



## Are You a Follower of the Word or Just a *Fan*?

It's easy to be a "fan" of Jesus. Fans admire from a distance, share uplifting quotes, nod along to inspiring messages, and feel comforted by the idea of great faith.

Scripture does not ask for fair-weather spectators. The Word of God calls disciples.

So, are you a follower of the Word or just a fan?

If we want to strive to be the Body of Christ—fully alive and growing in faith—then we cannot be content with inspiration alone. We need encounter. We need formation. We need the living Word of God to shape our minds, our habits, and our choices.

Pope Leo XIV invites us to rediscover the power of Sacred Scripture as the place where we can meet Christ and hear Him

speak into our lives. This isn't merely about information. It's about relationship.

The way Jesus begins His mission should open our eyes.

He goes out to call disciples, He does not head to Jerusalem, to the temple, or even to a synagogue. He goes to the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He chooses to walk among the everyday hardworking people – the sailors and fishers, not gathered in prayer at temple. He later explains why: He came to call sinners, not the righteous.

That detail matters for anyone who has ever hesitated to open the Bible because they feel unworthy or unprepared.

The Word is not only for the polished, the educated, or the "holy enough." The Word is for

sinners who want to be saved, for ordinary people trying to take the next faithful step.

Many of us can honestly say, "I turn to God in my struggles," and others might add, "I thank Him in my joy." But here is the deeper question: are we turning to the pages of His book to guide us toward life to its fullest? Are we letting God remind us of who we are, and that the Author of the greatest story is with us always?

Saint Jerome gives us a quote that cuts through the noise: "When we pray, we speak to God; and when we read Scripture, God speaks to us."

Prayer and Scripture belong together. If we speak but never listen, we shouldn't be surprised when faith becomes thin,

*continue...*

## Follower or *Fan*?



emotional, or easily shaken. As fans of Christ we may enjoy the feeling comfort faith brings, but as followers of the Word of God we build our lives on the voice of Christ to be His hands and feet.

It is no accident that Pope Francis instituted Word of God Sunday for the whole Church, celebrated on the third Sunday of Ordinary Time, to highlight not only the importance of Scripture in our faith and prayer, but also the importance of personally reading the Word of God. Saint Jerome—whose death anniversary this observance commemorates—translated the Bible into Latin because he believed something urgent: “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” That is not meant to shame us; it is meant to awaken us.

If we want to know Christ, we must become friends of His Word.

Of course, Scripture is not always easy. Some passages feel confusing, dense, or daunting. That is precisely when humility must become our doorway. Ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to understand what God is saying to us. The goal is to begin listening.

Saint Jerome also preached that we are so precious to God that each of us has been assigned a guardian angel—an invisible companion who protects and guides our soul, prays for us, and presents our prayers to God.

Let your guardian angel nudge you toward something beautifully simple: open the Bible.

If you don't know where to start,

start by getting to know your Bible: the introduction, the contents page, the indexes. Some include topical guides that help connect Scripture with real life.

Begin with the Psalms to learn how to pray, praise, and cry out honestly.

Spend time with Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to walk with Christ through His life.

Just start.

There is no one-size-fits-all method. God knows your strengths, your weaknesses, and your story.

One practical reminder: not all Bibles are the same. The Catholic Bible contains 73 books, while most Protestant Bibles contain 66. The seven included in Catholic Bibles and not in most Protestant Bibles are Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch, along with additional sections in Esther and Daniel. These deuterocanonical books are considered inspired by the Holy Spirit and have been part of the Church's canon from the early centuries.

And we are blessed to live in an age with many resources to support our resolve to read and understand Scripture.

In the end, Saint Jerome's invitation remains steady and clear: learn, love, and live the Sacred Scriptures—the Word of God, the Word of Life.

Fans may applaud the Word.

Followers are formed by it.



# POPE LEO XIV:

## REDISCOVER THE POWER OF SCRIPTURE

Pope Leo XIV invites us to rediscover the power of Sacred Scripture—a place where we can encounter Christ and hear Him speak into our lives.

Pray with him:

Lord Jesus, living Word of the Father,  
in You we find the light that guides our steps.

