My brothers and sisters in Christ, I want to speak to you briefly about the ongoing impact of the coronavirus on Catholic life throughout the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese.

I want to thank all of our parishes and pastors for what they are doing to serve the spiritual lives of our Faithful during this unprecedented time, in which public celebrations of the Mass and other liturgies will be suspended at least through the month of April. Many priests are live-streaming Masses on a daily basis, as we are from the Cathedral of St. Joseph on Saturday evening at 6:00 and every weekday at 12:05 p.m. I invite you to participate, if you have not yet done so, by going to [www.DWC.org/Mass](http://www.DWC.org/Mass).

Our daily routines and interaction have been so disrupted by this pandemic, which health officials believe has not yet peaked in our country. The longer-term impacts are deeply troubling: the economic damage to restaurants, small shops and other businesses, the loss of part-time and full-time jobs, schools closed, sporting events cancelled and so much more. It is a huge change from just two months ago.

As Catholics following Jesus Christ, we in his Church are committed to doing everything we can to alleviate the burdens the pandemic has imposed on so many people. We are striving to meet essential needs of parishioners and non-Catholics alike through Catholic Charities and our parishes’ charitable outreach efforts.

For us Catholics, not being able to participate in Mass and other liturgical celebrations, particularly during the holy seasons of Lent and Easter, is especially difficult. More than ever, we long for the comfort and support of our communal prayer and the Sacraments. We would do well to recall Jesus’ words: “Be not afraid.” Especially now, we need to claim the promise of our Faith, which unites us spiritually no matter how long we are separated physically, and trust in the God who created us, who loves us without reserve, who is with us always and who never disappoints us.

Like you and your family, the parishes of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are also suffering from this crisis. Now, perhaps more than at any time in recent history, your parish needs you. Without your faithful support, your parish will take on water and may sink. I wish to thank those of you who have responded to your pastor’s call to get medicine for an elderly shut-in or give out food at the parish pantry. This is the charity Christ calls us to show others. I also want to thank those who have continued to support their parish financially. I have been edified by hearing of parishioners leaving donations under the rectory door or mailing them in with kind notes to their pastors.

It occurs to me that this is an opportune time to consider online or direct deposit giving, which is financial support with a secure “social distancing” component. Your parish website should provide the information to sign up for it, if you chose to do so, or, if your parish doesn’t engage in online giving yet, you can give through the diocesan website, indicating to which parish to send your gift.

Your support and these funds are critical for your parish’s health, especially so that it may continue to serve the less fortunate and homebound during this pandemic. Just as with you and your household, the parish family’s needs don’t suddenly disappear just because people cannot physically attend church at this time.

For this reason, we have suspended the Diocese’s annual Catholic Sharing Appeal for the time being in order to allow our parishes to focus first and foremost on their needs and to sustain the ministries that are so vital to their members and families. Our parishes are there for us in the good times – weddings, baptisms, First Communions – and in the bad times – when we’ve lost a loved one or are facing a personal crisis. RCIA groups, which help persons who wish to enter our Church; St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, which help the poor, priests anointing the sick, preparation of parish bulletins in digital form and other communications to parishioners – many such ministries continue. Please support your parish.

I make a special plea for our Catholic schools. Just as our parish priests are offering Masses in private during this public health crisis, so our Catholic school teachers are continuing to educate our young people, using online technology or physical materials they call “blizzard packets.” I am truly impressed by their zeal and creativity! Although students and teachers are not physically together, they are still actively engaged in the educational enterprise. Alumni, parents, friends of Catholic education: consider a nice gift to a Catholic school to help them pay their teachers and cover their other costs. The Diocese is helping as best it can, but it cannot do it all.

I assure you that I pray for you every day, for you and for all the residents of our great State. Join me in praying especially for those who have been infected by the virus and for their quick recovery. Pray also for our medical personnel and others who are caring for the sick and for all those, such as our police, firefighting personnel and grocery store clerks, who are still providing essential services to us.

