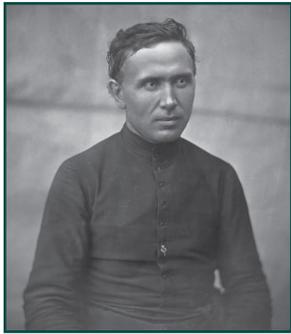




## NO GREATER LOVE THAN THIS

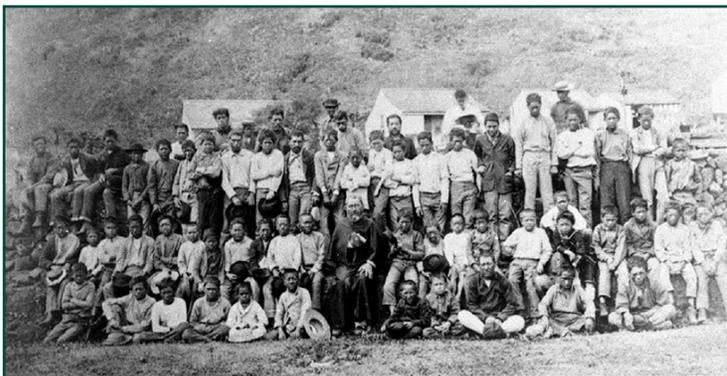


In today's Gospel, John shares what Christ said to his disciples: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13)."

As we celebrate this Easter Season and the Resurrected Christ, we exclaim Jesus's message – NO GREATER LOVE THAN THIS!

Saint Damien de Veuter of Molokai took Christ's words to heart.

On May 10, the Church honors this man whose ministry led him to Molokai, Hawaii. Molokai is one of the least inhabited of the Hawaiian Islands, and in 1866 it was considered far from paradise. That is when it became home to a rural leper settlement in the Kalaupapa Peninsula, surrounded on three sides by the ocean and the fourth side was a mountain. The settlement was the Hawaiian government's way of isolating lepers. Basic needs were ignored by the government and the majority of citizens turned a blind eye to it. Kalaupapa became an area of filth, despair, and lawlessness.



Father Damien knew well of this hell on earth as Hawaiians described it. He had been serving in Hawaii for nearly 9 years, when in 1873, he volunteered to minister

to the leper community. The priest was determined to turn it into a community of respect, empathy, and love; and he succeeded.

"My greatest pleasure is to serve the Lord in His poor children rejected by other people," he said.

Saint Damien shared the stories of these hopeless forgotten people and was able to secure support from all races and religions. He built everything from care facilities and houses to chapels and coffins.



Twelve years after he began his ministry in Kalaupapa, Fr. Damien contracted the disease and took it as an opportunity to empathize even more with the flock he served – from then on it was "we, lepers" he would note.

He lived another four years before he died.

In all St. Damien spent 16 years taking care of the lepers young and old. It was the children who tugged strongest at his heartstrings and fueled his fire to keep working. He knew these small boys and girls were ripped away from their families because of a circumstance that was out of their control. He made it his mission to bring hope to the hopeless and love to those who felt ashamed and unlovable.

He taught what he believed – God’s love is for all, and it is in the Eucharist we find enough food for the journey – a journey toward a glorious soul and eternal life.

“Without the Blessed Sacrament a position like mine would be intolerable,” he said. “Eucharist is the bread that gives strength.”

After his death, his story of selflessness became well known and more attention was given to the need for more humane treatment, better living conditions, and medical research of the disease. Mandatory isolation continued in the US until 1969.

Miracles began to happen for those who called on Fr. Damien’s intercession as early as 1895. He was declared venerable in 1897, Blessed in 1993, and was canonized in 2009.

Prayer to St. Damien:

Damien, brother on the journey, happy and generous missionary, who loved the Gospel more than your own life, who for love of Jesus left your family, your homeland, your security and your dreams.

Teach us to give our lives with joy like yours, to be in solidarity with the outcasts of our world, to celebrate and contemplate the Eucharist as the source of our own commitment.

Help us to love to the very end and, in the strength of the Spirit, to persevere in compassion for the poor and forgotten so that we might be good disciples of Jesus and Mary.

