



# PatchQuilt

A publication of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia

Summer 2019

## CATHOLIC COMMITTEE OF APPALACHIA

81 Puddle Run, Spencer, WV 25276  
(304) 927-5798  
cca@ccappal.org

## CCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CHAIR

**Ed Sloane**  
Philadelphia, PA  
esloane@gmail.com

### VICE-CHAIR/SECRETARY

**Sarah George**  
Vanceburg, KY  
sarahgeorge@emmausfarm.org

### TREASURER

**Jerry Hardt**  
Salyersville, KY  
jhardt56@gmail.com

### AT LARGE

**Joan Wages**  
Roanoke, VA  
jmgw42@yahoo.com

### Gerrie Zimmer

Asheville, NC  
gzatnc@gmail.com

### CO-COORDINATORS

**Jeannie Kirkhope**  
Spencer, WV  
cca@ccappal.org

### Michael Iafrate

Marietta, OH  
michael.iafrate@gmail.com

### EPISCOPAL ADVISOR

**Bishop John Stowe**  
Diocese of Lexington, KY  
jstowe@dlex.org

### WWW.CCAPPAL.ORG

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## CCA WRITES TO POPE FRANCIS URGING ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE DEACONATE



*In response to Pope Francis' establishment of a commission to study the possibility of again ordaining women to the permanent diaconate, CCA's Board of Directors approved the following letter which was sent to Francis on February 26, 2019. CCA is grateful to member Don Becher of Charleston, WV for drafting the letter.*

Dear Pope Francis,

We are writing to express our hope that the Church will soon be able to call forth women, as well as men, to serve as ordained deacons in the ministries of liturgy, word and charity. We are aware that a committee which you commissioned to study the possibility of ordaining women deacons is complete and its report is now before you.

We are the Catholic Committee of Appalachia—an organization that has sought to be a force for the poor and neglected of our mountainous area for almost 50 years. We trust that the commission has presented to you a strong theological basis for the ordination of women to the diaconate. We urge you out of our sense of need and fairness to allow this to happen.

Jesus entrusted the Church with the mission to embody and proclaim the Good News of love and mercy to all nations. In our part of the world, the Appalachian region of the United States, we have both great missionary opportunities and formidable pastoral challenges. We still have large areas that are underserved by any Catholic clergy, and we hear regularly from our members of chronic unmet pastoral needs.

We are grateful for your courageous consideration of the possibility of women deacons and urge you allow those worthy women among us to serve in this capacity.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

Donald Becher,  
Member Representative  
Edward Sloane,  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Sarah George,  
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors  
Jeannie Kirkhope,  
Co-Coordinator  
Michael J. Iafrate,  
Co-Coordinator  
on behalf of CCA

## FROM THE CO-COORDINATORS

Jeannie Kirkhope

In the 16 years I've been involved with CCA, we've had a stream of stellar board members coming and going. They are asked to serve a three-year term, but some serve an additional term or even two! Every time someone's term comes to an end (whether it was 3, 6 or 9 years) Michael and I go through a grieving process and wonder how we'll ever manage without them. But each person adds a unique perspective and fills a gap such that their voice simply becomes a piece in the orchestra that has kept the symphony of CCA humming through various movements for nearly 50 years.

This year, we had to say goodbye to our Chair, **Matt Kosydar**, and former Treasurer, **Bruce Cahoon**, both of whom served two terms. Losing two key players simultaneously is always sad, but in a board that is already reduced in size, it was worrisome, too. They both joined when we still had 9 members, and left us with only three remaining, the minimum number allowed by law. Matt kept us on time, on track and focused, and we were grateful for his challenging questions, while Bruce gave invaluable insights and added comic relief just when we needed it. They were each instrumental in making decisions that helped CCA go through needed transitions to remain in existence, relevant in the region, and more self-sustaining. Thank you, gentlemen.

To bring us back up to our optimum number of 5, in their seats, we welcome **Gerrie Zimmer**, also active in the North Carolina State Chapter, and **Joan Wages**, our first board member from Virginia in quite a while. We're already learning how Gerrie's realism and skills with logistics, and Joan's example of prophetic witness, enhance the work of CCA overall. Since we can accept up to 9, we are always open to more, but will be staggering the start of their terms so that, when they expire, we don't have too many vacancies at once again. We are looking to bring on one from West Virginia and one from southern Ohio to have representation from those states. Please contact us if you're interested.

As Co-Coordinators, we often talk about how grateful we are to have such a supportive board, but especially lately. With much of the work this year focusing on how the sexual abuse scandals are affecting the church in Appalachia, it's been exhausting for both of us, and emotionally taxing particularly for Michael who has kept a constant pulse on the ongoing multi-layered crisis right in Wheeling, where he lives. He has become as much of a target for criticism as an indispensable resource for up-to-the-minute information. Without the encouragement of the board and many members, CCA could not be the prophetic voice that it is in local, national, religious and secular media in the midst of these historic turbulent times.

Our work on behalf of victims of the abuse crisis is not the only thing bringing attention to CCA. People are watching Salt + Light Media's recent documentary,

*Magisterium of the People*, in both the United States and Canada. If you haven't yet viewed it, please see the ad on page 18 that shows how.

Beyond producing the documentary for us for free, the director of the film, Sebastian Gomes, was also kind enough to get a copy of the People's Pastoral personally delivered into the hands of Pope Francis with a note handwritten to him in Spanish inside, thanks to our member translator, Michael's sister, **Angie Iafate**.

This spring was busy with Michael and I giving talks to various college groups who came to our areas for their Appalachian service-immersion trips. But Michael also traveled quite a bit. He spoke to member **Debra Murphy's** classes at West Virginia Wesleyan, to member **Bob Pennington's** classes at Mount St. Joseph University, and to former board member **Bryan Wagoner's** classes at Davis & Elkins College. We screened *Magisterium of the People* and gave a joint talk at the *(Re)Imagining Catholic Vocation* conference at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and got a chance to see long time members **Sisters Loretta Scully** and **Nancy Fackner**, and visit the graves of **Sisters Mary Raymond Keane** and **Kathy Britt** while we were there. Michael was also invited by **Bishop Stowe** to give two talks to the Diocese of Lexington's lay parish life directors.

Meanwhile, between these and other office related tasks, we've been seeking extra funding to make up for the shortage from bishops this year. In addition to your generosity, ACF has contributed \$1,000 toward general operations, AMERC came through with \$6,000 for the Cherokee retreat, and the Sisters of St. Joseph Health Foundation and Wheeling Gift Committee blew us away with a total of \$8,000 earmarked for our latest project we've named **SAKO's**.

When SAKO's opens in 2020, CCA will finally have its own *Center for Reflection and Prayer* as called for in the 1975 Appalachian Bishops' pastoral letter, "*This Land is Home to Me*." In collaboration with, and additional funding from, Appalachian Catholic Worker (ACW), we are using all earmarked gifts and grants to restore an old homestead near Spencer, WV, donated by the family of an artist who went by the name "Sako." SAKO's has a dual purpose to serve both our organizations, and a dual meaning to its name. 1) CCA will be offering it for free retreat and meeting space, with preferential option given to grassroots groups of marginalized populations (women, people of color, LGBTQ, etc.). And, when not in use for that, 2) ACW will open its doors for short-term emergency housing. The name refers not only to the man who previously owned the property but, as an acronym, SAKO's honors those who first inhabited that land—*Shawnee And Kanawha Originally*.

Thank you for making these works of CCA possible with your prayers, participation, and donations. ▲

## FIGHTING ABUSE IN THE CHURCH: WHAT CCA IS DOING

Michael J. Iafrate

For almost two years, members of CCA have been increasingly engaged on the issue of clergy sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church, specifically as it impacts our Appalachian dioceses. We have acted as individuals, as CCA state chapters, and as an organization. This article explains the origin of this work and some of the things we have been doing.

In November 2017, CCA published a statement on sex abuse in the Catholic Church, available online and in the Summer 2018 issue of *Patchquilt*. Part of that statement focused on abuse in the church in Appalachia and called on civil and church authorities to issue a clarification on unresolved allegations against then-bishop Michael Bransfield (WV) that he had abused minors in Philadelphia in the 1970s. Then in March 2018, in light of Bransfield's impending retirement as bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (DWC), CCA wrote a letter to Pope Francis, the Apostolic Nuncio, and the Congregation for Bishops with a long list of criteria for what many West Virginia Catholics are looking for in a new bishop for the diocese. Since then, the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report affected Catholics nationally and worldwide. But because most of the dioceses contained in report fall within the Appalachian region, the report also implicated a number of the region's bishops and dioceses. Shortly after the release of the PA report, Bransfield's resignation and the immediate launch of an investigation into alleged sexual misconduct compelled CCA to further our efforts to help protect the vulnerable in our region and to work for church reforms necessary to address the roots of the problem.

The launch of the Bransfield investigation prompted Jeannie and me to write an open letter to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston which was published in five WV newspapers in September 2018. The letter called for the release of a list of credibly accused clergy and for various measures to be taken during the investigation, and it expressed concern about the appointment of Archbishop William Lori as overseer of the investigation due to his previously existing relationship with Bransfield. The piece drew the interest of groups and individuals who have since come to us with their own stories of sexual, spiritual, and emotional abuse by clergy as well as by lay officials of the DWC. This work of listening has been, in my view, some of the most meaningful and important work CCA has been called to do during this time, but also some of the most difficult, as it is evident how deeply this abusive culture has taken root in the church. These stories, combined with our own following of events in the DWC for the past several years, led us to initiate dialogue with Bryan Minor, the layperson appointed by Lori as Delegate of Diocesan Affairs. Through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and emails, Minor has done his best to respond to ques-

tions that we bring to him.

In order to work for reform, laypeople need to stay informed. To that end, we have added a page to the CCA website titled "Abuse in Appalachia" ([www.ccappal.org/abuseinappalachia](http://www.ccappal.org/abuseinappalachia)) as a resource for tracking news about the abuse crisis in our region. The page collects news articles, opinion pieces, and analysis on the various aspects of the situation in West Virginia, as well as various legal documents pertaining to specific clergy abuse cases. It also contains links to lists of credibly accused priests published by the dioceses of Appalachia.

One of those lists is the one finally published by the DWC in November 2018. Once the list was published, Bryan Minor solicited CCA's feedback. We gave them credit for the amount of detail contained in the list, but promised that we would continue to analyze it. Our study of the list has so far resulted in publication of an article co-authored by CCA member **Michael Barrick** and I on the case of Fr. Charles McCallister published at the *Appalachian Chronicle* website ([www.appalachianchronicle.com](http://www.appalachianchronicle.com)). Staying on top of the diocese's website also enabled us to catch the DWC quietly adding *nine names* to the list without publicizing the fact that they did so. CCA and SNAP issued a press release about the added names, and only then was the news widely reported in WV newspapers and acknowledged by the diocese. We continue to study and raise questions about the DWC list, and encourage local CCA chapters to do the same in your dioceses. The North Carolina chapter, for example, wrote to Bishop Peter Jugis of the Diocese of Charlotte upon hearing that he was delaying the publication of list of credibly accused priests. Jugis subsequently announced that a list would appear by the end of the year.

