

Faith IN WV

AUGUST 23, 2026
DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON



“Who do you say I am?”



What if Jesus turned to you and asked, “Who do you say I am?”

Put yourself in that moment from this weekend’s Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus asked His disciples. They were confused and just guessed.

Then, God opened Peter’s eyes. Peter declared, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Today, while others see just bread and wine, we as Catholics, know that at the consecration, we kneel before the Real Presence of Christ—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

Jesus is the Living God, the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation.

Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan calls us to take action and share this faith. He says, “If your faith matters to you, do your part.... Be the good, faithful servant Jesus calls you to be, and you will be rewarded” with the kingdom of heaven.

We have access to the keys of the kingdom. Those keys are not meant to be kept to ourselves; they invite us to open the way for others to encounter Christ. Think about that.

“The risen lord has walked with me even in those moments when my eyes have been veiled, and I could not recognize him,” Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala said in his first homily in the diocese. “My

prayer is that as we walk together... along the way of the Gospel... make this local Church and this diocese a place where everyone feels at home, where every person knows that they belong and are loved.

“Together let us continue being a church that resembles the heart of Jesus..”

We may not have all the people we dearly love stepping into the Church every Sunday with us, but we can bring them with us spiritually.

Carry them with you as you bless yourself upon entering, with you when you genuflect, with you when you state the creed, and with you as you process toward Jesus Christ in every Holy Communion received. Sacrifice. Fast.

Let others see your sincerity, your respect, and your charity – your strength of faith!

Pray joyfully!

Pray by calling to mind the feelings you will encounter when Jesus reveals his true identity to those we are praying for with great trust and confidence.

Accept like Saint Monica, the advice of her bishop, don’t argue or lecture. Don’t beg. “Speak less to Augustine about God and more to God about Augustine.”

Instead of praying for “Church attendance” pray like Blessed Solonus Casey taught, “thanking God in advance” for Christ changing their vision and revealing Himself to them so they return to Him at Mass.

Saint Monica, intercede for us for our loved ones and community we miss in our pews return to the Source and Summit of our faith, the Eucharist. We may weep many tears like you, but do not let us give up on Christ.

Christ is the One True God.

WHAT'S
INSIDE

A FaithInWV Series:

A Welcome Remembered



BRIDGING THE GAP

FATHER BEITING APPALACHIAN
MISSION CENTER HELPS
SEMINARIANS DISCOVER HOW
SERVICE, SACRIFICE, AND
ENCOUNTER SHAPE THE CALL
TO PRIESTHOOD.



A Welcome Remembered

International guests reflect on historical day, our new shepherd, and the WV welcome.



Editor's note: "A Welcome Remembered" is FaithInWV Q&A series presented to celebrate our shepherd and reinforce the joy when we the faithful of WV mirror Christ's love for all.

With 29 dioceses represented from across the country, including Washington, DC., NYC, Boston, San Diego, Orlando, Palm Beach, and Kalamazoo; and the globe, including El Salvador, Albania, Guatemala, and the Virgin Islands the Installation Mass for Bishop Evelio Menjívar-Ayala was a glimpse of his friendships, vocation, and mission to let others see Christ in you as, he has stated, "we walk this journey together."



"Your Bishop is a man with a generous heart, ready to walk with all of you—and with each one of you."

*-Monsignor Ionut Paul Strejac,
Counsellor of the Apostolic Nunciature in Albania*

Born in Romania, Msgr. Strejac has spent decades serving the Church worldwide including Italy, South Sudan, Kuwait, Poland, and El Salvador.

the beauty of the celebration itself and the large attendance of both the local Church and the many guests, I was deeply impressed by the involvement of the diocesan staff in every aspect of the organization. It felt like a big, close-knit family, in which every member contributes. The warm welcome and genuine human kindness I experienced added another special touch and made those days memorable. In the festive atmosphere and in the smiles of the people, I could sense the living and concrete faith of the Catholic community of West Virginia.

HOW DO YOU KNOW BISHOP EVELIO?

I have known Evelio since our years of study in Rome. We first met during an event for seminarians and stayed connected. He was at the North American College, and I was next door at the Collegio Urbano, and we used to joke about who had the best view of St. Peter's Basilica. I still remember our first meeting and his telling me that he came from the smallest country in Central America. At that time, I never imagined that I would later join the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy and begin my diplomatic service for the Holy See precisely in that same country, El Salvador. Since then, our friendship has only deepened and grown stronger. Our shared vocation and mission and perhaps our shared love of the mountains has also helped to keep us close.