Amen

TUESDAY  
MAY 7TH

#OneMissionOneDay



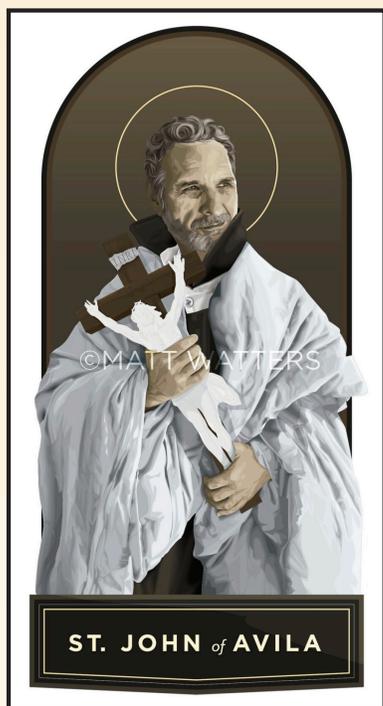
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# LESSONS OF ST. JOHN OF AVILA: EVANGELIZE! EVANGELIZE THOSE CLOSEST FIRST!

*Have Confidence the Holy Spirit is in You*



Saint John of Avila's life is a reminder that God wants us to first evangelize at home. So, welcome the Holy Spirit within – “He will console you, enlighten you, refresh you, and direct you.” – St. John of Avila.

He is a Doctor of the Church, “grounded in the sacred Scriptures, passionately concerned for the truth, and an outstanding precursor of the new evangelization,” noted the Holy See at the 16th century saint's doctoral proclamation in 2012. His feast day is May 10.

Saint John of Avila was an influential parish priest and friend to several well-known saints including, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and St. John the Cross. He had an exceptional knowledge of the bible and would present St. Paul's letters with such emphasis and compassion that those who heard him would say they felt like it was St. Paul talking directly to them.

He had lofty dreams wanting to leave his homeland to be a missionary priest, but God had a different plan.

He was born in Spain. As a boy he had hoped to become a lawyer. He even began to study law at 14, but by the age of 18 realized God was calling him to dive deeper into his faith. He returned home and began his discernment, ultimately becoming a priest in 1526. His next big dream was to be a priest to the people of West Indies - islands of the New World along Gulf of Mexico. He never received that assignment. His archbishop told him he just couldn't send him away, because he would be more influential at home. Within the first three years of being a priest, Father John was a popular preacher. The archbishop saw that he was strengthening so many souls in Spain through his devout celebration of the Mass, preaching, and inspiring catechetical efforts. It was the wise to keep the young priest in Seville, Spain to revive the faith that was severely damaged by heresy, other religions, and politics.

While his homilies and preaching revived the faithful, it also stirred up controversy. Father John lived a life of poverty, while other clergy lived lavishly. They turned him in for preaching lies - that the doors of Heaven would not be open for the rich. He was arrested and imprisoned. He remained devoted to prayer, studying, and writing. He began the *Audi, Filia* (his book *Listen, O Daughter*) requested by a Spanish nun seeking spiritual strength for herself and others. After a year in prison, he was found not guilty of any crime and released.

He went on to shepherd the faithful in his homeland for 18 years, before illness slowed him down in 1551.

In addition to *Audi, Filia*, the Church has acknowledged he wrote eighty-two sermons, Scripture commentaries, 257 letters, and various other minor works on reform in the Church (the great Council of Trent that he participated). *Finding Confidence in Times of Trial* is a book of letters from the saint to St. Teresa of Avila and also to priests, widows, the sick, the dying, and the persecuted.

His homilies for and about the Ascension and Pentecost are presented in the book *The Holy Spirit Within*, celebrating these two feasts that are among the greatest of the Church.

In honor of St. John of Avila, may we never tire of evangelizing those closest to us.

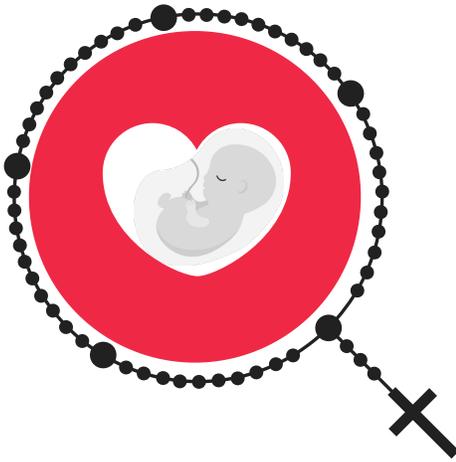
*Editor's note: The portrait accompanying this article is by Michigan artist Matthew Watters available at: [WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/MATTHEW WATTERS ART](http://WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/MATTHEW WATTERS ART)*

# ROSARY FOR UNBORN BABIES: MAY 10

Beginning on May 10 and extending three days through May 12, The St. Michael the Archangel Organization hopes the faithful around our diocese will join them praying Rosary for unborn babies.

The organization that began in 2007, coordinates the annual One Million Rosaries for Unborn Babies campaign. The group is part of St. James the Greater Roman Catholic Church in Charles Town.

This multinational event is specifically for the unborn and all humans whose lives are intentionally ended in the womb.



