

General Information

About the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Blessed Pius IX established the Diocese of Wheeling on July 19, 1850. The Diocese was redesignated the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on October 4, 1974, under a decree of Pope Paul VI, with Sacred Heart Church, Charleston, West Virginia erected as Co-Cathedral.

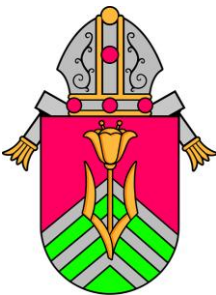
The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston comprises the entire State of West Virginia, with a total population of 1,814,468 in an area of 24,282.45 square miles.

When established in 1850, the Diocese of Wheeling was entirely within the State of Virginia. In 1863 when West Virginia separated from Virginia, eight counties in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia continued as part of the Diocese of Richmond, and the Diocese of Wheeling included seventeen and one-half counties in Southwest Virginia.

On August 13, 1974, the Diocese of Wheeling was realigned to be coterminous with the State of West Virginia. The counties in Virginia then became part of the Diocese of Richmond.

Diocesan Coat of Arms

SIGNIFICANCE



In the arms of Wheeling-Charleston, alternating points of silver and green chevrons form the background for a single golden lily, all against a red backdrop.

The golden lily honors Saint Joseph, principal patron of Cathedral Church in Wheeling, and thus, principal patron of the Diocese. The chevrons represent the mountains of West Virginia.

Ecclesiastical Forms of Address Recognized in the United States

CARDINALS:

Address on envelope:
His Eminence
(Christian Name) Cardinal (Surname)
Salutation: Your Eminence:

ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS:

Address on envelope:
His Excellency
Most Reverend _____, D.D.
Salutation: Your Excellency:

MONSIGNORS:

Address on envelope:
Rev. Msgr. _____
Salutation: Dear Monsignor _____:

SECULAR PRIESTS:

Address on envelope:
Rev. _____
Salutation: Dear Father _____:

RELIGIOUS ORDER PRIESTS:

Address on envelope:
Rev. _____, (adding designated letters)
Salutation: Dear Father _____:

DEACONS*:

Address on envelope:
Rev. Mr. _____
Salutation: Dear Rev. Mr. _____:

BROTHERS:

Address on envelope:
Brother _____, (adding designated letters)
Salutation: Dear Brother _____:

SISTERS:

Address on envelope:
Sister _____, (adding designated letters)
Salutation: Dear Sister _____:

*N.B. The title of Rev. Mr. for Permanent Deacons has been approved for usage in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Wills and Bequests

In all instances it is advisable to seek legal counsel before drafting a bequest or formulating a will.

Bequests for the benefit of the Diocese, a parish, or an unincorporated institution or organization should be made out to “The Most Rev. Michael J. Bransfield, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, or his successors in office,” with a specification of the purpose for which the bequest is to be used, e.g., “for the use of St. Titus Parish.” If a bequest is intended for an incorporated institution, please consult the director of that institution or the Chancery for the proper legal title.

Bequests for Masses should stipulate the intention for which the Masses are to be offered, the number of Masses and any other pertinent information, and clearly specify any other special requirements of the donor.

Many religious communities in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston carry on their work in other places, too. If a gift or bequest to a religious community is intended for an institution of that community in the Diocese, that intention should be made specific.

Burse for Ministerial Education

One of the largest operating expenses in the diocesan budget is for the education of those preparing for ministry to the Church as priest, permanent deacon or lay minister. In an attempt to minimize the direct outlay of money for this item, burses have been established by various parishes, individuals, families and organizations. These burses are often initiated in memory of a friend or loved one.

The basic method of the burse system is to build up the principal and use the interest as payment for ministerial education. The principal is not used directly to pay this expense. Donors to burses are remembered regularly in the prayers of the seminarians and ministerial candidates.

Once the burse has been initiated, additional tax deductible contributions may be made at any time. It should also be noted that any group or individual can contribute to the burses that have already been established.

While the inflationary rise in the cost of seminarian and ministerial education may require a change in the future, the present recommended goal for each of the burses is \$30,000. (Although a burse may be less than that figure, the larger the burse, the more help it gives. There is no limit to the amount that a burse may reach.)

Contributions should be made payable to Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and be sent to:

Office of Vocations
P.O. Box 230
Wheeling, WV 26003

Diocesan Statistics

(Figures as of 11/1/09, unless otherwise noted)

Bishop	1
Retired Bishops	1
Diocesan Priests	115
Active in diocese	71
Active outside diocese	1
Retired, sick or absent	41
From other dioceses	10
Religious Communities of Priests	14
Religious Priests	52
Religious Communities of Brothers	7
Religious Brothers	12
Religious Communities of Sisters	33
Religious Women (including hermits and Consecrated Virgins)	163
Permanent Deacons	45
Parishes (with resident pastor).....	82
Parishes (without resident pastor).....	29
Missions	20
Chapels.....	9
Total Seminarians	10
University.....	1
Total Students (2008)	1,288
Secondary Schools (2008).....	7
Students	1,649
Elementary Schools (2008).....	25
Students	4,784
Private School	0
Students	0
CCD Students (2008 Parish Census Report)	5,066
High School Students	861
Grade School Students	4,205
General Hospitals.....	3
Patients Treated Annually (2007)	723,835
Homes for Dependent Children.....	1
Homes for Aged	5

Baptisms (2008 Parish Census Report).....	1,309
Under Age 7.....	812
Age 7 and older	313
Profession of Faith.....	184
Marriages (2008 Parish Census Report)	387
Catholic.....	160
Mixed	227
Funerals (2008 Parish Census Report)	967
Catholic Population (2007).....	82,996
Total Population	1,814,468

Chancery Regulations

The Chancery is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

All special collections are to be forwarded to the Chancery within two weeks of the day on which they are taken up.

All prenuptial papers and requests for dispensations should be addressed to:

The Tribunal
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
P.O. Box 230
Wheeling, WV 26003

Please designate clearly the type of dispensation needed, and print or type the proper names of the parties.

Matters pertaining to matrimonial cases, declarations of nullity and rogatorial commissions should be addressed to the Diocesan Tribunal at the address above.

