



THE DIOCESAN CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS OF THE DIOCESE OF BAKER

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"greater good of souls"

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A Blessed Christmas to All

The many beautiful scenes of Eastern and Central Oregon constantly remind us that "The love of the Lord is everlasting".

The joy of friendship constantly reminds us that "The love of the Lord is everlasting".

May God's abundant blessings come upon you and remain with you during the entirety of this Year of Grace - -

The Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa, The Most Reverend Thomas J. Connolly and the Diocesan Staff

SISTERS OF MARY OF KAKAMEGA: In the last half of 2010 the Diocese of Baker is fortunate to have welcomed seven Sisters of Mary of Kakamega, a Kenyan order, to work among our parishes. Five of the Sisters are in Central Oregon and will work at St. Thomas and St. Francis parishes, while two have been assigned to Ontario's Blessed Sacrament Church.

The Sisters of Kakamega is a religious congregation founded by the late Bishop Brandsma who in 1932, requested the help of the Ursuline Sister from Bergen-Holland to form the African girls who wished to become religious. The congregation eventually spread beyond the Diocese of Kakamega in Kenya and now has 76 house and 332 sisters in Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and most recently, the United States.

The congregation has a mission of evangelization through activities that witness to the Gospel. It is also dedicated to living the Evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in community life. Its apostolate includes teaching, caring for the sick, catechesis, communication and social work.

The institute's charism is "To share in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ, the great Teacher and Healer," and the spirit of the congregation is persevering love and service in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The sisters also have a regimen of personal and communal prayer that nourishes their spiritual and apostolic activities.

In 2005 a General Chapter of the Sisters of Mary of Kakamega recommended the sisters move out to other parts of the world as missionaries. So, when Bishop Robert Vasa invited the congregation to come to the Diocese of Baker, the Mother Superior sent some of her sisters to help with catechesis.

Sister Sabina summed up the feelings of her colleagues and fellow religious: "We wish to express our gratitude to the Most Reverend Robert Vasa, who granted us an opportunity to share the Gospel and our faith with God's people in the new culture of the Baker Diocese ... and to the Christians of good will who have made our apostolate possible through their generosity and support. May God reward them abundantly."



Sister Sabina Mbenge: Sister Sabina is the superior of the group of sisters in Bend. She was born the second youngest in a Catholic family of six children and entered the congregation in 1973. She made her final profession in 1983 and has worked in formation and counseling. She has a Master's degree in Education and

extensive experience both as a teacher and as an administrator and has also served the disabled. She is working in St. Francis School teaching religion.

"I thank God and Bishop Robert Vasa and the people of the Baker Diocese for welcoming us in their midst to work and evangelize to the people of God," said Sister Sabina.



Sister Dorothy Radoli: Sister Dorothy comes from a family of eight children and attended Catholic schools before she joined the congregation. She has been professed for 18 years and credits her parents' encouragement with being able to pursue her vocation. Sister Dorothy has a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education

from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. She is working at St. Francis School, teaching religious education and may also help with CCD students.

"I am happy to be here and I feel that my teaching, guiding and counseling skills will be of benefit to the students. I pray and hope that some of these students will get a vocation to the priesthood and religious life," said Sister Dorothy.

MIND AND HEART OF BISHOP VASA: This is the last issue of the Chronicle before Christmas and the last issue for calendar year 2010. This affords me an opportunity to extend to our readers my prayer that all of you experience the greatest abundance of joy and genuine peace in this Christmas Season. I pray that our New Year, 2011, is likewise filled with an abundance of God's graces and blessings for all of us.

This season also affords me a suitable occasion to express to you my gratitude for the various ways in which you live and support your Catholic faith throughout the year. For many this involves hours of volunteer work, financial contributions, encouraging words and notes, participation in Sunday and weekday Masses, participating in service projects in the community, support and encouragement directed towards your priests, and a myriad of other practical ways in which Faith is made to come alive. For all of this, I thank you and pray that these exercises of your faith is a source of blessing for you. I also pray that your attachment and commitment to the faith are greatly deepened as a result of the ways in which you respond to God's call.

It is quite easy to become prey to a form of discouragement which causes us to focus too much on what God seems to want "from" us as apposed to joyfully recognizing how much He, in His love for us, really wants "for" us. He wants "for" us to live more completely and devotedly in relationship with Him. He wants "for" us to live by His commandments, not because of some kind of insecurity complex on His part, but because He knows that we, as human beings, can come to the fullest realization of our potential for joy when we live in accord with how and why He made us. Thus, even the keeping of the Commandments is "for" us. He knows that attendance at Mass every Sunday is one way of keeping us connected with Him "for" our benefit and so He insists on this very strongly. Again, this He does, not because he is hungry for our praise, but rather because He is hungry "for" us.

In His hunger "for" us He gives Himself as food. In His thirst "for" us, He gives himself in spiritual drink. At Christmas, he comes and is laid, "for" us, in a manger, a feed bunk, manifesting His will and desire to be food "for" us.

