



Faith IN WV

FEBRUARY 2, 2025
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

Presentation of the Lord – Candlemas

Celebrate the Light of Christ and the courage of Mary and Joseph.

Sunday, Feb. 2, we come together honor the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

This day of Jesus' presentation in the temple was a sign of Mary and Joseph's humility and respect for their Jewish faith. Upon making their way in the temple Jesus was immediately recognized as the Messiah by two elders – Simeon and Anna - who you could say waited their whole life for this fulfilling moment.

However, for as joyous the moment was, it was also a day that pierced Mary's heart. As Simeon referenced what was to come.

The moments were described in today's Gospel reading (Luke 2:22-40).

As required by Mosaic Law for all males 40 days after they are born, Jesus was presented at the temple. Most parents brought along a lamb and pigeon as a sacrifice for the mother's purification, but Joseph and Mary were so poor they were only able to offer two turtledoves.

It was the first public introduction of Jesus into the house of God.

The elder priest, Simeon, and the prophetess Anna greeted the new parents. Luke's passage declares that Simeon knew immediately the infant Jesus was the Savior he longed to see. He took the child into his arms then proudly raised him high and in a voice of praise exclaimed in thanksgiving to God, "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

This beautiful proclamation from Simeon leads to another special custom in the Church – Candlemas. On this same day our parishes will bless candles they will use throughout the year, and it is also the day when we can take our own prayer candles to church for a blessing. Let the flame of your prayer candle bring to mind Simeon's elated declaration of affirmation to Mary and Joseph that Jesus is the light for all people, His salvation, and His love for us. Pray in confidence, knowing His light will guide the life of the faithful to eternal happiness.

Turning back to Luke's Gospel reading specifically verses 34-40, what happens next reveals a striking truth - what we now identify as one of the seven piercing sorrows of Mary.

Simeon blessed the Holy Family, then turned to Mary, and said (Luke 2:34-35), "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Can you imagine young Mary's heart? She was only in her early teens. One minute she is elated to hear that this great priest and prophetess recognized her baby as the one who will save the world, but in the next Simeon voices the prophecy that this Christ Child will also divide the people He was sent to save.

Being devout Jews, Mary knew exactly what Simeon was saying to her for it is written in Psalm 22, the Messiah's



feeling of abandonment and mockery; and Isaiah 53, which the prophet proclaims the lamb led to slaughter and tortured for the sins of the people. As we pray today, recalling this

whirlwind of emotions don't diminish our Blessed Mother's emotions - her pounding heart, her labored breath, her racing thoughts....



Furthermore, have confidence in Joseph and Mary as our intercessors for they not only walked this earth like us, but also time and time again showed great obedience to God in all circumstances.

Let us pray that in our faithfulness we live in the light of Christ. God, give us the courage to bring our souls and the souls of others out of the darkness. Just as Mary and Joseph, who loved you and trusted you every step, let us have faith beyond all fears. Your plan is greater than our own for we know one day we will join You in heaven and have eternal joy, love, and peace. Amen.

Editor's note: the vintage art accompanying this story is "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple", c.1435, by Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia (1403-82). The contemporary watercolor portrait "Simeon's Blessing" is by Christian artist Marina Solwake of Bible Story Art and available at: www.etsy.com/shop/BibleStoryArt

CELEBRATING CONSECRATED LIFE AND THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE

Editor's note: the following was written by Sr. Martha Gomez, RGS, Delegate for Consecrated Life Office for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, to her peers. Let it not only be encouragement for all of us to show our gratitude to those who gave their "yes" to God's call for consecrated life, but also a reminder to pray that they and all discerning find God's strength, courage, and hope. Furthermore, let us all be like Elijah (1Kings 19) humbly waiting, quieting the world, so we hear God's call for us.

During the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis is inviting us to embark on pilgrimages of repentance, forgiveness, and renewal of spiritual life.

Each new Jubilee is designated as a special time of grace, offering an opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence.

In this Jubilee of "Hope", remember what St. Paul wrote "hope does not disappoint" (Romans 5:5).

