



## MARY - CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN PURE VESSEL FOR GOD'S PERFECT PLAN

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is December 8th. On this day we honor Mary for she was conceived without sin. May is the purest vessel for God's perfect plan for from the moment of her conception she was without original sin.



Church doctrine teaches us that all humanity was harmed by the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. However, by the grace of God, Mary was conceived with original innocence and holiness as both Adam and Eve were before turning their back on God and not listening to Him but taking their free will to give into sin. Unlike our first parents and all of us, Mary did not experience desires to put herself and her wishes before God.

On Nov. 21st we celebrated the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when her parents, Saints Anne and Joachim, took her at the age of three to the temple and dedicated her to God. Joachim and Anne desperately wanted a baby and prayed unceasingly for a child that they would joyfully dedicate to God.

In the Gospel according to Luke she is described as, a "highly favored daughter," also translated as, "Mary, full of grace," when the angel Gabriel addresses her in Luke 1:28.

She was chosen, a pure and the worthy mother for Jesus. She would call Him her savior, as we know from the Magnificat in Luke's Gospel (1:46-55).

She is part of God's perfect plan.

*Immaculate Virgin Mary, you were pleasing in the sight of God from the first moment of your conception in the womb of your mother, Saint Anne. You were chosen to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I believe the teaching of Holy Mother the Church, that in the first instant of your conception, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ. Savior of the human race and your beloved Son. you were preserved from all stain of original sin. I thank God for this wonderful privilege and grace He bestowed upon you as I honor your Immaculate Conception. Look graciously upon me as I implore this special favor: (Mention your request).*

*Virgin Immaculate, Mother of God and my Mother, from your throne in heaven turn your eyes of pity upon me. Filled with confidence in your goodness and power, I beg you to help me in this journey of life, which is so full of dangers for my soul. I entrust myself entirely to you, that I may never be the slave of the devil through sin but may always live a humble and pure life. I consecrate myself to you forever, for my only desire is to love your Divine Son, Jesus. Mary, since none of your devout servants has ever perished, may I, too, be saved. Amen.*

The art with this article is by Bead After Bead by Dulce available at: [WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/BEADAFTERBEADBYDULCE](http://WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/BEADAFTERBEADBYDULCE)

## PORTRAIT REVEALS THE LONGING TO BE A MOTHER

*Editor's note: On this weekend of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we share this artwork of St. Anne by Jess Coe of The Living Heart Co. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Coe wrote the following as the story behind the painting. We share her words with her permission.*



This rendering of St. Anne is inspired by a tale recounting St. Anne, deep in the throes of infertility, as she watched a family of sparrows build a nest from her window. Lamenting her inability to bear a child cried out in desperation to the Lord, “Why was I born?” Shortly thereafter, Gabriel appeared to announce that she would soon become the mother of Mary!

I heard this story while I was five years deep into my own cross of infertility and thought, “here is a saint who understands.” I, too, had wondered to God many times: Why was I born? Conflicted by feeling the call to motherhood while left with empty arms. I prayed a novena to St. Anne on repeat, visiting my parish’s perpetual Adoration chapel almost every day. Eventually, I wrote a note and left it there with a handful of copies of the novena: “If you find it in your heart to pray this novena with me, please pray that God either heals my infertility or leads us to adoption; whatever His will may be.” I received two notes in response that my fellow parishioners were praying with me, and a year later we were blessed with a child by adoption and my infertility was healed!

Even now when I think of St. Anne, I don’t picture her in her older years, as she is so often portrayed. I picture her at the window, oblivious to the miracle that is to come. Just as I was. I sought her intercession because I knew she’d felt the same things I did, never imagining my prayer of “or” would be answered with “and!”

A powerful intercessor for the infertile, St. Anne is also the patron of unmarried women, housewives, women in labor, grandmothers, and educators. Her feast day is July 26.

