Not to be served but to serve
Eight men ordained as permanent deacons

PLUS

From Bishop Folda: Reflections for Christmas
Sister’s Perspective: Advent an opportunity to meditate on this year’s blessings
Monsignor Jeffrey Wald passes away Oct. 28
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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FROM BISHOP FOLDA</td>
<td>Reflections for Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ASK A PRIEST</td>
<td>Can I be happy for someone’s wealth while being thankful for my own poverty?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>AROUND THE DIOCESE</td>
<td>Church in Harvey a community fostering vocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>COVER STORY</td>
<td>Not to be served but to serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>NEXT GEN</td>
<td>Devils Lake Girl Scouts put their faith to the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>FAITH AND CULTURE</td>
<td>Catholic Culture in the Home: Be present, listen, and pray always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>US/WORLD NEWS</td>
<td>McCarrick Report documents “tragic chapter” in Church’s life, USCCB president says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>SIDEWALK STORIES</td>
<td>“Can I have a hug?” she asked as hope was erased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ON THE COVER:
Bishop Folda hands the Book of the Gospel to a newly ordained deacon on Oct. 31 at the Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)
Reflections for Christmas

And the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.” Soon after you receive this edition of New Earth, the Church and the world around us will celebrate Christmas. With the COVID-19 pandemic still running through our state, the celebration of Christmas might be a little different than other years, but it will still be Christmas. The celebration of our Lord’s birth is one of the pillars of our faith and our liturgical year as Catholics, and this year more than ever we need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who was born in our humanity so that he could be our Savior.

The pandemic has imposed limitations on many of our routine activities, and it could put a crimp in some of our annual holiday festivities too. We might have to stay home rather than attending the regular round of holiday parties. We may decide in prudence to avoid large crowds. It might be necessary to refrain from traveling in the coming weeks. Concerns about illness might force us to forego the usual gatherings with family and friends that we look forward to at this time of year. Some of our family members might be unable to see their loved ones in person altogether because of the fear of infection. But Jesus will still be with us as he always is at Christmas. “The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.”

A growing number of families have experienced the impact of COVID-19 in a very personal way. Family members have become sick, and many of us have lost loved ones to this mysterious disease. So, our celebration of Christmas might be touched by sorrow and mourning. But even then, we remember that Christ was born for one purpose: to conquer sin and death. Through his Incarnation, he took on our human nature in order to lift us up from our mortality into the eternal life of God.

A great number of our brothers and sisters have worked heroically during this time to care for and assist those affected by the pandemic. Our health care professionals and other caregivers have worked long, difficult hours to care for the sick and help them recover from their illnesses. These great men and women are always an inspiration, but this year in a special way we see their commitment and spirit of self-sacrifice. Many of them will not have time off to spend with their families because of the demands of their work. We owe them so much, and perhaps we can support them with our prayers and offer a special Christmas greeting to them this year in gratitude for their care for us and our loved ones. Thanks to all who care for the sick, the elderly, and the needy! You are living the spirit of Christmas every day.

There are some who are feeling economic hardship this year, perhaps because of a lost job, or a struggling business, or a difficult farm economy. They might feel the pinch especially now during the holidays. Reaching out with a word of encouragement, an offer to help, or a promise of prayer, could be a most welcome Christmas gift for a friend or neighbor trying to make ends meet. We shouldn’t forget that Jesus was made known first of all to shepherds, the humble of the earth.

If we’re feeling disappointed by the limitations we’re facing right now, it might help to remember the challenges that the Holy Family experienced at the first Christmas. Joseph and Mary were forced to travel to Bethlehem for the census, even as Mary approached the time of her delivery. They had no place to stay but a stable, where Mary finally gave birth surrounded by animals and straw. Jesus came into this world as a helpless infant, and was laid in a manger, a dirty feedbox. And then Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were forced to flee into Egypt to escape Herod’s murderous plans. Our vision of Christ’s birth is peaceful and beautiful—“All is calm, all is bright.” But we should remember that Jesus came into this world amidst poverty and the threat of violence. Certainly he can give us encouragement as we face our own present challenges. He is, after all, the newborn King.

Even in the most difficult situations, God’s grace can be found, and the circumstances of this year’s Christmas might actually bring us some unexpected blessings. If we have to curtail our festivity, this might help us to focus more intently on Jesus himself. If the season is a little quieter than usual, it could be an opportunity for some quiet prayer and additional Scripture reading, especially

There may be some changes in our celebrations this year, but yes, dear friends, there will be Christmas, because whatever else happens, ‘Today is born for you a Savior, Christ the Lord.’

-Bishop John Folda
the narratives of Christ’s birth in Matthew and Luke. If there are fewer social gatherings, perhaps this would be a good time to make a few extra visits to adore Christ in the Eucharist at church, just as the shepherds and wise men adored him in the manger. If we don’t spend quite as much on gifts for family and friends, perhaps we can give something extra to those in need, like the homeless in our community.

There may be some changes in our celebrations this year, but yes, dear friends, there will be Christmas, because whatever else happens, “Today is born for you a Savior, Christ the Lord.” I pray that all of us will experience once again the joy of Christ’s birth in our lives and rejoice in the hope that he gives to the world at Christmas. May we persevere in faith and continue to place our trust in the one who became a child and was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

Dec. 8 • 12:10 p.m.
Mass of the Immaculate Conception, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo
Pastoral Center closed

Dec. 15 • 3 p.m.
Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Dec. 24 – Jan. 3
Pastoral Center closed

Dec. 24 • 11 p.m.
Vigil for the Nativity of the Lord, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Dec. 25 • 12 a.m.
Midnight Mass, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements

Most Rev. John T. Folda, Bishop of Fargo, has made the following appointments, announcements and/or decrees.