WHY WAS IT SO IMPORTANT TO BE PRESENT FOR THIS MOMENT?

Friendship means walking together and being close to one another both in difficult times and in moments of joy. This was certainly a very joyful one, and I couldn't miss it. Furthermore, the installation of a bishop in a diocese is like a wedding feast for the local Church, and I was very happy to attend. And I must confess that, beyond the personal reasons already mentioned, the splendid organization of the event made the long journey entirely worthwhile. In addition to

INSIGHT FOR THE FAITHFUL OF WV?

In His providence, God has sent Bishop Evelio Menjívar Ayala to be your Shepherd. Your Bishop is a man with a generous heart, ready to walk with all of you—and with each one of you—on the journey of faith toward Jesus Christ.

Walk with him, pray for him, and offer him your love and support. Together, continue to build a Church that welcomes, listens, serves and bears witness to the joy of the Gospel.

Thank you for making those days unforgettable. May God bless you all.



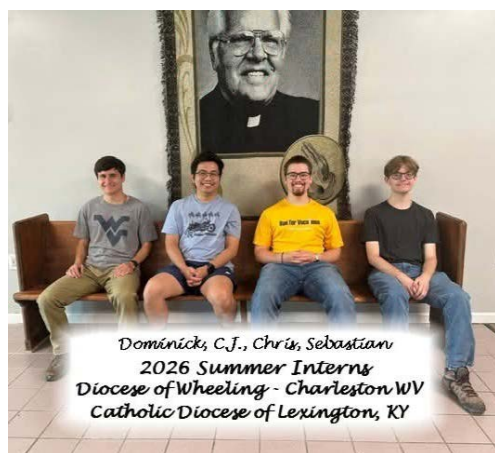
Second from the left Monsignor Strejac and friends laugh and reminisce with Bishop Evelio Menjívar at his installation reception.



BRIDGING THE GAP

FATHER BEITING APPALACHIAN MISSION CENTER HELPS SEMINARIANS DISCOVER HOW SERVICE, SACRIFICE, AND ENCOUNTER SHAPE THE CALL TO PRIESTHOOD.

Three of our diocesan seminarians spent their summer in Louisa, Kentucky. It is quiet town, where the Appalachian foothills are blanketed with dense forests and rugged valleys. It is where the Levisa Fork and Tug Fork Rivers meet to form the Big Sandy River.



However, this beautiful part of the country is also one marked with a poverty rate of 22%, nearly double the national average.

Most of us think of our seminarian's summer assignments as a basic priestly internship in our parishes or neighboring ones. We like to see them following our pastor around, experiencing firsthand the life of our parish family outside of the Mass, but complimentary of it and the Sacraments – home visits, evangelization, ecumenical relationships, and the creating, building, and renewing the Church as a shepherd of Christ.

However, additionally summer assignments are more than bridging the gap between seminary classrooms and the parish life, they are intended to inspire and create strong willed and able priests immersed in real-world of pastoral ministry.

Dominick Beckman, Sebastian Lasko, and Chris Nelson will tell you, charitable work is crucial spiritual and pastoral preparation.

Serving God in a suburban or city centered area is strikingly different than working for and with those in rural areas isolated and often struggling.

While the scene of the assignments – charitable versus parish based – look like opposites both are deep encounters with the Body of Christ.

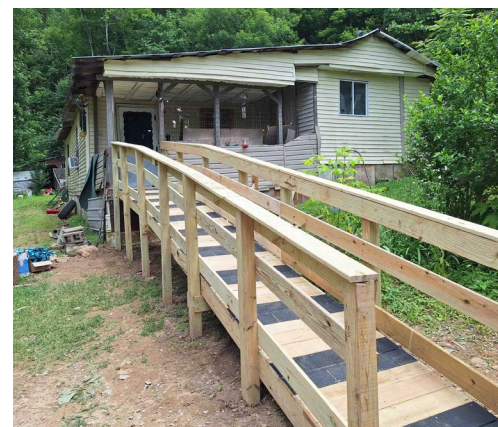
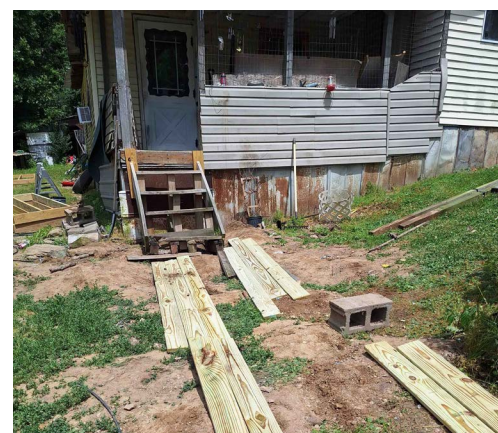
Our sanctuaries, altar, and parish centers are replaced with countless stick homes many with blue tarps on the rooftop hiding holes, cinder blocks replacing steps, and yards with more mud than grass and prickly thistle blooming instead of marigolds.

