



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT PERFECT TIME FOR BLESSING EXPECTING PARENTS

In this season of waiting, we focus today on the pure joy of Mary and Elizabeth, two women expecting their first children.

In Luke 1:39-45 we hear about Mary visiting her older cousin Elizabeth, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, becomes the first to call her blessed.



Many pastors and deacons in Catholic churches across the globe will be sharing a special formal Blessing for Expectant Parents on this Fourth Sunday of Advent, found in Chapter 1 of the Book of Blessings. During this prayer they call to mind Jesus who came to us in the womb of our Blessed Mother Mary. The reason for the blessing is simple, "God, the Lord of Life, brings every human creature into being and rules and sustains the life of each one of us. He has particular care for those born of a Christian marriage, since through the sacrament of baptism they will receive the gift of divine life itself. These parents-to-be are partners in God's love and seek his blessing because they already cherish the child they have conceived and because they await the hour of their child's birth in faith and hope."

We share with you a blessing for parents expecting a child that you can recite with family and friends if you do not receive the formal blessing with your pastor or deacon.

**Gracious Father,
your Word, spoken in love,
created the human family and,
in the fullness of time,
your Son, conceived in love,
restored it to your friendship.**

**Hear the prayers of (father to be) and (mother to be),
who await the birth of their child.**

Calm their fears when they are anxious.

**Watch over and support these parents
and bring their child into this world
safely and in good health,**

**so that as members of your family
they may praise you and glorify you
through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
now and for ever. Amen.**

If the expectant mother is alone, there is also a special formal blessing for her and all mothers before childbirth. We share one prayer among that rite:

**Lord God,
Creator of the human race,
your Son, through the working of the Holy Spirit,
was born of a woman,
so that he might pay the age-old debt of sin
and save us by his redemption.**

**Receive with kindness the prayer of your servant
(mother's name)**

as she asks for the birth of a healthy child.

**Grant that she may safely deliver a son or a daughter
to be numbered among your family,
to serve you in all things,
and to gain eternal life.**

**We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

To all of our expectant parents, may you always pray for Mary's intercession, peace, and strength. May she bring you the protection of her son Jesus Christ, and help you in all your needs with St. Joseph her spouse protecting you from every danger.

WV CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PLANNING AHEAD FOR 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

HOPE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WELCOME TO APPLY

As 2021 ends, the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is planning for the 2022-2023 school year and West Virginia Hope Scholarship program awareness is part of the planning.

Students entering kindergarten in the school 2022-2023, and first-through eleventh-grade students currently enrolled in public school are eligible to apply for the West Virginia Hope Scholarship run by the WV Treasurer's Office and use it towards tuition and fees for any of the 24 Catholic schools in the state. This scholarship is not run, managed, or determined by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston or the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese. The program, formerly HB 2013 was passed by the WV Legislature in 2021 and will begin in the Fall of 2022.


According to the WV Treasurer's Office, under the current school aid formula, each eligible student would receive \$4,600 annually to use toward private school, alternative instruction programs, or home school. The state stipulates that money in the Hope Scholarship education savings account will be administered through a third party. The treasurer's office reports that each family awarded would have access to an account for each eligible student in their household. All purchases would be pre-approved by the state. The funds awarded can only be spent on education expenses such as tuition and fees, extracurriculars, tutoring, materials, supplies, textbooks, transportation, etc.

Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., said the Catholic schools welcome Hope Scholarship recipients to apply for a Catholic education in West Virginia. She has been in talks with WV Treasurer Riley Moore since June about the opportunity for students new to Catholic school.




Moore has noted that the amount a family receives based on the state aid formula will vary from year to year based on the WV School Aid Formula, which is different from the cost per pupil K-12 schools spend in West Virginia. According to the US Department of Education, West Virginia public school's cost per pupil is \$11,757 (last updated Aug. 1, 2021). Students currently enrolled in Catholic schools, private schools, and home schoolers may become eligible in July 2026, according to the FAQs listed on the WV Treasurer's Office Hope Scholarship Page. For Hope Scholarship details go to: hopescholarshipwv.com.

Catholic schools have a lot to offer families, Deschaine said. "God is in our schools," she said. "Everything we do, choices we make, and plans we develop are prayerfully made with the best intentions of our students' success. While our students outperform their peers academically, the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental well-being of each child is just as important to academic achievement. We lead with faith."

For information on the Catholic Schools of West Virginia go to: WVCATHOLICSCHOOLS.ORG.