As the situation in West Virginia continues to unfold, Jeannie and I, as well as other CCA members, have published a number of additional op-eds and letters to the editor in various publications in West Virginia and beyond, including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Associated Press*, and the *Washington Post*. (All of them are available on the "Abuse in Appalachia" page.) CCA members have also been interviewed by various media to speak to these issues. Jeannie and I have been in regular contact with local media as well as with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Washington Post*, and *National Catholic Reporter* to comment on the news as it unfolds. CCA has also done our best to network with various groups and individuals around the state who are concerned about the crisis, most notably Lay Catholic Voices for Change which emerged among the parishes of Morgantown. A number of CCA members have been part of LCVC, which has so far organized a prayer vigil, letters to Archbishop

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**WHAT WE LOST AT WHEELING JESUIT UNIVERSITY***Kelly Strautmann (Reprinted with permission of Weelunk.com)*

I had been hearing hints for years that Wheeling Jesuit University was in trouble and could be headed for a big change. In 2017, many professors and staff were laid off or given an early retirement option, a clear indication that things were not going well. Maybe I just chose to hold out hope that someone would swoop in and stop the inevitable from happening.

But, the inevitable happened. Wheeling Jesuit University announced it was cutting all but 11 programs for the 2019-20 year. And the main programs to be cut are, in my opinion, the heart and soul of the school — the humanities and arts. What we have left is a shadow of what my alma mater was.

You guessed it. I am a 2004 graduate of the English literature department at WJU, just shy of a history minor because I enjoyed the subject and professors so much I couldn't quit taking their courses. When the devastating news hit last month that a major overhaul was in the works, and was swiftly followed by cutting all of the arts programs, I felt a strong need to share the value I found in those programs, in what a Bachelor of Arts at WJU was like.

WJU was not my first try at college. I lasted five weeks at another school. In 1999, I took what the kids today call a "gap year" — the difference was it started five weeks into a fall semester and was unplanned. I got a job bagging groceries, which left plenty of time to think about what I had done — quit college — and where I was headed — professional grocery bagger. (*A job I still wouldn't shrug off today that gave me so many fond memories, one I'd even say I have a nostalgia for. But that's another story for another day.*) I knew I personally needed more.

I feel like I actually got two rounds at WJU. My brother attended from 1995-99, and, I got to spend a lot of time on the campus with his friends. I'm happy to say many are still my dear friends today. It was

where I went to see his band play and hang out with him on weekends. It was where he sat with me in the computer room at the NTTC (National Technology Transfer Center) on campus and showed me the wonders of this new thing called the Internet.

After he graduated, I started to think about WJU as an option for me. I knew the campus well, and it already felt like home, with its picturesque green lawns and flowering trees in the springtime. I had a friend, a recent WJU graduate, who worked in the admissions office at the time. I started brainstorming with her about starting Jesuit the following fall. From the word go, the WJU community worked its magic on me — a recent graduate helping me and convincing me to give Jesuit a try, that it would be worth my time if I did. So in the fall of 2000, I became a Cardinal. What it was exactly that I was doing there, I wasn't quite sure of yet. I had only written a total of maybe three research papers in high school, and I was declared an undecided major when I started WJU. I had a long way to go.

Because I was an undecided major, I dove right into the core classes, many taught by humanities professors, and they changed me. I gave a passing effort in high school, but at Jesuit the classes were fascinating, and I wanted to work hard. The people I thank for this were my English, history, theology and philosophy professors and fellow students. I have a lot of memories, and some of them deserve to be mentioned and to be given their due for shaping me into who I am today.

Freshman year seminar and wellness programs were offered simply to better ourselves and to help us adjust to our new world. One of our tasks in my seminar class was community service. My group of classmates went to Moundsville and read library books to grade school students. I felt a connection with those students while I read to them, remembering being read to when I was their age. I was giving them something, a story time, without asking for or expecting something in return. I was just doing some good for goodness sake and helping others. I was exercising one of the key Jesuit values of "Women and Men for and with Others."

I had my first history course, and it opened my eyes to so many things. I feel that I truly began to learn about our country and our place in the world in my little 20th century history class. I had to write my first college research paper on something that impacted the culture of the United States of America. I chose the British Invasion of popular music in America, particularly the Beatles, and got my first taste of what it's like to write about something you actually enjoy. To have a professor sign off on your idea and be excited with you; to conduct your first research on a topic you love and then succeed at it —

**Catalogue of Sunsets in a Small Jesuit College**  
*Wheeling College 1954-2019*

The garden our priests and brothers tenured,  
thick dark stalks trimmed in golds and red  
along the east side of the residence,  
saw no sunset. By afternoon prayer,  
shadows of Whelan Hall brought the obscura  
of the honeybee and aphid. Argiopinae scripts  
unwove, and carpenters put down their projects.  
As in some old stories, there arrived a figure  
in simple clothes to pull stake on trellis and row.  
To have joined them at noon was to imagine  
what most of the earth does not know.

— *Jacob Strautmann*

this was huge for me.

This same history professor offered a course later in my career at WJU on women in religion, and I realize now that it laid the groundwork for me becoming a feminist. Prior to this class, I believe I thought feminism was just burning bras in the 1960s. I didn't realize it was about to help define who I was as a person and a mother. There was extra credit for this class, and one option was a visit to the nuns of the **Sisters of Saint Joseph** of Wheeling, West Virginia. It was a fascinating evening with my professor to an establishment I didn't even know existed prior to taking this course. My horizons were broadening, and I was learning things. Not only just about women, but about the community of Wheeling and myself.

I had an intro to world religions course. In a society that is lacking today in tolerance and understanding of others, I so greatly wish everyone had a chance to take that course. To approach learning about things you don't understand with an open mind; to explore new beliefs and traditions; to learn what religions have in common and where they differ; to discover that we are all just human at the core of it all.

I had a Jesuit priest for another religion class whose lectures were like entertaining performances. We learned about Native American religion and peyote. We read *Our Kind*. We listened to a Meatloaf song on cassette and dissected the lyrics. We learned that this professor would often stop his car when a turtle was dangerously crossing the road to help the turtle to the other side. Sometimes these turtles would end up in the garden on campus that the resident priests tended for their own meals. This class was only held once a week for three hours. I'd be lying if I didn't say it was

some of the best three hours of my week.

I had philosophy classes where we argued the meaning of love and the importance put on material possessions. We would take tests in Blue Books — a test book designed for writing an answer to one essay question on the spot. Talk about pressure, but you had to be able to articulate your thoughts quickly and precisely — a life skill that helps me to this very day. I took an intro to psychology class and finally started getting all of the Freud jokes. I did a project on manic depression. All of these courses opened my eyes and my mind and helped shape me into who I am today.

And then I met the English department.

I took a banned books class, and I knew immediately that if I could have in-depth conversations about *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Catch-22* on a regular basis, I had found my place in the university. I met with the head of the department to discuss my options, and I remember fighting back tears because she was telling me, basically, this was something she thought I could do ... and you will be good at doing. This is a major that is so all-encompassing — research, public speaking, gathering your thoughts, writing, debating — that you will not have a hard time finding a career when you graduate. That you will be seen as a smart, well-rounded person who would be an asset at any job. Join us. And suddenly I had a purpose.

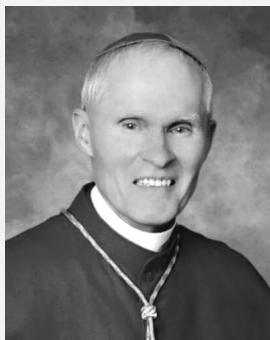
The scared kid who quit college the first time around now had a network of professors helping me every step of the way and getting excited with me about my projects and my future. I read and understood *The Sound and The Fury*, thanks to my studies in fiction professor who went over every detail of the novel. I took a Shakespeare class and would get together with a group of other students to study, and we would have the absolute best time picking characters and reading Shakespeare plays aloud to each other.

The final semester of our junior year, we had to choose our thesis topic for the following fall — researching, writing and presenting your senior thesis was a major part of your final grade and reflected on how well you understood your chosen topic and chosen major. I would check in with my thesis director throughout the summer about possible ideas, and she would return my worried emails, on her own time, with calm and thoughtful advice. The director of the Academic Resource Center sat with me and helped me fine-tune my thesis with many rewrites, giving me encouragement every step of the way.

One of my greater accomplishments was being able to present my thesis at a research symposium and present it well. To get up in front of a room of strangers and discuss my topic and answer questions intelligently. I was as finely groomed as I could possibly be thanks to my department working with me every step of the way. I understand that this year, 2019, was the 20th anniversary of WJU's research day. A

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## CCA WELCOMES BISHOP MARK BRENNAN TO WEST VIRGINIA



CCA congratulates Bishop Mark Brennan on his appointment to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Brennan, who was installed in August, succeeds Michael Bransfield who was sanctioned by Pope Francis in August after a lengthy internal church investigation found allegations of sexual and financial misconduct to be credible. Per

the Pope's decision, Brennan will participate in determining ways that Bransfield will "make amends" for his behavior.

Representatives from CCA look forward to meeting with Brennan in the coming months to introduce our work and to get to know one another. We pray that the Spirit will bless and guide Brennan's ministry alongside the People of God in West Virginia.



# TENNESSEE CHAPTER PREPARES FOR 2019 ANNUAL GATHERING

Jeannie Kirkhope

This year's Annual Gathering will be over the week-end of September 13-15 at Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts in Gatlinburg, TN. With the topic of nuclear war being discussed on the international stage again, and since Tennessee is home to the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Plant in Oak Ridge outside Knoxville, the planning committee decided the theme of this year's conference will be, "**Nuclear Disarmament NOW: What Can WE Do?**"

The gathering is just weeks after the 74th anniversary of two atomic bombs being dropped over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whether you're able to join us or not, there are many things you may not know – or may have forgotten – that are really important if we're going to make sure this never happens again. From *the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)*, here are 6 of them:

**#1 More than 210,000 people were killed.** By the end of 1945, the bombing had killed an estimated 140,000 people in Hiroshima, and a further 74,000 in Nagasaki.

**#2 The bombs were detonated in the air.** Bombs don't have to hit the ground in order to detonate. For nuclear weapons, detonating them in the air causes the blast to have a larger geographical impact. Both "Little Boy" (the uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima) and "Fat Man" (the plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki) were detonated in the air.

**#3 First responders couldn't help back then, and they wouldn't be able to help now.** The extent of the damage made it nearly impossible to provide aid. In Hiroshima, 70% of all buildings were razed and burned, 42 out of 45 hospitals were rendered non-functional and 90% of physicians and nurses in were killed or injured. In Nagasaki, ground temperatures reached 4,000°C and radioactive rain poured down. As a result, most victims died without any care to ease their suffering. Some of those who did enter the cities

after the bombings to provide assistance later died from the radiation.

**#4 The effects last to this day.** It takes around 10 seconds for the fireball from a nuclear explosion to reach its maximum size, but the effects last for decades and span across generations. And for all survivors, cancers related to radiation exposure still continues to increase throughout their lifespan, even to this day, seven decades later.

**#5 The Symbolism of the Paper Cranes.** Paper cranes have come to symbolize the Hibakusha – the survivors of the bombings. Their stories of hope and determination must not be lost. Survivors of the atomic bombings are living witnesses to the horror of nuclear war and, we must talk about the real unacceptable effects they can have on human beings. The paper cranes are not just a symbol of peace, but also a call to action.

**#6 On July 7th, 2017, the UN adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.** Once it enters into force, this historic legally binding treaty will prohibit nations from: developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory.