We know that the human heart lives restless, hungry  
for meaning,  
and only your Gospel can give it peace and fullness.

Teach us to listen to you each day in the Scriptures,  
to let ourselves be challenged by your voice,  
and to discern our decisions  
from the closeness to your Heart.

May your Word be nourishment in weariness,  
hope in darkness,  
and strength in our communities.

Lord, may your Word never be absent from our lips  
or from our hearts—the Word that makes us sons and  
daughters, brothers and sisters,  
disciples and missionaries of your Kingdom.

Make us a Church that prays with the Word,  
that is built upon it and shares it with joy,  
so that in every person the hope of a new world may  
be born again.

May our faith grow in the encounter with you through  
your Word,  
moving us from the heart  
to reach out to others,  
to serve the most vulnerable,  
to forgive, build bridges, and proclaim life.

Amen.

*To watch the video of Pope Leo XIV recite his sincere and powerful prayer go to: [youtu.be/s1CBCcEIkME?si=RMxD92XXMJBbO9P3](https://youtu.be/s1CBCcEIkME?si=RMxD92XXMJBbO9P3)*



# Happy Catholic Schools Week!

## CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS throughout West Virginia

Catholic Schools Week begins Sunday, January 25, inviting families, parishioners, alumni, and neighbors across West Virginia to celebrate the “Catholic Schools – United in Faith and Community.”

Superintendent of Catholic Schools Jennifer Hornyak said it is a week of gratitude and excitement as the Catholic school community and perspective families attend school and parish events, meet educators, and learn firsthand what makes Catholic education a gift for our youth, the Church, and society.

Catholic Schools Week is more than an annual tradition—it’s a chance for all the faithful to reflect on the shared vocation of forming young hearts in Christ, she said.

At baptism, parents accept the responsibility of being the first teachers of their child’s faith, with godparents joining them in that sacred promise. When children reach school age, that responsibility expands to include the parish community through religious education and, for many families, through Catholic schools. In this way, Catholic education becomes a beautiful partnership: parents, educators, and the Church family working together to help children know God, grow in virtue, and live the Gospel.

It is an investment for our future. West Virginia Catholic schools are a treasure passed from generation to generation—places where Christ is not limited to religion class alone, but where the teachings of the Church are woven across every subject, activity, and service opportunity. Whether students are learning math, reading literature, participating in athletics, singing in choir, or serving the community, Catholic schools aim to help them connect knowledge to meaning and faith to everyday life. This “whole child” approach forms students not only for success, but for holiness.

“We are committed to keeping this transformative education accessible,” Hornyak said. “The actual cost to educate (ACE) a student in our schools far exceeds the tuition we have charged for many decades. This ‘tuition gap’ has been bridged through the generosity of our parishes, diocese tuition assistance support, and other forms of advancement efforts at the local level (grants, program sponsors, awards, fundraisers, etc.). Because of this community-wide investment, we have been able to offer



a high-value, Catholic education at a fraction of the true cost, ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of developing a child's spiritual and academic potential."

Hornyak added she is grateful for the West Virginia HOPE Scholarship expansion.

"It is a very exciting time for our current school families who have not been eligible for the HOPE Scholarship until now," she said. "With the expansion of the HOPE Scholarship program for 2026-2027 school year, all students who are eligible to be enrolled in a WV public school will now be able to apply. We are blessed to live in a state where it is possible that parents can choose a Catholic education if they feel that is the best educational learning experience for their child."

West Virginia's Catholic schools have an irreplaceable role in the Church's evangelizing mission. While faith is the binding element, Catholic schools repeatedly affirm an essential truth: parents remain the primary educators of their children. That is why Catholic school communities strive to extend beyond classroom walls and embrace the family as an integral part of school life. When teachers, administrators, staff, students, and parents work together, the light of faith is strengthened—uniting culture with faith and faith with daily living.

"As our students and academic honors continue to flourish, we thank those who have been on this journey with us over many years and we invite others to be a part of our flourishing story," she said.

Catholic Schools Week is your open invitation to gather with them for Masses, assemblies, open houses, and special activities. Come and see. Experience the joy of faith-filled learning, meet the people who make the schools strong, and discover how Catholic education forms students for life.



