

## WAOB WE ARE ONE BODY RADIO PITTSBURGH GAINS NEW AFFILIATE WITH THE BENEDICTINES' WVTO BALTIMORE

**Baltimore, Feb 20 (CRU)**—St Joseph Missions' WAOB We Are One Body Radio in Pittsburgh gained a new affiliate today when the Benedictines' St Benedict parish switched its WVTO-LP 92.7 FM Baltimore from Relevant Radio to the WAOB network. WVTO-LP is WAOB's third affiliate and sixth station.

No reason is given at the WVTO website, but the parish was founded by and given to Benedictines by Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons in 1893. The license of WVTO is issued to the Benedictine Society of Baltimore City, Inc. Although St Joseph Missions is not a Benedictine station, the program director and operating officer of WAOB is Father Boniface Hicks, OSB, of St Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He is also spiritual director at the abbey, which dates back to 1854, founded by monks from the famed Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland, itself founded by a disciple of St Meinrad at the location of his hermitage in 934.

WVTO-LP is the result of the Benedictine pastor Father Paschal Morino's dream of bringing Catholic radio to his parish and the city of Baltimore, a dream created by the discovery of the Benedictine nuns' KSGS-LP on the Rio Grande, a dream that flowered four years later when the FCC granted a license for the WVTO on January 17, 2017. The station went on the air on March 4<sup>th</sup>, broadcasting from 2 a.m. to 10 a.m., with 23-year-old parishioner and Loyola of Baltimore graduate Cody Barber running the station.<sup>1</sup>

The archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Review*, said at the occasion, "For now, WVTO broadcasts content from Relevant Radio, a national, listener-supported Catholic outlet, interspersed with station-identification announcements by Barber." Alluding to the fierce competition for the frequency, "Father Morlino said the time slot is 'not perfect,' though he is pleased to have morning commuters' ears, and to have secured the slot in the face of 'lots of opposition.'"

Why the strange hours? There was heavy competition for the valuable frequency in Baltimore, and more than one applicant was after it—five in fact, including Loyola, Johns Hopkins University, and a labor union.. Ironically, it was Loyola University from which Cody Barber was a graduate.

The FCC decided on the basis of its point system to award a share-time operation to the three successful applicants, one of them the Benedictines. The others were The Center for Emerging Media, Inc., and the United Workers Association.<sup>2</sup> The other two stations were never built and their construction permits

