

# Faith IN WV

SEPTEMBER 21, 2025  
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON



## FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST'S LOVE INSPIRES COURAGE, SERVICE, AND SELF-GIVING LOVE

Jesus taught us that a true friendship with Him means we follow His command to love one another with self-giving love (John 15:12-17).

This is the love He has for us. Moreover, He calls us to "bear lasting fruit" through this love. How do we do that? By living in God's love always - good works, virtues, and transformed lives that draw others closer to Him.

Always? Yes, even in the hardest of time. A great example can be seen in the acts of first responders.

Every act of courage, whether saving a life, calming someone in crisis, or protecting a community, plants seeds of hope, safety, and compassion that can ripple far beyond the moment. This reflects Christ's command to love one another.

As he does every year, Fr. Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens, Jr., of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, School, and Day Care, and also pastor of Sacred Heart of Mary Parish, all in Weirton, celebrated a Blue Mass in honor of the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and in gratitude for the steadfast service of law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, military members, and all first responders who safeguarded our families and neighborhoods.

The students from the grade school and Madonna High

School were joined by the local community for the special Mass, Concelebrated by Fr. Binu Sebastian, of St. Paul Church and School; Fr. Justin Golna of St. John Parish, Wellsburg; Fr. Gerald Muoka, of St. Anthony Parish, Follansbee, and pastor at Madonna H.S.; and Fr. Luke Iyengar.

This sacred liturgy not only recalled the heroism of 9/11 but also lifted up in prayer the countless men and women who, each day, embodied selfless courage by placing themselves in harm's way to protect, defend, and serve both our community and our nation.

Through prayer and song, the community prayed for a world that upholds faith, family, and a shared commitment to live together in peace.

Father Schuelkens homily was based on John 15:12-17:

*Laying Down Our Lives....*

*No one has greater love than this than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

*Life is about love, and love is about laying down our lives, it's a choice of self-sacrifice.*

*A good sacrifice brings life in others and in ourselves- in this world, and in the next.*

*It's God's presence that inspires and brings peace through God's*

witness of light. We recognize God's witness of light that shines!

It's Christ's light that runs into a place of fear with courage to bring hope.

It's Christ light that presses forward into lawlessness to restore order.

It's Christ's light that pushes back against sickness and injury to bring healing.

It's Christ's light that protects and defends humanity.

This is Christ's call for each and every one of us - to be His instruments of God's peace.

With deep gratitude, we honor those professions, who by their very nature, bring this light - Christ's light into places of darkness.

Whether it's the trauma of planes flying into buildings, or the violence of silencing a discussion of truth, we honor those whose actions bring hope, order, healing and safety.

With this deep thanks to God, we honor you and the witness of Christ's light that you bring: firefighters, law-enforcement officers, EMTs and members of the military. May you exercise wisdom, courage, and charity in the midst of very often confusion and chaos. And may God's light shine in us all, each of us are called to be Christ's instruments of peace.



His homily was followed by a moment of silence, and then the meditation song sung by St Joe's and St. Paul's musicians in a duet with harmony – the Prayer of St. Francis:

*Make me a channel of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred let me bring your love.*

*Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord*

*And where there's doubt, true faith in you.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

*Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope*

*Where there is darkness, only light*

*And where there's sadness, ever joy.*

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek*

*So much to be consoled as to console*

*To be understood as to understand*

*To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned*

*In giving to all men that we receive*

*And in dying that we're born to eternal life.*

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek*

*So much to be consoled as to console*

*To be understood as to understand*

*To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace*

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*And in dying that we're born to eternal life.*



[Note: The words are from a prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (however, it cannot be traced earlier than 1912, when it was published as author unknown, in a French magazine The Little Bell/The Holy Mass League, founded by Fr. Esther Bouquerel). The theme of the prayer/hymn is based on the writing of the Prophet Isaiah (Chapter 61) and Christ's teachings echoed throughout the New Testament. Composer Sebastian Temple turned the prayer into a hymn in 1967.]