Every time we speak up and say: "*I believe nuclear weapons are inhumane, immoral and illegal. All countries should join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*" it chips away at their legitimacy. This kind of stigmatization has been incredibly successful in the past, for the elimination of other weapons – such as landmines and chemical weapons – to changing social norms around behaviors – such as smoking.

At our Annual Gathering this year, we will learn different ways to speak up through our words and actions in order to keep pushing to create a world where nuclear weapons are an unacceptable, nearly unbelievable thing of the past. See you there! ▲

## JOE STEEN FURNISHES TENN. PARISH

The woodworking talents of Glenmary **Brother Joe Steen** have become part of the new home of Catholics in Union County, Tennessee. Steen created flooring, the main altar, tabernacle altar, baptismal font stand, and more fixtures for St. Teresa of Kolkata Parish in Maynardville from the pews and other fixtures from the previous cathedral in Knoxville which was replaced last year.

The parish came together 8 years ago and serves 6 counties that had previously been without a Catholic parish. Masses were originally held in a carport and then a storefront until a permanent location was found. St. Teresa's was dedicated for the Diocese of Knoxville by Bishop Richard Stika on February 2. ▲



Brother Joe Steen pictured in his workshop.  
Photo courtesy of Glenmary Challenge.

## KENTUCKY CHAPTER

*Adapted from Sarah George's minutes of the February meeting*

If there is a group in Eastern KY that would like to start a coop, **Fr. John Rausch** is available to speak to that group. Contact [jsrausch@bellsouth.net](mailto:jsrausch@bellsouth.net).

The Diocese of Lexington's *Laudato Si'* Commission had an event in Morehead, KY at the First Baptist Church in February and Fr. John Rausch spoke. The goal was to mobilize leaders to take on initiatives in their churches.

Covington Catholic update: **Sr. Robbie Pentecost** and Fr. John tried to get Nathan Phillips and the CovCath students together for some necessary cultural education. Mr. Phillips was open to this. John reached out to the administration but suspected they would not move forward until the investigation was complete.

**John Coe** mentioned the weekly gospel reflections he shares to the Maryknoll Mission Education Facebook page, and talked about the increased engagement with a post he shared praising Bishop Stowe's prophetic voice regarding MAGA hats at a pro-life march. The reflection can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/Maryknoll.MEP.West/posts/2335706036463623>.

Wildflower walks took place in May at Red River Gorge off of the Mountain Parkway in Slade, and in

April in Berea. A tree planting also took place near London, KY at Wild Cat Ridge in April.

Security at churches was discussed. St. Martha's church in Prestonsburg has talked about having someone armed seated in the back of the church. Robbie has seen/heard about doors locked after Mass begins. John suggested setting up non-violence trainings or workshops and diocesan policies being more effective than individual parish policies.

The group discussed having a KY Chapter Facebook page, which would be managed by Sarah George as well as Jeannie Kirkhope and Michael Iafrate to gain an online presence and spread the word about Chapter news. No one opposed the idea when put to a vote, and that page is now up and running. Search for it on Facebook under the name "**Catholic Committee of Appalachia—Kentucky Chapter.**"

**Dominic** shared an article from the December 2018 edition of *Vanity Fair* called "Pope vs. Pope: How Francis and Benedict's Simmering Conflict Could Split the Catholic Church," available at [www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/10/pope-francis-benedict-conflict-catholic-church](http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/10/pope-francis-benedict-conflict-catholic-church). ▲

## NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

*Adapted from Mary Herr's minutes of the April meeting*

**1) Annual Gathering:** NC Chapter continues to help TN Chapter with fundraising for 2019 annual gathering with \$629 raised through a bakesale and silent auction, and donations from Knights of Columbus and St. Joseph's Thrift Store have come in.

**2) Letter to Bishop Jugis:** Our letter to the Bishop about refusing to release a list of any priests accused of sexual abuse in our diocese received no response, but St. Eugene received a response to their letter about this issue. Consensus was to remove this from future agendas. Jugis subsequently agreed to release a list.

**3) Magisterium of the People Documentary:** When a copy is available, we are considering having a screening of it at Unitarian Universalist Church in Asheville.

**4) Environment and Climate Change:** St. Eugene Care of Creation group had a "Going Green Giveaway" in May and the Friendship Garden with Anglos and Latinos is going again this summer at that parish. St. Margaret parish has stopped using styrofoam and has a study committee on *Laudato Si'*. They have proposed solar panels on the church or hall. **Frank Bus-teed** wrote a letter to the director of Catholic schools in Charlotte diocese asking what they are doing about curriculum for study of the encyclical but he has received no response. **Mary Herr** circulated a petition to send to major grocery store chains in NC asking them to stop using plastic grocery bags and phase out use of

plastic and styrofoam packaging for meat and produce. **Lynn Jefferys** said pastor at St. John has agreed to include periodic eco-tips in the parish bulletin and online.

**5) Efforts continue for recruiting CCA members locally and regionally particularly younger people:** **Scott Lyon** suggested going into the schools and faith formation classes and CCA needs to develop something for students and young people.

**6) Updates on Economy and Health Care:** Everyone is asked to contact legislators about HB 5 - Medicaid Expansion. **Mary Herr** circulated petitions to be sent to NC legislators about Medicaid Expansion and Medical Marijuana by Prescription in NC.

**7) Updates on Comprehensive Immigration Reform:** **Connie Mitchell** and **Gerrie Zimmer** agreed at February meeting to draft a letter about immigration reform to be sent to Burr, Tillis, and Meadows about immigration reform.

**8) Ecological Way of the Cross:** **Jean Marie Luce** shared the ecumenical service that was attended by 50+ people from various denominations but mostly Catholic. Our plan is to do something similar again next year.

**Next meeting** will be held August 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at St. Eugene Catholic Church in Asheville with a potluck lunch at noon. **Gerrie Zimmer** will facilitate. ▲

**ALYSSA PASTERNAK POST CONTRIBUTES TO CATHOLIC WOMEN PREACH***Alyssa Pasternak Post (Reprinted with permission of Catholic Women Preach)*

Last summer, CCA member Alyssa Pasternak Post was invited to contribute a homily for the groundbreaking "Catholic Women Preach" project touching on the work of CCA. Below is the text of the homily. You can view a video of the homily at [www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/06172018](http://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/06172018). Be sure to browse the other homilies from Catholic women like M. Shawn Copeland, Sandra Schneiders, and Simone Campbell at [CatholicWomenPreach.org](http://CatholicWomenPreach.org).

**June 17, 2018—Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time**

Ez 17:22-24 / Ps 92:2-3, 13-16 / 2 Cor 5:6-10 /

Mk 4:26-34

In the name of God who, through the Word and in the Spirit, creates, redeems and sanctifies. Amen.

When standing in my home region of Appalachia – one the most bio-diverse parts of our planet – one easily see how it is a right and good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to God, the creator of heaven and earth.

Dwelling in this – "one of God's awesome cathedrals" – We can with today's psalmist: "Sing praise to your name, Most High and proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night" (Psalm 92:2-3).

Here the vibrancy of the creation, of which our scriptures speak, manifests itself in abundance: sun-splashed leaves become stained glass, and song-birds...angelic chorus, and misty mountain haze... holy incense.<sup>1</sup>

Here the kingdom of God, of which Christ speaks about in today's gospel, this reign of God or dream of God, seems to be here already...almost.

And yet the integral ecology of which Pope Francis speaks, that would have us bursting out into songs in praise,<sup>2</sup> and where humans recognize our proper place in creation,<sup>3</sup> is gravely absent in the destruction of Appalachian communities and waterways and mountain.

And so we still have good reason to pray: Thy kingdom come.

Imagine with me one of my favorite ways of telling today's gospel parable: sitting in the grass next to my urban parish's community garden, in a circle of children who will soon plant seeds of squash and cucumber that we will later harvest in the summer and offer to the people in our city.

Sitting there in the grass with some simple Godly Play,<sup>4</sup> Montessori-inspired materials – just some felt and some wood, we remember that:

There was once someone who did such amazing things and who said such awesome things that people found the courage to follow him. And as they followed him, they heard him speaking of a kingdom,



but it certainly wasn't the kingdom they were living in, or like any kingdom they had ever visited, or like any one they had heard of. So one day they had to ask him: What is this kingdom of God like? And once when they asked him he said,

This kingdom of God – this dream of God for creation – is like a mustard seed, a seed so small that if it were on my finger here, we could barely see it. And one day a person took that seed and planted it in the ground. And it began to grow, and to grow, and to grow until the birds of the air came and made their nests in the tree.

In the circle of children we then wonder playfully about this story. I wonder if the person planting the seed has a name, and what that person is doing while the seed is growing. And of the tree, and the nests, and this entire whole place...what could it really be? And have we ever drawn this close to a place like this?

In this visual mystery, with seeds in our hands, we come to see that the reign of God starts so small, and yet grows so grand. We draw close to God in the mys-

*(Continued on page 18)*



## REFLECTION ON 2019 CHEROKEE EXPERIENCE

Sharon Young

I want to start this article by saying the experience in Cherokee brought so many profound experiences that all blended together and made the trip a once in a lifetime opportunity. The memories along with every presenter, host, cook, local residents and business met on the journey including our amazing group that were so eager to listen, learn, share and open their heart and mind brought this profound effect and understanding that cannot be captured into words. This is one of those times that you really had to be there and be part of each life that was touched in order to understand the impact felt for each person. There can never be enough good things said about the whole program and how grateful everyone was for the time and effort Mary so generously gave to put this all together and keep everything running smoothly the entire time.

The program allowed a complete perspective and picture of the spiritual beliefs, past history, culture, foods and language that so many young and elders have worked so hard to preserve, honor and protect.

The program is not only for people who have Native American in their family tree, but also to help those who do not understand the details of the culture and the amazing history. We learned this by meeting each person that was gracious enough to give of themselves for the sake of keeping the heritage alive. They have passed down traditions understood by others that have only heard bits in pieces from outside sources, textbooks and many other myths that are passed around especially with the many years and generations.

You cannot understand the full spectrum of the culture unless you are able to have conversations and interact as the program allowed us to do so freely. It is that part of the experience that you feel the impact history had and is still having in their nation and the ripple effects it has caused throughout all tribes.

I want to say how at home I felt during the entire five days. I felt a sense of peace and wonder as we were welcomed into the lives of each of the people who gave of themselves. I left with a great respect for all and instead of seeing the differences of our culture to theirs. It opens your eyes to the simplicity of life and how much we are all alike and share the same struggles, joys and spiritual principles, if only everyone would value and respect the beliefs of the other and allow each to let their heart guide their spirit and celebrate life in their own way.

I can only end by saying without a doubt that you feel the integrity of the people, their love for their families and the pain that has been passed down for many generations. They have the desire to keep the heritage, culture and traditions alive so that they may know that years from now their children, their children's children, and the many other generations to

follow will know where they came from, how hard their ancestors worked to keep these principles and beliefs instilled in generations to come.

The saddest is the poverty that has continued to plague the nation since the invasion and displacement, which brings me to tears as I remember the stories heard and wonder how anyone can treat another human being with such disrespect and devalue life as we have seen so many times throughout history.

In trying to support their community and raise money they brought in the casino to earn revenue, but as we all know that does not come without a heavy price. They are also are fighting the epidemic of drug use, alcohol, and other substances that help people escape their circumstances and mask their pain. They have worked hard putting together programs to address these issues.

What I did feel from each person I met was a deep appreciation for life. I felt welcome in their presence but had to wonder how they could be so loving, trusting and kind after all they have experienced.