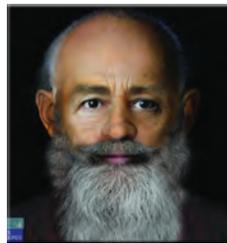


*(Coe is an opera singer, professor of voice and self-taught artist. She opened her Living Heart Co on Etsy in as a means to generate the funds for the adoption of her and her husband’s first child. In 2019 she transitioned to exclusively creating sacred art and prays that her work inspires deeper*

*devotion and mediation in all who encounter it. The name “The Living Heart Co.” comes from her deep love for the Holy Eucharist, which scientific analyses of eucharistic miracles reveals is the real living heart of Jesus.)*

## CONFRATERNITY OF ST. NICHOLAS

The gift of prayer for the protection of children



The Feast Day of St. Nicholas, an opportunity to learn about the Confraternity of St. Nicholas, which began in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. This group is dedicated to praying for the protection of all children.

The Confraternity of Saint Nicholas is a public association of the faithful who, through prayer, fasting, and good works, are dedicated to the protection of all children from scandalization, abuse, and trafficking. The Confraternity seeks to create spiritual millstones and depths of prayer to drown those demons which inspire men and women to commit evil against children.

Special events this week will be held in WV, Ohio, and Pennsylvania:

### December 4th

- Most Precious Blood Parish, Pittsburgh -11am Mass followed by a potluck lunch, rosary, games, and treat bags.
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church, Wheeling - 3 pm Divine Liturgy with dinner to follow (*Cost is \$6 for adults and free for children age 17 and under*).
- St. Peter Chapter of the Confraternity of St. Nicholas, Steubenville - 7 pm St. Nicholas Lantern Parade to begin at First Westminster Presbyterian Church, traveling three blocks to the Nativity Crèche

### DECEMBER 6TH

- Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling - 12:05pm Mass.
- St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church, Steubenville - 8 am Mass with a relic of St. Nicholas exposed for veneration. Also, after the 8am Mass on Dec. 28th, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the parish will be installing a copy of the Confraternity’s Icon of St. Nicholas in the church.
- St. John University Parish, Morgantown - 5:15 pm Mass followed by a St. Nicholas procession to Woodburn Hall and back. Reception to follow.
- Most Precious Blood Parish in Pittsburgh - Masses at noon and 7pm announcement of the formal participation in the Confraternity and recitation of the Litany of St. Nicholas to follow.

For information about the Confraternity of St. Nicholas and registration go to: [CONFRATERNITYOFSTNICHOLAS.ORG](http://CONFRATERNITYOFSTNICHOLAS.ORG)



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1311 BYRON STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 230  
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

November 28, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As you likely know, religious sisters, brothers and priests worked for years in our schools, hospitals, parishes, and service agencies without receiving (or requesting) monetary compensation. Now the great majority of them are old and sometimes sick and handicapped. Their religious orders, taking their vow of poverty seriously, did not generally save money for retirement. They assumed that there would be a steady stream of younger religious to support those who grew old.

The drastic decline in religious vocations led to a crisis in which religious orders had a large number of old and incapacitated members and few younger ones who could both carry on their ministry and care for their elders. This led the US Bishops in 1988 to institute the Retirement Fund for Religious to help religious congregations care for their aging and infirm members.

The annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will soon take place the weekend of December 10-11. I urge you to remember how much these elderly brothers and sisters of ours have contributed to the good of the Church. You may have been touched personally by their generous care for you. Now is your turn to be generous in support of them.

We all are aggrieved when we hear of clergy and religious who have abused the young, but we must remember that the overwhelming majority have served with love and integrity. Let us honor their service by offering them our own.

May the Lord Jesus, born of a poor virgin for our sake, look kindly on you and your loved ones as you observe the joyful season of Advent in preparation for the great feast of Christmas.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan

Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston



# NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

## PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST

By Sr. Albertine Cevallos, O.P.

*Editor's note: Sr. Albertine is a Dominican Sister of Saint Cecilia. She is a native of Charleston and was a member of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral. She is currently teaching chemistry and physics at Mount de Sales Academy in Catonsville, MD.*