Bishop Folda has assigned Rev. Bernard A. Pfau as administrator of St. James Basilica, Jamestown, St. Margaret Mary, Buchanan, and St. Mathias, Windsor, effective November 7, 2020, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

For a Life of Prayer

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.
Saint Juan Diego was born in 1474 in Mexico. He became the first Roman Catholic indigenous saint from the Americas. When a group of 12 Franciscan missionaries arrived in Mexico in 1524, Juan Diego and his wife, Maria Lucia, converted to Catholicism and were among the first to be baptized in the region. Juan Diego was very committed to his new life as a Christian.

On Dec. 9, 1531, Juan Diego was in a hurry to make it to Mass and celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. However, he was stopped by the beautiful sight of a radiant woman who introduced herself, in his native tongue, as the “ever-perfect holy Mary, who has the honor to be the mother of the true God.”

Mary asked him to make a request to the local bishop. She wanted a chapel built in her honor on Tepeyac Hill, which was the site of a former pagan temple.

When Juan Diego told the bishop what happened, he was told to provide proof that the apparition was real and truly of heaven.

The next day, Juan Diego’s uncle became very sick, and he was obligated to stay and care for him. Juan Diego set out the following day to find a priest for his uncle, but the Virgin Mary intercepted him and asked him what was wrong. He explained his situation and promised to return after he found his uncle a priest.

She promised him his uncle would be cured and asked him to climb to the hill and collect the flowers growing there. He obeyed and found many flowers blooming in December on the rocky land. He filled his tilma (cloak) with flowers and returned to Mary. The Virgin Mary arranged the flowers within his cloak and told him this would be the sign he is to present to the bishop. Once Juan Diego found the bishop, he opened his cloak and the bishop was presented with a miraculous imprinted image of the Virgin Mary on the flower-filled cloak.

The next day, Juan Diego found his uncle fully healed from his illness. His uncle explained he, too, saw the Virgin Mary. She also instructed him on her desires to have a church built on Tepeyac Hill, but she also told him she wanted to be known with the title of Guadalupe. News of Juan Diego’s miracle quickly spread, and he became very well-known.

St. Juan Diego was beatified on May 6, 1990 by Pope John Paul II and canonized on July 31, 2002.

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.
The full question is: “Some of my friends (who don’t practice the faith) have recently come into some money through inheritance. I’m happy for them, even though my husband and I struggle with money each month. In fact, sometimes I’m glad I don’t have more money because it seems healthier for my faith. Can I be sincerely happy for them, while also being thankful about where I am?”

We are in a season leading up to Christmas known to make people feel like they don’t have enough. A beautifully decked home is an accusation that we haven’t even dug into our decorations. A trip to the mall submits us to a barrage of ads formatted to make us feel like fulfillment is just a purchase away. It is a jarring contrast to the celebration of a baby boy, born to a poor couple who could provide no better bed for him than an animal’s trough.

I am reminded of what St. Ignatius of Loyola calls the “First Principle and Foundation,” of our spiritual life. He writes, “As far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor…. Our one desire and choice should be for whatever is more conducive to the end for which we are created.” To put it in a biblical way, St. Paul writes, “I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Philippians 4:12). How does he keep such equilibrium? “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

When our vision is shaped by trust in God, any circumstance can reveal his hand of providence. A timely illustration comes from “Tiny Tim” in Charles Dickens’ classic, A Christmas Carol. Tiny Tim had just arrived home from church on his father’s shoulder when his mother, Martha, asks Bob Cratchit, her husband, how Tim’s behavior was in church: “As good as gold,” said Bob, “and better…. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who [it was that] made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.” Tiny Tim’s words began to warm even Scrooge’s cold heart. Tiny Tim believed that even his crippled legs could be a blessing if they made other people remember Jesus’ miracles.

The poverty of the Cratchit household is a reality for many. It is difficult and oppressive, and it cries to Heaven for justice. Yet many (like perhaps yourself) may not live in poverty but still cannot enjoy the niceties that others can. In the eyes of God, this is no curse. In fact, it may be the difficult and unrequested gift that opens (or has opened) your eyes to the other innumerable and unappreciated gifts God gives each day.

It sounds like your heart and your values are in the right place, glorifying God for the benefits others receive without feeling inadequate about your own. When we find the peace that only God provides, we learn to see the many lesser things he provides as well.

Editor’s note: If you have a question to suggest for consideration in a future column, send to news@fargodiocese.org.

Can I be happy for someone’s wealth while being thankful for my own poverty?

**FOCUS ON FAITH**

**ASK A PRIEST**

Father Gregory Haman  
Pastor of Holy Rosary, LaMoure; Assumption, Dickey; St. Raphael’s, Verona

Tiny Tim believed that even his crippled legs could be a blessing if they made other people remember Jesus’ miracles.

– Father Gregory Haman

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“My spirit rejoices in God my savoir”

Mary’s eager heart a guide for Advent

By Kristina Lahr | Assistant editor of New Earth

On the outside, this Advent and Christmas might not look like what we hoped. Yet, we can take comfort knowing that the very first Christmas probably didn’t look ideal either. I doubt Mary was excited to travel to a distant town where she’d be away from her mother, cousins, and friends when she gave birth. It was disheartening to hear there was no room available at the inn. Mary likely didn’t envision giving birth to the son of God in a cave.

Despite the hardships, we see Mary’s great faith from the moment we meet her in scripture. Even though God’s will for her was unexpected and confusing, she gave her “fiat,” her yes to God’s plan that she bear his son. Rather than puffing herself up, deeming herself too important to serve, she immediately took a journey to see her cousin Elizabeth, trusting that God would protect her and her unborn child. It was as if she couldn’t bear to wait nine months to share the gift of Christ’s incarnation!