Without question, this is a difficult time for us all, but we must remain steadfast and spiritually united, even though we are forced to remain physically apart for a time. We are doing the right thing by cooperating with our public authorities and health care officials during this crisis. Adults: take care in particular to comfort and reassure our children that better times will return.

With the abiding grace and abundant mercy of God our Father, His Son and their Holy Spirit, we can face our present situation not with fear and panic but with hope and confidence. Thank you for all that you do to live your faith and to support others, especially in your parish. We eagerly look forward to being together again soon around the Lord’s Eucharistic altar to taste how good the Lord is and to experience tangibly the outpouring of his tremendous love. Until then, God bless you all!

[Mark E. Brennan]
WORD OF GRACE FOR WV CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

As I sit down and write to you this week’s Word of Grace, my new weekly communication to you, I can’t help wanting to share with you like a beamingly proud, bragging parent or grandparent. From my last letter you know that I am so proud of our principals and teachers, and I wholeheartedly remain just as impressed, but this week my heart has been touched time and time again by our students – your children and grandchildren.

We know how Christ loved children through the Blessing of the Children found in Mark 10:13-14:

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Jesus is praising the trust and dependence of a child, telling us we need to learn from their example.

I heard that message echo in my head, as I read emails from principals sharing how students and families are not only adapting well, but are supporting and showing compassion for them.

I was brought to joyful tears as I watched countless Facebook videos of students reciting prayers, showing school spirit, and singing declarations of love and gratitude for their teacher’s phone call or video chat.

Then when I learned about what the Notre Dame High School’s Class of 2020 did in lieu of a cancelled trip to Walt Disney World, my heart soared. When they should have been enjoying the Florida sun these students concentrated their efforts on random acts of kindness to the elderly in nursing homes and patients in local hospitals with cards, prayers, and videos. At that moment I knew we had prepared our children well for these days of uncertainty. It is truly times like this that reinforce our drive to continue to be elite.

I shouldn’t be surprised with all of these amazing testimonies, because they showcase how we take our jobs seriously in the Catholic Schools of WV. We nurture attitude, set expectations high for student and teacher effort, and reinforce Christ as our guide for our actions.

Our entire Catholic school family is taking what some see as a mess and turning it to an opportunity to enhance everything we already had in place.

With the technology and online learning we have integrated over the years our students are not skipping a beat. Because we conduct student assessments not just once a year but multiple times a year, we have a measurable gauge to make sure students are not falling behind.

So, even though the walls around us are miles apart, we are running as some might say business as usual. Our RenWeb and FACTS programs at our school levels are up to date with student records and tuition payments. Registrations continue for the 2020-2021 school year. Websites remain a great source of information about our individual schools, programs, tuition, and financial aid. Principals are available through email for any questions and assistance.

It is important that you continue to be our number one marketing tool and share the good news of our schools, while encouraging families to register. Thank you in advance for helping your principals, advancement directors, and school secretaries in that endeavor. Your children are what make us great.

As we continue to learn from our students, we are strong and successful, because of our faith and trust in God.

May God continue to bless you always and in all ways.

Peace,

Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S.
HOMELESS FIND SHELTER AT PRIEST FIELD PASTORAL CENTER
By: Colleen Rowan

KARNEYSVILLE—In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, homeless individuals in Jefferson County have found shelter at the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston’s Priest Field Pastoral Center in Kearneysville.

The diocese is providing this shelter through the action plan for Jefferson County, Community Cares Center (CCC), to support at-risk populations during the COVID-19 crisis. The objective, organizers said, is to provide homeless individuals of the area with shelter, food, healthcare, and distancing safeguards. The diocese has answered that call by providing the Community Cares Center with sheltering facilities at the pastoral center for homeless individuals.