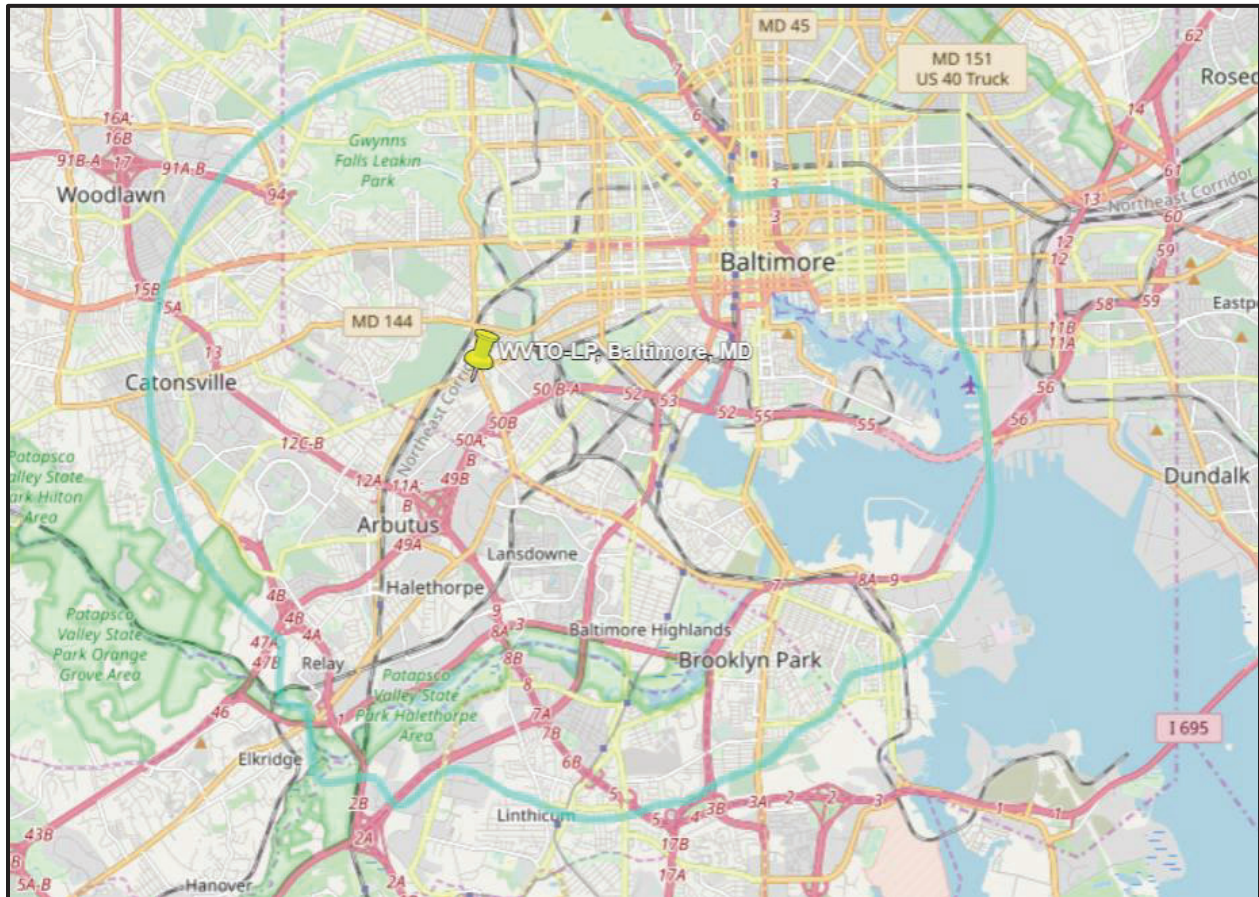


<sup>1</sup> The archdiocese's newspaper, *The Catholic Review*, reported the launch the following May, "From the Bell Tower of St Benedict: Catholic Radio Evangelizes Morning Commuters," <https://www.archbalt.org/bell-tower-st-benedict-catholic-radio-evangelizes-morning-commuters/>

<sup>2</sup> The Memorandum Report & Order announcing the decision was issued on September 16, 2015, and concerned this MX Group 198. It can be found at <http://licensing.fcc.gov/cgi->

expired, at which points the Benedictines filed with the FCC for expanded hour operations. This was granted when the second sharetimer's CP expired, June 23, 2017.

Father Morlino's dedication to Catholic radio is phenomenal; he was not about to sit back on his laurels now that WVTO-LP was a 24/7 radio station. In January 2018, not a year after his full-time acquisition, he applied to move the station's antenna from the church steeple to atop the Transamerica Building on Light Street in downtown Baltimore. The antenna would be mounted on a 10-ft pole atop the 161-meter (528 ft) building. The FCC granted the change the following month, and on July 26, 2018, granted a license covering the change. Because LPFM station antennas are limited to 30 m HAAT, any higher elevation requires a proportional reduction of ERP, and so WVTO-LP was now running 6 watts ERP from an antenna 116 m HAAT. That signal got out as far east as Dundalk and as far south as Lansdowne.



**New 60-dBu contour of WVTO-LP after a move from the Transamerica Building in downtown to Saint Agnes Hospital in southwestern Baltimore. Station may be operating on PTA.**

But Father Morlino wanted to improve signal outreach. In November, he filed to move the antenna to atop the Saint Agnes Hospital at the intersection of South Canton Avenue and Wilkens Avenue, but the FCC rejected the application as being short-spaced to two commercial FM stations. WVTO amended the application and it was granted just after the New Year. This transmitter move shifted the signal as far south and west as the I-695 bypass while limiting its coverage over the northeast of Baltimore. Although the HAAT was reduced from 116 m to 20 m, the move considerably extended the signal of WVTO, ranging now from Dundalk on the east to Druid Hill on the north, Woodlawn on the West, and Elkridge on the south. The new contour moves the WVTO-LP contour closer to that of WSJF-LP, owned by St Joseph's Church in Eldersburg, which is a Relevant Radio affiliate.