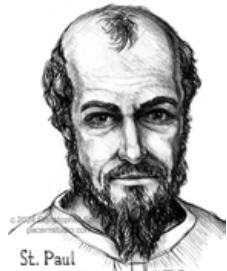
# From Darkness to Light

## *Saints Who Still Shape Our Faith*

Late January offers Catholic families a beautiful strand of feast days, showcasing conversion, courage, life-long learning, and finding joy. These saints help us become better disciples, strengthen our mission, and celebrate our faith.

### January 25: The Conversion of St. Paul

#### *When Christ Stops Us in Our Tracks*



St. Paul

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, celebrated on January 25, is one of the most widely known conversion stories in history. Saul (later called Paul) was feared by early Christians for his cruelty. On the road to Damascus, he was thrown from his horse because of a sudden intensely bright light. That is when he encountered Christ, who asked, “Saul, why are you persecuting me? I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4-5).

Shaken and blinded, Saul could do nothing but surrender. When a Christian named Ananias came and baptized him, his blindness went away. From that moment, Saul became Paul—a follower of Christ who would spend the rest of his life traveling, establishing churches, and proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul’s letters are the earliest records of the life and history of the early Church. He is the author of first and second Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, first and second Corinthians, Romans, and Philemon. Other epistles bear his name—Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, and first and second Timothy—though it is believed they were written after his death.

Christ’s words to St. Paul give the Church family a direct, challenging reminder: when we persecute others, we persecute Christ. Our words and actions toward others are never “small” in God’s eyes.

### January 26: Saints Timothy and Titus

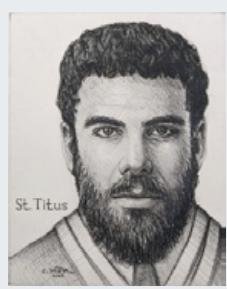
#### *Conversions That Become Mission*



St. Timothy

On Jan. 26th, the Church honors Saints Timothy and Titus, two men so moved by Paul’s preaching that they joined him as missionaries, helping souls turn from darkness into the light of Jesus’ love.

Timothy was the son of a Jewish Christian woman married to a Greek pagan man. His mother was forbidden to immerse their son in the lessons and hopes of Christ. But when St. Paul preached to the Gentiles in Lystra (in present-day Turkey), Timothy—about 20 years old—was intrigued. He knew his mother and maternal grandmother were Christian by faith and virtue, but it was St. Paul who changed the course of his life. Timothy began following and practicing the faith openly and sharing it with others. When St. Paul returned to the region, Timothy met the Apostle and became a missionary with him in Greece, Turkey, and Israel, traveling through places such as Corinth, Thessalonica, and Philippi. St. Paul called him his “loyal son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2).

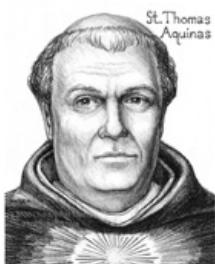


St. Titus

We know fewer details about Titus’ early life, but the Letter to Titus tells us he was a Gentile Christian. He traveled to Jerusalem with St. Paul and was sent to preach in Corinth. Paul later entrusted him with building up the Church in Crete, stopping false preaching and abuses, and appointing leaders of strong faith and character to serve as bishops and presbyters (Titus 1-3). Good works would be the evidence of their faith in God (Titus 3:8).

## January 28: St. Thomas Aquinas

## *What We Love Reveals Who We Are*



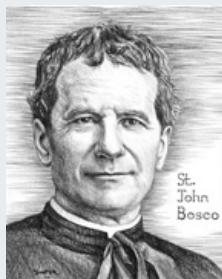
On January 28, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Church gives families a saint who pairs brilliance with humility. Consider his quote: “The things we love tell us what we are.” Thomas is the patron saint of students, Catholic schools, and universities. He is described as a humble and brilliant writer, teacher, and preacher of God and His Church, and his writings were so influential he was named a Doctor of the Church.