# Here I am Lord! You Have Called Me



call God makes of consecrating oneself completely and wholly to him. A sister begins in the stage of the Postulancy, from the Latin *postulare*, meaning “to ask,” referring to the candidate’s request for admission and desire to try out the life of religious consecration. If a community finds her apt, she is then admitted to the stage of the Novitiate. The purpose of the novitiate is to prepare a young woman to live the evangelical councils. It is a time to deepen in knowledge of the order’s charism and spirituality, as well as of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. At the end of novitiate, with the approval of the Mother Superior and her counsel, one goes on to profess your temporary vows. Once a sister is admitted to temporary vows, which are made in the hands of the Mother Superior or the Vicar General, she enters a process of solidifying her call to consecrated life as well as growing in the knowledge of the order and deeper participation in communal life. This stage is one of deepening one’s convictions and relationship with our Spouse, Jesus Christ. For the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word, the temporary vows are renewed every year for six years. At the end of six years, a sister will ask for admittance to her perpetual profession, meaning that after uniting herself more fully to Christ, she publicly declares her commitment and intention to give herself to Our Lord for the rest of her earthly life and for all

The pews were overflowing at Mass at St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town on September 6, as 30 Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word renewed their vows. Causing even more celebration and reverent awe was the added blessing that four women entered the

novitiate, one sister professed vows for the first time, and four sisters renewed their vows, ceremoniously permitting them to enter their fourth year of religious profession and dedication to evangelization.

To explain this beautiful moment for the Church,

Sr. Jessica Bernal, of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word (HMSP), who has served in Martinsburg since January 2023, wrote the following:

*When God calls a young woman to religious life, there are different stages she enters in order to respond fully to the*

eternity in heaven with Him.

On September 6th, 2025, 30 Missionary Sisters Servants of the Word had the great blessing and privilege of having the mass for the renewal of vows at St. James the Greater Catholic Church in Charles Town, WV. One week prior to this great and solemn moment, we were blessed to prepare for this renewal with a week of silent spiritual exercises. We were invited to stay at Priest-field Pastoral Center in Inwood to have the space and means necessary to truly enter the mystery of this consecration and prepare more fully to renew our commitment. The spiritual exercises culminated with the beautiful mass, preceded by his excellency, Bishop Mark Brennan and in company of

our Pastor, parish priests and deacons, and visiting priests. During this celebration, we had four sisters enter the novitiate, one sister profess vows for the first time and four sisters renew their vows, entering their fourth year of religious profession.

The mass was celebrated in English and Spanish with visitors from New York, Kansas City, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, Georgia and of course, West Virginia. Our choirs also did such an amazing job at leading the congregation in this bilingual mass.

It was a moment of great grace, and we are immensely grateful to God our Father for having allowed each and everyone of us reach this moment in our religious



life. We are also so grateful to Father Timothy Grassi, Deacon Dave Galvin, and all of the St. James parish community for hosting us (at the church and) at priest-filed and allowing us to share the joy of religious life here in Charles Town.

May God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ bestow on many more young women the beautiful

gift of a consecrated vocation. We ask for all for your prayers that we may all persevere and live a life of holiness according to the will of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Editor's note: the group photo provided by Sr. Jessica. The additional image is from the Sept. 14th edition of the parish's bulletin.



## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

# WV PILGRIMAGE SITES FOR JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE



- **Cathedral of St. Joseph** 1300 Eoff Street, Wheeling
- **Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart** 1032 Virginia Street East, Charleston
- **St. Patrick Church** 210 Center Avenue, Weston
- **St. Joseph Parish** 225 S. Queen Street, Martinsburg

Through December 28, 2025, Catholics are invited to visit any and all of these locations to obtain a Plenary Indulgence by completing:

- **Reverent Prayer** (at site): Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Liturgy of the Hours, or Mass.
- **Confession** - within 20 days before or after pilgrimage.
- **Holy Communion**
- **Pray for the Pope**