**“I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves on earth...” - J. R. R. Tolkein**

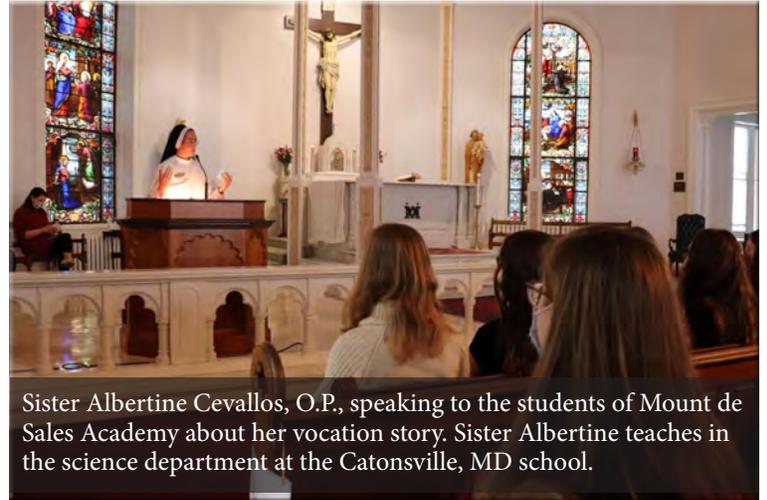


It was a Saturday afternoon, I was 23, and a friend had invited me to go with her to church for something called Adoration.

It had been several months since a grand conversion of faith in which I encountered the merciful love of Jesus at an evangelical church. My former way of living, a dull and monochrome life that chased distractions and success with no real satisfaction, had given way to a bright technicolor adventure—the amazing,

unconditional love of God that alone can satisfy my restless heart. I wanted nothing else but to know this great Lover. I was bouncing from Bible study to Bible study, relishing each copy of the Bible offered from Christians eager to encourage a new believer. After weeks of pouring these pages, hungry for Jesus, I had come to a full stop at the 6th chapter of John. This contains the scene where Jesus invites his many listeners to eat the bread of life: his own body. The echoes of the Masses I had attended as a bored, distracted child suddenly reverberated in my heart. The same Jesus that I had just fallen in love with, and was pursuing in the pages of Scripture—was he really, literally, what had been offered on the altar every Sunday? If this was true, this would change everything, again. I prayed one of the best prayers I know—Lord, I believe, help my unbelief—and waited for God to show me that he was really present in the Eucharist.

That afternoon, my friend led me to a pew toward the front. A priest placed the host in a beautiful, golden holder, which I now know is called the monstrance. In a moment,



Sister Albertine Cevallos, O.P., speaking to the students of Mount de Sales Academy about her vocation story. Sister Albertine teaches in the science department at the Catonsville, MD school.

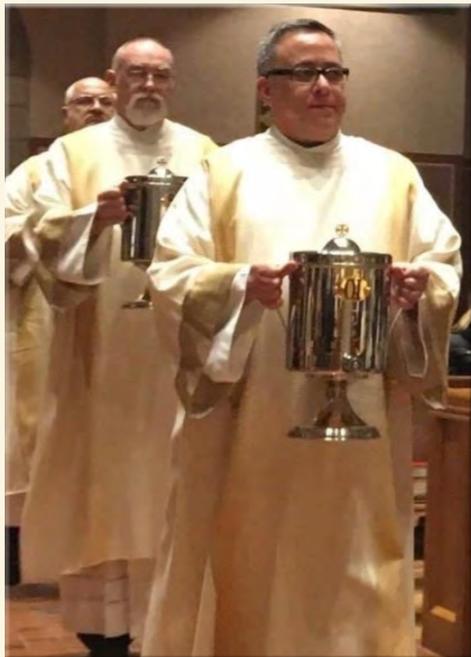
I experienced the answer to my prayer. I sensed the heart of Jesus, beating for me. I could hear his words of love deep in my heart. I could hear him invite me to belong to him, to lay down my life for him as he had for me. What do you say when the King of the Universe proposes to you? I knew that he had a plan for me to belong entirely to him, and I said yes. It was only afterward that I discovered this monthly hour of Adoration is sponsored by the Serra Club with one intention: to pray for vocations.

As I began to discern a religious vocation and entered the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, my greatest moments of clarity and assurance of God's love have been before our Eucharistic Lord. As Tolkein puts it, the Blessed Sacrament is the one great thing to love on Earth. To sit at his feet in adoration is the one thing necessary. If he has gone through so great a trouble as to endure the Passion, to resurrect, and to ascend to Heaven, leaving behind his true Body and Blood as a pledge of future glory, who are we not to avail ourselves of such a priceless treasure? When our feeble senses fail to grasp the mystery, when we struggle to stay awake in adoration, we will remain no less united to him than in the greatest consolation. Faith suffices, and he is eager to grant this gift to anyone who asks. Glory and romance await those who seek him, or rather are sought by him, in the Blessed Sacrament. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, then I will enter his house and dine with him, and him with me.”