Yet he wasn’t always considered intelligent. He was so quiet, classmates called him a “dumb ox.” His teacher, St. Albert the Great, defended him and predicted Thomas would do great things. He was right. St. Thomas even evangelized his own family into the faith, and his thinking, homilies, and writings continue to inspire millions.

St. Thomas Aquinas, pray for us—help us to love God deeply, enrich our souls, and become better students and teachers of the faith.

## January 31: St. John Bosco

## *Christian Joy and the Mission to Youth*



On January 31, the Church celebrates St. John Bosco, a 19th-century saint who shows how to live the faith with Christian joy. It is fitting to remember him during Catholic Schools Week, because he believed Catholic education and Christian values were crucial: “If you want to have a good society and moral order.”

From the time he was nine years old, John Bosco told his mother he wanted to be a priest and help children love Jesus and all of His creation. In 1841 he was ordained Father John Bosco—often called Don Bosco (“Don” meaning father). He made it his mission to teach youth to know God, reflect on their faith, and celebrate the sacraments frequently.

*Editor’s note: The portraits with this article are by WV native artist Christopher Santer of PACEM STUDIO [www.pacemstudio.com](http://www.pacemstudio.com)*



## *Prayer for Justice and Peace*

*By Bishop Mark Brennan*

“How long, O Lord, how long?”

We see violence and hatred on every side, cruel language, and crueler actions. Many of your children are treated harshly by those who should protect them and others, lacking food, are given stones when they ask for bread and a scorpion when they ask for a fish.

“How long, O Lord, how long?”

We see friends and neighbors suffering because of who they are or where they come from. We have forgotten that you are the Father of us all and that we are brothers and sisters.

Turn our hearts to you and to those who share our land.

Make us peacemakers committed to work for that justice, which alone can ensure a lasting peace among your children, so that we may be in truth a single family united in fraternal love. Bind us together, Father, as your beloved children.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, the King of Justice, and the Prince of Peace.



# THE MAN WHO BUILT OUR DIOCESE

CELEBRATE BISHOP RICHARD WHELAN'S BIRTHDAY, JAN. 28

*The following is another article in a series of feature stories, celebrating our 175th Anniversary as a diocese.*



On January 28th honor the birthday of the man who literally rolled up his sleeves and raised the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston brick by brick. Bishop Richard Vincent Whelan, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling, was born in Baltimore on January 28, 1809.

He was ordained to the priesthood at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris, in 1832. As a young priest he was sent to serve in the missions around Martinsburg, Virginia. Father Whelan's residence was in Harpers Ferry.

"Father Whelan labored with zeal for the spiritual good of the Catholics, and for the edification and conversion of the Protestants," noted *The Lives of Deceased Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States* by Richard H. Clarke, LL.D. (Vol. III)

On December 19, 1840, the Holy See -papal bull-noted Father Whelan would be the second Bishop of Richmond. On March 21, 1841, at the age of 32, he was indeed installed as bishop.

Throughout 1842, Bishop Whelan traveled the western reaches of the Diocese of Richmond to bring scattered Catholics the sacraments and assess the needs and potential of these regions.

In 1846, he moved his base from Richmond to Wheeling, never returning to Richmond's capital city.

Clarke's publication described the work ethic of the small in stature, but huge in will bishop as, "No kind of work was beneath the dignity of the good Bishop, when intended for the service of God."

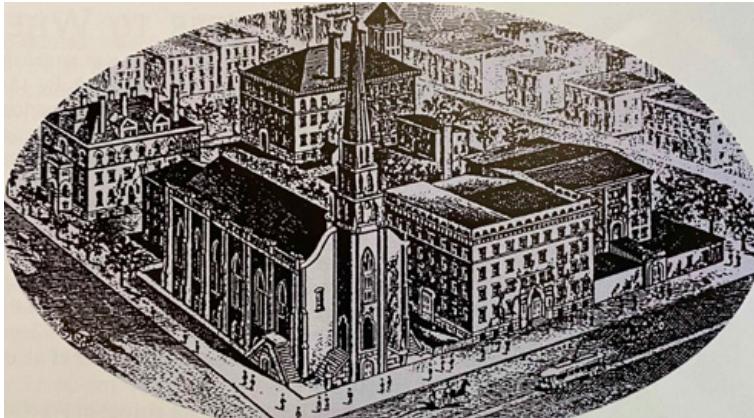
Further Clarke cited the example of Whelan's time in Martinsburg, a traveling man impressed with the church there said, "Who did the stonework on this chapel?" The answer was. 'I did,' 'Who did the brick work?' Answer, 'I did.' 'Who did the woodwork?' Answer, 'I did.' 'Who is the pastor?' Answer. 'I am.' The man gave the pastor \$50 for his church. That would be worth more than \$3,500 today.