From the moment Mary arrived, the visit was one of great joy. “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, ‘Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb’” (Luke 1:41-42). Likewise, we sense Mary’s joy when she says, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savoir” (Luke 1:46).

In All the Generations, a collection of Advent reflection from Blessed is She, Blythe Fike writes, “Mary had to see with a divine vision that could reach beyond her human experience. And I’m no different. In the little contradictions of each day, in the way things go sideways, and even in the way things go wrong, our Lord is asking me if I’m willing to see beyond what I can see, and to give him the yes that will ultimately lead me to Home.”

This Advent season, may we remember Mary’s example and see beyond what is in front of us. Remember that where Christ is, there is joy. Just as Mary offered her body to bear the son of God into the world, let us offer our hearts. No matter who is with us or where we are this year for Christmas, we can be joyful and confident that Christ’s will is being done in us.

Holy Cross Church, West Fargo. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)
Church in Harvey: a community fostering vocations

By Susan Waldoch  | Parishioner of St. Cecilia's Church, Harvey

My dear sons, you have been called by our Lord to be his priests in an interesting time. The challenges are many, the opportunities are endless, and the grace of God is unfailing,” said Bishop John Folda at the Presbyterate Ordination Mass on Aug. 8 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. Five men from St. Cecilia's Church in Harvey that have answered that call to the priesthood were present to concelebrate the Eucharist with newly ordained Father Jered Grossman.

Expounding on his roots of faith at St. Cecilia's, Father Grossman said, “I feel very blessed to have grown up in St. Cecilia's under the care of Monsignor Roman G. Neva. My vocation to the priesthood was sparked by him when I was 10 years old. It was very humbling for me to celebrate my first Mass at the altar which fostered my vocation.”

“Harvey will always be the hometown where my journey to the priesthood began,” said Father Paul Kuhn. “The seeds of faith were planted in Baptism, cultivated and cared for by family, friends, parishioners, priests, Wednesday night Catechesis, and will ultimately be brought to fruition by God in his timing. Although Harvey will always be the hometown where the journey of faith began, God please, it will end in our eternal home—Heaven.”

“Growing up in a small town was a wonderful blessing,” said Father Robert Keller. “I had the support and friendship of many people around me. Grandparents and a close knit faith community provided the seed bed for my vocation to grow. It was through the times of prayer at St. Cecilia’s that I heard the Lord calling to me.”

Father Bert Miller’s formation began in Harvey too. “I remember all my friends in Harvey and the ways in which members of the community formed me for life... working at the Harvey Herald, being a member of the European Tour Choir, Turkey Bingo, and the St. Cecilia Choir. My call to priesthood happened throughout my life... in college at UND with Sister Borgia Sondag and Father Larry Haas who were both on staff at the Newman Center, editors that I worked for, and friends from Harvey to Grand Forks to Beach to Jamestown and Fargo.”

St. Cecilia’s is also proud to have five women Religious Vocations consecrated to God for the ministry of health care and education: Sister Nancy Miller, OSB; Sister Dorothy Bertsch, SMP; Sister Mary Ann Schmidt, SMP; Sister Dorothy Bunce, SMP; and Sister Elizabeth Rose Muscha, SMP.

“As a child I took note of the many Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in our parish,” said Sister Dorothy Bunce. “When I was six years old, I had a tonsillectomy at St. Aloisius Hospital where health care sisters cared for me. So perhaps it is pretty natural that when a visitor came to see my dad and asked me, ‘what are you going to be when you grow up,’ I immediately responded, ‘a Sister.’ My parents were very respectful toward the sisters and priests, and it relayed to me to show similar respect. St. Cecilia’s had many people in attendance at the daily Mass, which I began to attend as a sixth grader. I was in awe of how important God was in the lives of these people. I am grateful for God’s call.”

Sister Nancy Miller, a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck and spiritual and formation director for new members, said, “My parents most influenced my choice to become a religious sister. As they raised me and my seven siblings, they instilled in us a love and commitment to our Catholic faith. They served in many ways. I believe this is really what led me to respond to God’s call to a life of service in the church.”

We would be remiss, if we did not mention the Permanent Deacons from Harvey who have faithfully served the Fargo Diocese over the years: Deacon Jeffrey Faul, Deacon Matt Prom, and Deacon Donald Bunce.

Deacon Faul said, “Diaconal ministry is a bit different than the call to priesthood. Although a permanent deacon is an ordained cleric, the deacon lives a lay lifestyle. He may be a married man at the time of his ordination but may not remarry if pre-deceased by his spouse. Deacons generally maintain a secular vocation and receive no compensation for the time they devote to ministry. I experienced the call to diaconal ministry through the message of the Cursillo movement where it became clear that more was expected of me. After visiting with Monsignor Neva, my wife and I decided ministry would be part of our lifestyle. Twenty-seven years have slipped by and each one has brought many blessings.”

Reflecting on the seeds of faith and religious vocations, we pray for more seeds to be planted and nourished by the witness of all the faithful.

Father Grossman’s Mass of Thanksgiving on Aug. 9 at St. Cecilia’s Church, Harvey. (l to r) Fathers Paul Kuhn, Scott Sautner, Bert Miller, Jered Grossman, and Robert Keller. (Photo by Rosalie Axtman)
Monsignor Jeffrey Wald passes away Oct. 28

Monsignor Jeffrey Wald, 56, passed away Oct. 28 at Jamestown Regional Medical Center. He was laid to rest Nov. 3 at St. Philip Neri Cemetery in Napoleon.