Our group was filled with amazing people that were all on their own spiritual quest to tap into their own inner direction and gratitude filled our room as we shared and reflected on each day with Father John and Mary. Thank you again for allowing us to participate and for all of the program leaders and hosts that made this an unforgettable and life changing experience. ▲

### WALKING OUR SPIRITUAL PATHS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE

For nearly 25 years, **Mary Herr** and **Fr. John Rausch** have been facilitating this Cherokee retreat/seminar annually. Mary recently announced that she will be retiring after she hosts the 2020 retreat. And Fr. John is still contemplating how much longer he'll stay on.

If you have not already experienced it, we strongly encourage you to register for the last time it will be led by this dynamic duo, **March 10-15, 2020**. More information can be found at [www.ccappal.org/events\\_projects/cherokee-seminarretreat](http://www.ccappal.org/events_projects/cherokee-seminarretreat).

If those dates don't work, fear not. With recommendations from Mary and John, CCA's board is working on hiring a successor for Mary, and if need be, for John, so that the Cherokee retreat-seminar may continue in 2021 and beyond.

We cannot thank Mary and John enough for the profound gift this program has been to CCA and to so many retreat participants over the years. ▲

**WILD CHURCH IN WEST VIRGINIA / VILLANOVA***Edward Sloane (Reprinted from AllCreation.org)*

Wild Church West Virginia Way of the Cross of the Multitudes, Holy Week 2018. Photo by Ed Sloane.

*"Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil"—Matthew 13: 5*

Do we only love the land when it is uncomplicated? In the essay titled "Walking," Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows." The passage, which reads like a creedal statement, reminds me of all the ways in which the land, the sky, and the sea in all their beauty and abundance can bring us back to God in the midst of the civilized madness of consumer capitalism. The forests and meadows that are such nourishing environments are easy to love, which is why I have often sought them out for spiritual nourishment, especially because such nourishment can be hard to find in the official structures of my Roman Catholic tradition.

It was for these reasons that a friend and I co-founded Wild Church West Virginia in Wheeling, WV. As we cultivated our sense of ministry and rituals of worship out of doors and at the edges of our tradition, what some wild churches call "re-wilding," we sought to nurture a spirituality for and with sacrifice zones. We sought to worship on the streets of postindustrial urban environments and near polluted waterways or coalmines. Our practice of re-wilding gave a preferential option for places that are hard to love and where God seemed to be as dead as the landscape. It was in

the midst of Good Friday, however, that we discovered ourselves as an Easter People and encountered the God of Life.

In my new place in the Delaware River Watershed in Lenni Lenape Territory and in my new position as a Campus Minister at Villanova University, I have been asking how I can invite students and others to re-wild. My students inhabit a culture of excess; they are accustomed to disposability in so many ways, so a colleague in the Sustainability department and I collaborated to organize a Plastic Fast for Lent this year. Plastics, the detritus of consumerism, have a similar effect on our landscapes, turning once nourishing habitats into toxic landscapes.

We have organized a series of events, prayer experiences, and workshops that invite all of us to, in the words of Sasha Adkins, "reinhabit our garbage-shed." If our love for the land is to resist sentimentality and cultivate the strength to stand the test of life's messiness then it must embrace Earth as Earth is found. A true love of the land cannot limit itself to selecting only those parts that are easy to love, but in moments of sickness and death, of beautiful brokenness, do we truly come to know and love our Common Home. In these moments we become a people of resurrection. Returning to Thoreau, today our creeds must say "I believe in the Mountain Top Removal Site, I believe in the Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch, I believe in those people, places, and more-than-human beings who have died before their time. And I believe they can live again." As I get to know my new place, I hope to create a new community of worship with others who seek the same. If you are interested in re-wilding together please reach out! ▲

*Ed Sloane is Chair of CCA's Board of Directors.*

## **THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO OUR ANNUAL APPEALS & FUNDRAISERS!**

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## FR. LARRY CANN: HOW WILL WE VOTE?

Fr. Andrew Switzer

Fr. Hilarion Cann, retired pastor of All Saints Parish in Bridgeport, West Virginia, and a founding member of CCA, passed away on May 6, 2019. The following is a transcript of the homily delivered by Fr. Andrew Switzer at Fr. Larry's funeral which was held May 10, 2019 at All Saints.

Like many of you, I can't get Larry out of my mind this week. And, then, when I found out that I was asked to preach, something has been haunting me all week: If Larry was going to preach on these readings that he picked for his funeral Mass, what would he want to say to you? Then, I've been having a recurring nightmare that if I don't say it, Larry will haunt me for the rest of my life! *[laughter]*

So, I have to start with the Cann family. You know, I was with you here last night, and I sat with you at his anniversary Mass, and when we celebrated his birthday I was here, and it's just tough not having him in front of you, to speak to you, because I've been looking in your eyes and I know how much you loved Larry. And I believe he would want me to tell you, the Cann family here today, how much he loves you, and how proud he is of all of you. And then I need to thank you, because you have a large family, but thank you for extending your family, and sharing Fr. Larry with all of us.

As I think of all the conversations Larry and I have had in his life in ministry, I would describe it in three ways. First, it was an *incarnational* life in ministry. He physically and tangibly made God's love present to all of us. Second, it was a life in ministry committed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and no priest in this diocese embodied and did more for Vatican II than Fr. Larry Cann. And third, it was Eucharistic, which for him meant a shared meal with Jesus among friends.

So, let's start with incarnation. Oh, how we loved Larry's preaching, and this was his gift! The homily for Larry was not a monologue, it was a dialogue. And let me say, he prepared very, very well. But he would always say that he never knew what he was going to exactly say until he read the Gospel and he looked at all of you. You see, your stories, your joys, your struggles, your trip-ups gave flesh to the scriptures for Larry Cann. And, that's why he'd often say, "I can't do nothing here without all these people smiling and loving me in the present." He believed it and meant it.

A couple of years ago, he came to Preston County for the Buckwheat Festival Mass. He was our guest of honor, he was the presider, and gave the homily that day. And it's still interesting that the lectionary cycle that day just happened to be Philippians 2 that he picked for his funeral Mass. And you probably heard



Fr. Larry Cann

him tell the story many times, but the way that he wanted to relate this message of Philippians 2 to us is he came out and said a line that you could say with me: "Take everything seriously but yourself." And then he gave the whole homily and he said, "I need to come back to my first point. But I forget it!" And he laughed. But this is where his genius was. He said, "Help me out." And someone raised their hand and said, "Something about—Ah! 'Take everything serious but yourself.'" See, his homily was a dialogue. It was something shared with the People of God. That explains, I think, this scripture for Larry. You see, Larry's God didn't take herself too seriously. Larry's God, she could laugh. In Christ Jesus, Larry's God didn't take himself too seriously, but he put aside all of his godliness and wanted to become human and love us in a human way. And, that's what this reading is about. Jesus wanted to enter into our joys but he wasn't afraid of our failures and spills. He would love us through all of that. And that's what Larry represented: the humility of God and how it is embodied in a community. Because Philippians was written for a community like All Saints in Bridgeport.

And, what is humility? I once heard Larry speak during Lent on humility. Larry had no place for sackcloth and ashes and beating yourself up. He gave the best definition of humility that I've ever heard. Humility is about self-acceptance, and self-acceptance means that we have to accept our gifts and our human limitations. And Larry was so comfortable in his skin. He had self-acceptance, and that's why he could accept us as we are.

I remember hearing him speak about his time in the Tribunal office dealing with married and divorced people. He said, "You know, Andy, I have never once

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Reflections

met a bad divorced person." And then I think of what he would say about where we need to start. "Put aside the Church that points fingers! Start by listening to that person and where they see God present in their life, where they see Christ present in their life." That's why he was so good there, and why he was so good with gay and straight people. He believed that the humility of God brought us into a community of love and self-acceptance.

The second point of Philippians 2 that Larry Cann embodied, and I heard him speak on many times: powerlessness. He believed that the God of Jesus Christ enters into the powerlessness of our lives. And I was with some of the family and Chris Turner at the hospital on Sunday. And I think some of you remember—I don't know if you remember what he said to us. He said, "I've been on this ICU unit many times." And he said, "You know, when you learn to accept your own powerlessness, then that's where faith comes in." And that was so foundational to how Larry understood Jesus and his theology. We're not in control of life and life's circumstances, but the God of love walks with us through it. But this powerlessness is what made him such an effective friend, pastor, and priest.

I remember some time ago, I'd had a tough day. And I knew there was only one priest in the diocese that I could call. And many of his parishioners can definitely relate to this. See, what happened is, the worst day is when you bury a child. And I was pretty emotional. I was pretty upset. I was pretty emotional around the family as we grieved together. But why did I call Larry? The same reason why many of you called on him. He didn't give me advice. He didn't try to direct my theology. He didn't try to counsel me. What Larry Cann did was he cried with me. And he would do that. He would laugh with the parishioner, but how many times have I also heard stories about how he sat on the porch and wept with a parishioner to enter into the powerlessness of the human condition. Then I could go on with my day.

Folks, all of this is the type of church Larry believed in. He wanted a humble church, a powerless church, a church that didn't take itself too seriously. Guys, that's how we got in the crisis we're in. And, I'm going to tell you, if many of us would have listened to him—because he was always the prophet among the presbyterate—we wouldn't be in the mess we're in. Because what happens when the church takes itself too seriously is that it protects its power and security rather than enter into the vulnerability of the human condition. Larry was like Pope Francis. He wanted a church that was bruised and injured and dirty and out on the streets to bring healing. And, that's why it's not surprising he picked this reading from Isaiah.

I had a teacher in seminary who said, "How do we deal with what we've been through? Every 500 years the church seems to go through a reform. And it's

been 500 years since the Reformation, and this is a time of reform." But Larry was on the front lines of *the way* of the reform. It was the Second Vatican Council. And this reading from Isaiah describes it well. In this time of the Jewish people in Israel that Isaiah speaks about the hierarchical priesthood goes like this [*makes a descending hand gesture*], and it's diluted, and it becomes about *all of our* priesthood. You see, Larry realized that a priest doesn't have a special connection to God any better than the People of God. And when we realize that, we can be a light to the nations.

So this reading is about servanthood and how do we lift up the lowly how do we lift up the poor, how do we liberate the brokenhearted. Larry didn't believe in a church of a pyramid. He spoke on it often. He believed in a church of a circle, of "We do this together." And I'll tell you how he viewed the ministerial priesthood, because he told me. He saw it as an *inverted* pyramid where the clergy are on the bottom of the pyramid and lifts the people in the community up, where the whole community is lifted up to serve the world. This is most clear in the document *The Church in the Modern World*, and it was the message of Larry Cann. He started living it and fighting for civil rights at Blessed Sacrament, lifting up that community to fight for civil rights. We had many conversations about it. Church, we have to carry forth that prophetic ministry because hatred, resentment, prejudice is on the rise in our country, and Larry was concerned about it. And he saw it as our mission to stand for tolerance, equality, and to build a just society.