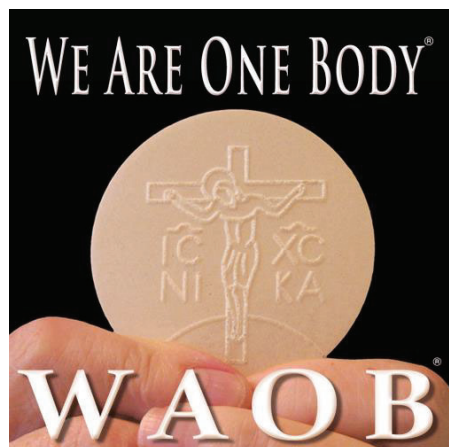
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WAOB WE ARE ONE BODY NETWORK STATIONS				
Call Sign	Dial	City of License	Licensee	Network Launch
WAOB-FM	106.7 FM	Beaver Falls (Pittsburgh)	St Joseph Mission	February 15, 2010
WAOB	860 AM	Millvale (Pittsburgh)	St Joseph Mission	February 2010
WPGR	1510 AM	Monroeville (Pittsburgh)	St Joseph Mission	February 15, 2010
WJVM	90.3 FM	Bellefonte, Pa.	Voice of Divine Mercy	April 3, 2014
WEJO-LP	104.7 FM	State College, Pa.	St Joseph's Academy	July 22, 2015
WVTO-LP	92.7 FM	Baltimore	Benedictine Society of Baltimore City, Inc.	February 20, 2020

In joining the We Are One Body network, WVTO-LP dropped Relevant Radio affiliation. That may have been planned from the start, for the in the May archdiocesan article, one of the paragraphs reads, “For now, WVTO broadcasts content from Relevant Radio, a national, listener-supported Catholic outlet, interspersed with station-identification announcements by Barber.”

The WAOB network will celebrate its tenth anniversary this March 19<sup>th</sup>, St Joseph Day, honoring the patron of the network—“St Joseph Missions.” The network had launched unofficially on February 15, 2010, with a live inaugural Mass, but only over WAOB-FM 106.7 FM and WPGR 1510 AM; for some reason WAOB 860 AM was not turned on, and Wikipedia reports that the endless loop broadcast thereafter did not identify the station.



That loop was interrupted only by broadcasts of Mass until March 19<sup>th</sup>, when the network began “with limited programming,” typical of newly launched operations that do not simply download a satellite feed.

Programming on the We Are One Body network is intensely spiritual, moreso than the other Catholic networks. Its broadcasts comprise the Mass twice a day, the Liturgy of the Hours at stated intervals, the Rosary several times daily, sermons and talks by bishops around the U.S. and not just from Pennsylvania, excerpts from papal addresses, readings of Church Fathers and prominent saints, vocational stories by priests, biographies of saints and, above all, during the evening and overnight hours, lectio divina, in

which various priests read sections of Scripture and allow a minute of silence thereafter for mediation on those readings. Throughout the day, there are intervals of Gregorian Chant and sacred polyphony; there is no Christian Contemporary music.

There are no laity instructing listeners, nor are there lay volunteers producing programs. Youthful lay announcers are heard between programs and do live identifications and program introductions, and lay families and the St Thomas More Prayer Center in Cranberry feature in the various programs of prayer.

The network offers four feeds over the Internet at its website, [www.waob.org](http://www.waob.org), one for each time zone. Thus, listeners who want to follow the Eastern Time zone schedule can click on their feed for their own time zones and hear the programs at the same local time zone hour as they were heard at the Eastern Time zone hour in Pittsburgh.

Conversely, a listener can listen to a later time zone to hear the repeat of a program. If, for example, someone in New York wishes to hear a program he heard at 8 a.m., he can go to the Central Time zone feed and hear it at 9 a.m. New York Time, to the Mountain Time zone feed to hear it at 10 a.m. New York time, or to the Pacific Time zone feed to hear it at 11 a.m. New York time. WAOB is working on Apple and Android apps but hasn't yet released them; it can be heard on Tune-In but Tune-In offers only the Eastern Time zone feed. One can hear the Eastern Time zone feed also on WJVM Bellefonte at its website and now at the WVTO-LP website. **ΛΩ**