Monsignor Wald was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Fargo on June 6, 1992. He served as Parochial Vicar at St. Michaels, Grand Forks until 1994 when he received his first parish assignment, St. Bernard, Oriska and Holy Trinity, Fingal and became Vocation Director for the Diocese of Fargo. In 1996 he was assigned to St. Joseph’s, Devils Lake; St. Benedict, rural Crary; and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Starkweather. After six years he was assigned to Holy Spirit, Fargo until he was assigned at St. James Basilica, Jamestown in 2014 along with St. Mathias, Windsor; St. Margaret, Buchanan; and St. Michael’s, Pingree. He received the honor of becoming a Monsignor on Oct. 7, 2006 in part due to his service to Bishop James Sullivan in his aging years. His parishes in Devils Lake, Fargo, and Jamestown all had Catholic Schools, which he felt essential to the church’s mission. Through his leadership, he recently concluded a $6 million renovation of St. John’s Academy in Jamestown.

“You couldn’t know Monsignor Wald without knowing his dedication and zeal for Catholic education,” said Bishop John Folda at Monsignor Wald’s funeral Mass. “He very openly said that he was a convert to the value of Catholic education because as a priest he saw the great good that could be accomplished through Catholic schools. Not only was Catholic education a blessing for children, but also for entire families, and so he threw himself into that work. Through his fervent involvement in Catholic schools wherever he was a pastor, Monsignor Wald managed to touch the lives of many children and their families. And he just completed a kind of dream project, the expansion of St. John’s Academy in Jamestown with its crown jewel, a beautiful new school chapel. It was a happy day for him, and what a blessing that he was able to see it through to completion.”

Monsignor Wald grew up learning hard work on the family farm just a few miles from Napoleon. He carried that work ethic in serving others through all he did. He was not only a pillar of the communities he served as pastor, he lovingly served his parents, family, friends, and nearly anyone he came in contact with. He would want everyone to use his loss to deepen their faith in Christ and to serve each other as we continue to move on and prepare ourselves for our own eventual passing.

Monsignor Wald is survived by his mother, Pauline Wald, Jamestown; four brothers Pat (Delilah) Wald, Bismarck; Tony (Patricia) Wald, Mandan; Clinton (Ann) Wald, Bismarck; Peter Wald, Bismarck; and three sisters, Virginia (Joseph) Zubrod, Valley City; Bertha (Lee) Blaschke, Lisbon; and Dorothy (Geoff) Lauinger, Jamestown. He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph; two brothers, Dennis (Claire) Wald and Michael Wald; and one sister, Barbara Ann.

Monsignor Joseph Senger passes away Nov. 9

Monsignor Joseph Senger, 91, died Nov. 9 in a Minot hospital. He spent the last three and a half years as a resident of Somerset Court, Minot, celebrating Mass there daily.

Joseph Phillip Senger was born March 19, 1929, at Orrin, a son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Thomas) Senger. Orrin and the farm life he grew up in became the subject of countless church homilies he offered later as a priest. He was proud of Orrin and of his Germans from Russia heritage.

While very young, Joseph decided he wanted to be a priest, so his parents sent him to Assumption Abbey in Richardton. He graduated there in 1946 and then attended St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn. for two years. He went to St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, for his last two years of college and four more years of seminary training. He was ordained a priest on May 1, 1954, at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo. His first assignment was as pastor at St. Mark’s in Bottineau.

Two years later he was assigned to serve as secretary to Archbishop Aloisius Muench, then of Fargo, who had been chosen by Pope Pius XII as the apostolic nuncio to Germany. The pair lived at the embassy in Bonn, Germany. Father Senger also served as a chaplain at an American military unit. He spent almost four years in Germany and another year and a half in Rome after Muench was named a cardinal.

In 1960 he returned to North Dakota eager to become a pastor. He was assigned as pastor of St. Arnold’s in Milnor and St. Vincent’s in Strum. Successive assignments were at St. Mary’s in Knox and St. Ann’s in Fillmore, St. Mary’s in Grand Forks, and St. Cecilia’s in Velva and Sts. Peter and Paul’s in Karlsruhe. He was appointed a monsignor in 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

In addition to his work as a pastor, he was director of the Propagation of the Faith for 40 years in the Fargo Diocese, deanery director of vocations, director of religious education at St. James Education Center in Grand Forks, and dean of Deanery II and Deanery VII. He maintained a prison ministry for the North Dakota Council of Churches and served on the College of Consultants for the Fargo Diocese. He was a spiritual director for Marriage Encounter, SEARCH, and Cursillo. He also served as state spiritual director for the Catholic Order of Foresters and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. After retirement, he was a substitute pastor in many parishes, including the Minot Air Force Base. He also served as a chaplain at Trinity Hospital in Minot.

He is survived by his sisters, Christine Axtmann and Jenny Lemer, and brother, Nick Senger and his wife Bernie, all of Rugby; sister-in-law, Lucy Senger of Edmonds, Wash. along with numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Anton, Edward, Pete, and infant Adam; sister, Elizabeth Burgard; sisters-in-law, Regarda Senger and Julia Senger; brothers-in-law, Tom Burgard, Peter Lemer, and Fred Axtmann.

Mass of Christian Burial was held Nov. 19 at St. Therese of Little Flower Church in Rugby.
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Not to be served but to serve

Eight men ordained as permanent deacons

By Kristina Lahr

Bishop John Folda ordained eight men deacons on Oct. 31 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. New Earth asked the new deacons and their wives a few questions so readers could get to know them as they begin their new ministry.