Open wide the door, in the words of Pope St. John Paul II, open wide the door of your heart to Jesus! He is waiting for you in the Blessed Sacrament so he can love you. Do not be afraid!

# NEW DIACONATE FORMATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

*Editor's note: the following is an article from The Catholic Spirit by editor Colleen Rowan*



The diaconate is a vocation that men are called to, Deacon Yaquinta said.

“The first year of aspirancy,” for those who have been accepted to the program by the diocese, “is where they really learn about discernment and if they are being called or not being called,” Deacon Yaquinta said. Aspirants will meet most of the first year on designated Saturdays, once a month, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Stonewood, where Deacon Yaquinta serves as pastoral associate. The first two years of the program will be a period of aspirancy. Following that will be a three-year period of formation, at a college graduate level curriculum. The faculty will be provided through St. Meinrad’s and local clergy and lay personnel.

The second year of aspirancy and all three years of formation classes will take place at Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston one weekend a month. The academic year begins in September and ends in June.

The men accepted to the new program will see the ordination of the 20 current candidates to the diaconate on June 7, 2024, at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston.

Deacons receive their assignments in the diocese on their ordination day. Deacons serve their assigned parish by assisting at liturgical functions, preaching, officiating at baptisms and marriages outside of Mass, assisting and officiating at funeral rites, adult education, youth ministry, and prison ministry, among other projects.

Unlike transitional deacons going on to the priesthood, permanent deacons may be married. They must be faithful Catholics; married in the church (if married) or willing to remain celibate if not married; of good character; enjoy good mental, emotional, and physical health; be financially stable; be recommended by their pastors; and supported in their vocation by their wives and their parish or other church community. They should already be active in the church,

committed to the church’s doctrine on social justice and have good “people skills.” Most deacons work at secular jobs and must be willing to be open to an assignment outside of their parish.

An applicant should possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university as diaconate studies will be conducted at a graduate level. Exceptions to this academic requirement can be made if the candidate can demonstrate the ability to do graduate-level work. An applicant who became Catholic later in life is welcome to apply, provided he has been a Catholic for at least five years.



The application process for the 2023-2028 Diaconate Formation Program is open. All applications must be received by April 15, 2023.

Applications may be obtained by contacting Tina High in the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston at (888) 434-6237 or for the Wheeling area at (304) 233-0880, ext. 271. Applications and more information are also available on the diocese’s website at [dwc.org/directory-listing/permanent-diaconate-formation-office-of/2275/](http://dwc.org/directory-listing/permanent-diaconate-formation-office-of/2275/).

Completed applications must be sent to the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston: Very Rev. Dennis R. Schuelkens, Jr., V.E. Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has announced the opening of a new Diaconate Formation Program for all Catholic men who will be 35 by June of 2027. Bishop Mark Brennan has made the 2023-2028 Diaconate Formation Program free to the men who apply, and the cost will be covered by the diocese.

Deacons are ordained to a ministry of service, assisting the bishop and his priests in many areas, especially in the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity.

“The possibilities are endless,” said Deacon John Yaquinta, coordinator of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Deacon Yaquinta said there is no limit to the number of men who will be accepted to the program and that it will be administered at locations in West Virginia through St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana. He also noted that the program now has an additional year of formation which was implemented by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

# RELICS OF THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS AND OUR LADY OF FATIMA PILGRIM STATUE COMING TO ST. ANTHONY IN FOLLANSBEE

The faithful around the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are invited to pray before the relics of the little shepherds of Fatima Portugal - Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto, and the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, Dec. 8-11, at St. Anthony Parish, 1017 Jefferson Street, Follansbee.



*Our Lady of Fatima statue with the petite reliquary of the relics of Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto, and small statue of the Angel of Peace that travel with the statue.*

This is only the second time since the pandemic that the relics in the petite reliquary and statue of Our Lady have traveled in the US. The custodian of the statue, Judy Studer, and pilgrimage coordinator, Joan Alix, will be on hand to address the faithful who come to venerate the relics and statue.