Beckman, Lasko, and Nelson quickly became Jesus's hands and feet by volunteering at the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center in Eastern Kentucky just across river from Wayne County, West Virginia.

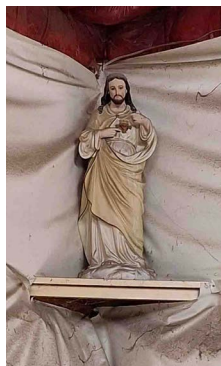
Through face-to-face interactions, home repairs, food distribution, and programs for the youth and elderly our seminarians helped bring the presence of God to those in need, Catholics, and non-Catholics alike.



"I have witnessed the fruit of my two-month stay... within the people involved here, both those serving and being served," Sebastian Lasko said. "It's been amazing to see the quality of life get better for those living here, and even more amazing to see how much the volunteers get out of it, especially the kids in the volunteer groups. I've gotten practical skills myself during my stay, as well as more time to get to know the two other DWC seminarians assigned with me, but my understanding and love of the Appalachian people has been deepened and strengthened, something that has been important in my discernment of the priesthood."



"This part of Appalachia reminded me a lot of the areas outside my hometown of Parkersburg, yet still



Louisa is very much a different part of Appalachia than from where I grew up... but something that I've seen before in Appalachia, and didn't see any less here, is the great resilience,

sense of community, and love of God that is saturated in the people and culture of Appalachia," he said. "These strengths add a unique beauty to everyone who lives in these mountains, hills, and valleys, whose beauty add to that of the peoples' in their identity and way of life.



"But in the midst of these strengths, at least to me, the great needs and wounds of everyone here in Eastern Kentucky and my own part of Appalachia back home along the Ohio river begin to show, and I can't help but see their great need for our Lord in the Sacraments to carry them through their struggles, and give them greater purpose and a more

fuller life, something that I know can be offered in the fullness of the Faith that is Catholicism."

He said it is these strengths and seeing and working to fill the needs of struggling Appalachia are indeed more fuel for his desire to become a priest.

"I hope to, God willing, to serve the people of Appalachia as a priest someday, bringing the Sacraments and Saints, above all the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin."

"Reflecting on my assignment at the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission this summer, I have much to be grateful for," Beckman said. "I was particularly thankful for the opportunity to see how the Lord has been and still is at work in the lives of the staff, volunteers.

"Our service projects, no matter how great or small, brought such joy and gratitude to those whom we served - people who were very in need of joy and hope," he said.

Beckman defined the takeaway from the experience as invigorating, emphasizing more of a reason to say "Yes" to God's call to the priesthood, and "Yes" to serving and not being served for the Glory of God.

"I leave this assignment with a renewed sense of Christian mission - a desire and a will to serve, with my brother Christians, the people who most need to be served, and

especially in this region. I hope that our charity to the people of this region will bear witness to the love that the Lord Jesus has for them, and which is at work in us. I hope that the people of this region will come to know intimately this love of Christ, and that this knowledge will continually inspire them to trust in Him and persevere through all difficulties they may face."



Editor's note: The namesake of the mission center, Father Ralph Beiting, of the diocese of Lexington, began his efforts with a Bible school for children and street preaching, often proposing the question, "Have you asked God what he wants you to do with your life?" He was ordained in 1950 and served more than 60 years in the Appalachian Mountains. During that time, he built 10 churches and two parishes, repaired 5,000 homes, opened 5 thrift shops, and welcomed over 60,000 mission volunteers. His focus was to break the poverty cycle of the innocents - the children who lived in poverty, so they turn to God in times of challenges not the evil ways of this world.

For more on the center go to:

WWW.FBAMC-KY.ORG

MAJOR MILESTONE FOR DEACON MICHAEL AIELLO



Before heading back to Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, Deacon Michael Aiello, had the honor of celebrating his first baptism as a transitional deacon. What made the moment significantly more special was that it was for his niece, Caterina Marie Aiello, daughter of Andrew and Christina Aiello, at St. Agnes Parish in Charleston.