How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?
Deacon Breen: Throughout formation, Jesus gently drew me closer and closer to him, especially in my prayer life. He continuously revealed himself more to me in his creation, in the beauty of nature, in scripture, in the undisputable truth of the Word of God, and in the goodness and dignity of each person he created. In the deepening of my relationship with Christ, he gave me great trust, confidence, and hope that the only way to true happiness in this life and in the next is through his holy will.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?
Deacon Breen: I am looking forward to serving God’s church as a deacon in the liturgy, in serving the poor, the lonely, the sick and the marginalized, in serving those who are seeking Jesus or desiring to deepen their relationship with him and in serving to uphold the dignity of every human person. However, I am most looking forward to the unknown. I look forward to what God may be calling me to that I haven’t even imagined yet. I know that if he is calling me to something he wants me to do he will provide me with the gifts needed to accomplish his holy will. Life with God is a wonderful adventure!
What changes have you noticed in your husband since he began formation?

Brenda: Tears, and a gentleness that has blossomed. His formation has been a gift for me. We have grown closer to God together and come closer to each other together. Our triangle is getting smaller. Once we grow closer to God, we can’t help but grow closer to each other.

How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?

Deacon Brewer: Before formation, I was tied to the things of this life. Christ wasn’t my first love, maybe number two or three. During formation, I learned that he is to be my all, to become my love and vocation. What is implanted in your heart is a great willingness to serve Christ and his Church. He becomes first and foremost in your life, the first step to true service to the Lord.

How has your wife had an impact on your discernment and formation?

Deacon Brewer: I don’t think that I would have ever been able to make the journey without my wife. There are a lot of times during formation that a person needs help, instruction, and guidance to see clearly to stay on the path. During this time, I understood why God gave her to me, and why she has to say yes to this calling too. Jesus sent them out two-by-two. In the same way, a husband and wife work together.

What changes have you noticed in your husband since he began formation?

Karen: I have noticed that he is more calm, compassionate, willing to listen, relaxed. More concerned with other people than himself, even tempered.

How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?

Deacon Fischer: The more I learned, the more I found out how much I don’t know, and how really dependent we all are upon God, whether we believe it or not. God is truly in charge, no matter how hard I try to control my life. If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.

What changes have you noticed in your husband since he began formation?

Annette: The journey of formation truly healed my husband. He has spent most of his life in distrust and self-gratification, which caused him great distress at times when his action caused much hurt towards others. Formation taught him a personal relationship was possible with God and unlike his earthly parents, he will never abandon him. Mary and Joseph became the mother and father he was lacking in his childhood and within that new found relationship, he was able to forgive his biological parents. Through formation, God gave me a husband that I never dreamed could exist.

When did you first feel the calling to pursue this vocation?

Deacon Fischer: Since childhood there was a gradual calling to be with Christ in an ever-growing relationship. After I left the Air Force for college, I also left the Catholic Church, due to peer pressure. All my friends were secular, and I wanted to be like them. I met my wife-to-be at this time, and after we married, I longed for the old spirituality I felt as a practicing Catholic. You never know what you’ve lost until it’s gone. I decided to come back and let God lead me wherever he may.

How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?

Deacon Fischer: The more I learned, the more I found out how much I don’t know, and how really dependent we all are upon God, whether we believe it or not. God is truly in charge, no matter how hard I try to control my life. If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.

What changes have you noticed in your husband since he began formation?

Karen: I have noticed that he is more calm, compassionate, willing to listen, relaxed. More concerned with other people than himself, even tempered.
When did you first feel the calling to pursue this vocation?  
**Deacon Kaufman:** I was asked to organize a meeting with Father Gunwall who was coming to St. Rose to preach about vocations. Some potential candidates were invited to come to a breakfast meeting with Father Gunwall following Mass to visit about the upcoming Diaconate class. I “recruited” four men, two who were over the age limit, and so I also sat in. A small spark that day seemed to answer a vacancy that I felt in my life, a longing I couldn’t understand. Since then my discernment has been much like a toddler learning to walk. When I fall down, I stand back up, and take another step… walking together with Christ and what he has called me to.

How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?  
**Deacon Kaufman:** When I first began in formation, it would be difficult to describe that I had a “relationship” with Christ. I was practicing my faith, but I did not really have a personal interaction with the Lord. One of the most rewarding, important, and joyful fruits of the Diaconate program has been my understanding that I am a beloved son of God. I hope to use this personal relationship with God and share it with others.

What question do you get asked most about your husband becoming a deacon?  
**Tammy:** “If you have to attend the formation classes do you feel you should be a deacon too?” My first response is, women cannot be deacons in the Catholic Church, and second, being a deacon is not just about formation classes but is a “call” from God, and I have not been called. We have been a team as husband and wife. Now we are a team serving the Lord. I am called to be Curt’s support by praying for him, being his sounding board, and helping him with ministries like marriage/baptism preparation, visiting the sick, and serving the needs of our parish. Our faith is deeper through diaconate formation, and I thank our Lord every day for the gifts that we have received.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?  
**Deacon Ripplinger:** I am most looking forward to leading others to Christ. I am looking forward to walking with the people of my parish and diocese in their sufferings as well as their joys. I really enjoy teaching the faith to both children and adults and hope to use that passion to bring others into a relationship with the Triune God.

How has your wife had an impact on your discernment and formation?  
**Deacon Ripplinger:** Leann has always been very supportive. She has a strong faith life of her own, so I have always been able to watch her and learn from her. Leann loves to learn, so during formation classes her desire to learn and do well was something that motivated me to my best. Leann is a great model of holiness and virtue. Her example helps me to persevere in my own pursuit of holiness.

Were you surprised when your husband began to discern the permanent diaconate?  
**Leann:** I was definitely surprised. We had made our Cursillo retreats the year prior, and I noticed a change in him following that experience. His faith took on a larger emphasis in his life, and he became more involved in serving at our parish. He also felt a calling to reach out more personally to others and began a men’s group. These were wonderful transformations in his life, but there was never any prior discussion between us as a couple about Diaconate. I really didn’t know what was involved in the process. The more I thought about it, however, the more it seemed to fit with his desire to serve God and His people.
How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?