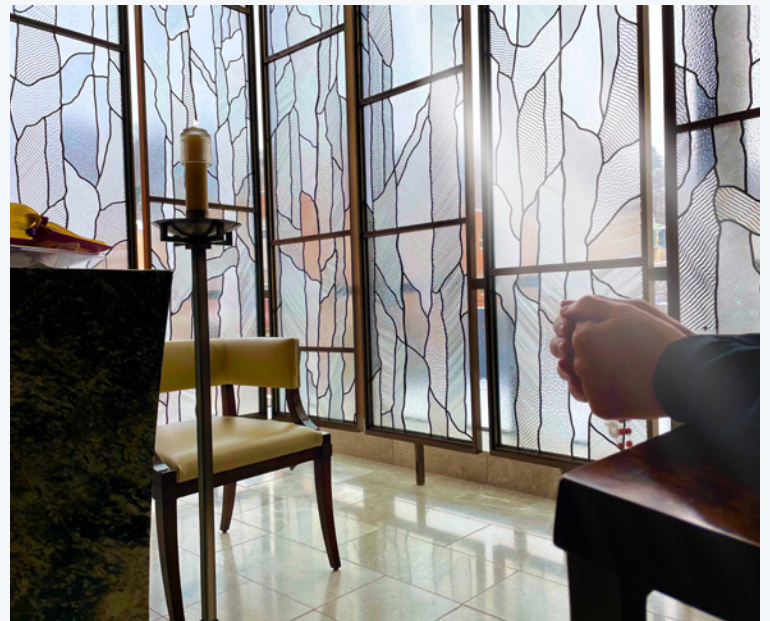
So, let this year be our opportunity like the prophet Elijah when he heard that the Lord will be passing by, and he knew that the true God was about to speak.

Author and theologian Howard Thurman, wrote how to journey mindfully through the year, "In the stillness of quiet, if we listen, we can hear the whisper of the heart giving strength to weakness, courage to fear, hope to despair."

If Elijah could hear the tiny, whispering sound of God's

voice; so, do we in the pains and challenges of our world if we have faith and hope we hear the tiny whispering of God.

Today we hear so many voices promising us joy, peace, and success. They are so loud that it makes it almost impossible for us to hear anything else. But to us the only voice that matters is the whispering sound of our conscience, that will speak loud and clear if we become another Elijah, another man or woman of God.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CONSECRATED LIFE IS FEB. 2

Our parishes in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston join fellow Catholics around the globe at Mass this weekend raising our prayers and praise for Consecrated Life!

Instituted by Pope St. John Paul II in 1997, World Day for Consecrated Life is a day of prayer for consecrated men and women who share their love of Jesus Christ through their unique witness of selfless service, such as caring for the poor and elderly, teaching children in our schools, dedicating their life to prayer, and other servant leadership through their professional careers.

Just as the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and Candlemas remind us of the light of Christ in the world, let us honor and pray for the men and women who reflect Christ's Light as brothers, sisters, consecrated virgins, hermits, and members of apostolic life and secular institutes.

May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation. They lead us to Heaven through their service, example, and prayers!

Show your gratitude.

Be dedicated in your prayers for vocations to consecrated life.

Pray for our families to be stronger in our faith.

Nurture, encourage, and support religious vocations.

For more information about Consecrated Life and the call to religious life contact the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of the Delegate for Consecrated Life - Sister Martha Gomez at mgomez@dwc.org.



Pray for Her Resilience, Courage, and Faith

St. Josephine Bakhita



Unimaginable terror left her nameless, but it was her faith in God that set her free - Saint Josephine Margaret Bakhita, pray for us!

Her feast day is February 8th. Of all the saints whose memorials are this week, let us pray that we are blessed with an ounce of her resilience, courage, and trust in God.

In 1876, the young saint was only seven, when she

was captured by Arab slave traders in her Sudan village. For the next 12 years she was bought and sold more than a dozen times by Arab and Turkish owners, who put her through excruciating circumstances - cutting, branding, beating, and other physical, mental, and moral torture.

Being ripped from her loving home coupled with these traumatic experiences made her forget her birth name. Bakhita was the Arabic name given to her by her captors. Fortunately for her, when she was 19 or 20 a somewhat compassionate family acquired her, and she became their nanny.

When the family traveled, they took Bakhita to the Canossian Daughters of Charity convent in Venice to care for her in their absence. There she learned about God - the creator of all things, including the moon and stars to which she always loved.

