



Faith IN WV

FEBRUARY 23, 2025
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

The Lord is Kind & Merciful

“May Our Parishes Be Islands of Mercy in A Sea of Indifference.”

Our readings for this the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time illustrate God’s mercy and love.

Are we reflecting that grace?

God’s mercy endures forever – “slow to anger and abounding in kindness” (Psalm 103:12-13).

God’s boundless mercy is for all of us when we seek reconciliation and sincerely regret our actions. Christ taught us if we want to be forgiven, we must first forgive.

Next week, as we approach Lent, it is natural for our hearts and minds to cling to the desire of obtaining the Father’s mercy. Did you know that on Ash Wednesday, parishes around the world typically double in attendance than that of an ordinary Sunday? They come seeking God’s mercy, honoring Christ, and wanting to start Lent with a “do-over” per say.

Knowing the numbers in the pews on Ash Wednesday will be great, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, including our own Bishop Mark Brennan have asked all parish priests and deacons to speak about a great example of hope by addressing a terrible misconception that abortion is an unforgivable sin.

During homilies on Ash Wednesday and through Divine Mercy Sunday in this Jubilee Year of Hope, heed the words of our priests and deacons following the lead of our bishops – be merciful especially in our world of chaos and indifference. Reflect God’s great grace especially to parents struggling after abortion, God longs to heal.

The lasting wounds of abortion are very tormenting. The reoccurring guilt is haunting. God knows this and through

his kindness and mercy we are all to be reminded that Jesus came to heal sinners.

“Now this is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of his Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin. If we say, “We are without sin,” we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.”

–1 John 1:5-9

Jesus Christ conquered death for our salvation. He didn’t do so with a list of sins that are exceptions. Christ died on the cross for all our sins.



Abortion Is A Forgivable Sin

In a USCCB Pro-Life plenary talk to diocesan pro-life directors, Bishop Mark Brennan, who serves on the USCCB’s Pro-Life Committee, said,

“We teach rightly that abortion is a terrible injustice to an innocent human being, but we offer forgiveness, healing, and peace to those who have chosen abortion. We are definitely pro-child, but are equally pro-woman. Abortion has scarred the souls of many women and some men. After

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years of hearing confessions and serving in ministry for both Catholics and non-Catholics, it taught me that when a woman comes to grips with her decision to do the most unnatural thing for a woman to do – allow the destruction of her child – it is a devastating realization.”

In his letter to priests and deacons about their homilies during Lent, Bishop Mark wrote, “We cannot deny the evil of abortion, but we must assure women and men involved in abortions that, beginning with remorse and repentance, genuine healing and peace are possible. My service in the Project Rachel ministry has taught me that. Here Jesus’ words apply: You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free (John 8:32). The truth that a procured abortion is always unjust and cruel needs to be accepted but so must the truth that God is merciful and forgives the repentant sinner. If a woman or man is treated with respect and compassion and allowed to tell their story, God’s grace can flow into their lives.”

Bishop Brennan’s and the USCCB’s message is for all of us in the pews– do not be so ignorant as to think God will not forgive those who are truly devastated and remorseful after having an abortion even if it has been years or decades ago.

“This misconception leads some women (and men) to abandon the faith but, even for those who remain in the Church, it heavily burdens their spiritual lives.



We All Need to Pray for Parents Who Lost A Child through Abortion

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas, Bishop of Toledo, and Chairman of the USCCB Pro-life committee shares this prayer on the USCCB’s pro-life webpage, “Let us pray for mothers and fathers who have lost a child through abortion that the Lord’s Divine Mercy may fill their souls, bringing them healing and new life; and may they trust in God’s mercy and find peace again through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”

Among the resources on the USCCB’s Pro-Life resources is

this statement from Bishop Thomas:

As we prayerfully continue the essential work of restoring full legal protection of all preborn children and supporting parents facing difficult pregnancies, we also recognize our need for asking forgiveness and healing from the Lord for when we have given in to the culture of death.

Abortion inflicts deep and lasting wounds on society, but more directly on individuals and families. Many mothers and fathers may feel they have no choice except abortion. Some are pressured or coerced. No matter the circumstances of the abortion, we must recognize the often-silent grief of parents for their child and their despair of being worthy of the love and forgiveness of God and others.