Deacon Salazar: I have a more personal relationship with Jesus. I better understand what is meant in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2834 when it says: “Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you.” Jesus accompanies me as I ride my Bobcat. My simple prayer to him is an informal, “Jesus, I have never done this before. How do we do this?” He gives me the inspiration I need to accomplish what I need to do. This is one example of how I am in constant conversation with Jesus. It is wonderful to have a good friend who knows the answers to everything if we only ask him.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?

Deacon Salazar: I am looking forward to assisting people to encounter Jesus. After an initial encounter, a relationship can be formed. I believe one of the best ways for people to encounter Jesus is through the silent and non-distracting atmosphere of Eucharistic Adoration. They are able to share with Jesus all of their anxieties, worries, and joys and know they are not alone. They can recognize that he cares and is there to assist in carrying the load. Then a loving relationship can form and grow. Through time, people can discover that we make our greatest efforts to spend the most time with the ones we love the most.

Were you surprised when your husband began to discern the permanent diaconate?

Andrea: I wasn’t surprised when Bart began to discern because it happened gradually. His discernment probably started around 9/11/01 when he started attending daily Mass and weekly Adoration. This put him in a place to listen to God speaking to him. We lived in New York, and some priests we knew encouraged Bart to consider the Diaconate. However, it wasn’t the right place or time. When we moved to North Dakota 10 years ago, people often asked if Bart was a deacon or in formation. Non-Catholics would ask if he was a pastor. Clearly something was shining through him and the Holy Spirit was speaking through others. When Father Pfau encouraged Bart to apply to the program, it seemed a natural progression.

When did you first feel the calling to pursue this vocation?

Deacon Seitz: In 2002 we moved to Stavanger, Norway and began attending St. Svithun’s parish, the only Catholic Church in the city. I noticed that the altar servers did not appear well trained. Father Rolf, the pastor, had to constantly provide direction during Mass. After Mass, I approached Father Rolf and offered to assist training the servers. His eyes lit up! We met later that week to discuss and much to my surprise his vision included six servers, bells, candles, and smoke. I drafted a server’s guide, trained the servers, and assisted at the altar to direct traffic. Father Rolf really liked the results, and I gained a profound appreciation for the Mass.

How has your wife had an impact on your discernment and formation?

Deacon Seitz: I would not be a Deacon today if it were not for my wife, Jennine. Although I had 13 years of Catholic education behind me, it was Jennine, raised without Christian formation, who led me to a greater appreciation of Jesus Christ and his Church. She enrolled in RCIA while we were engaged and asked me to be her sponsor. Upon joining the Church, she constantly sought out knowledge and opportunities to grow in her faith. She led me to Cursillo and ultimately motivated me to learn more about the faith. Over the past ten years of study and discernment, she has been a constant source of encouragement and a pillar of strength for me.

Were you surprised when your husband began to discern the permanent diaconate?

Jennine: No. Ben has always had a servant’s heart. When we were dating he wanted to help me keep my car running, and it wasn’t because he was trying to impress me—he didn’t know anything about cars! When we were stationed in South Carolina, with the Air Force, we started praying the rosary as a family. As Mary
helped us grow closer to Christ and our faith grew, Ben started attending daily Mass and reading Catholic books. When we were stationed in Norway, Ben trained and led the altar servers. In Montana, Ben was active with prison ministry, Cursillo, and RCIA. So, when we moved to Fargo, I was not surprised that he discerned a calling to be a deacon.

**When did you first feel the calling to pursue this vocation?**

**Deacon Vaagen:** The call to vocation within the Church has been one of continuous experiences. One of my earliest memories of participating in Mass was as an eight-year-old altar server for an “ancient” Russian priest that we all feared. No one wanted to get close to him. One daily Mass while serving for him, but scared to get close to him at the altar, in his thick accent he said to me, “Do not be afraid, come closer.” I became instantly not afraid. I have been drawn to serve the priest at the altar, to be near the tabernacle, and to the Mass since.

**How has your relationship with Christ changed during formation?**

**Deacon Vaagen:** Christ is very real and desires a relationship with each one of us. Our relationship with Christ is like having friends. Everyone has friendships. We chat with each other at convenience. Then we have our closer friends that we share more about with each other and our lives. Then we have the relationship with the one that we desired to say “yes” to in marriage. Through marriage, our spouse grows to know the most intimate details about us, and love us for who we are, not who we might become. As newly ordained deacons, we have just said “yes” in a marriage vow to Jesus Christ. That marriage, is just beginning!

**What question do you get asked most about your husband becoming a deacon?**

**Leatha:** “What will Jeff be doing as a deacon?” I respond by describing that as a deacon in the Catholic Church, my husband is conformed to Christ the servant. From a practical standpoint, his role within our parish is that of service and may take many different forms. This is directed by our parish priest and may include Communion services, Funeral services and burials, baptisms, or preaching at a Mass. It may also be teaching an RCIA class, speaking to our youth in religious education or training altar servers. Each ministry he is involved in is taken to prayer and guided by the Holy Spirit.

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**New Earth deadlines for articles and ads in 2021**

The diocesan publication, *New Earth*, aims to provide informational, educational, and inspirational stories and photos about the people and places of the Diocese of Fargo. You are invited to submit articles, photographs, and story ideas for consideration and inclusion in an upcoming issue.

The following are the 2021 printing deadlines for *New Earth*. Please share this schedule with anyone who may want to publicize events or share a great story through *New Earth* and/or the diocesan website.