The reforms of the Second Vatican Council that Larry Cann stood for are all over this diocese. Sometimes we've focused on Joseph Hodges, the bishop at the time. He was kind of the figurehead, but Larry was the mover. And, if you listened to his stories, you know it. So, we know that Bishop Hodges was at every meeting at the Council, but Larry was there with him afterwards, and they would drive around together. Ecumenism in the Christian community was one area that meant so much to Larry. Larry said one day Hodges had dressed up for a meeting, with a big hat and everything on. He was ready to go, and Larry said to him, "You're not going anywhere looking like that." The bishop said, "What do you mean? What do you mean I'm not going?" He said, "We're going to this ecumenism thing with our Christian brothers and sisters dressed like other ministers that are going to be there." Hodges began to grumble, and Larry said, "Bishop Hodges, let me ask you, when ecumenism came up at the Council, how'd you vote?" He said, "I voted for it." "Well, if that's how you voted, then, this is what it means, so go change!" And, Hodges did. [*laughter*] *That's the reform. "How'd you vote?"*

I use that line all the time in Preston County. I ask, "What was that he used to say? 'How'd you vote?'" And then, once you recall how you voted, he'd say, "This is what it means." And, you know what? That's why Vatican II has stuck in the places where he's

been, because his vote mattered, and it got into the people. They learned that you have to fight for Vatican II. Folks, if you hear anything today that I've said, Larry would want me to say that we have to fight for the reforms of Vatican II as a diocese. Because that meant so much to Larry Cann. It represented what he was about. He would glow when he talked about it.

Just a quick story. The last time I celebrated Eucharist with Larry Cann was at a gathering with the presbyterate with Archbishop Lori. Someone was shocked when I said this, but Larry Cann taught me diplomacy. [Laughter] To say things more gently. Larry could fight with you and walk away not bitter or resentful. And that wasn't always my style, but he helped me a lot there. But that day at the gathering, he spoke up and then I did. I remember what he said: "If we're going to get through this, it can't be a church of clergy and of people. We have to come together and see it as one church and work through this issue together as equals." So we get through the meeting and are getting ready for Mass. Larry said, "Andy, let's just sit with the people today, with some of the laypeople—Bryan Minor and others there. Let's not vest." I said, "Ah, Larry, I don't need another call from Wheeling." [laughter] I had my vestment out, and he said, "If you put that alb and stole on, I'll boo you in front of everyone!" So, I took my alb and my stole and I went and put it back in my car. And I said to myself, "Andy, how'd you vote? This is what it means." We got through part of the Mass, and Larry said, "Are you glad you didn't vest?" and I said, "Yeah, Larry." Which brings up the Eucharist.

Larry fought for Vatican II. He believed firmly in full participation in the Eucharist. And even when I was in my own community, he believed firmly that we need to stand during the Eucharistic prayer. He said he wasn't against kneeling, but he also said, "If we're called to kneel during the Eucharistic prayer, then they ought to make altars about the height of a coffee table so that the priest can kneel along with everyone else." But he was serious. He was serious. Because he celebrated the Eucharist as one, as equal, as shared friends. That's why after he retired he was so comfortable sitting up there in the "lawyer's corner"—because he was one of us and ministered as one of us. The best Eucharistic theology I ever heard was from Larry Cann. He said, "What Jesus did on the night before he died was he took a big loaf of bread and a big jug of wine and he said, 'I love you guys. You're my friends. This is who I am.'" Larry wasn't concerned about whether the Eucharist would be kept "sacred." Instead, he was anxious that we might forget that it was a shared meal among friends. I think Larry would want me to say today that if you want to understand his theology of the Eucharist, understand it at the table here, understand it if you had lunch with him at Oliverio's Restaurant, understand it also if you had a drink with him. They all went together. Today we're going to have a lunch back there, and one of Larry's

favorites, Oliverio's, is going to make lunch. That's Eucharist, too. A shared meal among friends.

I saw Larry Sunday before he died. We were supposed to have lunch at Oliverio's on Monday, and, struggling to say goodbye, Larry said to me, "Andy, I'm going to have to take a rain check." Well, Larry, we're sharing a meal right now. Jesus is present, your family, all your friends. You casted your vote, your ballot, Larry. Everyone here knows how you voted. How will the rest of us vote? ▲

*Andy Switzer is pastor of the three Catholic parishes of Preston County, West Virginia. He served on the People's Pastoral Committee and was recently elected to the leadership team of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests.*

**SEPTEMBER 13-15, 2019  
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## *See, Judge, Act*

# THE LAITY IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S LAST EARTHLY HOPE

*Jeannie Kirkhope and Michael J. Iafrate (Originally published Jan. 13, 2019 in various WV newspapers and the AP)*

The disgust, distress and anger that West Virginia Catholics feel are relieved when our Diocese does something, anything, about the sex abuse and its cover-up by bishops. Yet, regardless of “official” efforts, there will still be more to do, more truth to uncover, before healing can begin. That work belongs to us, the laity.

The Second Vatican Council declared that the People of God have authority, too, something which was rarely acknowledged during the previous 1,965 years. But over 50 years after the Council, many laypeople still automatically acquiesce to clerics, and understandably so. Following blindly is a hard habit to break, and it is one reason Jesus referred to us as sheep.

Jesus knew, as any West Virginia farmer and 4-H student knows, that sheep won't naturally follow. They can only be guided from behind or flanked. That is, unless they are halter trained. Then, it takes rope, sweet treats, and fear-based habit to lead them. God knows no self-respecting human, let alone a West Virginian, takes well to being tethered, buttered up or dragged down. But we Catholics are programmed to comply, however subtly or unconsciously our shepherds manipulate us.

When we don't speak up, we are complicit in the abuse and its cover-up through our silence. Our fellow Catholics— children of God — have been raped! What can we, as laypeople, do about it?

For the sake of survivors, we cannot be content that our Diocese has released its own list of names of priests they consider to be credibly accused, especially when obvious names are omitted.

For the sake of truth and transparency, laypeople cannot wait for the results of the Church's internal investigation of former Bishop Bransfield's alleged harassment of adults when, now, there are mounting reports that he is in regular contact with seminarians, clergy, and lay officials from this Diocese. Waiting only postpones inevitable action laypeople will need to take when the results of this investigation fail to include closure of the ambiguous, unresolved case of Bransfield's alleged abuse of teens in Philadelphia in the 1970s.

And, for the sake of our God-given role in the church, we cannot rely on our interim shepherd, Archbishop Lori. Since his appointment, he has consistently prioritized meetings with the Finance Council and clerics over consultations with faithful yet critical laypeople. Laser focus seems to be on the flow of money and solidifying the current caste system for the future. How, then, do laypeople respond?

Prayers are, of course, important, but we are called to much more as the people of God. We propose the following:

- Op-eds are effective. However, those that blame the victims, impatiently pressing them to come forward as a recent Huntington, WV op-ed did, are not helpful. For survivors to come forward, we must repeat loudly and clearly that the Church is not only sorry and walks with them in their pain but that, first and foremost, we believe them.
- Advise priests to regularly tie the crisis into their preaching and liturgies. Abuse is the ongoing, elephant-in-the-room issue that shakes our Catholic identity, our entire way of being. We need priests to find connections in scripture and share those insights to encourage us in our faith.
- Insist the West Virginia Attorney General convene a grand jury investigation and reform the statute of limitations.
- Confront Diocesan Delegate Bryan Minor, Archbishop Lori and Pope Francis with questions and concerns. Every single one is valid and deserves their attention and response.
- Reach out to and support the West Virginia chapter of SNAP (Survivors of those Abused by Priests).
- Brainstorm more ideas within parish councils, women's circles, youth groups and men's groups.
- Contact us. Tell us what you're doing. We will promote the hope.

Laypeople are called to guide the whole church from our place in the pews. We can speak truth to power unapologetically in ways that are respectful but still demand accountability. In light of this holiday season, let us confidently claim our own power as the people of God-with-us, God-in-the-flesh. Let us work to provide justice for lambs we have lost, return dignity to those surviving, and bestow merciful, tough love on our clerics. Indeed, let us go, in peace, to love and serve the Lord. ▲

*We invite you to consider  
Catholic Committee of Appalachia  
as a beneficiary  
when making your will.*

For more information contact us at:  
[cca@ccappal.org](mailto:cca@ccappal.org) or  
81 Puddle Run Rd. Spencer, WV 25276

## CCA ACTION ON IMMIGRATION

*Jeannie Kirkhope, Bishop John Stowe, Joan Wages*

On July 18th, in Washington DC, 70 Catholics gathered in the rotunda of the nation's capital building to take part in the Day of Action for Immigrant Children. It was the first of a three-phase direct action campaign for which Catholic Committee of Appalachia is an endorsing organization. Of the 70 participants, 12 chose to risk arrest, including two CCA members, **Joan Wages** (CCA board member) and **Bob Shine** (also of New Ways Ministry). A handful of bishops across the country sent letters of support, including our Episcopal Liaison, **Bishop John Stowe** of Lexington who wrote:

*"Your voices and witness in Washington are critical right now. I would love to be with you at this demonstration and will be prayerfully united with you as you stand against the cruelty that has become public policy in our nation.*

*It is hard to believe that in recent days we have heard our own federal government argue in court that toothbrushes and soap were not necessary provisions for detained children.*

*We cannot accept that children are left unbathed, without changes of clothing, in unsanitary facilities, sleeping on concrete without beds and sometimes without room to lie down, no diapers for toddlers, and sick children being left to care for other sick children. This is unacceptable and inhumane treatment for adults, and all the more outrageous for children.*

*How can we allow this to be done by our government, in our name?*

*There has been one chapter after another of serious atrocities intentionally perpetrated on some of the most vulnerable people: family separation, loss of children in custody, two dozen deaths in ICE custody since 2017, children in cages, living under bridges in extreme temperatures, shielded from public view, assaulted and brutalized, underfed and without facilities for bathing or hygiene. Now we have raids targeting families (families who have fled situations of danger from gang violence, drug trafficking, and economic desperation. And changing rules about who qualifies for asylum right as people are fleeing for their lives.*

*Instead of comprehensive immigration reform, we opt*



Bob Shine (left) and Joan Wages (right, in white) are arrested during a demonstration on immigration at the U.S. Capitol. Photos courtesy Bob Shine and Christopher Kerr.

*again and again for enforcement only policies which do not work no matter how much they are escalated. Cruelty toward the suffering and bullying the most vulnerable should not be national policy and we cannot allow it to continue. Thank you for standing up! May God bless and reward your efforts on behalf of our sisters and brothers."*

Below, Joan Wages gives a moving account about her experience.

*Seventy Catholics, silently process single file into the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda, forming a large circle. Each wears a photo of one of six immigrant children who have died recently in US custody.*

*Five of the seventy quietly move into the center of the circle and lie down on the floor, forming a cross. There is a hush as the press swarms to take their photos.*

*The call and response begins. About a hundred other voices, standing close by, join with the seventy. The sound reverberates around the rotunda and out into the hallways.*



*"Mic check!"*

*"We are here to stop the inhumanity!"*

*"To end child detention!"*

*"We are Catholics,"*

*"Lay, Professors, Sisters,"*

*"Priests, Deacons, Brothers."*

*A blaring siren interrupts. I cannot tell where it is coming from. Then a voice says:*

*"This is the United States Capitol Police.*

*You are engaging in unlawful conduct.*

*If you do not cease and desist, you will be arrested.*

*This is your first warning."*

*As I listen, I feel an arm on my back, hear the words "excuse me," and then my body is moved. Several police officers pass by. I return to my place in the prayer circle.*

*No one ceases or desists. A single voice cries out "Stop persecuting the refugees!" The call and response continues:*

*"We stand here especially for six children,"*

*"Who died recently."*

*"Darlyn....Jakelyn....Felipe....Juan....Wilmer....Carlos"*

*"We know that an unjust system will fail, if we refuse to*

*(Continued on page 21)*

## *See, Judge, Act*

# A DREAM FULFILLED FOR SISTERS LORETTA SCULLY AND MARY RAYMOND KEANE

*Kathleen Loughlin, CSJ (Reprinted from the Spring 2019 issue of Focusing Magazine)*

With a dream to inspire them, Sisters Loretta Scully and Mary Raymond Keane started on a journey that would take them from Kentucky, to Dante, Virginia and finally to West Virginia. Their dream was to go to the Appalachian Mountains to minister to those who lived there.