When the family returned from one of their trips, St.

Josephine did not want to leave. The sisters of the convent came to her aid and petitioned the Italian government to let her remain with the Canossian Sisters.

She was declared a free person, and in 1890, she received her Christian initiation - baptism, first holy communion, and confirmation. She took that name Josephine Margaret Fortunata. (Fortunata is the Latin translation for Bakhita).

In a Vatican article it is noted, "She was often seen kissing the baptismal font and saying: 'Here, I became a daughter of God!'"

Saint Josephine became a novice with the religious order three years later and took her final vows in 1896. She was loved and cherished by her sisters, the children who attended the Canossian schools, and all she would speak to when she traveled to other convents to share her story to religious who were to depart to serve in Africa.

Vatican documents note, "Her humility, her simplicity, and her constant smile won the hearts of all the citizens. Her sisters in the community esteemed her for her inalterable sweet nature, her exquisite goodness, and her deep desire to make the Lord known."

Her feast day marks the International Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking.

She is a saint of great mercy and professed forgiveness for her captors saying, "I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that had not happened, I would not be a Christian or a religious today."

The art of St. Josephine Bakhita is by John Alan Warford of Sante Fe, New Mexico, it and other portraits of inspirational saints can be found at: JOHN-ALAN-WARFORD.PIXELS.COM

SPECIAL COLLECTION NEXT WEEK

Help Those Close to Home

Home Missions Collections, Feb. 8-9, is an opportunity to help strengthen the Church at home by supporting essential pastoral programs (Mass and sacraments, religious education, and ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters and lay people) in financially challenged dioceses and eparchies in the United States.

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal strengthens the #ChurchAtHome and supports pastoral projects here in the United States.

Read more: www.usccb.org/committees/catholic-home-missions

#1church1mission

Children's Activities For St. Josephine Bakhita

Teaching the children in your life about St. Josephine Bakhita will help nurture their minds, so when they face hard times, they may turn to God first.

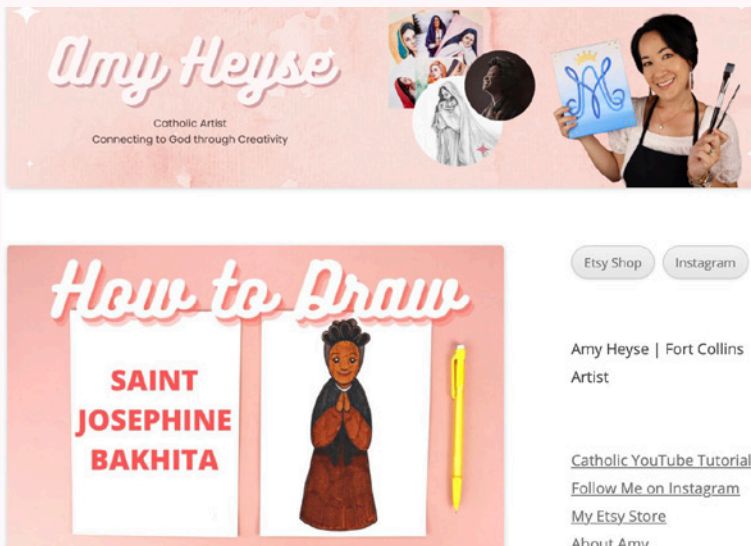
Today we present three resources for parents, grandparents, godparents, babysitters, etc., to honor the life and story of St. Josephine.

For lessons, videos and coloring sheets go to Catholic Icing by [CLICKING HERE](#).



The screenshot shows the website 'Catholic Icing' with the tagline 'The Icing on your Catholic Cake!'. It features a search bar and a navigation menu. The main content area is titled 'St. Josephine Bakhita Resources For Kids (Crafts, Printables, More!)' and includes a 'Meet Lacy' section. Lacy is described as the Catholic mother of 4, author, crafter, chapstick addict, and purple fanatic. The page also has social media sharing options for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Email, with a share count of 266.

For a lesson on how to draw her be sure to check out artist Amy Heyse's website [HERE](#).