Please submit your items no later than 5 p.m. on the “Submission Deadline” date that corresponds with the issue you wish to see your item appear via:

- **Email:** news@fargodiocese.org
- **Mail:** Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd., Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104
- **Phone:** (701) 356-7900

All submitted articles must meet approval before being published. No item is guaranteed with the exception of paid advertising.

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The young man was in training to be a pilot on an aircraft carrier. Basic training had gone well. He had a few days off and chose to visit a west coast port city rather than go home to see his parents.

Like the other young men at the boarding house, he went to a pub for the evening. After a few drinks, he met the female bartender who tried to cut him off for his own good. They talked. She served him lighter amounts of alcohol with mixes. He did not know the difference. They talked more.

At closing time, the bartender took him to her place. He left in the morning to see some more of the city. He never gave her another thought, nor did she give him another thought until a couple of months later.

She was pregnant. The only thing she remembered about the father was that the men in the bar called him “Jack.” It seemed that they called all the military men that. She did not know his last name or anything unique about him. By now, he was off to the Pacific.

She was pregnant. The only thing she remembered about the father was that the men in the bar called him “Jack.” It seemed that they called all the military men that. She did not know his last name or anything unique about him. By now, he was off to the Pacific.

After one tour of duty, he became a flying instructor. Later he got a call from the White House to serve as a pilot with the Secret Service detail for the executive branch of the U.S. Government. Soon he was flying department secretaries around the nation to speeches and to inspect damage due to floods, fires, and hurricanes. Given his expert skills and care for those he flew, he soon began training for the 747. He would fly with five presidents during this 20-year tour of duty.

When it was time to settle down, he chose the west coast port city he had visited before going out to the Pacific 30 years ago. He returned to working as a flight instructor. He liked the quiet, single life and never married. He was tremendously successful. Years later, his picture was splashed across the newspapers of his port city.

The bartender saw the paper and with a tear in her eye said to her son, now a 30-year-old college professor, “Son, this man is your pa!”

The son could hardly believe it. She had never talked about his “pa!” He looked at the man seriously. He never looked for him because he was happy with his “ma.” She was enough for the next 30 years—until she died.

Then, he went to look for “pa.” He was easy to find. He was wealthy. If you asked anyone where he would be, they would point to his house up on the hill.

The old man heard a knock at the door. Through the camera, he saw himself at age 60. The man at the door had to be related to him, but he knew no surviving family member. He opened the door. The man outside said, “Hello. I am your son.”

After a long chat, the older man realized the younger man desired nothing from him other than recognition that he was his son. He welcomed him and loved him and included him in all aspects of his life. The old man was 79; the young man was 60.

That night the older man gave thanks for having met his child. God certainly works in funny ways. He wondered whether this joy could have been greater had he went to look for that young female bartender when he returned to the city 30 years ago. He wondered what he had missed.
North Dakota offers new tax credits for donations to non-public schools

Catholic schools are being blessed in new ways by our N.D. Legislators, so before I share more about these wonderful gift tools, I must ask, have you thanked your legislator lately? It’s quite amazing the types of opportunities that have been created to help those who pay N.D. state income tax support charities like our beloved Catholic schools. Our legislators have created some outstanding credits for all of us to use.

As Director of Advancement at St. John Paul II Catholic Schools, this is the time of the year that our supporters are planning, as good stewards do, their gifts to Catholic schools. If you want to benefit a N.D. Catholic school in your area, here are some wonderful tools that your family can use when you make a gift.

TAX CREDITS FOR GIFTS TO NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The 2019 North Dakota Legislature expanded tax credits for non-public schools, which means charitable gifts to Catholic schools in N.D. are now eligible for a N.D. tax credit. This is big news to those who make annual or regular contributions to their favorite Catholic school.

N.D. resident taxpayers (individuals, corporations, or fiduciaries) are allowed a non-refundable credit equal to 50% of the gift amount but limited to 25% of the taxpayer’s total state income tax or $2,500, whichever is less. (Full description in N.D. Century Code 57-38-01-.7.) There is no carry forward of these credits when filing returns, so taxpayers will likely want to apply these credits before applying other available credits. The credits for non-public schools are divided into three different buckets, so to speak. For those who donate to various education levels of Catholic education, this new law provides for more tax credit opportunities. Here’s how it works:

Example: John and Mary figure they will owe $1,000 income tax to North Dakota for the year 2019. With some clever planning, they make three donations to various Catholic schools (Elementary, High school, and University). They make three checks out for $500 to each school. Because of these donations, they will now earn a $250 N.D. tax credit for each gift. They are now able to reduce their tax bill by $750 (3 x $250), and only have to pay the remaining $250 in income tax.

This is a great tool to share with your accountant to see how it might benefit your annual giving plans for your favorite Catholic school(s). Remember that your charitable gift is likely to help you in your federal taxes as well.

BUT WAIT THERE’S MORE!

Use the non-public school credit first, and if you still have N.D. State income taxes to pay, perhaps a 40% state income tax credit would be helpful. That is where the N.D. Endowment Credit comes in.

ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Tax credits are still available for contributions to qualified N.D. endowment funds. Gifts of $5,000 to $50,000 to one or more of the many qualified endowments or scholarship funds are eligible for a tax credit equal to 40% of the charitable gift. The maximum credit is $10,000 for an individual; $20,000 for married individuals filing a joint return; and $10,000 for corporations and pass-through entities. Any unused portion of the credit can be carried forward for up to three taxable years, so this credit can be applied after the non-public school credits (ND Century Code 57-38-01-21).

REDUCE THE COST OF YOUR ENDOWMENT GIFTS (SEE CHART ON PAGE 19)

If we use the example of a donor with a 37.5% tax rate, we can see that the actual out of pocket costs of a gift are greatly reduced when you use the endowment credit because you save on federal and state income taxes.