Settling in Dante, Virginia, Loretta and Mary Raymond spent 25 years responding to the diverse needs of Dante. The first challenge they faced was living on a monthly stipend of \$100. Seemingly an impossible feat, they did the unexpected; they successfully lived within that budget. David Glockner, a Glenmary Father, contributed a rent-free house for them to live in. The house was situated in Straight Holler. (Hollers are narrow mountain valleys.) Another challenge they faced was a trek of 65 steps up to their home.

With faith and spirit of adventure, Loretta and Mary Raymond went to every house and simply asked the residents "Can we help you?" The people had many diverse needs. Loretta and Mary responded with enthusiasm to them all. They substituted teaching wherever needed. At another time they provided a wedding gown donated by Mary's cousin for a young woman of the Holler.

As time passed, they received donations from par-

ishes, particularly Sacred Heart in Baltimore, Maryland and Transfiguration in Kentucky. Loretta and Mary immediately started a fund for the poor. They helped a man who lived at the bottom of the mountain who needed a cesspool. They went to the fund and provided him with the money. Over time the gentleman proudly paid back the money.

Another ministry that Loretta and Mary engaged in was consoling those who were dying and their families. It was not uncommon for them to prepare prayer services and then accompany the family to the cemetery.

Several years at Easter time, S. James Annette McAuley and S. Anne Maureen Oakman visited them and brought greetings from their second home in Brentwood, NY. It was always a special time for all of them, so much so that S. James Annette took her jubilee trip to the mountains.

As years passed, Loretta and Mary collected memories of all their friends in Virginia. When Mary Raymond's sight grew weaker, they both agreed that the time to return to Brentwood had arrived. With a sense of leaving friends, they hired a moving van to bring their furniture to Brentwood and began the trip home. For them, their dream was fulfilled. ▲

## MY GRATITUDE TO CATHOLICISM

*Jan Phillips (From There Are Burning Bushes Everywhere, submitted by Sr. Ann Marie Quinn, OSF)*

Thank you for the Mysteries - joyful, sorrowful, glorious -  
and for teaching me early  
that the Divine is too ineffable  
to ever comprehend.

Thank you for the communion lines I watched every Sunday  
as people lined up to receive the Light

For the holy water font that gave me  
something wet and real to dip my fingers in  
and know the difference between before and after

For the Bishop's slap on my cheek  
that confirmed me as a warrior for peace

For the flame in the sanctuary  
that let me know God was in the house.

For the Stations of the Cross  
that gave me a way to walk the path with the love of my life.

For the ciborium full of hosts  
the ever-changing rainbow of vestments  
the gold monstrance of Benediction  
the frankincense, the novenas,  
Perpetual Adoration.

For the ashes on Wednesday  
the washing of the feet on Thursday  
the tears on Friday

the tabernacle -empty on Saturday  
the Hallelujah chorus on Easter Sunday.

For the statues of the saints lined up on my dresser  
giving me heroes a cut above what my culture was offering.

For the scapular tangled up  
in my undershirt, the miraculous medal,  
my white Missalette,  
St. Christopher on the dashboard.

For the fish on Friday that made something sacred of an average day

For two years in the convent to learn  
the balance of solitude and community,  
prayer and service.

I loved you then and thank you always  
but I will not return until you open your doors  
to me as a lesbian, a prophet, a woman, a priest.

My altar now is the world at large  
and the candle announcing  
the presence of God burns day and night wherever I am.

I am a servant of unity.  
The language of this church  
is my mother-tongue  
but I would rather be fluent  
in the language of Love.

## CELEBRATING UNSUNG BLACK CATHOLIC WOMEN IN U.S. HISTORY

Shannen Dee Williams (Reprinted with permission of U.S. Catholic Magazine)

On the evening of Sunday, May 10, 1891, Father Augustus Tolton, the nation's first self-identified black priest, traveled to a home in Chicago's "Negro district" to administer death rites to a pious, but once-lapsed laywoman.

Writing about the incident two days later, Father Tolton noted that the "colored woman had been nine years away from her duties because she was hurled out of a white church and even cursed at by the Irish members."

Inspired by this woman's enduring faith in the face of such unholy discrimination, Father Tolton, the son of devout Catholic slaves, documented her faith testimony and in the process gave a voice to the legions of anonymous and unheralded black women upon whose shoulders the African American Catholic community has historically rested.

"She sent for me," Father Tolton wrote, "and thanked God that she had me to send for."

To date, black women remain among the most invisible and elusive figures in U.S. Catholic history. Like the woman who sent for Father Tolton on her deathbed in 1891, many of these women remain nameless, captured only in brief references and in the shadows of more well-known members of the church.

Since the earliest importation of African slaves into the Americas, black women have played prominent roles in the propagation of Catholic faith, education, and charity. In the 18th century, for example, black women constituted the majority of the church's membership in New Orleans, Louisiana, and free black women served as godparents to more than 80 percent of the city's enslaved population.

Beginning in the 19th century, women became the first representatives of the African American community to enter religious life. Barred from joining white sisterhoods due to exclusionary admissions policies that lasted until well into the 20th century, black women first succeeded in becoming sisters by either passing for white in white congregations or establishing their own orders.

Between 1824 and 1922, African American women organized at least eight historically black and Afro-Creole orders, of which three are still in existence. The surviving congregations are the Oblate Sisters of Providence (1828) in Baltimore, Maryland; the Sisters of the Holy Family (1842) in New Orleans, Louisiana; and the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (1916) in Savannah, Georgia and later Harlem, New York.

However, the first known African American woman to enter religious life was Nellie Morgan, who was the sixth member of the Kentucky-based Sisters of Loretto, the first Catholic sisterhood with an American foundation. The daughter of a white man and an ex-slave



*Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, 1899, public domain via Wikimedia Commons*

mother, Morgan passed for white in her order.

Black women also co-founded the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan in 1845 and the Benedictines of Mary, Queen Apostles in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1995. Both communities are predominantly white.

In addition to educating 10 of the nation's first 23 black priests, black sisters desegregated several Catholic colleges and universities, including Saint Louis University, Villanova University, and the Catholic University of America, in the era before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In 1933, for example, Oblate Sisters of Providence Mary of Good Counsel Baptiste and Mary Consolata Gibson re-integrated the Catholic University of America. In 1934, these sisters became the institution's first black women graduates.

Like their religious counterparts, black laywomen were prominent propagators of Catholic faith and formed the backbone their parishes and communities. Women, like Anna (aka Madre) Bates of Detroit, founded Catholic missions in their neighborhoods when white ecclesiastical authorities refused to do so. Many of these missions, like Detroit's Our Lady of Victory, became thriving black Catholic parishes.

Black laywomen also encouraged and nurtured the vocations of black girls and boys in their families and parishes, reminding them constantly that a racially segregated church was a profoundly un-Catholic church.

Angela White's journey to religious life, for instance, is replete with examples of this kind of support from black Catholic women. A cradle Catholic and native of Washington, D.C., White felt the call to religious life while in elementary school. Soon thereafter, members of her family, the Sisters of the Holy Family who

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Reflections

### CATHOLIC WOMEN PREACH

(Continued from page 8)

tery of it all as we come to receive the reign of God, offered by Jesus to us today in a couple of sentences about some seeds.

The spaciousness of this parable invites our participation, compels our participation.

With Paul and the Corinthians, we can claim with confidence that “We are always courageous” (2 Cor 5:6) while here in this earthly life.

When individuals respond to life calls to live close to the land and the people, embodying an integral ecology, walking by nothing more than faith and certainly not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)...Friends, we can say, “And yet we are courageous” (2 Cor 5:8).

When lay members of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia craft the People’s Pastoral listening to the voice, “the magisterium of the poor and the earth,” and when they write letters against racism and child abuse, and for the protection of streams... building on decades of fidelity to Christ in this region...Friends, let us say, “We are always courageous.”

When artists create memorials to mountain ecosystems that have long been destroyed permanently by mountaintop removal<sup>5</sup>... Let us say, “And yet we are courageous.”

When communities organize food co-ops in food deserts, fight drug epidemics, and demand just wages and good schools... Let us say, “And we are always courageous.”

In this participation of the unfolding of divine work in our lives, let us keep humility though, and remember, in familiar terms, that “We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development...

“For we are workers not master builders, ministers not messiahs, prophets of a future not our own.”<sup>6</sup>

Inspired by this let us take time this week to spend time in one of God’s awesome cathedrals, where trees are temple pillars. *Let us draw close to the One who tells the truth at slant<sup>7</sup> in parable form and who compels our participation in the unfolding of the divine story. Let’s do so with courage and gratitude, wherever we are in the mundane existence of our daily lives. Amen.*

#### Notes:

1. These words are borrowed from *At Home in the Web of Life* (Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 1995), as quoted in *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us* (Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015) on page 11: “To live in these mountains and forests, and with their trees and plants and animals, is truly to dwell in Earth’s community of life, as one of God’s awesome cathedrals. In this magnificent work of God’s creation, misty mountain haze is holy incense, tall tree trunks are temple pillars, sun-splashed leaves are stained glass, and song-birds are angelic choirs.”

2. See Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* [On Care for Our Common Home], sec. 11.

3. See *The Telling Takes Us Home*, 36.

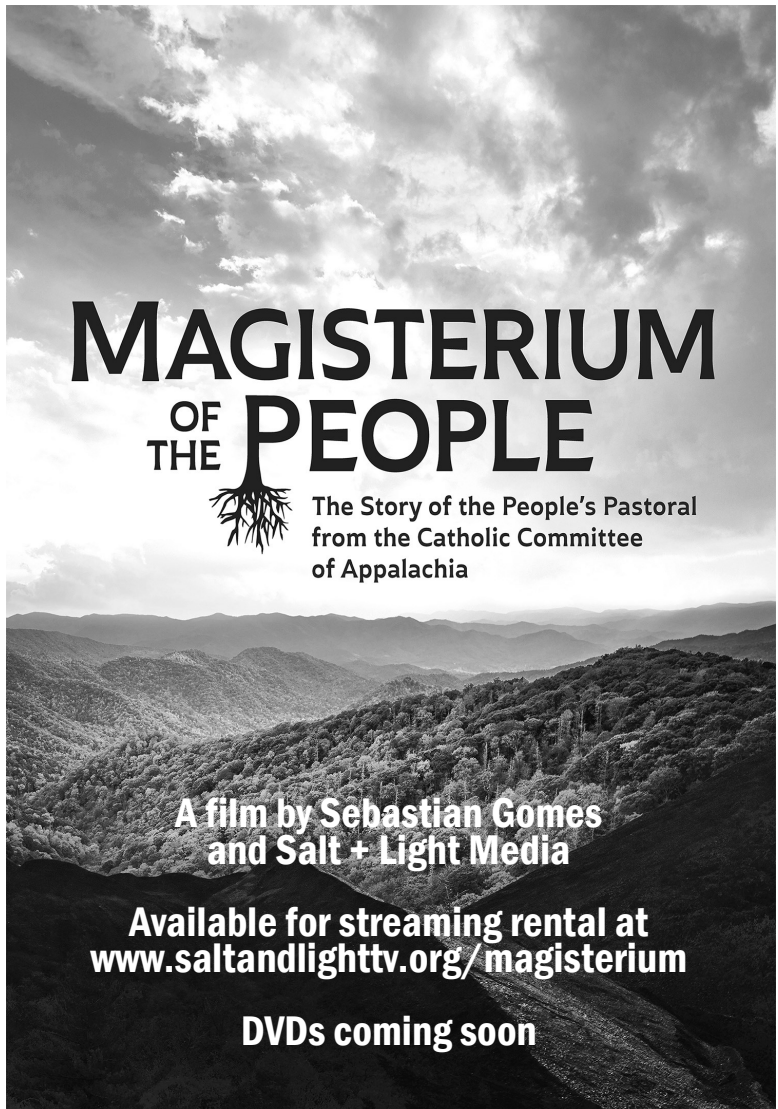
4. These paragraphs describing how the preacher has presented today’s gospel with young people rely on “The Parable of the Mustard Seed” as found in Jerome Berryman’s *The Complete Guide to Godly Play: Volume 3*, Revised and Expanded (Church Publishing, 2017).