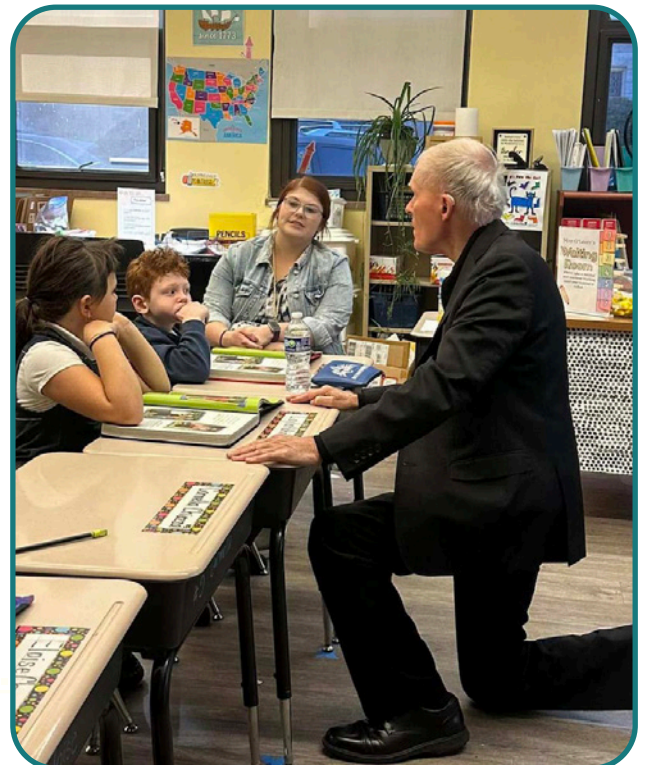
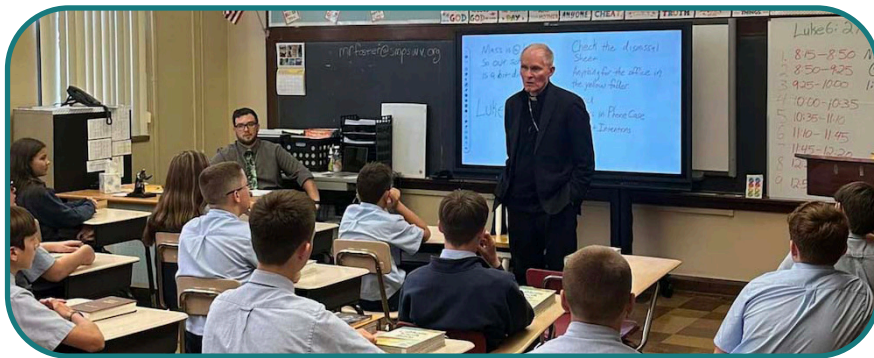
For information and updates go to: [dwc.org/jubilee-year-2025](http://dwc.org/jubilee-year-2025)

# Bishop Goes Back to School

Bishop Mark Brennan definitely has his “boots on the ground” as he is making his rounds to our 25 Catholic schools.

So far, he has been to the Eastern Panhandle, visiting St. Joseph Grade School and the newly established high school with the Class of 2029. He swooped south to Sacred Heart Grade School in Charleston, east to St. Joseph Catholic Grade School and High School in Huntington, and back to Wheeling, visiting St. Michael’s grade school. At this publications deadline he was visiting Madonna High School.

These visits were all within the first three weeks of school continuing his annual tradition of celebrating Mass and visiting classrooms with students across the Diocese – prioritizing conversations of faith, prayer, and the Church with students and staff.



# Mary's Refuge Opens Doors For Mother of Three

By MEG H. PARTINGTON

Administrative assistant, Saint Joseph School

Eight months pregnant and already the mother of two children younger than 3, Caitlin was living in a homeless shelter that would not let her stay after she delivered her baby. All the maternity homes she called in her native Virginia were unable to house the young family.

Doors were closing everywhere she turned until a woman living at the shelter told her about Mary's Refuge, a maternity home in a former Martinsburg convent. Executive Director Allison Ferrell responded promptly to Caitlin's pleading email, providing an opening to a better life for the recovering addict and abuse victim.

"I could hear the desperation in her voice, and she had told me how many people she called and already reached out to, with everyone turning her away for one reason or another," Ferrell recalled.

All nine of the refuge's rooms were full, but Ferrell and the program manager at the time decided to convert a first-floor computer room into a 10th bedroom so they could welcome Caitlin and her kids. Ferrell's husband built bunk beds for the two older children to help maximize the space.

On July 28, 2024 - just five days after her C-section - Caitlin and her three children moved into Mary's Refuge. Her daughter, Laci, is now 3; Ryan Jr. is 2; and Kane is a year old.

