase, Erasmus, Pantaleon, Vitus, Christopher, Denis, Cyriacus, Acacius, Eustace, Giles, Margaret, and Catherine) to call upon in times of desperation.

Namesake fact: St. Barbara's Memorial Nursing Home in Monongah that opened its doors on July 12, 1961, was named after the saint to pay tribute to the 362 men and boys that lost their lives in a nearby mine on Dec. 6, 1907. It was the worst mine disaster in U.S history. A statue of her was placed on the property as a monument to the miners.

Prayer for Intercession of St. Barbara:

O Saint Barbara

You are revered among the faithful
as one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers.

Your life serves as a vivid reminder
that our world is filled with
extreme anger and pain,

but that our faith and hope in the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
can alleviate our burdens.

Pray for me from Heaven that I
may follow your example by
treating God with His established
plan for my life. Amen.



HAPPY ST. NICHOLAS DAY

PHOTO FEATURES BISHOP MARK BRENNAN AT THE AGE OF SIX (FAR RIGHT), VISITING ST. NICK WITH HIS BROTHER PAUL.

Celebrate St. Nicholas Day on Dec. 6th as an opportunity to experience the joy of giving and performing good deeds.

Throughout the world Saint Nicholas is remembered as Santa, Père Noël, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle.... No matter what fond name he is called the love of good ole' St. Nick is rooted in reality not fairytale. Just as Christmas is a religious holiday, Santa – St. Nick – is a true saint and was a respected bishop with a generous spirit, choosing to live his life as a reflection of the love Christ has for each of us.

He was born in 270 AD in the Greek village of Patara (now Turkey between the Mediterranean and Black seas). His parents died when he was a boy. He inherited their great wealth. He didn't spoil himself with it, he chose to use it to help the poor and sick. He dedicated himself as a servant of God, to make his parents proud.

He became a priest and eventually bishop. In 325 AD, he was adamant at the Council of Nicaea that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity be an integral part of the Church. Since then, it has become part of the Nicene Creed, we still say in our churches today. The good saint died on Dec. 6, 343, AD.

On St. Nicholas Day act like the good bishop - donate food to a food pantry, donate shoes to a local shelter, ask your local hospital about donating toys and activities for children who must spend Christmas there, the possibilities are endless.

For activities for your family and to learn more about the real Santa – including what he might have looked like based on forensic science go to: WWW.STNICHOLASCENTER.ORG.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

DEC. 7-8

NATIONAL RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Bishop Mark Brennan is calling on all faithful in WV to prayerfully consider a contribution to an annual special collection set for Dec. 7-8 in all parishes in the state to benefit the National Retirement Fund for Religious.

“Let us pray for and give material aid to our aged religious in gratitude for all the good they have done for God’s’ people!”

~ Bishop Mark Brennan



Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

Please donate at your local parish or by mail at:

National Religious Retirement Office
3211 Fourth Street NE
Washington DC 20017-1194

Make check payable to Retirement Fund for Religious.

retiredreligious.org

Visit retiredreligious.org/2024photos to meet the religious pictured.
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Father Ben Cameron
Fathers of Mercy
Parish Mission



The Holy Eucharist: *Shadows and Fulfillment*

December 16-19, 2024

St. John Catholic Church
1704 Webster Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
(304) 872-2554

Daily Confessions & Evening Talks*
with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

Dec 16 | Monday

The Passover Lamb: The Holy Eucharist as Sacrifice

Dec 17 | Tuesday

The Manna: The Holy Eucharist as Communion with God

Dec 18 | Wednesday

The Bread of the Presence: The Holy Eucharist as Real Presence

Dec 19 | Thursday

The Eucharistic Sacrifice: Foretaste of Heaven
Closing Mission Mass at 7:00PM, followed by a reception and fellowship in baptistry/Cry Room.

*Confessions at 6:00 PM | Mission talk at 7:00PM

GIVING THANKS BY GIVING TO OTHERS

THEME KICKS OFF OUR LADY OF PEACE YOUTH GROUP

A newly formed youth group at Our Lady of Peace Parish in the Marshall County section of Wheeling met for the first time ever focusing on the theme - *Giving Thanks, Giving to Others, and Looking Forward.*

More than two dozen students in 6-8th grade gathered for the group's inaugural meeting. Organized by parishioner Marty Medovic and assisted by a team of 5 other OLP parishioners, the evening intentionally linked together food, fun, faith, and planning. Not only did they enjoy a Friendsgiving Meal, but time was also spent in prayer, scripture, and service.



The students made cards for their pastor Fr. Joseph Augustine and also made lap blankets to be distributed to local nursing home residents.

The evening ended with looking to future plans for the group.

“I really want the students to have input on where we go from here,” Medovic said, emphasizing. “This is *their* group, and their ideas are valued and important.”

He also talked to the group about the importance of taking ownership of their faith and becoming more involved in the Church's various ministries.

The group is not only for students of Our Lady of Peace Church. He is hopeful that youth from all Marshall County area parishes will feel welcome and want to join the group that will be meeting monthly.



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

God will send a Messiah to bring righteousness and justice to the world.

Responsorial: Psalm 25

“To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.”

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

May the Lord make you abound in love.

Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Don't let the anxieties of daily life distract you. “Be vigilant at all times.”

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may prepare for the coming of the Lord by imitating Christ in the way we pray, the way we proclaim God's word, and the way we extend God's grace to those in need, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For victims of injustice and all who suffer from unjust institutions or circumstances beyond their control, that they may yet be able to proclaim, “The LORD our justice,” let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those who were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal thanks to the generosity of others, that generosity may continue to be offered to them throughout the rest of the year, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we may be a sign of Christ's presence to the wider community in the way we increase and abound in love for one another and for all, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

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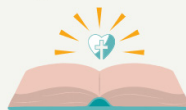
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Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Eastern Panhandle - coming soon	FM	88.5
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
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Liturgy of the Hours

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

EBREVIARY.COM LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view a PDF version of the Liturgy of the Hours.



MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.