The relic visit was secured by Attilio Boni a music minister at the parish, who contacted Alix after learning about this Mother of Mercy mission. Boni, Studer, and Alix believe prayerful reflection before these holy images not only bring hope and healing, but are

also needed in this time of violence in our country, absence in our pews, and tolerance of evil in society.

## **PRAYER INTENTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO PORTUGAL**

All who visit are encouraged to write a special intention on a prayer card that will be taken to the Chapel Shrine in Fatima, Portugal, the week of Dec. 12-18, and be permanently placed in a prayer offertory. The religious in Fatima pray daily for the intercessions and those who made them, Alix said. Rosaries Made in Fatima, Portugal will be available.

## **THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS**

Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto are two of the three Portuguese children to whom the Angel of Peace appeared three times in 1916, and Mary, Our Lady of Fatima, appeared six times in 1917.

Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto along with their cousin Lucia dos Santos were eight, six, and nine-years-old respectively at the time. It was during World War I, when anti-Christian forces and politicians were determined to abolish even the thought of God, which agonized Catholics and Christians in Portugal and eastern Europe. For the Marto family prayer became increasingly important. Praying the rosary for peace became a beautiful ritual especially for the children.

All of these heavenly appearances occurred when the children were out on their families' land shepherding their sheep. The children loved this chore, which took them outside to play and explore.

According to memoirs written by Lucia, the first visit from the Angel of Peace was in the Spring of 1916. The angel said, "Do not be afraid. I am the angel of peace. Pray with me."

The children knelt with the angel and repeated the prayer he said: "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You."

They all repeated the prayer three times. The angel said to pray that way and "the hearts of Jesus and Mary are ready to listen to you."

The angel appeared again to them in the Summer and Fall, Lucia wrote that it was to teach them the importance of continuous prayer, begging for mercy for sinners, sacrificing for God, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The children remained reverent in prayer and faithful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament after that. They were unaware that in just eight months they would be the ones who were chosen to be the instruments of heaven and the messengers for Our Blessed Mother, when the infamous apparitions in Fatima began (May 13, 1917).

Saints Francisco died at the age of 11, and Jacinta died at the age of 10, just as Our Lady of Fatima said they would. Lucia dos Santos became a Carmelite nun in Portugal. She died February 13, 2005, at age 97. Pope Francis canonized Francisco and Jacinta May 13, 2017, at a Mass in Fatima.

## **SPLINTER OF THE HOLY OAK**

A piece of the holy holm oak tree that Our Lady of Fatima appeared to be floating above is included with the relics of the little saints.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STATUE**

This particular statue is referred to as the United Nations statue, because it is the one that more than 800 people from around the world prayed in front of while it was at the UN on May 12, 2017, the day before the 100th anniversary of the Fatima apparitions, Alix said. That was the second time this statue was at the UN. The first time was in 1952, when it was in the Chapel of the United Nations where people prayed for the end of the Korean War. It is a statue of peace.

The statue was designed based on the interviews of the shepherd children and in particular Sister Lucia. However, artists knew it would not be as beautiful as the shepherd children witnessed.

## **ANGEL OF PEACE**

Alix and Studer will also bring a statue of the Angel of Peace the little shepherds saw. It was created as Lucia described him in her diary.

CONTINUE...

## RELICS SCHEDULE FOR DEC. 8-11

### **December 8, 4-9 PM, Welcoming**

Welcome - 4 PM

Solemn Mass at 6 PM

Quiet prayer, rosary, chaplet, veneration of relics and presentations immediately following Mass

### **December 9, 9AM - 6 PM, Day of Healing**

Eucharistic adoration 9 AM - 3 PM

Healing Mass - Noon

Quiet prayer, rosary, chaplet, veneration of relics throughout the day.

(Presentations 9 AM, Noon, 3 PM, and 5 PM)

### **December 10, 9 AM - 6 PM, Marian Day**

Presentations 9 AM, Noon, 3 PM, and 5 PM

Mass in honor of Our Lady 10:30 AM

Confession 2 PM

Mass 4 PM

Quiet prayer, rosary, chaplet, veneration of relics throughout the day

### **December 11 7:30 AM - Noon, Farewell to Our Lady**

Veneration 7:30 AM

Mass 8 AM

Youth Presentation 9 AM

Closing Mass 10:30 AM

Farewell procession Noon

## WHELAN POURS HER HEART & FAITH INTO ALL SHE DOES

Her choice to keep her heart focused on the “good portion” – Christ and the kingdom of God – has brought her peace, love, and strength, all of which she pours into her family and career.