In 1849, Bishop Whelan convinced the Church hierarchy in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to petition the Holy See to divide the Diocese of Richmond by the natural barriers of the Allegheny Mountains.

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On July 19, 1850, the Holy See established the Diocese of Wheeling. The diocese included all of what is now West Virginia except for the eastern panhandle and Potomac highlands, and included several counties in southwestern Virginia, all the way to the Tennessee border. Four days later, on July 23, 1850, Blessed Pope Pius IX named Bishop Richard Whelan as the first bishop for the diocese.



"On Sunday after Sunday, for years, Bishop Whelan catechized the children, heard confessions, preached at all services. . . celebrated two Masses, visited the sick, and left no pastoral duty undone, even while teaching and conducting his (college/seminary)," Clarke noted. "He was,

as a priest or bishop, never known to miss a pastoral appointment, n matter what the weather, or how bad the roads. He often reached the distant Mass station, over deep snow with feet frostbitten. His reply on such occasions was, 'If pastors want to form and be consoled with fervent and self-sacrificing congregations, they must themselves set them the example."

By 1874, Bishop Whelan's non-stop work life for the Church had taken a toll on his body. He died in on a trip to Philadelphia and Baltimore, checking himself into St. Agnes' Hospital in Baltimore, where he passed. His right-hand man, Fr. Henry F. Parke reported that his "last days were most devout, speaking on none but religious subjects, reading his breviary as long as he could hold the book, his eyes alternately looking at the crucifix in his hand and an ecce homo (an image of the Passion of Christ) on the wall. His last words were, 'My work is done.'" That was July 7, 1874.



**\$1,000,000 Campaign Goals:**

- Roof Replacement
- Exterior Stone Repair
- AC Replacement
- Interior Repair & Restoration

The Cathedral of St. Joseph is more than a parish—it is the spiritual heart of the entire Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. It is where we gather as one Church for Chrism Mass, ordinations, diocesan celebrations, and moments of mourning and hope.

As we mark 100 years of grace, we invite every Catholic across the Diocese to participate in preserving this sacred treasure that belongs to all of us.

## Let Us Go Rejoicing to the House of the Lord

Psalm 122:1

# Celebrating 100 Years of Faith.



### A Cathedral for All the Faithful

The Cathedral of St. Joseph is more than a parish—it is the spiritual heart of the entire Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. It is where we gather as one Church for Chrism Mass, ordinations, diocesan celebrations, and moments of mourning and hope.

**Donate Today!**  
Support the Cathedral of St. Joseph  
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Make checks payable to:  
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or mail to:  
Cathedral Campaign  
PO Box 230  
Wheeling, WV 26003



Center for Dominican Studies  
2025–26 Events

# Celebrations of Dominican Saints

ODU and The Center for Dominican Studies invite students, faculty, staff, and community members to join us for our annual three-part series of Dominican Saints lectures. Please mark your calendars.



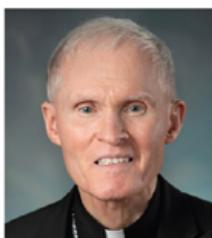
## **St. Albert the Great Lecture**

**Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025 | 11 a.m.**

Erskine Hall's Sr. Mary Andrew Matesich, OP Theatre

“Thinking Outside The Panel: How Solar Panel Orientation and Location Influence Power Production, The Local Environment and Economic Value”

*Presented by Dr. Rydge Mulford*



## **St. Thomas Aquinas Lecture**

**Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026 | 11 a.m.**

Erskine Hall's Sr. Mary Andrew Matesich, OP Theatre

“Today’s Immigration: Friend or Foe?”