Riley Moore
West Virginia State Treasurer



HOME FAQs BOARD AGENDAS

Hope Scholarship Program

West Virginia

The Hope Scholarship will be an education savings account program that will allow parents and families to use the state portion of their child's education funding to tailor an individualized learning experience that works best for them.

Passed by the Legislature during the 2021 Regular Legislative Session, the program is scheduled to begin with the Fall 2022 school year, with an application period to open by March 2022.

The State Treasurer's Office is currently developing this program in advance of its launch date. For more information, please visit our frequently-asked-questions (FAQs) page. Also, sign up using the form below to receive further updates as they become available.

Here you will find news and information about the **Hope Scholarship** program. Please sign up below to be added to our mailing list.

Signup for more information

* First Name

* Last Name

REGISTRATION STILL OPEN FOR JANUARY TEENS ENCOUNTER CHRIST

Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) is an international, spiritual-renewal movement in the Catholic Church that strives to bring young people and adults into close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The next TEC retreat in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will be held from Friday, January 14th to Monday, January 17th, at the St. John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston, West Virginia.

It will be free for all teens who are in their junior year of high school through first year of college.

You can register to attend or volunteer at this retreat at [**TEC | DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON \(DWC.ORG\)**](http://TEC | DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON (DWC.ORG))

TEC is a community, led by the Holy Spirit, that gathers people into Christian groups of faith, while attempting to incorporate its ministry into the overall ministry of their members' dioceses and parishes.

The primary method employed to gather people into Christian community and form them in the Christian life is that of the weekend retreat. At the weekend retreat, which usually runs from Friday evening to Monday afternoon, the participants are led into Christ's Paschal Mystery, through a combination of presentations, activities, talks, prayer, community building, and liturgy.

With the Paschal Mystery as the movement's fundamental point of theological focus, participants on the retreats are shown God's great love for them, through a close consideration of Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. They are shown how to incorporate Christ's Paschal Mystery into their own faith lives, through a calling to die to sin and self, in order to rise to New Life in the Spirit. They are also empowered to bring back to their communities the great gift of God's love and Spirit that they encountered on their retreat.

Once initiated into the movement through attending a weekend retreat, the participant becomes an informal member of a Catholic community within the Church that endeavors to live the Christian life and bring others into relationship with Jesus Christ through His Church.

The Spirit encountered, energy built, and community established at the retreats never die. They flow over into the wider community throughout dioceses and within parishes. The TEC community also itself maintains its identity through gatherings and events that continue beyond the retreats.



Be sure to check with your local parish for Christmas Mass times.

Merry Christmas
from the staff of the Marketing and Communications Office



Special Collection

TO HELP KENTUCKY DISASTER RELIEF



Most Rev. Mark Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, has approved a special collection to be held the weekend of January 1st and 2nd, 2022, in all parishes and missions throughout the diocese to support recovery efforts related to the recent natural disasters that have occurred in Kentucky, leaving severe damage and significant loss of life. Donations can also be made at your parish or on the diocesan website at WWW.DWC.ORG/DISASTERRELIEF.

Proceeds from this collection will support the humanitarian and recovery efforts of Catholic Charities agencies on the ground, working in the communities affected by the tornadoes.

Please remember in prayer all those who have lost their lives in the wake of these disasters, as well as all those who have been injured and lost their homes, cars, employment, and access to food and water, especially as we prepare for the Christmas Season.

As we hold the victims and first responders in our prayers during these critical days, let us also spend time in prayer and discernment as we prepare for this upcoming collection. Let us come together now to support our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering this horrible loss.

REJOICING WITH WILLIAM

William is an Adult Learner in Huntington. He is a recovering addict and has been in recovery since August. We rejoice with William, celebrating his progress and victories!

This is an appropriate time to focus on William's story, as we are called to rejoice in a special way during this week of Advent.

William and others in recovery have been experiencing particular struggles over the last year and a half, which makes their triumphs all the more exceptional. Social distancing has led to isolation, which can be dangerous for those struggling with substance use disorder (SUD).

Catholic Charities West Virginia staff members have taken the precautions necessary to keep everyone safe, offering the gift of community when people need it most.

SUD impacts every area of a person's life, including relationships, nutrition, housing, and employment. William needs "wrap-around" support and services to help him overcome daunting challenges.

Our staff has worked with William to create an individualized plan to help him achieve his unique goals. We've connected him with social services to support him while he earns his High School Equivalency diploma.

William says, "I'm getting a lot of help from Catholic Charities. They've helped me in so many different ways. Like, furthering my education, meals when I'm hungry and I don't have much to eat, rides to and from the [Catholic Charities] Center, helping me stay sober and in my recovery, and last but not least, friendship."