Joined by Deacon Michael Kawash, his uncle; and cousin, seminarian Timothy Kawash, the private Baptism will forever be a memorial event as God willing Deacon Michael will soon become a priest he will administer many baptisms but Caterina Marie's will always be the first.

Deacon Michael was ordained by Bishop Emeritus Mark Brennan to the transitional diaconate on May 30th at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. He was vested by his uncle and godfather, Deacon Michael Kawash.

LESSONS FROM THE SAINTS

BEAUTY, TRUST, HOPE AND COURAGE



Editor's note: The art with these features (except the image of the portrait of Our Lady of Częstochowa) is by Saints Home Studio on Etsy.

THE BEAUTY OF A SAINT

ON AUGUST 23, WE CELEBRATE THE MEMORIAL OF ST. ROSE OF LIMA. Her beauty was breathtaking, but it was her heart that was magnificent.

She was born in Peru as Isabel Flores de Olivia in 1586 but was called Rose or Rosa because of her beauty. Writers note she was so pretty people would stop in their tracks in awe of her. As a toddler, her mother would place a crown of flowers on her head to compliment her radiance.

Throughout her childhood she declared she wanted to become a nun and devote herself to Jesus. She had her own retreat space that she would go to for solitude

and prayer. At the age of 20, her parents, though reluctant, gave her their blessing for her to enter the Third Order of Saint Dominic. However, they did not want St. Rose to live at the convent. So as a compromise she secluded herself and resided in the space she had previously set aside for her retreats.

Saint Rose welcomed the poor and sick children and elderly into her humble residence, so she could care for them. She was known for her dedication to the lowly and admired by poor and wealthy alike for as she said, "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus."



BE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST AND BRING OTHERS.

ON AUGUST 24, HONOR THE FEAST DAY OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE. Although the biblical documentation of St. Bartholomew is scarce, we can come to know him as a humble follower to whom many faithful can relate. He is someone who did not need the limelight. His silence speaks volumes. He shows us that to know Christ is to love Him and to want to serve Him.

In John 1:47-51 we learn Saint Bartholomew (also called Nathanael) could be described as a faithful Jew, honest, innocent, and just man, devoting much time to quiet reflection and prayer, awaiting the Messiah.

It was Philip who took St. Bartholomew to see Jesus. Jesus said to him, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree."

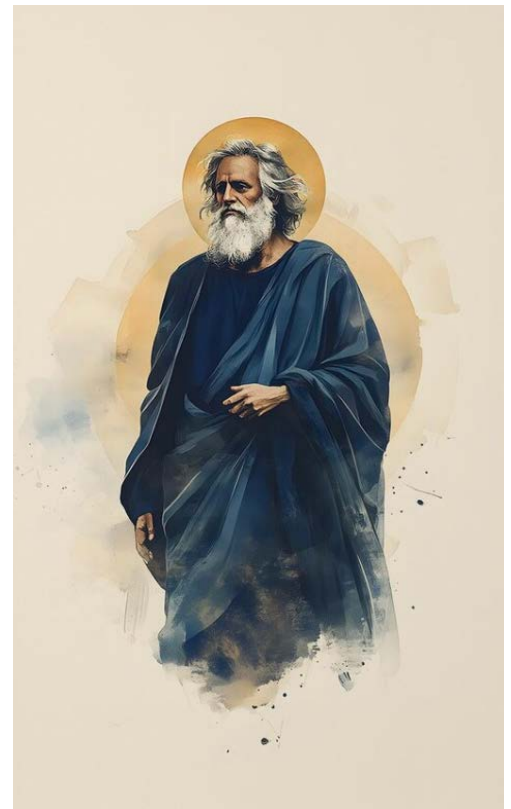
Pope Benedict XVI has said St.

Bartholomew answers Jesus "with a clear and beautiful confession of faith: 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' In this confession is conveyed a first important step in the journey of attachment to Jesus."

"His heart is moved by Jesus' words, he feels understood and he understands (God) knows everything about me, He knows and is familiar with the road of life; I can truly trust this man," the former pontiff said.

St Bartholomew's relics are venerated in Rome in the Church dedicated to him on the Tiber Island.

Let St. Bartholomew's example influence your thoughts and actions. Instead of overthinking and questioning, choose trust and peace, knowing God is present and He is always working for the greater good for all of the faithful.



KEEP YOUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS

ON AUGUST 26, THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF CZĘSTOCHOWA, also known as the Black Madonna.