5. See, for instance, the work of Christopher Santer, available at <http://www.christophersanter.com/mountains>.

6. The full text of this prayer by Ken Untener can be accessed at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prophets-of-a-future-not-our-own.cfm>.

7. Cf. Emily Dickinson: “Tell all the truth but tell it slant — / Success in Circuit lies / Too bright for our infirm Delight / The Truth’s superb surprise / As Lightning to the Children eased / With explanation kind / The Truth must dazzle gradually / Or every man be blind.” ▲

*Alyssa Pasternak Post earned bachelors and masters degrees in theology from Wheeling Jesuit University and the University of Dayton respectively. Her masters thesis studied the history and theology of “This Land is Home to Me,” and she served on the committee that produced the People’s Pastoral. She currently serves as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries at Saint James Episcopal Church in Lancaster, PA and is a regular contributor to the blog “Women in Theology.”*



**MAGISTERIUM  
OF THE PEOPLE**

The Story of the People’s Pastoral  
from the Catholic Committee  
of Appalachia

A film by Sebastian Gomes  
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## "GOD'S GARDEN IS IN DANGER" (A REVIEW OF *MAGISTERIUM OF THE PEOPLE*)

Elias Crim (Reprinted with permission of [SolidarityHall.org](http://SolidarityHall.org))

"Wisdom comes from listening to the holy faithful people of God. Listen, listen with the heart. And then let us walk together."—Pope Francis

Last week, after watching the latest – and very good – documentary film, *Magisterium of the People*, from Salt + Light TV, I went to my PC and pulled up Google Maps.

In seconds, I could take a look at the area around three small places I'd never heard of – Martin, Kentucky; Hurley, Virginia; and Boone County, West Virginia. (I knew the name for the larger region: Southern Appalachia.)

At each location, I switched from Map view to Satellite view, in order to see the natural features of the landscape. What then appeared were small towns within a vast mountainous forest.

But what I noticed next, just outside of the towns, sometimes three or four times their size, were giant patches of grey looming up, ugly scars resembling moon craters or bombed-out (or in this region, dynamited) landscapes in Syria.

As I zoomed in on the denuded mountains, I knew from the film what I was seeing: places where the foliage no longer holds back the water as it floods downward on the populations below. And where the mountain removal process generates micro-particulates so small they don't fall to the ground: you breathe them in. This is legacy pollution, as it's called: leaving an aftermath of respiratory problems, tumors, cancers, it never goes away.

While Catholics represent a small percentage of the population of Appalachia, it was a group of Catholic Workers and religious sisters in 1970 who created the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA), with an annual conference to talk about life in a "mineral colony," a "sacrifice zone." As many as six bishops from around the country would attend during those early years.

In 1975 appeared "*This Land is Home to Me: A Pastoral Letter on Powerlessness in Appalachia*." Among items, the document called for centers of reflection, where rich and poor could meet and talk about how to create a just future for all. As one participant remarks in the film, "it was a mix of poetry and prophecy, the voice of the people and the voice of a place."

The Catholic Committee of Appalachia was very much the work of several Catholic women religious, in a forgotten place where, as **Sister Beth Davies, CND**, described in the film, they could serve as "a listening presence." Indeed, the first pastoral letter sent the sisters an influx of new postulants, "spirit-led women."

Then, in 1995, came the letter "*At Home in the Web*

*of Life: A Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia*."

Despite these quiet efforts of protest and resistance over several years, the residents of these communities only saw the coal companies' depredations increase, abetted by the advent of fracking and mountaintop removal techniques, the latter described by one priest as "strip mining on steroids."

By 2015, the CCA was ready to write a third pastoral letter but discovered something else had changed: this time no Catholic bishops wanted to sign on. Thus was born "*The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories That Shape Us (A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia)*." The document's key question: What is it like to be you in this place?

In language foreshadowing that of *Laudato Si'*, it said, "To change the course we're on, we need to change the stories we tell about ourselves, our region, and our place in the whole of creation."

In its three major sections, the letter includes Scripture, poetry, photography and art, mixed through local history, meditation and stories from the community, understood here to include not only residents but the homeless, women, youth, people of color, Native people, LGBTQ people, Latinas and Latinos, women religious, people from diverse religious traditions, people who have left the Catholic Church, and "people who have left the region."

After the stories of Part One (some of which we hear in the film), Part Two describes "Our Traditions," finding the roots of integral ecology in ancient Israel, Galilee and in the "crucified places."

Part Three gives "The Ground of Our Hope," including transforming politics, transforming the churches and "becoming Appalachian mystic activists."

Remarkably, most of the document had been completed as two dramatic events occurred in the summer of 2015: the promulgation of Pope Francis' groundbreaking encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the arrival of a new bishop, **John Stowe**, a Franciscan, in the Diocese of Lexington. (Stowe appears near the end of the film.) The new bishop not only helped promulgate the letter but personally sent a copy to every one of his fellow bishops in the U.S.

"It was like a Christmas card from God," **Fr. John Rausch**, a local priest, remarks of the impact of *Laudato Si'*. His friend **Sr. Jackie Hanrahan, CND**, adds "It has allowed people to be proud of the earth in a way and in their connection to it. They felt it."

In less than one hour, the film (produced and directed by the talented **Sebastian Gomes**) manages to bring us scenes of great natural beauty, the brutal vio-

(Continued on page 20)

## Reviews

lence of a huge series of successive dynamite explosions, along with tranquil scenes of elderly religious sisters singing and worshipping together. We meet several of the long-time local CCA activists and eventually end up in Washington D.C. with Sister Simone Campbell (of the Nuns on the Bus) as she visits with Gwen Moore, an African-American U.S. Representative from Milwaukee (“I’m old enough to remember when the Church was a major player in social justice. And the Pope has brought that mission of the Church back to center stage.”)

And yet there is another prophetic dimension to this story in Appalachia, one which the medium of film cannot easily convey: the way in which the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and its neighbors embody perhaps the key theology behind Pope Francis’ mission: the theology of the people (*teología del pueblo*).

For Pope Francis, the term people means everyone but especially the poor, those who have no way of having, that is, the majority of mankind. As this People’s Pastoral suggests, the Church also needs evangelizing — by the people, as the pope has stated.

This is a theology which differs from the older-style liberation theology in its emphasis not on politics or revolution but on culture — the people’s culture, their ethos, their devotions and traditions. And yet at its center is not, for example, our American-style notions of New Evangelization but rather a new and Latin American-flavored sense of liberation and restored communion. The latter does not promise utopia but instead eutopia — joy in the here and now.

For those of us American Catholics yearning for a media channel expressing the fullness of the faith — not the recovery of what has been but of the transcendent meaning of shared everyday life — Salt + Light TV (based in Toronto) is surely our premiere English-language (and French-language) source. SLTV, importantly, is an independent voice and draws on a wide range of Catholic sensibilities and approaches to the faith. Having just celebrated its fifteenth year of operation, we can only hope for many more. ▲

*Elias Crim is publisher of Solidarity House.*

### **BLACK CATHOLIC WOMEN** *(Continued from page 17)*

staffed her parish, and a black female public school-teacher all actively nurtured her vocation, taking her to Mass daily and keeping her on the path of spiritual perfection.

Having grown up listening to the stories of her maternal great-grandmother, Mary Mattie Wood, who cooked and cleaned for the white priests at St. Mary Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, but was forced to sit in segregated pews and receive communion after the white parishioners, White also wanted “to change the world” by desegregating a white congregation. Although rejected admission into three white congregations solely on the basis of race, Angela White became one of the first two African American Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati in 1956.

Such examples of black Catholic women’s sufferings and triumphs stand as a searing testament to the enduring faith of the African American Catholic community in the face of bigotry and exclusion. Their stories should inspire all Catholics and be celebrated as Catholic history. Indeed, the lives and labors of this small sampling of women prove that black history is not simply American history, but also Catholic history.

As Franciscan Handmaid of Mary Loretta Theresa Richards aptly put it, “The Catholic Church wouldn’t be Catholic if it wasn’t for us.” And that’s a fact. ▲

*Shannen Dee Williams is Assistant Professor of History at Villanova University and author of the forthcoming book Subversive Habits: The Untold Story of Black Catholic Nuns in the United States. She was a keynote speaker at CCA’s 2018 Annual Gathering.*



**Sister Joan Wilson, SCN, models CCA’s now classic “Be the church you want to see in the world” t-shirt. Shirts are still available in 4 colors at the CCA online store at <https://ccappal.bigcartel.com>!**

**IMMIGRATION** *(Continued from page 15)*

cooperate."

Another interruption. This time high-pitched whistle sounds, then:

"This is the United States Capitol Police.

You are engaging in unlawful conduct.

If you do not cease and desist at this time, you will be arrested.

This is your second warning."

Again, no one ceases or desists. The call and response continues:

"We will increasingly refuse to cooperate!"

"We live the Eucharist."

"We are one body, "

"Ready to be broken for others."

A priest steps forward and offers a prayer.

"God of the universe, Creator of all.

We summon your Spirit today,

Bless our brothers and sisters who stand...."

A blaring siren interrupts again, then:

"This is the United States Capitol Police."

"You are engaging in unlawful conduct."

"If you do not cease and desist, you will be arrested."

"This is your third and final warning."

As supporters standing outside the prayer circle slowly begin to leave the area, the priest completes his prayer.

The arrests begin. We sing several verses and choruses of *We Shall Not Be Moved*.

"We shall not, we shall not be moved.

We shall not, we shall not be moved,

Just like a tree that's planted by the water,

We shall not be moved."

The press are urged by police to leave. They do.

A few minutes later, I'm arrested as the rosary is prayed: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." As officer Cruze escorts me in handcuffs toward the exit, I continue the witness. "Stop the inhumanity!" I cry, and the acoustics generously carry my voice down the hallway.

Outside on the sidewalk, each arrestee is photographed and searched. Belongings are taken and placed in individual plastic bags. We are loaded onto busses. Upon arrival at the police "warehouse" we are searched again, including shoes this time. Then we sit where assigned and wait to be processed.