Charleston’s Aisling Whelan chooses to keep faith first.

Just as Bishop Mark Brennan calls upon the faithful in the diocese to evangelize by sharing and celebrating Christ and our faith, Whelan intentionally has developed her career as owner of The Good Portion Co. as her voice.

“I think evangelization begins and ends with communion, with relationship,” she said. “I experience over and over again, in my own life, how fruitful it is, the growth and grace that follows, when we lean into the simple gift of presence, to ourselves, to the others in our lives, and of course to God. This passion for presence drives my work, organically nourishes my own life with the Lord, and continues to birth new and creative ideas for bringing the gift of God’s

presence into our human lives.”

Her Catholic based company that specializes in stationary, Catholic cards, and wall art reflects her love of Christ, art, and learning. It is her home-grown career that not only lets her reflect on holy days and saints with evangelizing vision, but also encourages her to be more of a lifelong spiritual learner. Because of her quest for inspiration, her list of favorite saints continues to grow.

“Some of my favorite saints are St. Maximilian Kolbe (after reading a deeply-moving book about his life, called A Man for Others - highly recommended); St. John Bosco, because of his gentle, respectful, and deeply personal methods of educating and guiding children/young people;; and Blesseds Luigi Beltrame and Maria Corsini Quattrocchi - I discovered them a few years ago,” she said and noted, that during the

homily at the beatification of the Blesseds, who are the first married couple to be beatified together, Pope



Saint John Paul II said, “This couple lived married love and service to life in light of the Gospel and with great human intensity.’ I think if this is what JP II has to say about your life, you nailed it! I could not better articulate my life goal.”

She didn’t plan to turn her faith into her career, it happened when her and her husband Sean were expecting their daughter in 2017. The couple now has two daughters, Brigid, who is five, and Mariel, who is two; and a baby in Heaven. They are parishioners at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

“I was transitioning out of the workforce into being a stay-at-home mom,” she said. “I knew it was going to be important for me to have meaningful, fulfilling work to do that would engage my mind and creativity, and could also help support our family as we grow. It was my mom, beautifully, who reminded me how I used to make greeting cards for our family’s needs when I was in high school, and that I have a gift for heartfelt words.”

It was in that moment when Whelan’s mother Cheryl Maloney encouraged her to open the online shop, that she realized how obviously natural it would be for her to let her Catholic faith guide her. She cherishes the faith that was handed down to her - the same faith she and Sean lovingly share with their daughters.

“I so love that it was my mom who kind of planted the seed and got this endeavor started, because looking back on that, it has seemed to me like such a beautiful example of who a mother is, and what she does: she knows us, and she speaks to us the truth of who we are, and the gifts we have to bring to the world,” Whelan said. That image of motherhood and maintaining that joy to share her faith with all through her creativity is her goal.

Knowing that her work is shared to celebrate and acknowledge life’s blessings – a birth, ordination, sacrament, etc. – is a “moment of joy for me.”

“In the busy, isolated, technology-heavy times in which we live, I want to be a part of real human connections, of celebrating moments that matter, and of being truly present to one another, especially in our raw places of need,” she said. “The response to my work has been overwhelmingly positive, which is such a powerful motivator, and also a testament to just how hungry people are for communion, and for things that matter.”

Maintaining a faith focused mindset is what keeps Whelan grounded and hopeful. Prayer throughout all of life’s joys, setbacks, and challenges embraces your spirit with the love of God. As a wife, mother, daughter, and Catholic business owner prayer is her strength.

“One of my favorite prayers is this one to St. Raphael that my husband shared with me when we started dating (on the feast of the archangels), and which we’ve prayed together often ever since,” she said.

St. Raphael, arrow of God’s love, wound our hearts, we beseech you, with burning love, and do not let the wound heal, so that we may stay on the path of love every day, and so that we may overcome everything with it. Amen.

“There is so much to overcome, on the journey of married life; this prayer has been like a bedrock for us, grounding us in a love that is bigger than the struggle and can overcome everything that our human weakness, our fallen world, or our eternal enemy, throws in the way of our communion,” she said.