To the parents of children who have died by abortion, I am deeply sorry for your loss. Know that our Lord loves you as His daughters and sons no matter your actions. No sin is beyond His unfathomable Mercy. Jesus greatly desires our repentant hearts and invites us into an encounter with Him. For Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available for those seeking God’s forgiveness, hope, and peace.

As we celebrate this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope, Pope Francis invites us to experience God’s love ‘that awakens in hearts the sure hope of salvation in Christ’ (Spes Non Confundit, 6). Hope allows those who have been involved in abortion to turn to God and repent, confident that He will forgive and make them whole.

This January 22 and beyond, we need to be reassured that Jesus Himself, who is the source of our hope, was first wounded for our offenses, and suffered for every sin of ours, including abortion. Please join me in praying that God will fill the hearts of mothers and fathers suffering the emotional and psychological wounds from abortion with the hope of forgiveness that only He can give. We invite them to seek support from the Church’s compassionate and confidential ministries.

Just as Bishop Thomas wrote to his brother bishops, “may our parishes be transformed into what Pope Francis calls “islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference.”

Resources for you or someone you know would like confidential information and help after abortion: Bridges of Mercy for Healing After Abortion: WWW.USCCB.ORG/BRIDGES-OF-MERCY



The Project Rachel Ministry for the Catholic Church in the US is HOPEAFTERABORTION.COM/?PAGE_ID=88.

The helpline is 888-456-4673 (HOPE). Note: Not all states including WV have Project Rachel Ministry offices, however, callers are to choose their closest office. We are able to contact offices in Ohio, KY, PA, MD, VA.



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

• P.O. BOX 230, WHEELING, WV 26003 •

Diocese Announces Disaster Assistance Fund

Special Collection Specifically for WV Flood Victims

Bishop Brennan Authorized a Challenge Grant of \$50,000 through WVCF

Thursday, February 20, 2025

WHEELING—Recovery efforts continue across the Mountain State after the severe flooding that occurred earlier this month. Several counties have experienced generational flooding resulting in loss of life, property, and livelihood. More than ten counties in our state remain under a State of Emergency. With many roads just being re-opened, the scope of the devastation is becoming more visible.

Most Rev. Mark Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, has approved a special collection to be held the weekends of February 22-23 and March 1-2 in all parishes and missions throughout the diocese to support recovery efforts related to the series of disasters that have occurred. Checks should be made out to your respective parish with “Disaster Relief” on the memo line. Donations can also be made on the diocesan website at DWC.ORG/DISASTER-RELIEF/.

All of the money collected will remain in West Virginia and will be managed by Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa). Money will be allocated along a four-tier priority list as follows:

1. Parishes in and around the affected area who directly assist families will receive funds to give aid to those in need.
2. CCWVa Regional staff will receive funding for direct, short-term recovery assistance to victims.
3. Partner agencies who work with CCWVa to administer relief to West Virginia residents affected by the flooding.
4. Funds will be given to CCWVa for long-term humanitarian and recovery efforts. This fund assist families long after other organizations have moved out help families and individuals in the rebuilding process to restore safe, secure, and sanitary living conditions.

To help jumpstart the collection and speed funding to assist West Virginia families, Bishop Brennan, has authorized a challenge grant in the amount of \$50,000 through the West Virginia Catholic Foundation. These funds will be immediately distributed for relief efforts in our state. Bishop Mark hopes the donation will spur others to give generously to help our neighbors in need.

Please remember in prayer all those whose lives have been changed in the wake of these disasters. Let us come together now to support our brothers and sisters in Christ who have been injured and lost their homes, cars, employment, and access to food and water.

PILGRIMAGE SITES IN WV ANNOUNCED FOR JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE

JUBILEE 2025



Cathedral of Saint Joseph
Wheeling



Saint Patrick Parish
Weston



Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
Charleston



Saint Joseph Parish
Martinsburg



The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is pleased to announce four locations which have been designated as Pilgrimage Sites for the Jubilee Year 2025:

- † [CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOSEPH, WHEELING](#)
- † [BASILICA OF THE CO-CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART, CHARLESTON](#)
- † [ST. PATRICK CHURCH, WESTON](#)
- † [ST. JOSEPH PARISH, MARTINSBURG](#)

From now to December 28, 2025, Catholics from all over WV are invited to visit any and all of these locations obtain a Jubilee Indulgence called for by Pope Francis. A Jubilee Indulgence is obtained after having completed:

1. Make a brief pilgrimage to one of the four locations designated as a pilgrimage site within the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston as a sign of your deep desire for true conversion and hope in the Lord's Goodness.