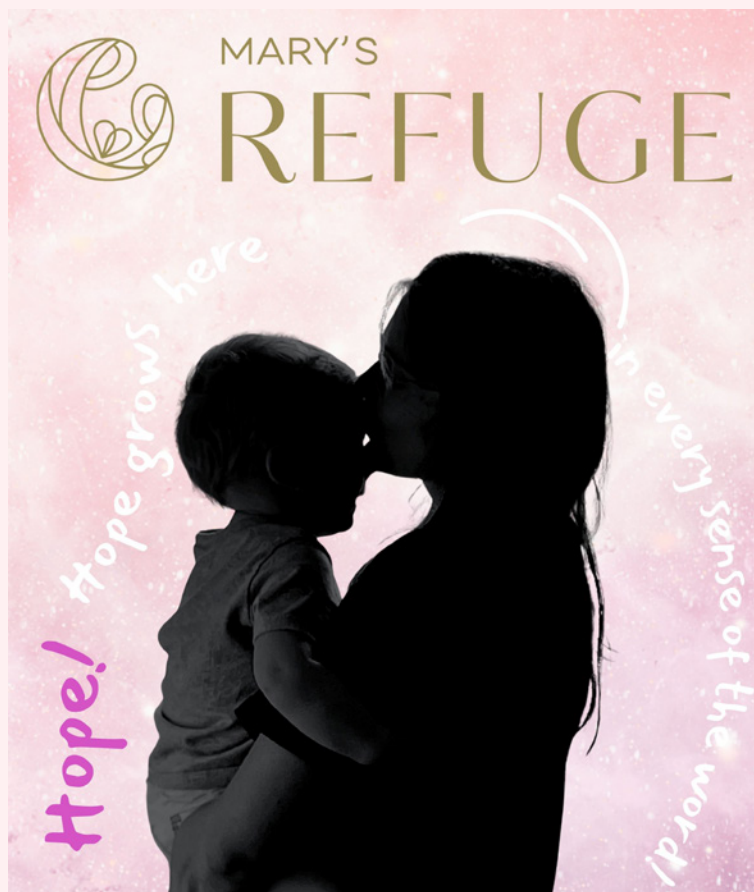
"I was scared and felt alone, but my faith in God gave me strength," said Caitlin, 29. "Through Ayla (Gressler, a licensed therapist and former case manager), Allison and my parents' support, I began to rebuild."

While recovering from her surgery, she moved everything from Orange County, Va., to the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

"I just felt like God wanted me here," Caitlin said. "He wanted me out (of Virginia)."

The last decade in Virginia was tough. Caitlin met her partner - the father of her children - in 2016, while they were in counseling to try to overcome drug addiction.

"The first two years were horrific," Caitlin said of her relationship. "We were both pretty toxic."



Caitlin said she never sought help for her postpartum depression and carried in her heart plenty of guilt, shame and pain while cradling her children because she didn't feel like she was a good mother. When she was pregnant with Kane, her partner was on the run - not for the first time - from law enforcement over drug charges and his family evicted Caitlin and the children from the apartment in which they were living. She did not have access to a car. "Being completely dependent on his family was hard to overcome," she said.

That's what led Caitlin, at that point eight months pregnant, to a 90-day family homeless shelter in Virginia, where she encountered the fellow mother who told her about Mary's Refuge, a 501(c)(3) ministry of St. Joseph Parish and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

"You never know who's going to give you a solution," she said.



*Caitlin, a mother of three who has lived at Mary's Refuge in Martinsburg, W.Va., since July 2024, started an externship at a Martinsburg medical office in early September.*

With help from Gressler, she applied for Medicaid and food stamps. In December 2024, she received a Recovery Coach Academy certificate so she can help others detoxify their lives. In April 2025, she completed the five-month medical billing and coding certification program at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College and in early September, she started a 40-hour externship at a Martinsburg medical office.

The refuge staff placed Caitlin in a vehicle donation program, and helped her transfer her driver's license to West Virginia and create a plan to pay off her debts.

Laci and Ryan go to a preschool/day care center five days a week and Caitlin works in the day care center at Mary's Refuge, the first job she's had since she became a mother. Prior to that, she had supervisory roles at gas stations and a Family Dollar store.

"They have provided for my family when I couldn't, offering clothing, diapers, wipes, hygiene and cleaning supplies," Caitlin said. "They've also invested in my healing. Through weekly therapy and neurofeedback, I've been able to address deep struggles, and soon, my oldest will also begin therapy."