“Our location, Priest Field, is pretty well designed for this,” said Susan B. Kersey, director of the pastoral center, which opened its doors to those in need of shelter through the CCC March 26. The pastoral center is currently housing between four and six homeless individuals at the bunkhouse, and has the capability of sheltering a total of 15 people in need.

Kersey, who has worked at the pastoral center for 13 years and served as director for the past four years, reflected on the opportunity to shelter people in need during this crisis. She pointed to the many “healing” programs that the pastoral center hosts, from Alcoholics Anonymous counseling for both men’s and women’s groups, to spiritual retreats, to the history of the pastoral center and its Catholic presence in the community.

“What happens here,” she said, “the healing, the presence of the Lord's power here is amazing. ... It’s palpable what happens here, what this holy ground means. And this was just another extension of that—for the homeless to feel the love of the Lord, and that there's something good out there.”

Local shelters have closed in Jefferson County, Kersey said, so this initiative could not have come at a better time.

The CCC is overseen by site supervisor at the pastoral center, and there are very strict rules for those receiving shelter, Kersey said. According to the CCC, each guest must agree to rules for occupancy. This includes health screening. Each guest must comply with standardized pre-admission screening established by the CCC medical team, which are akin to what is being used to screen entrants to public healthcare facilities. If a guest leaves the CCC without permission, he or she cannot return. At the back gate of the pastoral center, which is locked at all times, there is a cell phone to contact the CCC site supervisor.

Through the initiative, the pastoral center’s chef prepares dinner each night for people staying at the bunkhouse. To adhere to social distancing, Kersey then delivers the meals to a picnic table near the bunkhouse for pick-up. Other daily meals are being provided through the Jefferson County Community Ministries Food Pantry.

In addition to sheltering at the bunkhouse, the pastoral center also has a cabin ready in case a family would need shelter through the CCC in the future.

For Kersey, the outreach the pastoral center is providing through the CCC during the pandemic is vital. “You’re dealing with people that don’t have a home,” she said. “So it was a pleasure, really, to be able to do this.”

Referrals for shelter are processed through the CCC, which is part of Jefferson County Community Ministries. Funding for the initiative is being provided through a number of state and local agencies, including the West Virginia Governor’s Contingency Fund and the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation COVID-19 Emergency Fund, among others.

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

For all those who are suffering from any sort of illness, but especially the Coronavirus, that they may know the healing touch of Christ, who healed the sick and raised the dead, we pray . . .

For health care workers, scientists and all those who are working diligently during this time, in order to help all of us to feel safe and healthy, that God may give them protection from harm and the insight to find healing and hope, we pray . . .

For leaders of the world, that they may grow in wisdom and good judgement as they consider ways to care for and protect us all, we pray . . .

For all of us, that we may enter into the spirit of Holy Week, as we recall and share in the suffering of Christ, we pray . . .

Lord hear our prayer

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LET NOTHING DISTURB YOU

Let nothing disturb you or take away your peace. Let nothing alarm you or hold your heart in fear. Know that all things fade away.

So be patient with what is and everything is yours. All you need your God will give. For with God in your heart and your faith strong in him know that you will forever live.

Let nothing disturb you or take away your peace. Make your home, make your home, make your home in God.

— Saint Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582)
As the Church takes action to keep everyone safe during the Coronavirus pandemic, priests, bishops and even Pope Francis are live-streaming and recording celebrations of Mass for the faithful. But sitting at home in your living room watching the Mass is radically different than praying and singing together with your parish community. We must ask ourselves, are we simply watching Mass as we would a movie or television show or are we engaging in the full, active, conscious participation called for by the Church?

How can we make our unique situation of “watching Mass” into a true act of participatory worship of the Living God? Let’s consider some ideas that may be helpful:

• **Mindset:** Make it intentional that it is “time for Church” in your household. Gather in front of the television or computer as a family. Let this be the only activity going on.