2. Pray. Devoutly participate in one of the following at any of the four locations:

- Holy Mass
- Liturgy of the Hours (office of readings, lauds, vespers)
- Via Crucis (Way of the Cross/Stations of the Cross)
- Rosary

3. Confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation within twenty days before or after your pilgrimage.

4. Receive Holy Communion, reflecting on the hope God gives.

5. Pray for the Pope and for the intentions that he bears in his heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world. Any prayer may be said, according to personal devotion, but the Our Father and Hail Mary are suggested.

Additionally, important to note, the Plenary Indulgence can be applied for yourself or souls of the deceased, but not other living souls. Further, a Plenary Indulgence can be gained only once per day. Though, a second can be obtained if it is applied to the souls in purgatory.

"May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven," Bishop Mark Brennan said at the opening of the Jubilee Year in the diocese from the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling.

Let this Year of Hope energize our mission to lead others to Jesus. Place your trust in God who created you to do good works.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Each Jubilee Year brings with it the opportunity for the faithful to gain a Jubilee indulgence. To quote the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), an indulgence is “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints” (CCC 1471).

To read Pope Francis’ official decree granting the indulgence [CLICK HERE](#).

PILGRIMAGE SITES IN WV

The faithful of WV may of course visit any of these churches at any time; however, on the first Sunday of each month at the principal Mass, anyone who is making a pilgrimage to that location will be acknowledged and a special blessing will be offered.

The USCCB has a list and map of all the Jubilee 2025 pilgrimage sites in the US the faithful are encouraged to visit. Access it here: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JUBILEE2025/PILGRIMAGE-SITES-US.

Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling - principal Mass Sunday 10:30am



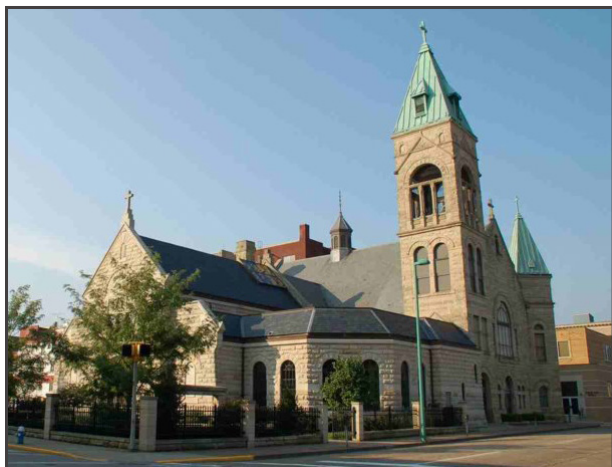
Originally known as St. James Parish, the church was completed in 1823. It was the first church built in what became the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. The earliest parishioners were primarily Irish and German immigrants. A second church was built in 1849, and when the Diocese of Wheeling was created in 1850, St. James became the cathedral parish. The patronage was officially changed to St. Joseph in 1872.

St. Joseph Cathedral has been a center of Catholic life in Wheeling and the diocese from the time of its humble wood frame in 1823 to the majesty of its Romanesque carved stone, completed in 1926. All city parishes and many throughout the northern panhandle were

formed from the St. Joseph Cathedral.

Various schools for boys and girls have been attached to the parish as far back as 1848, staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Xaverian Brothers, Marist Brothers, and lay teachers. Central Catholic High School was established in 1898.

Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Charleston - principal Mass Sunday 10:30am



Located in the capitol city of Charleston, Sacred Heart parish was established in 1866 by Rev. Joseph Stenger, affectionately remembered as the “Apostle of the Kanawha Valley.” The first pastorate was spread over Kanawha, Boone, Clay, Fayette, Nicholas, and Putnam counties. Mass was celebrated in a rented storefront until the first church was built in 1866. The second and current church was completed in 1897.