We're honored to walk with William on his journey of recovery. And we truly rejoice with him, thankful for every victory! Ultimately, our goal is to help adult learners like William become healthier, stay in recovery, and get on the road to self-sufficiency.

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

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



CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA

Providing Help, Creating Hope, Serving All

Please, consider a gift to the Catholic Charities WV Annual Appeal and Christmas Collection. Catholic charities provides vital children, elderly, nutrition, disaster, refugee and other family services guided by God's love to enable people to reach their full potential.

For more information or to make a donation now online go to:

www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading MICAH 5:1-4a

Thus says the LORD: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.

Responsorial PSALMS 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

R. (4) Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong. Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Second Reading HEBREWS 10:5-10

Brothers and sisters:

When Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God.'" First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Alleluia LUKE 1:38

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel LUKE 1:39-45

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that like Mary we may eagerly bring Christ to our neighbors, rejoicing in God's presence in our world, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who are traveling to visit loved ones, that they may find joy in each other's company and may return home safely, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For expectant mothers, that they may realize their blessedness and the blessedness of the fruit of their womb, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us, that our hearts may be worthy dwelling places for our Lord, enabling us to bring Christ to all whom we encounter, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



Christmas Mass²⁰²¹

CELEBRATE THE MASS OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
FROM THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOSEPH
WITH US THIS CHRISTMAS

We hope you will join Bishop Mark Brennan as he celebrates
Mass for the Nativity of the Lord at the
Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling at 6 pm, Friday, Dec. 24.

The Mass will be livestreamed on our website, DWC.ORG, and also
available on our diocesan Facebook page at
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIOCESEOFWHEELINGCHARLESTON.

The faithful may also view the Mass on television. See below for a
list of channels broadcasting the celebration. May God bless you
and your family as you prepare for the coming of Christ.

CHRISTMAS MASS WILL BE BROADCASTED
AT MIDNIGHT ON THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS

WTRF-TV7

WHEELING

WBOY/NBC

CLARKSBURG/MORGANTOWN

WDVM

MARTINSBURG

WOWK

CHARLESTON/HUNTINGTON

WVNS

BECKLEY/BLEUEFIELD

LET US GO *Rejoicing* TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

PSALM 122



UPDATED GUIDELINES RELEASED

Bishop Mark E. Brennan released updated guidelines for our churches and facilities.

- New Norms for Reopening Parish Facilities for Meetings and Gatherings
- Updated Liturgical Guidelines
- Music Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations

These are available online at www.dwc.org.

Liturgy of the Hours LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

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

EBREVIARY.COM LITURGY OF THE HOURS



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| Grafton - Clarksburg | AM | 1190 |
| Montgomery - Beckley | FM | 89.7 |
| Purgitsville | FM | 98.7 |
| St. Marys - Parkersburg | FM | 105.3 |
| Star City - Morgantown | FM | 89.7 |
| Summersville | FM | 91.3 |
| Wheeling - Martins Ferry, OH | FM | 90.7 |
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~Also Streaming in WV at www.rdo.to/WLOL~

WV Catholic Radio www.WVCatholicRadio.org

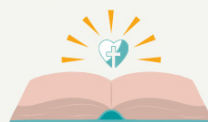
A LITTLE CATHOLIC HUMOR



ENROLL TODAY

WV Catholic Schools

Empowered
by knowledge.
Transformed
by faith.



Register today

wvcatholicschools.org



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.

Below are four options for enriching your spirit through daily Mass online.

- EWTN airs daily Mass from Our Lady of Angels Chapel, in Irondale, Alabama, at 8am, noon, and 7pm: [HTTPS://WWW.EWTN.COM/TV/WATCH-LIVE](https://www.ewtn.com/tv/watch-live)
- St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York has daily Mass live streamed at 7am: [HTTPS://SAINTPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.ORG/LIVE](https://saintpatrickscathedral.org/live)
- Catholic TV also streams its daily Mass: [HTTP://CATHOLICTV.ORG/MASSES/CATHOLICTV-MASS](http://catholicTV.org/masses/catholicTV-mass)
- Daily Mass Online at Notre Dame' Basilica of the Sacred Heart is live at 11:30 am Monday-Friday: [HTTPS://CAMPUSMINISTRY.ND.EDU/MASS-WORSHIP/BASILICA-OF-THE-SACRED-HEART/WATCH-MASS/SPECIAL-MASSSES/](https://campusministry.nd.edu/mass-worship/basilica-of-the-sacred-heart/watch-mass/special-masses/)