The screenshot shows the website of artist Amy Heyse, a Catholic Artist who connects to God through creativity. It features a drawing of St. Josephine Bakhita and a 'How to Draw' guide. The drawing is titled 'SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA' and shows her in a brown habit with her hands clasped in prayer. The website also includes links to her Etsy Shop, Instagram, and a YouTube channel for tutorials.

Finally, an activity and fun fact - the long necklace St. Josephine and her Canossian Sisters wore every day was a double-sided pendant with our Lady of Sorrows on the front, and the back the instruments of Jesus' suffering. Saint Josephine's medal was a locket. Inside she would place a written prayer between the images.



We can only imagine her prayers. However, this quote from her makes one think her prayers were always for evangelization, "Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who do not know Him."

Thanks to northern Virginia Catholic mom - Roxanne and her Catholic Homebody website you can access a free printable to make the St. Josephine necklace and print a beautiful prayer card.

Go to: www.catholichomebody.com/printable-library/

It's free if you sign up with your email. Plus once on her sight you will find a treasure trove of inspirational Catholic printables for self-evangelization and Catholic teaching. Enjoy!

Saints to Intercede for You This Week



February 3 – He was from the third and fourth centuries, so we don't have too many recorded facts about him, but **St. Blaise** was the Bishop of Sebastea (Turkey) and considered a healer and physician of souls.

Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver us from ailments of the throat and from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Art is by Pacifica Design in Virginia available at: WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/PACIFICADESIGN

Also, on Feb. 3rd we honor St. Ansgar. When he was only about five years old, his mother died and his father sent him to live at the Benedictine Monastery. Today he'd be described as an ornery class clown, getting into trouble often. However, he began having visions that would change his behavior. In them he often saw the Blessed Mother surrounded by other women, one his mother. Mary would ask if he wanted to be with his mother, and he would tell her, yes.

The ninth century benedictine pupil said Mary told him, "You must flee from every kind of vanity, and put away childish jests and have regard to the seriousness of life; for we hate everything that is vain and unprofitable, nor can anyone be with us who has delight in such things."

As a teen he became lackadaisical in his devotions again. Another vision came, this one causing him to be "terrified and comforted." He seemingly experienced death, followed by painful years in Purgatory, and then finally earning the glory of Heaven, where Jesus spoke to him, "Go and return to Me crowned with martyrdom."

By the time he was 21, St. Ansgar, took vows as a monk, serving Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. In 831, St. Ansgar was named Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, a new diocese in northern Germany. He worked for 35 years sending missionaries throughout Europe to evangelize despite receiving countless threats against him from pagans and Vikings. In his final year on earth he was struck ill and was bedridden. It is recorded that he prayed until his last breath, quoting various Scriptures, including, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), and "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

As his vision declared, St. Ansgar returned to the Lord a martyr – not a physical martyr, but a martyr in mental and emotional agony, who carried the crosses for others and tirelessly lead a sacrificial life of service for our Lord.



On Feb. 5, honor St. Agatha. She is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass (the longest version of the Eucharistic prayer), for being a bold and beautiful martyr in the Church. She was a woman of breathtaking appearance but declared by the age of 15 she would refuse to marry. Saint Agatha considered herself a bride of Christ. For this she ultimately suffered unimaginably - raped, tortured, mutilated, and thrown in jail at the age of 22.

Her spirit did not break and remained trusting in Christ. She prayed that God would have mercy on her and as she slept in her prison cell her soul was received in heaven. Her story teaches us courage, commitment, and perseverance. When we are assaulted, or in the midst of life's worst trials, St. Agatha reminds us to keep our faith - God is always with us and His love will lead us to everlasting joy in heaven.

She is the patron saint of nurses, breast cancer, and rape victims.

...continue

On February 6th reflect on the lives of Saint Paul Miki and Companions. He was a religious brother in Nagasaki, Japan during the 16th century. He worked as an evangelist in his native Japan alongside others from the Philippines. At the age of 33, Saint Paul Miki and 25 others were crucified on a hill for proclaiming Christianity. Among the group with him were priests, brothers, and laymen - catechists, doctors, artisans, servants, elderly, and children. All refused to denounce Christ and His Church.



Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit, said from the cross, “The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ.... Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ’s example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain.”

Two centuries later, when missionaries returned to Japan the only Christians found were in Nagasaki, where there were thousands. The 26 were canonized in 1862. It was Feb. 5, 1597.