Diocesan priests staffed Sacred Heart until 1901 when Bishop Patrick J. Donahue invited the Capuchin Friars to take charge of the parish. The Capuchins remained at Sacred Heart until 1980, when the parish was transferred back to diocesan control.

In 1974, Sacred Heart was designated the Co-Cathedral of the diocese, and in 2009 was named a minor basilica. Considered the mother church of the Kanawha Valley, many area parishes can trace their origin to Sacred Heart. The parish’s first school was opened in 1867, and the present school was established in 1903. Central High School was established in 1923.

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St. Patrick Church, Weston – principal Mass Sunday 10:30 am



A Catholic presence had been established in Weston as early as 1820 with many Irish and German immigrants who had labored on the Staunton & Parkersburg Turnpike. A priest from Pittsburgh visited the area until Rev. Austin Grogan was sent to Weston in 1845. Grogan was responsible for serving all of the Catholic faithful in central West Virginia. Mass was celebrated in private homes in Weston until a church was built in 1848, at which point St. Patrick was elevated to a parish, one of the earliest established in West Virginia. The earlier church was replaced in 1914 by the current stately stone church built by future bishop of Wheeling, Rev. John J. Swint.

St. Patrick has operated two grade schools (1855 – 1878; 1914 – present) and a high school (1918 – 1973). The Sisters of St. Joseph served the parish at Weston for nearly a century.

St. Joseph, Martinsburg – principal Mass Sunday 10:30 (English) Noon (Spanish)



Martinsburg was one of the earliest centers of Catholicism in the state, dating back to the late 1790s. The families gathered for Mass in private homes and later a rented house until the first church, St. John, was completed in 1830. The parish's second and present church was completed in 1860 and dedicated to St. Joseph. The church sustained significant damage during the Civil War, with the main floor serving as an occasional hospital and the basement as a stable for the soldiers' horses. St. Joseph remains the oldest Catholic church in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. A parochial school was opened in Martinsburg in 1870 and staffed by lay teachers until the arrival of the Sisters of Charity in 1883. A new school building was completed in 2000, with plans to open a high school in 2025.

PRAYER FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.

~ adapted from the Jubilee Prayer by Pope Francis



ST. GREGORY OF NAREK

On Feb. 27, we honor the memorial of St. Gregory of Narek, an Armenian monk, poet, philosopher, and composer. He is known throughout the world as “the watchful angel in human form.”

This 10th-century mystical writer was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Francis in 2015. He described the saint that is honored by the Catholic Church and Armenian Apostolic Church as “an extraordinary interpreter of the human soul, offers words which are prophetic for us.”

His book of prayers, The Book of Lamentations (aka The Book of Narek), is described by him as “an encyclopedia of prayer for all nations.” It contains 95 prayers, each beginning with, “Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart.”

Saint Gregory was born in 951 in the Kingdom of Armenia, now Turkey. His mother died when he was young. His father was a ruling prince Armenian bishop, and scholar.

After his mother died, Gregory was sent to live at a monastery where his maternal great-uncle Anania was the abbot and monastery’s founder. By the age of 26, Gregory was ordained a priest. He remained at the monastery the rest of his life, teaching theology in its school.

Losing his mother as a boy influenced St. Gregory’s deep devotion to our Blessed Mother. He wrote, “This spiritual, heavenly mother of light cared for me as a son more than an earthly, breathing, physical mother could (included in his book as part of Prayer 75).”

Saint Gregory wrote many letters, chants, and several books including the Song of Songs and a commentary on the Book of Job.

It was Gregory’s father from the time Gregory could speak who taught him to talk to God all the time and be mindful of His divine presence.

Theologians compare St. Gregory’s prayers as similar to Saint Augustine’s Confessions.

As St. Gregory states his prayers were written “by the finger of God” (Prayer 34) and he saw God, “with my own eyes” (Prayer 27f).

Before he died, St. Gregory penned the importance he wanted his book to have on other faithful, “although I shall die in the way of all mortals, may I be deemed to live through the continued existence of this book...This book will cry out in my place, with my voice, as if it were me” (Prayer 88b; c).