We all have loved ones for whom we wish the very best but we, as human beings, always have a degree of self interest. We want children and grandchildren to have a closer relationship with God, at least in part, to lessen our own anxiety. We want spouses to have a healthier relationship with God because such an improved relationship may mean an improved relationship with us and with other family members. This is perfectly good and normal. The point is that God has no such self interest. In truth, He comes to us at Christmas "for" us. He comes to us in Eucharist "for" us. He calls us to holiness "for" our sake. The Word became flesh "for" us and dwelt among us, "for" us.

CONSIDER LITURGY: We already looked at the "Lord, I am not worthy" but this little prayer merits additional comment. I do not remember much of the Latin from Mass but, "Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum" is something I think of very often when I say, "Lord, I am not worthy..." This is so because, as a child, the English translation in the bi-lingual missal which I used regularly always reminded me of the Centurion who came to Jesus seeking help for his servant. When Jesus said He would come to his house, the Centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Only say the word and my servant shall be healed." This connection is not necessarily recognizable in the present translation and so may be virtually unknown. Yet, it is a very valuable connection. I am pleased to see it restored. God bless you. +Bishop Vasa

GETTING TO KNOW THE DIOCESE: To know more about the Diocese is as easy as turning on your computer. The address is www.dioceseofbaker.org and you will find numerous areas to explore right from the home page. Documents and guidelines to help us understand our place in the total mission of the Church are available.

The website also contains history about our diocese as well as parish and deanery information and puts faces on those who serve us in their various positions within the Diocese plus much more. Web page content is constantly being updated with new information and pictures which help describe what is happening in our Diocese. Families are encouraged to check the Youth and Family Events page to see what is planned for 2011. One visit is not enough to take in all that can be found.

PARISH NEWS: At 12:45 a.m. November 9, the Burns, Hines and Tribble Fire departments responded to a fire at Holy Family Church in Burns. It appears that the fire was the result of arson. The 55 year old single story parish hall was comprised of a kitchen, a large gathering hall and classrooms. The building was 6,300 square feet and is certainly a tragic loss for the parish but there were no personal injuries and no other structures were affected by the fire. The building is fully insured and Fr. Strzyz will be working with the insurance company to assess the extent of the damage. Full replacement cost would be expected to exceed \$1,000,000.



SAINTS AND FEASTS: At this time of year, excitement is always the predominant emotion. But getting worked up about presents and eating rich food is not what is most meaningful to the serious Christian. Instead he ought to look at the quieter, more hidden meaning of Christmas, the Christ Child and what His coming means for each one of us.

In Advent John the Baptist gives us an example when he disdains fine clothing, fancy food and anything that calls attention to himself. He goes out into the desert to set himself apart from the world and, when the Messiah comes into the same locale, John points to Him as the Person who needs to be the focus of piety. Christ as an infant in His Mother's arms, Christ as a young man working miracles, Christ ultimately on the cross redeeming us all from sin, should be the center of our celebration.

And those festivities, prepared for carefully in Advent, need to continue for 12 days, starting with Christmas Eve and ending on the old feast of the Epiphany, January 6. Instead of putting up a tree and decorations on Thanksgiving and taking things down the day after Christmas, Christians can give witness to their faith by rejoicing in all the exquisite days following the Birth of Our Lord: the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John, the Holy Innocents, the Holy Family, the Circumcision and more.

The liturgy this time of year is filled with imagery that can excite our devotion and love for God. On Christmas Day at the third Mass, the Scriptures tell us, "A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us: Whose government is upon his shoulder and His name shall be called the Angel of great counsel." And in the Office for Christmas Day the hymn at Vespers gives a glorious picture of the impact of the Incarnation.

This day, the stars, the earth and sea
And all creation welcome sing
This day which brought out liberty
When came our Lord, our Saviour King.

CLERGY NEWS:

Congratulations to the following as they celebrate their ordination anniversary during December:

Rev. Dennis Strachota, Bend	December 23, 1967
Rev. Eduardo Nebelung, Boardman	December 21, 1984
Very Rev. Robert Irwin	December 8, 1995

We are most grateful for the years of service of all our priests. Please keep them in your prayers.

RETREAT CENTER NEWS: A treasure trove of statues for Camp Connolly Store has arrived from Chicago courtesy of Father Radloff's mother and the St. Michael St. Vincent de Paul Society of Orland Park, Illinois. Opening the three boxes was just like Christmas. The variety of statues will surely appeal to the young people attending next summer's camps. The boxes also contained a variety of rosaries, medals, books, holy cards, etc. We appreciate all the items that are coming in. Joan Walsh-Camp Store Volunteer Manager

PARISH NEWS—KLAMATH FALLS: A group of seven evangelists facilitated a Light of the World (LOTW) evangelization retreat at St. Henry Parish in Gresham, Oregon, in late October. Six of the seven evangelists are from the Diocese of Baker.