On February 8th honor St. Jerome Emiliani. At 15 he had been orphaned and ran away from the home of his guardian. While managing life on the streets he got into trouble and ended up joining the army. There are several differing accounts of his life, but the common thread is that tragedy scarred him at a young age and while he went down the wrong path at first, St. Jerome was able to rise above the darkness with a vision of Mary.

It was Venice in the 1400s. Saint Jerome gave little to no thought about God until he was captured and made prisoner. It was there he thought about his fate and the faith from his childhood. He prayed for the intercession of the Blessed Mother. He was able to escape after Mary gave him the keys to his chains. He made his way to a Marian shrine to honor her. There he promised to change his ways. He dedicated his life to

care for the sick and for orphans.

Saint Jerome Emiliani was ordained a priest and founded the Somaschi Fathers to continue this ministry. He founded three orphanages, a shelter for penitent prostitutes, and a hospital.

The sketch of St. Jerome Emiliani is by American artist Julie Lonneman, for more about her and her art go to: WWW.JULIELONNEMAN.COM/BIO

Did you complete your parish survey?

The clock is ticking! Have you completed your parish survey?

The deadline is Feb. 6th.

What’s the survey? All the parishes in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are participating in the Catholic Leadership Institute’s (CLI) Disciple Maker Index (DMI) Survey as a way to grow in faith, love, and service as a local parish family.

Think of it as your parish’s journey to become a more vibrant faith community, articulate a vision for the parish family, and grow stronger in their love of Christ together.

Partnering with CLI, the survey assesses our parishes’ greatest strengths and opportunities. Everyone’s input is significant. Taking the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey is your voice to define ways to improve, strengthen what is working, and provide data for decisions reflective of the whole congregation.

Fill out the survey! For a quick link to yours go to: dwc.org/2024-dmi-survey-links/

Share your perspective. • Help strengthen your parish. • Get closer to God and bring others along with you.

On Behalf of Bishop Brennan and the priests in the diocese, thank you for taking part in this important evangelization project that truly celebrates how we serve Christ as a community.



Lenten Mission for Charleston Vicariate

Ascension Catholic Church of Hurricane and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Office of Youth and Young Adult Discipleship will be hosting For the Love of God, a Lenten Mission for the Charleston Vicariate with acclaimed Catholic speaker, musician, author, and comedian Chris Padgett.

For four evenings, beginning March 9th and concluding March 12th, Catholics of all ages are welcome to attend the event at the church – 905 Hickory Mill Road - with your family and friends.

On March 9-11th the evenings will begin at 6pm with refreshments with the presentation beginning at 6:30. The final night will be a Lenten Penance Service at 6:30 pm.

Gather with to listen, learn, pray, and reflect during this special Lenten retreat. Chris will blend storytelling, music, and comedy into a truly unique experience to help deepen our connection with family and community, and strengthen our relationship with God.

A free will offering will be taken.



DIocese of Wheeling-Charleston

ASCENSION
CATHOLIC CHURCH OF HURRICANE

Lenten Mission

“For the Love of God”
Presented by
Chris Padgett
March 9 - 12, 2025

9th - 11th: Refreshments at 6 PM
Event at 6:30 PM
12th: Lenten Penance Service
at 6:30 PM

Ascension Catholic Church
905 Hickory Mill Rd
Hurricane, WV 25526

Schedule/Themes:

Sunday, 3/9 - Called to Be Love

Monday, 3/10 - What Keeps Us from Love

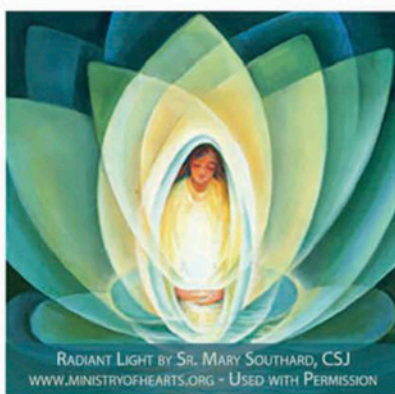
Tuesday, 3/11 - Sharing the Love, ending with Adoration

Wednesday, 3/12 – Lenten Penance Service

WOMEN'S RETREAT *ARE YOU A MARTHA OR A MARY?* *LIVING A BALANCED LIFE.*

Presented by Janet Schaeffler, OP

March 28-30, 2025 • St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston



The Scripture story of Jesus coming to the home of Mary and Martha (and Lazarus) is well-known to us.