Saint Gregory of Narek, pray for us, and let us always choose good just as you wrote as part of your prayer to God:

Almighty God, “You alone are great and generous in everything.

*You are the definition of abundant goodness,
Who pours forth constantly, without measure,
more than we ask or expect,
as Paul said in gratitude.*

*“For You commanded that we should do good,
from dawn to dusk, in the same day,
nine times fifty, plus four times ten.*

Always attentive,

*forgiving with an unfettered heart,
something more*

than the expectation of men’s prayers.”

The portrait of Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekatsi) is by Arshak Fetvadjian (1863-1947).





Mardi Gras PARTY

Join us for a night of fun!

TICKETS

\$25

MUST BE 21
OR OVER TO
ATTEND

SATURDAY, MARCH 1

6:00 P.M.

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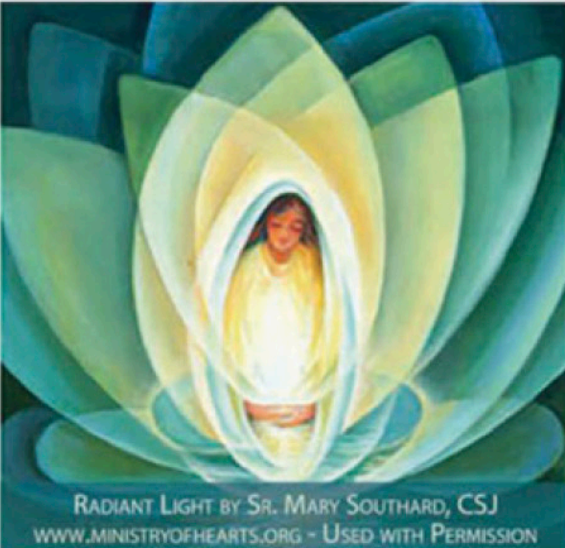
WOMEN'S RETREAT

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



RADIANT LIGHT BY SR. MARY SOUTHARD, CSJ
WWW.MINISTRYOFHEARTS.ORG - USED WITH PERMISSION

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

Save the date:

Chris Padgett

Catholic Speaker. Musician. Author. Comedian.

View more about Chris at:
<https://chrispadgett.com/>

Hosted by:

Ascension Catholic Church &
the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
At: Ascension Catholic Church of Hurricane
905 Hickory Mill Rd
Hurricane, WV 25526



Sunday, March 9th - Tuesday, March 11th:

Refreshments @ 6:00 PM & Event begins @ 6:30 PM

Wednesday, March 12th: Lenten Penance Service @ 6:30 PM

ALL AGES welcome! Please plan to attend with your family & friends.
Rides WILL be available for those who are uncomfortable driving after dark if requested in advance.

LENTEN SEASON



MARCH 5 ASH WEDNESDAY



MARCH 9 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



APRIL 13 PALM SUNDAY



APRIL 17 HOLY THURSDAY



APRIL 18 GOOD FRIDAY



APRIL 19 HOLY SATURDAY



APRIL 20 EASTER SUNDAY

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SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: 1Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

David chooses not to kill Saul instead chose mercy over vengeance for God will reward justice and faithfulness.

Responsorial: Psalm 103

“The Lord is kind and merciful.”

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

We shall bear the image of Christ in heaven.

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

Love your enemies. Choose mercy not vengeance. Forgive and be forgiven.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may be models of mercy and understanding forgiving our critics and treating those who are against us how we want to be treated, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That national leaders work to bring peace where there is hostility and justice where there is hatred, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we embrace a commitment for lifelong learning of our own faith, taking accountability for being fully alive in the Church, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our habitual and special intentions, we hold dear in our hearts, may we be so blessed to see the fruit of our reverence, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

WV CATHOLIC RADIO BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

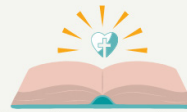
Berkeley Springs - Hancock, MD	FM	96.3
Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Eastern Panhandle - coming soon	FM	88.5
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
Purgitsville	FM	98.7
St. Marys - Parkersburg	FM	105.3
Star City -Morgantown	FM	89.7
Summersville	FM	91.3
Wheeling - Martins Ferry, OH	FM	90.7
Weirton - Steubenville	FM	97.9

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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.