Caitlin said she is focusing on being a better parent, using her own mother and father as role models and gaining insight from the other women living at Mary's Refuge. The pro-life home is at capacity right now with 10 mothers and 11 children; a set of twins is due to one of the women at the end of November, according to Ferrell.

"I've learned more being around other moms," Caitlin said. "I had great parents and I still do," she said, adding that maintaining routines and a tidy living space are among the ways she tries to emulate them.

Having three children who depend on her for everything gave Caitlin incentive to move through the doors that

opened for her and toward a brighter future.

"Motherhood has transformed me completely," she said. "Choosing to keep my babies required great sacrifice, including leaving my home state to start over. But it was the best decision I have ever made because it led me to Mary's Refuge. And they have truly lived up to their name. They became a safe place when I had none, a refuge that pushed me to grow into a stronger mother and a better person.

"For years, I struggled with addiction. Becoming a mother gave me the strength to choose a different path, one that I pray God is proud of. I have never once regretted my decision to keep my children. Every day is a lesson, and even my oldest has already taught me so much about patience, resilience and love."

Ferrell said finding space for Caitlin's young family has been a gift to the refuge, too.

"We made it work, and Caitlin and her three children have been a blessing to Mary's Refuge," Ferrell said. "She is a hardworking, dedicated mother, and she is taking every opportunity that Mary's Refuge has to offer."

To women who are in precarious situations, Caitlin

shared this advice: "Use your voice and speak up. You have to use your resources. You can't give up."



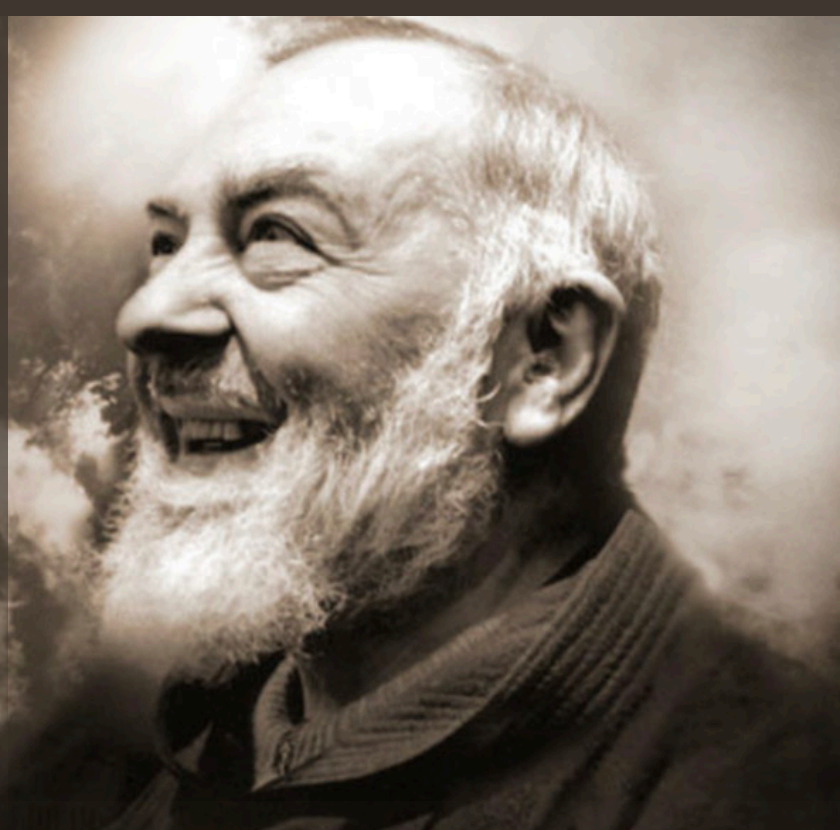
*Photo courtesy of Hallie Michelle Photography. Caitlin and her children found a safe place and a new beginning at Mary's Refuge, a maternity home in Martinsburg, W.Va. From left are Ryan Jr., Kane and Laci.*

## GALA TO SUPPORT MARY'S REFUGE

A gala fundraiser for Mary's Refuge is taking place Thursday, Nov. 6, at the Hilton Garden Inn Martinsburg at 65 Priority Drive. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the event begins at 6 p.m. for the annual event, to which attendees are invited to wear cocktail attire; black-tie outfits are optional.