*Presented by Bishop Mark Brennan*



## **St. Catherine of Siena Lecture**

**Wednesday, April 29, 2026 | 3:30 p.m.**

Sansbury Hall's Colonial Room

“We Each Have a Part to Play: Discerning Your Role in Promoting the Common Good”

*Presented by Sr. Julia Walsh, FSPA*



*Founded by the Dominican Sisters of Peace.*



# CURSILLO

## INFORMATIONAL SESSION

**Where: St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church**



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If you are unable to attend in person, let us know, and you can join via Zoom.

For the Zoom link, please email:

[Cursillo@dwc.org](mailto:Cursillo@dwc.org) or you can leave a message at the following phone number – it is checked frequently – 304-233-0880, Ext. 480.

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**Is the Holy Spirit calling you to a richer relationship with God?**

- Cursillo is a Catholic movement that encourages Christians to deepen their faith and become better evangelizers in their community.
- Those who have “lived” Cursillo say it is an experience of living and sharing with others in a loving and caring Christian community.
- It is not a theoretical course but, an experience that must be lived. It is said to be life-changing experience, which brings with it the discovery of the basis of Christianity and its fundamental significance to life.
- It is an experience that can change your relationship with Christ.
- The motto of Cursillo is make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.

**January 31, 2026 - 10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
407 Jackson Street, Fairmont, WV 26554**



**DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON**

**CURSILLO MINISTRY**

1311 Byron Street

PO Box 230

Wheeling, West Virginia 26003

304-233-0880, Ext. 480 | [cursillo@dwc.org](mailto:cursillo@dwc.org) | [dwc.org](http://dwc.org) (Events – Cursillo)

# Who is my Neighbor?

## Catholic Social Teaching & Immigration



**February 5, 2026**

**6:30 - 8:00 pm | St. Michael Parish Angelus Center**

Join us for a synodal style listening session concerning the most recent teachings of the Catholic Church, from Pope Leo XIV, to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to our own Bishop Mark Brennan, growing in hospitality, solidarity, and compassion with the many refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and immigrants around the world.

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### Featuring

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**Very Reverend Fr. Carlos Melocoton Pastor, St. Michael Parish  
Genevieve Volpe**

**Reverend Fr. Lusius (Luis) Mite Parochial Vicar, SVD,  
(Society of Divine Word Missionaries)**

**Lou Volpe ~ Facilitator**

**Joined by the Most Reverend Bishop Mark E. Brennan**

## WORD OF GOD SUNDAY

### First Reading: Isaiah 8:23-9:3

The Prophet Isaiah declares, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

### Responsorial: Psalm 27

"The Lord is my light and my salvation."

### Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

Let there be "no divisions among you." We belong to Christ; His Cross is our salvation. Allowing divisions among you empties the Cross of its meaning.

### Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Christ calls out to Peter and his brother Andrew, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." They abandoned their nets and follow Jesus.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

## 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
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Keyser - coming soon	FM	98.9
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
St. Marys - Parkersburg	FM	105.3
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Summersville	FM	91.3
Wheeling - Martins Ferry, OH	FM	90.7
Weirton - Steubenville	FM	97.9

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Radio Luz de Vida streaming at [www.rdo.to/WLOL2](http://www.rdo.to/WLOL2)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we continue to shine a light on poverty, injustice, and neglect, inspiring others to join the movement to alleviate this darkness from our world, let us pray to the Lord...

That world leaders turn away from darkness so they may see clearly the path of justice is to unite and be servant leaders, let us pray to the Lord...

That we support our students, teachers, and staff in our Catholic schools, so they remain unapologetically Catholic and reflect Christ's works, lessons, love, and mercy, let us pray to the Lord...

During this week's International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, their stories strengthen our resolve to stand up against evil, and through prayer, fasting, and unity we change harden hearts of those filled with hate, let us pray to the Lord...

*Lord hear our prayer*

**ENROLL TODAY**

WV Catholic Schools

*Empowered  
by knowledge.  
Transformed  
by faith.*



Register today

[wvcatholicschools.org](http://wvcatholicschools.org)



## *Liturgy of the Hours* LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

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).