Register to be a participant by going to:

[WWW.SAINTMICHAELTHEARCHANGELORGANIZATION.ORG](http://WWW.SAINTMICHAELTHEARCHANGELORGANIZATION.ORG)

or emailing [ROSARIES4THEUNBORN@YAHOO.COM](mailto:ROSARIES4THEUNBORN@YAHOO.COM)

Prayer intentions can also be sent to:

Saint Michael the Archangel Organization

ATTN: Nancy Cortese

St. James the Greater Roman Catholic Church

49 Crosswinds Dr.

Charles Town, West Virginia 25414

U.S.A.

## FAIRMONT CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL RAISES MONEY FOR PATIENTS

Students at Fairmont Catholic Grade School raised more than \$500 for their peers who are patients at WVU Children's Hospital. The contributions will go towards buying games, toys, and school supplies for children receiving treatment at the hospital.

The project was led by first year teacher Franchesca Aloï, who is also Miss Mannington District Fair Queen 2023. She's pictured with a few of her students and a little bin of items the children brought to school in addition to the money they raised.

Aloï, a member of St. Peter's Parish in Farmington, shared with her first-grade class that as queen she does not just accept a crown and sash, but has to eagerly and wholeheartedly accept the responsibility of community service, accountability, and leading by example - all lessons of Catholic social teaching.



# KEEP PRAYING ROSARIES FOR VOCATIONS MAY THE LORD BRING PEACE AND CLARITY.

While the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston had to cancel the June 2024 Women's Discernment Retreat for single WV women ages 18 and over due to lack of response, those involved in the planning are not giving up – planning has already begun for a future event. Stay tuned, and in the meantime keep praying for vocations.

“We are always praying for strong grace filled vocations in our diocese,” said Sr. Martha Gomez, RGS, and Delegate for Consecrated Life. “Offering an opportunity to spend time away from our daily distractions to listen closely to your heart and what God wants for you is invaluable – the powerful reasoning behind our persistence to serve women discerning their vocation and praying that the Lord bring them peace and clarity. A discernment retreat is a time for discovery.”

Religious sisters serving in the diocese are representative of more than 20 communities/congregations. Gomez said, the future retreat will still have religious sisters from various religious orders assisting, sharing personal testimonies, and providing a joyful witness of what it means to be a consecrated Religious Sister.

So, while the diocese goes back to the drawing board to plan a future retreat, please join us as we pray for vocations for our beautiful Mountain State. Keep including vocations in your Rosaries.

As Fr. Brian Crenwelge, Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, said promoting the retreat, “God calls each of us to a particular vocation. To some, he whispers on their hearts that he wants them to give of their whole lives to him in a radical way--to consecrate themselves to him so as to follow him more closely and live now like we will live in heaven. The religious vocation is ultimately a vocation of love.”

“We should ever be grateful for and love the vocation to which God has called us. This applies to every vocation because, after all, what a privilege it is to serve God, even in the least capacity!” Blessed Fr. Solanus Casey

“Discernment is discovery,” Sr. Martha said. “Our future retreat will help the young ladies in our diocese experience a glimpse of life as a religious sister - one of commitment, prayer, and community.”





# BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS YOUTH CAMP

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Make friends with other young people!



Participate in regular Mass, Adoration, and entertaining catechesis!

Register today at [campcarlowv.org](http://campcarlowv.org)!

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### First Reading: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

While Peter was speaking, the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles.

### Responsorial: Psalm 98

“The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.”

### Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-10

God is love. Whoever does not know true love does not know God.

### Gospel: John 15:9-17

Keep the commandments and remain in Christ's love. For God proved the ultimate love to lay down one's life for one's friends. Love one another!

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may be a sign of God's love through our works of kindness and mercy, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That leaders of all nations use their power focused on love for those they serve, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who have suffered the loss of a child and for those who are unable to have children, that they know and feel the love and compassion of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For our habitual and special intentions that we hold in the silence of our hearts; and for all those we said we would pray for, but failed to fulfill, let us pray to the Lord. . .

*Lord hear our prayer*



## SPECIAL LITURGICAL NOTE

The Ascension appears on the calendar on May 9, but Masses for the faithful in the diocese for May 12 will celebrate this special feast.

The art featured with this announcement is by Jason Jenicke and available at: [jasonjenicke.com/product/ascension-into-heaven/](http://jasonjenicke.com/product/ascension-into-heaven/)

## WV CATHOLIC RADIO BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

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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
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Transformed  
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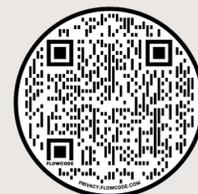
*Liturgy of the Hours*

# 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).