For more information about Mary's Refuge or to purchase tickets to the gala, call 304-350-1632; email [life@marysrefuge.com](mailto:life@marysrefuge.com); or go to [marysrefuge.com](http://marysrefuge.com).

Sick? Hurt? Lost?  
Praying for a  
loved one who is?  
Pray the  
**HEALING PRAYER**  
by St. Padre Pio  
(*St. Pius of Pietrelcina*)  
His feast day is  
**Tuesday, Sept. 23.**



*Let us pray,  
Heavenly Father, I thank you for loving me.  
I thank you for sending your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
to the world to save and to set me free.  
I trust in your power and grace that sustain and restore me.  
Loving Father, touch me now with your healing hands,  
for I believe that your will is for me to be well in mind, body,  
soul and spirit.  
Cover me with the most precious blood of your Son, our Lord  
Jesus Christ from the top of my head to the soles of my feet.  
Cast anything that should not be in me.  
Root out any unhealthy and abnormal cells.  
Open any blocked arteries or veins and rebuild and replenish  
any damaged areas.  
Remove all inflammation and cleanse any infection by the  
power of Jesus' precious blood.  
Let the fire of your healing love pass through my entire body  
to heal and make new any diseased areas so that my body  
will function the way you created it to function.  
Touch also my mind and my emotion, even the deepest  
recesses of my heart.  
Saturate my entire being with your presence, love, joy, and  
peace and draw me ever closer to you every moment of my life.  
And Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit and empower me to  
do your works so that my life will bring glory and honor to  
your holy name. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.*

# Saints Cosmas and Damian



Cosmas and Damian were twin brothers who became renowned physicians and martyrs. They are often invoked for healing and are considered patrons of doctors and surgeons. Their dedication to treating others without charge exemplifies the Christian call to charity and selflessness. Saints Cosmas and Damian are mentioned in the Canon of the Mass.

A quote from the Golden Legend, Thirteenth Century, about their martyrdom:

*The judge ordered them to be thrown into a large fire, but the flames leaped away from them and killed many. They were then ordered to be placed on a torture device...but an angel of the Lord protected them...The judge ordered the three to be imprisoned and had Cosmo and Damian crucified and stoned by the people, but the stones flew back at those who threw them, injuring many. Then the judge, filled with madness, made the three brothers stand by the cross and commanded four knights to shoot arrows at Cosmo and Damian. However, the arrows turned back...When the judge saw this, he was utterly baffled, tormented to the point of death, and ordered all five brothers to be beheaded together.*

A prayer for their intercession published by mycatholic.life:

*Saints Cosmas and Damian, you were touched by Christ and sought to share your faith in Him through your selfless and free service to all who needed your medical care. When persecuted, you remained strong in your faith, preferring death over sin. Please pray for me, that I will follow your example of selfless service to others and will have the courage to be a witness to Christ no matter the cost. I also entrust to you, this day, all who are ill and in need of your prayers. Saints Cosmas and Damian, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## Possible Cause for Sainthood of Father Charles R. Carroll

### SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

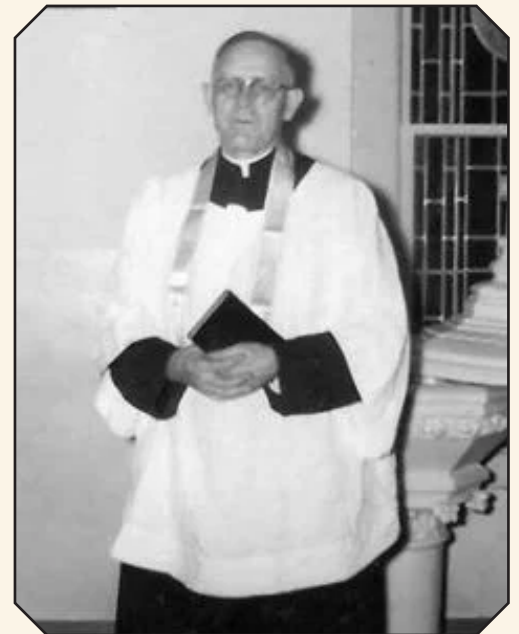
A group of people consisting of some members of All Saints Parish and former members of All Saints and its Mission Churches is exploring the possible Cause for Sainthood for Fr. Charles R. Carroll, the first pastor of All Saints Parish, Bridgeport, founder of the former school, Father Carroll served the faithful in WV from 1933-1982.