This painting of Mary and Child Jesus that has a bit of varied factual history, but one thing is for certain, Our Lady of Czestochowa is a beautiful image of the Blessed Mother holding her son, the Savior of the World. The right arm of Mary gestures towards Jesus, illustrating for us her desire for us to focus our lives not on her, but to focus all our attention on her Son, who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Legend states the original image of this Madonna and Child was on painted by St. Luke the Evangelist on cypress wood believed to have been the top of a table built by St. Joseph for the Holy Family.

It was discovered by St. Helena in 326 AD, in the Holy Land, and then she had it taken to Constantinople where it remained for centuries.

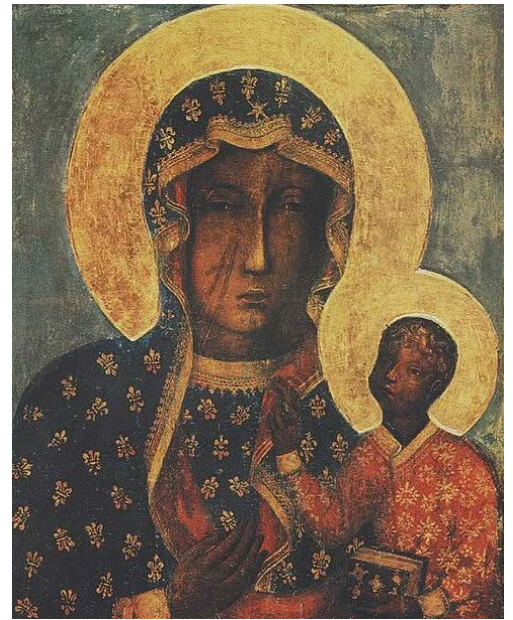
Some art historians note the Black

Madonna is a Byzantine icon and was painted in the sixth to ninth century. Then it arrived in Poland in 1382, as a wedding dowry between royals.

Scientific history notes that the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa that is in Poland today, was created in the 14th century believed to be a restoration of the painting by Polish artist Leonard Torwirt after it was damaged pm Easter in 1430, after it was struck it with a sword in a botched burglary attempt, leaving the slashes on the face of the Virgin Mary. The distinctive marks on Mary's face were never repaired and instead left to be a powerful reminder of the suffering endured by our Blessed Mother.

Through the most recent centuries miraculous events such as spontaneous healings occurring to those who made a pilgrimage to the portrait have been documented.

Our Lady of Czestochowa is also called “Black Madonna” because soot residue



from centuries of votive lights and candles burning in front of the Blessed Mother and Child Jesus.

The painting is at the Jasna Góra Monastery in Czestochowa.

As we celebrate Our Lady of Czestochowa, may Mary teach us to follow her example of faith and to keep our eyes fixed on her Son.

Diaconate Information Session

6:30 pm, Thursday, Sept. 17

in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Center

Presenters

Deacon Doug Breiding & Deacon Tom McFadden



DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE TURN TO GOD WITH ALL YOUR NEEDS



ON AUGUST 27, THE CHURCH CELEBRATES ST. MONICA, who prayed reverently for 17 years for her son and his faith. We know him as **SAINT AUGUSTINE! HIS FEAST DAY IS AUGUST 28**. This once irrational, reckless, and selfish man became one of our most brilliant spiritual leaders of the Church.

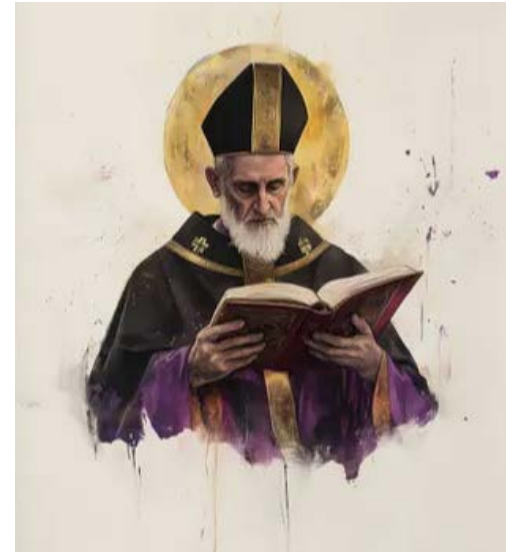
It is through her we learn not give up hope, be persistent, and do not hesitate to go to our Almighty God with our big asks.

Although he was raised Catholic and taught the importance of a devout prayer life, Augustine chose to turn away from God and his mother. Prioritizing everything else but his faith, he lived a sinful life, looking for immediate gratification.