We are all charged with D.C. Code 22-1307, "Crowding, Obstructing or Incommoding", which is one of several charges listed under "Disturbances of the Public Peace." In solidarity with the poor, several of us refuse to pay the \$50 fine. Within about five hours we are all out.

Some people would call our action at the Senate Office Building "civil disobedience." Others like Anne Montgomery, sister of the Sacred Heart, might call it "divine obedience," which puts the emphasis on "obedience to the law of love" and on "the call to uphold it in the face of systematized divisions, enmity, and violence."

I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in this Catholic Day of Action for Immigrant Children with

fellow Catholics, little c, big C, or whatever relation to the institutional church. It was a pleasure to meet and risk arrest with Bob Shine of New Ways Ministry and fellow CCA member.

A day or so after the action, I noticed photos posted on Twitter with captions saying "THIS is church!" I agree and feel similarly encouraged and inspired by the prophetic witness happening through the CCA. This all reminded me of Saint Oscar Romero who said, "What marks the genuine church is when the word, burning like the word of the prophets, proclaims and denounces: proclaims to the people God's wonders to be believed and venerated, and denounces the sins of those who oppose God's reign, so that they may tear those sins out of their hearts, out of their societies, out of their laws – out of the structures that oppress, that imprison, that violate the rights of God and humanity. This is the hard service of the word."

See the Franciscan Action Network's website for a description of the three-phase direct action campaign, to sign up for updates, and to view a number of resources that can be used at local level, as well as lists of sponsoring and endorsing organizations: <https://franciscanaction.org/article/join-us-catholic-action-immigrant-children>.

We cannot begin to talk about CCA's involvement in the immigration issue without highlighting another of our members, **Fr. Peter Hinde, O.Carm.**, and his partner, **Sr. Betty Campbell, RSM**, who, for decades, have lived and worked at Casa Tabor-Tabor House, on the border between El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, MX. You may remember Peter being one of the keynote speakers at CCA's 40th Anniversary Annual Gathering in Hinton, WV, discussing how the Appalachian pastoral letters held particular significance for them and for those with whom they work. Casa Tabor is a community for contemplative prophetic and political action. In an effort to raise awareness and educate Americans on our part in the immigration crisis, theirs is what is called "reverse mission," hosting delegations of visitors from the States to experience, join in prayerful witness and volunteer at either Casa Migrante on the Mexican side, or Annunciation House on the U.S. side. Now in his late 90's, although Peter has limited some activities, he and Betty are still on the "front lines."

For a fascinating and inspiring look at the story behind Casa Tabor-Tabor House, watch this hour long interview with Peter on YouTube: at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ravPI4CDuLY>. To receive the annual update and Christmas letter from Casa Tabor, contact them at: PO Box 1482 El Paso, TX 79948 or [pchinde2@gmail.com](mailto:pchinde2@gmail.com) or [bettyrsm13@gmail.com](mailto:bettyrsm13@gmail.com). ▲

**"[Pope Francis] symbolically took the migrant south-north route to the United States by going to Ciudad Juarez on the border with Texas, and there he spoke of the human dignity of immigrants."**

—Sylvia Poggioli

## Back Matter

### WHEELING JESUIT (Continued from page 5)

chance for all students to share their knowledge in their chosen fields and departments with a friendly competition day on campus — always a day of pride on campus. Was this the 20th and the final year for the research day tradition? I have a hard time thinking it will continue when the psychology professor who started research day will be let go at the end of this semester along with so many majors that participated in the special day.

I was not a perfect student. I remember a nice math tutor at the school doing her absolute best to help me with developmental math — almost a lost cause.

I didn't stick around much on the weekends or partake in a lot of the social activities at WJU, a lot of that was due to being an introvert and being busy with a job and relationship off campus. But the Wheeling Jesuit University campus will forever be the place where I learned about Matthew Shepard by attending the stage play *The Laramie Project* and wept like a baby along with my professors. It's where I watched my fellow students give a riveting production of *Waiting for Godot* and saw author Tim O' Brien give a talk on his novel *The Things They Carried*; where I watched in class and then discussed the movies *Malcom X*, *Fight Club* and *The Godfather*; where I read the novel *Johnny Got His Gun* and was faced with the horrors of war; it's where on the night of the 9/11 attacks we all gathered on the campus lawn in the dark with lit candles and had an impromptu remembrance and mass while we were still trying to figure out what had happened.

It's where I learned to take risks; do good research; begin to realize my thoughts on the world and my country; learned the importance of community. It was where I had the opportunity to go on a snorkeling trip with manatees and to take a yearly trip to Canada to attend the Stratford Festival to see Shakespeare plays and musicals, and to dine and socialize with my professors and fellow students as friends and peers.

When the devastation hit in early March that a major overhaul was about to happen, then was later followed by the news that 20 faculty and staff would lose their jobs at the end of this school year, I couldn't quite believe what I was hearing. How could my university, the one that taught me about "service with and among others," turn its back on its own community? On professors and priests who had devoted their lives to teaching students about Jesuit values? Some who have been there for 30 years or more, and then turn them away without even so much as a thank-you severance? And at the end of a school year, no less, when it will be so hard to find jobs in their field?

WJU is no longer a liberal arts school or even a Jesuit school, and we are left with so many questions. How can you be bailed out of debt in 2017 and then turn around and gut your course offerings and staff? Somehow they got so far off track that the school is

unrecognizable from my class of 2004 and my brother's class of 1999, and every class since. My heart breaks for the current students and professors. This isn't just losing a job or a major — this is losing an identity and a piece of yourself. This is Wheeling losing a part of its identity.

I was a lucky beneficiary of this great little college in Wheeling, West Virginia. I have had a career for the past 15 years with my Bachelor of Arts degree that I earned there. I have taken the knowledge those professors bestowed on me in those classes and turned it around and put it back into the community of Wheeling. I only wish those who are in charge of the institution that shares the same name as my little college could say the same. ▲

*Kelly Strautmann is a proofreader in Wheeling, WV and writes for Weelunk.com. Jacob Strautmann teaches poetry and manages a theatre at Boston University, and his debut book of poems is titled The Land of the Dead is Open for Business. They were raised in Cameron, WV and are graduates of Wheeling Jesuit University.*

## NEW WAYS MINISTRY OFFERING TWO PROGRAMS THIS FALL

A large part of New Ways Ministry has always been helping gay clergy and gay and lesbian members of religious congregations appreciate and value their sexual orientation as part of their religious and ministerial lives.

A retreat for gay priests, bishops, brothers, and deacons entitled, *All Are Welcome! All Are Welcome?* is scheduled for October 22-24, 2019. The retreat leader will be Fr. Daly, a writer, lawyer, and retired pastor. A retreat for lesbian sisters, entitled *Celebrating Our Identity* is scheduled for December 5-8, 2019. There will be opportunities for prayer, storytelling, dreaming, Eucharist, and more. One of last year's retreatants said, "I appreciated the level of honesty that occurred; it was a safe environment for sharing."

Because it is difficult to reach gay and lesbian clergy, brothers, and nuns, New Ways is asking for help in disseminating this information to people who would consider participating in these programs. A personal invitation from a trusted friend is always the best way to encourage people to attend. Folks who have participated in the past have found these programs to be life-giving and enriching.

Information for both retreats, including registration forms can be found at [www.NewWaysMinistry.org/upcoming-programs/](http://www.NewWaysMinistry.org/upcoming-programs/). You may also email [info@NewWaysMinistry.org](mailto:info@NewWaysMinistry.org) to receive copies of the brochures or PDFs of the registration form.



**New Ways Ministry**

**ABUSE** (Continued from page 3)

Lori, and a campaign to withhold financial contributions to the diocese.

CCA has also been persistent in requesting a meeting with Lori to discuss the investigation and the state of the DWC. After months of attempts, Bryan Minor convinced Lori to meet with us in March, but the offer was withdrawn at the last minute. In response, CCA members joined other Wheeling area Catholics with similar concerns to organize a prayerful witness during and after Lori's Chrism Mass in Wheeling. During the sign of peace, two CCA members entered the sanctuary to offer a sign of peace to the Archbishop and concelebrants as an assertion of the dignity of the laity and a sign of cooperation between laity and clergy. Nearby priests offered handshakes, but Lori did not. The pair then joined other demonstrators outside the Cathedral after Mass. Lori did not engage the demonstrators after the Mass, though several priests and parishioners affirmed our presence.

Following the action, the group released a statement which Jeannie and I mailed to Lori with an accompanying letter on April 29. The statement reads, "Our presence today is not fundamentally protest, but rather a promise to remain engaged in spite of the temptations to cynicism and despair. We call on the clergy to reject attitudes of defensiveness and secrecy surrounding abuses of the past and present, and to give an honest account of the failures of the Church so that all may grow together in holiness."

In response, Jeannie and I received a letter of reprimand from Lori on Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston letterhead. The letter, dated May 15, states, "The Mass should never be used as a moment for demonstration or the expression of individual opinion, especially during Holy Week and I ask you, as the concerned Catholics you are, to avoid such actions in the future. [...] [P]lease know that I have heard your concerns...." We were taken aback to receive such a reprimand, in part because this letter literally represents the only communication or acknowledgment CCA has received from Lori after months of polite invitations for dialogue. We also take issue with the Archbishop's characterization of a sign of peace as a "protest," for it completely disregards the statement that was sent to him and the solemn liturgical character of the action conducted at the Chrism Mass.

A note at the bottom of the letter indicated that a copy was sent to CCA's Episcopal Adviser Bishop John Stowe. When we reached out to Bishop John to discuss the matter, he said he never received a copy of Lori's letter, but affirmed the respectful and prophetic tone of the witness action, writing: "As you know, I believe there is a necessary place for prophetic action in the Church and there are often consequences for those actions. [...] I see that your voices are needed now more than ever."

A narrative is emerging within the national coverage of the Bransfield story that suggests WV Catholics

have been largely passive in response to Bransfield's behavior. CCA's work over the last two years, including our participation in the witness action at the Cathedral, flies in the face of that narrative. And in our continued media engagement we insist that Catholics have been resisting the abusive church culture that enabled Bransfield all along and that we will continue to raise up the voices and actions of Catholics who have been so engaged for many years.

This is a critical time in our church, and every sector of the church must pause and discern ways to become part of the solution in ending abusive clericalism once and for all. We believe CCA can make, and has been making, important contributions in our region. It has been important to Jeannie and I to have the backing of the Board of Directors in doing this work, and this focus was indeed affirmed by the Board at its meeting in May.

We believe CCA can make significant contributions because of our long-held commitment to lay empowerment. CCA knows that if any change is to happen in our church the laity will be at the center or it simply will not happen. And we believe we can make contributions that are credible because they are grounded by listening closely to victims of sexual and spiritual abuse by clergy and by participation in dialogue among different sectors of the church. Listening to these stories of abuse and acting for change is another way of living out our pastoral letters' call to *see*, to *judge*, and to *act*. In doing so, we become "living pastors," creating a church where "everyone's story... [is] welcomed and honored in its telling."

West Virginia was given a new bishop in August (see page 5), and members of our state chapter are eager to meet with him to share CCA's story and to take our place in the work of reform in the local church. As we wrote in our open letter to the DWC in September 2018, "Together with other concerned Catholics, we raise our voices in faith and in hope for truth, transparency and accountability in the church we love, and for the justice and healing of her abuse survivors." ▲

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