Her prayer life has gracefully conditioned her heart to be more empathetic and compassionate.

“I know so many people who have lost their love of or belief in the Faith; it has been a really difficult few years, coping with a pandemic, we are already living in a deeply secular age, and the recurring scandals and abuses within the Church’s hierarchy have had such a devastating effect on the health of the lay faithful,” she said. “I have so much compassion for people who are struggling to stay, or who have fallen out of connection with their faith. I am often reminded of the iconic words, ‘There, but for the grace of God, go I.’ I am deeply aware of and endlessly grateful for the rich spiritual and liturgical roots of my childhood, for formative relationships with beautifully holy and human seminarians and young priests, for books like Caryll Houselander’s *The Reed of God* which repeatedly rededicate me to communion with Christ, and for my encounter with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as a college student and later as a teacher in a Catholic Montessori school.

“There are a thousand things that have shaped my journey and brought me to this day, many or most of them people, relationships, or encounters,” she said. “This is what matters, and what continues to lend strength to my living the faith: the lived experience of the truth, in all its beauty and goodness, in the context of relationship and communion.”

In a quiet moment, when she gets to sit at her desk to create a card or image to frame, she brings to mind the motivation behind her focus, she said.

“I do this work for the world, for the people who are struggling to stay Catholic, for the children - my children, and others - who are growing up in a world uniquely desperate for true, good, and beautiful things, for everyone who is hungry for love, communion, for something that matters.”

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

The prophet tells a story that begins by declaring new life will come from the old stump of Jesse. That spirit of life is destined to bring peace, mercy, and grace.

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### Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72

“Justice shall flourish in his time and fullness of peace for ever.”

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### Second Reading: Romans 15:4-9

St. Paul teaches us that we need to unite through Christ who will continue to give us encouragement and endurance through the word of God.

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### Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Matthew tells the story of John the Baptist, who tells the crowd to repent and prepare for the Lord – the lamb of God.

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[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT  
BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/120422.CFM](http://BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/120422.CFM)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we prepare ourselves and others by sharing the Word of God in order to get to heaven, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For the leaders of the world, that they seek to unite for the good of all and leave selfish ways and doubt behind, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who struggle physically, mentally, and spiritually, may we the Body of Christ be mindful of their needs and choose to be a sign of hope and a light of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For the faithful in West Virginia that we listen to St. Paul's lesson today and unite, treating all with dignity as we all draw closer to the Savior of the World, let us pray to the Lord. . .

*Lord hear our prayer*

## Special Collection Dec. 10-11

### Retirement Fund for Religious



**Please give to those who have given a lifetime.**

## THE VALUES THAT GUIDE OUR WORK



*Guided by Catholic Social Teaching, Catholic Charities West Virginia values the dignity of every person.*

As we begin our Advent journey, our staff, donors, and volunteers continue to live out our mission as we encounter neighbors in need. Our core values guide our work every day, and we take pause in this new season to reflect on the values we hold dear:

Dignity is the foundation of both our work and our Church's social teaching. We honor the gift of every human life. We respect each person for who they are. And we commit to enhancing the lives of each person we serve. Our work focuses on serving the whole person, and so we collaborate with other organizations and parishes to ensure each person we meet is treated with dignity.

Since a basic moral test of a society is how we treat the most vulnerable, we work hard to promote justice in our relationships and advocate for a society that honors basic human rights. Works of mercy, like our many programs and services, set a firm foundation from

which our neighbors can grow and thrive.

As a sign of compassion, we empathize with our clients and neighbors. We actively work to alleviate the suffering of others as though such suffering were our own.

We serve from a place of hope. A better future is possible, and we work toward that vision in everything we do.

The root of the word "charity" is love. We are truly present with each person we meet as we accompany them on their journey.

We strive for excellence and value quality in all aspects of our work. Using our knowledge, skills, and talents, we act with professionalism, integrity, and commitment. We strive to continually improve in all aspects of our service.

As we wait in joyful hope for the birth of our Lord, we invite you to join us in embracing these values.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).

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Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Eastern Panhandle	AM	740
Eastern Panhandle	FM	106.5
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
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## Liturgy of the Hours

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

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### 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).