Saint Monica argued with Augustine, and she cried countless tears to no avail.

It was her pastor that told her to take her grief and plead with God not her son. So that she did. She begged God to have mercy on her son. She prayed to have complete trust in God that His will be done, and Augustine would come back to the Real Presence of Christ in the Church and ultimately be with her in Heaven.

Not only did her prayer become fruitful and he returned to embrace his Christian foundation, but her son would also return to the Church, serve as the Bishop of Hippo, and be known by generations as St. Augustine one of the greatest saints of all time.



BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR THE SAKE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

MATTHEW 5:10



THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IS AUGUST 29. He was God's chosen one to prepare the way for Jesus. He remained unwavering even to the moment of his martyrdom. The Gospel of Mark (6:17-29) gives the account of his death

– he was beheaded at the command of Herodias, the wife of Herod Antipas. She despised him. He was a threat to her position. So, she manipulated her daughter to ask for John's head on a platter upon Herod telling the royal young lady he would grant her anything she wanted for performing a graceful and captivating dance at one of the royal gatherings. Reluctant, but true to his word, he had guards decapitate John the Baptist and presented the daughter with his head.

The disciples heard of this horrendous event and recovered the body to bury him.

John the Baptist was considered a great prophet. Even Jesus said he was "more than a prophet."

"Truly I say unto you, among them that are born of women there has not risen a

greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:9-15).

St. John the Baptist spoke truth and announced Christ's ministry would be much greater than his. He spoke with such boldness calling others to make a change of heart and follow God. He preached with his words and his actions.

When the disciples told Jesus of His cousin John's horrifying death, He went off... alone...by boat to pray (Matthew 14:13).

When he returned, he found 5,000 people who had heard and followed him. He healed them, preached, and with only five loaves and two fish, fed them.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10



The Secret Lives of Butterflies

Speaker Heather Tokas, the founder of West Virginia Monarch Butterfly Day (Sept.12th) is an award-winning international speaker and entrepreneur. She is the first and only butterfly farmer in West Virginia. Born in Wheeling, graduate of Bethany College in social work, Heather is also the founder of metaStone: a healing group located in Wellsburg, WV.

September 8, 2026
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p. m.

St. Joseph Retreat Center
Wheeling, WV

Cost:
\$15

Did you know butterflies have personalities? Yes! Even the caterpillars do quirky things.

Butterflies are no exception when it comes to having preferences and particular interests.

Heather Tokas will present a slide show of interesting photos encompassing the entire life cycle of butterflies while talking about her experiential wisdom gained over the last 50 years.

If you have photos of caterpillars, butterflies, or moths that you need identified, bring them and Heather will most likely be able to do that for you.



Butterfly life cycle kits will be available for sale so you may enjoy a personal experience at home.

Reserve your spot today!
Contact Anna Marie Troiani at 304-907-0171
or email at: atroiani@csjoseph.org

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23

God gives Eliakim the keys to the House of David.

Responsorial: Psalm 138

“Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.”

Second Reading: Romans 11:33-36

To God be the glory forever.

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus promises Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For Pope Leo, that he may grow in wisdom and courage as he follows in the footsteps of Saint Peter, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all those in positions of leadership—in government, business, or family—that they may exercise their authority with forbearance and fairness, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those threatened by floods, hurricanes, and other storms of summer, that they may be kept safe, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For young people returning to school, that their curiosity and love for learning may be rekindled by a new school year, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For each of us in this diocese, that we may sharpen our eyes to recognize the Christ, the Son of the living God, in our sisters and brothers in need, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

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ENROLL TODAY

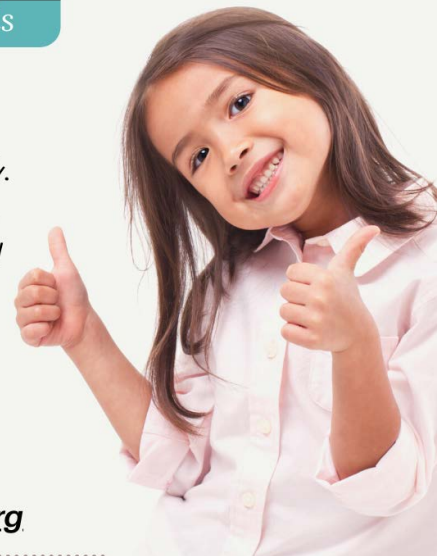
WV Catholic Schools

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by knowledge.
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by faith.



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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.