What is the message for us, women living in 2025? Through this Scripture passage, what is God saying to us about our lives? Is it what we often hear - or might there be several messages?

- Do I feel too busy, to rushed?
- How - really - do I balance everything today?

What really are the answers to which Jesus challenges us - and comfort us.

For more information and to register visit:
www.dwc.org/2025-Womens-Retreat

FATHER SEBASTIAN DEVASYA HOLY YEAR ITALY PILGRIMAGE

Florence | Siena
Assisi | Rome



September 2nd through the 11th, 2025



BOOK ONLINE:

<https://bit.ly/DevasyaItaly>

**FROM
CHARLOTTE
10 DAYS
\$5,999**

Including current taxes
and fuel surcharges
(subject to change)

For more information and
reservations please contact

Ms. Gina Boggess
Sacred Heart Parish

Telephone:
304-920-7047

Email:

gina@sacredheartprinceton.org



SCAN ME



20/20 Vision Series for 2025

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE APPALACHIAN PASTORAL LETTERS

"THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME" (1975)
"AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE" (1995)
"THE TELLING TAKES US HOME" (2015)

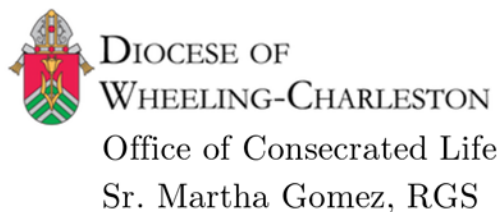
Note: Each session will begin at 7 pm and will be presented via Zoom.

January 27	OUR HOME, OUR HISTORY – Bishop Mark Brennan
February 24	THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART I – Tom Breiding
March 31	THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART II
April 28	THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, PART III
May 19	AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART I – Beth Collins
June 23	AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART II
July 28	AT HOME IN THE WEB OF LIFE, PART III
August 25	THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART I – Rodica Stoicoiu
September 22	THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART II
October 27	THE TELLING TAKES US HOME, PART III
November 24	AN EVENING OF APPALACHIAN MUSIC – Tom Breiding
December 15	WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? – Bishop Mark Brennan

(Series originated by Ms. Shirley Carter, B.A., M.A.A.T.)

Cost for complete series: \$120.00 Or \$15.00 per session.

RSVP – Anna Marie Troiani: atroiani@csjoseph.org



Quo Vadis Retreat

Middle School Discernment Retreat

Boys in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are invited!

11 am on June 30
through 1pm on July 3

Priest Field Pastoral Center

Kearneysville, WV

Campers will enjoy outdoor activities including:

**Prayer • Kayaking • Discernment
Camp Fire • Games**

Opportunities for Charitable and Spiritual
Works of Mercy

The camp is staffed by laypeople, priests
and seminarians from the
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

RETREAT IS FREE!!!



FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

The Lord will come to the temple.

Responsorial: Psalm 24

“Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord”

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

This baby boy that Simeon held is the Salvation of the world.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Mary and Joseph present the Lord Jesus in the temple – the day Simeon and Anna long awaited. They recognized the Messiah immediately.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For Pope Francis, all bishops, and priests they may be living examples of hope and trust in our Heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those of authority all over the world, that they work to stop human trafficking and enslavement, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who are discerning their vocation in life, particularly those being called to consecrated life. May they be given the wisdom to hear God’s call and the courage to respond generously to His Church, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those who have trouble finding hope and trusting God, may we be a light that shines for them to the Way, the Truth, and the Life – Christ, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

WV CATHOLIC RADIO BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

Berkeley Springs - Hancock, MD	FM	96.3
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
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
Weirton - Steubenville	FM	97.9

~Listen on LoL Stream at www.rdo.to/WL0L~

ENROLL TODAY

WV Catholic Schools

*Empowered
by knowledge.
Transformed
by faith.*



Register today

wvcatholicschools.org



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.