As part of this formal process, the Church seeks signs of cultus—devotion and esteem among the faithful. Bishop Brennan has encouraged the group to gather stories and testimonies.

If you knew Fr. Carroll, you are invited to share a testimony about his life and witness by emailing [revrcarroll@gmail.com](mailto:revrcarroll@gmail.com) or by writing to:

#### **The Cause of Father Charles R. Carroll**

Attention: Stephen Pishner  
All Saints Catholic Church  
317 East Main St.  
Bridgeport, WV 26330



# This is your Sign!

The Olive Branch  
Ministry Program  
may be the sign you  
have been waiting for  
to bring hope in a  
time of uncertainty.



OLIVE BRANCH  
MINISTRY

Helping individuals separated or divorced

October 11th

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

St. Michael Angelus Center  
1225 National Road  
Wheeling, WV



DIOCESE OF  
WHEELING-CHARLESTON

**REGISTER NOW**

**DWC.ORG**

# FALL INTO FAITH TOUR

**JOHN ANGOTTI & DION CLAY  
WITH MEREDITH AUGUSTIN**



**ALL SAINTS  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
317 EAST MAIN ST.  
BRIDGEPORT, WEST VA**

**OCT. 4**

**SAT. MASS 5:00PM**

**OCT. 5**

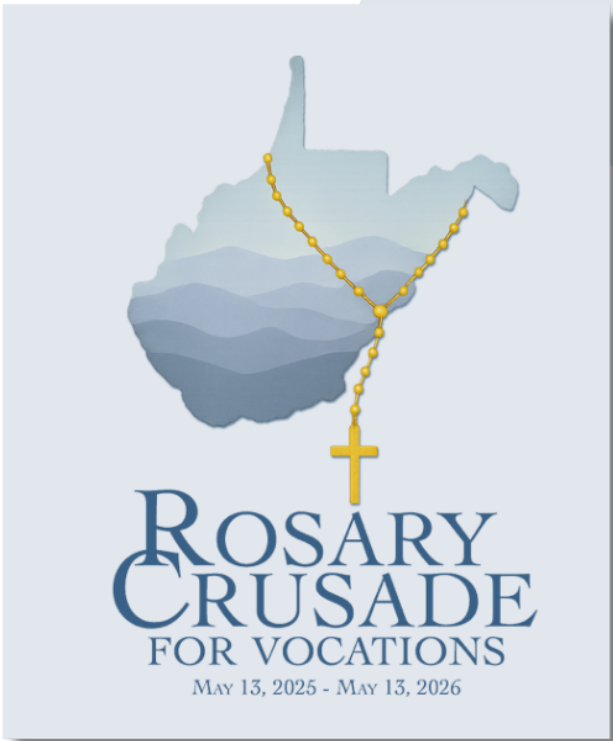
**SUN. MASS 10:00AM**

**CONCERT**

**4:00 PM**

# ROSARY CRUSADE FOR VOCATIONS IN WV

SCAN ME!



From May 13, 2025, to May 13, 2026, faithful around the world can join our Rosary Crusade for Vocations in WV.

PRAYER WORKS!

Step up for Jesus and His Church!

**Pledge. Share. Pray.**

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME

**First Reading: Amos 8:4-7**

The Prophet Amos shares that God is loud and clear – do not cheat the poor. Do not be greedy or deceitful.

**Responsorial: Psalm 112**

“Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.”

**Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-8**

Pray for everyone not just a few. Pray that everyone comes to know God Almighty through Jesus Christ, who gave himself for ransom for all.

**Gospel: Luke 16:1-13**

Be faithful to God not money. Use any wealth wisely and to serve God.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that it is a model to the world on how to use time and treasure faithfully to lift up the poor and raise up the lowly, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For world leaders, that they may pursue peace, justice, and reconciliation between nations and regions, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our Jewish brothers and sisters as they celebrate Rosh Hashanah this week, that the new year may bring peace, good health, and blessings, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For catechists and all who evangelize our youth, that their words and actions inspire a curiosity in our faith and an enthusiasm to deepen a love of God in those they teach, 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
Keyser - coming soon	FM	98.9
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
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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Transformed  
by faith.



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*Liturgy of the Hours*  
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

[EBREVIARY.COM](http://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](http://DWC.ORG).