The LOTW retreat is a Catholic-based parish retreat that provides parishioners with the opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ through the gospel message and the sacraments. This weekend retreat includes talks, adoration, music, and small-group discussion. The LOTW retreat combines evangelization with renewing our commitments at Baptism and Confirmation, as well as experiencing the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Most of the West-Coast team that facilitates these retreats lives in Klamath Falls. The majority of people attend St. Pius X Parish while the others attend Sacred Heart Parish. The team also includes members from Corvallis, Oregon, and Red Bluff, California.

Vic Scaravilli, from Klamath Falls, leads the team in their goal to provide evangelization retreats throughout the West Coast.

The retreat team was invited by Fr. Charles Zach who is currently the pastor at St. Henry. He has already experienced the LOTW retreat when he was the pastor of St. Helen Parish in Junction City and wanted to bring it to his new parish. Fr. Zach's goal is to further evangelize his new parish so they will become more committed followers of Jesus and share their gifts in order to grow the parish by providing more ministries for increased spiritual growth.

Please contact Vic Scaravilli if you or your parish might be interested in a weekend evangelization retreat. His email address is VScaravilli@q.com or call the St. Pius X Church parish office at 541-884-4242.

PARISH NEWS: On Friday, December 3, Sacred Heart Parish in Klamath Falls hosted an event for women only to reflect upon 'Advent Past, Advent Present and Advent Future'. Twelve hostesses each beautifully decorated a themed table and provided a fabulous dessert and beverage for their table guests.

More than 100 women of the Klamath Basin attended this outreach event. *Advent by Candlelight* is an opportunity for women to set aside the hustle and bustle of holiday preparation and focus their minds and hearts on the season of Advent. It is an elegant, relaxing evening of friendship and preparation for the true meaning of Christmas. The evening incorporates prayer, scripture, music and an inspirational message, along with admiration for the decor in a social setting. For more details on how to start this simple and wonderful event at your parish, please contact Michele Laughlin, Pastoral Associate at Sacred Heart. Michele's email is DRE1@charter.net or call the parish office at 541-884-4566. For more photos, please visit the parish website homepage at www.sacredheartkf.org.

Please see page 4 of this newsletter for pictures.



Sister Baptista Kahti: Sister Baptista was born the fifth in a family of nine children and joined the congregation after attending secondary school. She has certification in several areas of ministry, including catechetical and pastoral work, spiritual direction, social work and pastoral counseling, as well as chaplaincy to prisons. She will bring all these skills to her work at St. Thomas, where she will also teach religious education in the Catholic school and for CCD.

“My special talents (include) being a good listener and team worker. I hope to enrich myself more through interaction with the various groups ... and am grateful for the opportunity to reach out and work with the above mentioned (ministries),” said Sister Baptista.



Sister Fortunata Nabuduwa: Sister Fortunata is the daughter of two teachers and the youngest of four children. She attended Catholic secondary schools and has a Master’s degree in Education from Uganda Martyrs University. She joined the religious congregation in 1984 and loves teaching and working with children. Sister has been assigned to teach at St. Thomas Academy and help with the CCD program in the parish.

“I feel so glad to serve the people of God here. The pastor, teachers, parents and children at St. Thomas are so great, supportive and receptive that I feel encouraged to serve and share with them the faith,” said Sister Fortunata.



Sister Irene Mwangi: Sister Irene is the fourth in a family of ten children and credits her parents with nurturing her Catholic faith. She was also inspired by Italian nuns who visited homes in the central part of Kenya where she grew up. Moved by the kindness and attracted to the habits of the sisters, Sister Irene told her mother she wanted to be just like them. After high school she joined the Sisters of Mary and was trained in spirituality, catechesis and human development. She has served in hospital settings as a nurse. She is currently in the spiritual care department of St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Ontario. She believes interior healing can help bring about physical health and that empowering patients to discover strength from within helps them realize true healing comes from God.

“I am glad that Bishop Robert Vasa has welcomed my Order to serve in the Baker Diocese,” said Sister Irene. “God bless all who have touched my life in one way or another.”



Sister Kevin Musonye: Sister Kevin came in contact with the Sisters of Mary in high school. She joined the order in 1986 and was finally professed in 1994. She is a registered nurse and has also been trained in counseling and clinical pastoral education. She has been assigned to St. Francis Parish to do confirmation and middle school ministry and is looking forward to giving witness to God among the youth of the parish.

“Being an outgoing person with a sense of humor will help me reach out to the youth ... and I thank God for this opportunity to share my life,” said Sister Kevin.



Sister Regina Namaleha: Sister Regina is the second-youngest of seven children. Her father died when she was only two years old and her mother raised the family and taught them their faith. Sister joined the order after she took her exams out of high school. She trained as a teacher and has taught for 13 years. In Ontario she is instructing the third graders in religious education and is happy that parents and teachers are supportive and welcoming.

“My hopes and dreams are to do my best for all. (I want) my presence to bring joy and peace,” said Sister Regina.

SACRED HEART ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT (see page 3):



Sacred Heart women enjoy a relaxing evening of friendship.