• **Environment:** Light candles, set up a table with a cloth (purple for Lent, white for Easter), consider placing a Bible and a crucifix on the table.

• **Participate:** Say the responses aloud, do the gestures (sign of the cross, stand, sit, etc.), actively engage in the prayers as you would if you were physically present at Mass.

• **Make a spiritual Communion:** Ask the Lord Jesus that although you cannot receive him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, you desire to receive him within your heart.

• **Discuss the readings and the homily:** After the Mass is over, turn off the television and discuss the readings and the homily with other members of your household. Finish the conversation with one idea you will put into action throughout the week ahead.

Sitting in front of the television or computer is less than an ideal way to worship. But then again, we are living in a time where we all wish things were different. Perhaps by incorporating some of these ideas, watching Mass on TV or internet can be a true act of worship, rather than just watching. We all long for the day when we can rejoin our brothers and sisters in body and spirit to worship the Lord together.
The Procession – MT 21:1-11
When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, ‘The master has need of them.’ Then he will send them at once.” This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

Say to daughter Zion, “Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.”
The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is the he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.” And when he entered Jerusalem the whole city was shaken and asked, “Who is this?” And the crowds replied, “This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Second Reading PHIL 2:6-11
Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Verse Before the Gospel PHIL 2:8-9
Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

Jesus stood before the governor, Pontius Pilate, who questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer.

Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?” But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, “Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him.” The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him.” The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They answered, “ABarabbas!” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?”

They all said, “Let him be crucified!” But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Let him be crucified!” When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the
crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.” And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha — which means Place of the Skull —, they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!” Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “This one is calling for Elijah.”

Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.” But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

**AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

**WHAT MAKES A WEEK HOLY?**

By: Sister Ellen Dunn, OP

In the short span of a few days, we will learn how to make our week ‘holy.’ In the context of the spiritual life, ‘holiness’ is understood as ‘wholeness.’ This wholeness is highlighted in the commandment ‘to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our spirit.’ It involves all of our senses and our thoughts and all our words spoken. This is a big responsibility for us. This Holy Week 2020, we have the gift of time and new space to allow us to focus anew on the mystery of Christ’s journey to the cross and beyond. We can unite our frustrations, questions, hurts and desires with Jesus as we remember His walk toward intense suffering and eventual death on our behalf.

As we endure hardships we have never known in our earlier lives, there is the opportunity to reflect on the Way of the Cross from our new perspective and to seek God’s care and protection in the process. Remember to look outward too—out the windows and doors—to see your neighbors as you make the way of the cross during the coming week. Jesus made the journey for all of us; many today are doing exactly that for their fellow human beings. May our eyes and ears be opened anew to behold the good works God is doing in and through and around us. Because we believe in the Resurrection of Jesus, we can make this year’s Way of the Cross with confidence and abiding Hope!
My Daily Living is back online! After a terrible accident last fall, Fr. John Chapin Engler, Jr., best known as Fr. Chapin, had to take a few months off to heal. He is pastor of Christ the King, Dunbar; Holy Trinity, Nitro; and St. Patrick Mission, Bancroft. Happily, thanks to many prayers and petitions he is presenting his at mydailyliving.com

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is a great resource for how to build the domestic church – the family. Go to www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/parents Scroll down and select “Tools for Building a Domestic Church.”

Word on Fire is providing Masses, videos, podcasts, homilies, and more. Click the resources tab at www.wordonfire.org

My Heart is Ready, www.facebook.com/www.davidhaas.us is a morning of song and reflection with David Haas that airs at 9am. Haas is a liturgical composer, author, performer, speaker and recording artist.

Make sure you are following John Angotti Music Mission on Facebook. Angotti, originally from Clarksburg, is a music missionary, providing inspirational music and faith. www.facebook.com/johnangottimusicmission

Follow the latest from the Vatican. Find Pope Francis on Twitter @pontifex and Vactican News at Vaticannews.va/en and on Facebook at Vaticannews

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