

Annual Report of the Confraternity of St. Nicholas
December 28th, 2021 Feast of the Holy Innocents

Glory to Jesus Christ! By the grace of God, the Confraternity of St. Nicholas has had a good first year. I am grateful to all those who have helped the Confraternity grow. This year, children continued to face scandal, abuse, and trafficking. Our world provided and continues to provide us with frequent reminders for the necessity of our prayers and advocacy for children. This year saw the trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, romantic partner of Jeffrey Epstein, the billionaire who globally trafficked underage girls for sex. In May, UNICEF, the UN's Children Fund, suggested that there is no conclusive evidence that pornography negatively impacts children. In June, a teacher at Dalton taught her first grade class about masturbation via a cartoon. Speaking of cartoons, the Netflix animated series *Big Mouth* aired its fifth season in November despite explicitly depicting underage characters engaging in sexual activity. The satanic temple joined the many groups in opposition to Texas' new law restricting abortion passed in September. In December, the CIA declassified that ten of its employees or contractors committed sex crimes involving children. Only one was charged with a crime. All these anecdotes point to a great need for our prayers.

I first learned of the various and severe attacks on children in 2018. In 2019 I hosted a guest speaker event for Anneke Lucas, a Belgian survivor of child sex trafficking. She described events where she was trafficked as having politicians and military personnel in attendance. My interaction with her among other research showed me that child trafficking was not only a global enterprise but also one which reached into powerful circles. I also learned of the involvement of satanism in several cases involving the trafficking and abuse of children. I began to see the various ways the devil attacks children and their innocence. Through government operations, education, and mass media, the innocence of children is targeted by satanists, secularists, and sexual revolutionaries. From these findings I glimpsed into the great evil which pervades our world and dwells in the hearts of men. Unfortunately, the more I learned of these things, the more I saw how little known such issues were to most people. Of course, when many people think of pedophilia, they think of the abuse crisis within the Catholic Church. But these issues extend far beyond the walls of the Church so that they impact all of society.

In April of 2021, I learned of the growth of Confraternities during the Renaissance in a History class at West Virginia University. Confraternities then enabled the laity to have a more active participation in the life of the Church. Considering this, I wondered why there was not already a Confraternity which prayed for children. I continued to think of the gravity of Christ's words when speaking of those who harm children. He said of those who harm children, "it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). I initially thought of St. Joseph as a patron for a Confraternity which prayed for children, but the Confraternity of St. Joseph already existed. I then shifted my attention to St. Nicholas since one of his several patronages was children. As I learned more of this holy bishop of Myra, the more I saw him as a great defender of the faith and children. I put together a rough draft for the Confraternity of St. Nicholas including its description, obligations, and mission statement. After looking into how a Confraternity is established, I realized I needed to have it approved by my local Bishop. I met with Bishop Mark Brennan of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on June 28th to discuss the idea.

Bishop Brennan was very favorable toward the idea. He asked mostly logistical questions such as how it would be advertised as well as the structure of the Confraternity itself. He shared that as a parish priest he had before dealt with cases of abuse and suspected human trafficking. He understood the severity of these issues and the necessity for a spiritual effort to combat them. He explained that such problems were at their roots spiritual and therefore must be fought spiritually. After I gave him an information sheet on child abuse around the world, he remarked “our world shows more and more everyday that it needs a savior.” He concluded by saying he would pray and consult others over the matter before approving it. Then, on August 10th, Bishop Brennan approved the Confraternity of St. Nicholas and commissioned me to write its statutes. After composing and sending him the statutes, he approved them and appointed me as the General Promoter of the Confraternity on September 20th. At this point I began enrolling members. Bishop Brennan then composed and sent a letter to the entire Diocese on October 15th announcing the establishment of the Confraternity while encouraging the faithful to join it.

The Confraternity of St. Nicholas currently has over 160 members. Of them, we have two deacons, four priests, and one Bishop. Members are mostly from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, but there are also members from the Dioceses of New York, Boston, Cleveland, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Agrigento, Madrid, and Beijing. I continue to promote the Confraternity to parish churches and Bishops. My secretaries, for whom I am very grateful, and I continue to plan ways of promoting and spreading the Confraternity so that prayer for the children is increased. The Confraternity had its first fundraiser on November 7th at St. John University Parish in Morgantown, WV. We had a bake sale to raise money for a statue of St. Nicholas for a procession on his feast day. We were able to purchase the statue and have the procession after a special mass at St. John’s for the Confraternity on December 6th. Bishop Brennan also celebrated mass for the Confraternity at St. Joseph Cathedral in Wheeling, WV. The icon for the Confraternity, written by Reece Lopatka on November 24th, was present at both masses. Since I will be mostly in Morgantown for the next two years for my college education, donations to the Confraternity are processed through St. John’s University Parish. I am especially grateful to Father Brian Crenwelge, the pastor of St. John’s, for helping the Confraternity in this way and more. I ask all members to spread word of the Confraternity of St. Nicholas so that prayer, fasting, and advocacy for the protection of children may increase.

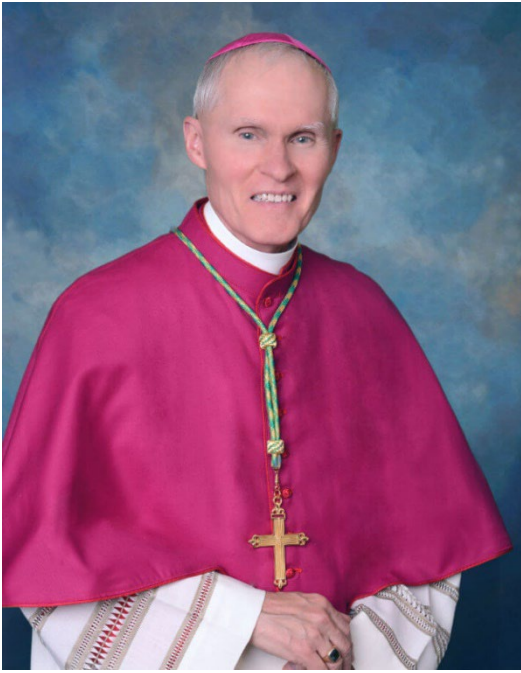
In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Marquart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Adam Marquart

General Promoter

P.S. Please reach out to me at confraternitystnicholas@gmail.com if you would like to be a local promoter for your parish



Bishop Mark Brennan of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Icon written for the Confraternity by Reece Lopatka

General Promoter Adam Marquart with icon of St. Nicholas at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church



Fr. Brian Crenwelge of St. John Roman Catholic Church blessing processional statue of St. Nicholas



Fr. Jim Fraser of Holy Protection of the Mother of God Ruthenian Catholic Church blessing the icon