INCREASE THE BENEFITS WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR GIFT WITH APPRECIATED STOCK

You can lower the net cost of a gift even further when you use appreciated stock. Why? Gifting stock helps you eliminate any capital gains tax you would normally pay when selling a stock. This enhances the benefit even further.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TAX DEDUCTION AND A TAX CREDIT?

You might think the two are interchangeable, but they aren’t. A tax deduction is something that reduces how much taxable income you claim. A tax credit is something that directly reduces how much tax you owe.

As usual, for your own unique tax situation, please consult a professional tax advisor. If you have questions or would like more
information, contact John J. Klocke, Director of Advancement at St. John Paull II Catholic Schools made up of Shanley High School, Sullivan Middle School, and Nativity, Holy Spirit and Trinity Elementary Schools. I’m happy to provide you with information to benefit a Catholic School in your community. Now find your legislator and thank them today.

REDUCE THE COST OF YOUR ENDOWMENT GIFTS

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Devils Lake Girl Scouts put their faith to the ground

Submitted by Girl Scout Troop 20028

Girl Scout Troop 20028 in Devils Lake recently completed its Silver Award Project by building a stepping-stone rosary at St. Joseph Catholic School in Devils Lake. The Silver Award is the highest award a Cadette Girl Scout can earn by completing 50 hours on one project. The girls chose this project because they are all St. Joseph Catholic School alumni and wanted to give back to the school. The stepping-stone rosary is located at the northwest corner of the school playground. Troop 20028 and St. Joseph’s Catholic School invite anyone to visit the playground during non-school hours.

Girls Scout Troop 20028 members Emily Green, Aubrey Hammond, Carmen Lindquist, and Rachel Willey stand at the site of their stepping stone rosary they built to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award. (submitted photo)
My cell phone rang. It was my aunt asking if I could help her check out an unknown situation with their cattle just down the road from my place. I rode along on the 4-wheeler as we drove up the boggy creek bottom to make sure there were no cows or calves stuck in the mud as she feared was a possibility based on the bellowing of the herd. We found no evidence of anything in distress so the amount of my service to her was simply opening and shutting a few gates. However, it was more than what it may have seemed at the time. My presence and availability was enough to take some significant stress and worry off her shoulders. I was present.

Many times we underestimate how much impact our actions can have on a situation or person. I simply dropped what I was doing to assist her in whatever small way she was in need. My mom and dad were perfect examples of this. I can remember numerous times that my dad would go out of his way to assist in getting my vehicle fixed when I was in a pinch for time, and my mom was frequently there to listen when a sibling or myself needed someone to talk to.

I remember a moment near the end of my college years when I expressed some questions about some teachings of our Catholic faith. The main question I was debating was sex before marriage. I didn’t want to accept the teaching because I knew it would be inconvenient for me. I brought it up to my mom because I knew I could trust her to listen to my struggle. My mom could have tried to right my course of belief, but she didn’t. She was present, listened, and then retreated to prayer, knowing that trying to correct me in the moment would have done more harm than good.

Now, I want to clarify that keeping others accountable in their faith is very much a part of what we are called to do as followers of Christ. However, careful discernment through prayer must be at the core of our action if we plan to approach someone. My mom, although not perfect, strove to pray for her children and their needs throughout her life. She was not a confrontational person, and I believe that to be a great testimony to the power of prayer. We often are tempted to want to control a situation, but as the saying goes, we need to “let go, and let God” work out the kinks in our lives and in the lives of others in his timing. There is no cookie cutter form of daily prayer. It can be as simple as offering up an intention by mentioning someone’s need and then praying an Our Father, Hail Mary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, or Rosary for that intention. I often have a conversation with God throughout my day. It might sound odd at first if you’ve never done it, but if you have ever talked things through to yourself when no one was around (or when you thought no one was around), all you need to do is believe that Jesus is there listening. He is that friend that sits quietly while you spill out your heart, whether it be joys or struggles. Jesus is my friend, and God is my Father, insomuch as he is yours. Jesus will take whatever you can give and use it in great ways.

No action or prayer is too small for God to hear. Be present to others whether it is your immediate family or larger faith family, and especially be present to him. Say a Glory Be in the morning, pray before meals, sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament or Tabernacle, pray a Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet, pray before bed, or just talk out-loud to him. No matter what your journey has looked like, be present, listen, and pray always.
I struggle with most Christian movies. I find that many of them don’t adequately capture the struggle of the interior life, the true meaning of sacrifice, or simply lack an artistic eye. A *Hidden Life* is different. It isn’t branded as a Christian movie, but multiple times while watching it, I thought, “This is what Christian movies should be like!”

The story begins in 1939 in a rural village in the Austrian Alps. The Nazis regime is in full force. The villagers discuss the politics affecting their nation as they go about their everyday lives and swear their loyalty to Hitler should they be called to service. Franz Jägerstätter is the lone opposition. After returning from service in World War I, he lives a steady and peaceful life with his wife Fani and their growing family. Franz first expresses his concerns to Fani who grapples between supporting her husband’s ideals and fearing what could happen to him if his beliefs became public. As devout Catholics, both Franz and Fani struggle to discern what is right—should Franz simply say, “Heil Hitler” so they can retain their peaceful life and relationships with their community? Or should they stay true to their beliefs, risking Franz’s imprisonment or execution, leaving Fani and their three young daughters without an income or support?

One of the great beauties of this film for me was that in the midst of this internal struggle, Franz and Fani care for their daughters, wash laundry, and milk the cows. Their lives don’t stop so they can focus on this conflict. Their lives are ordinary and human, and it’s in the ordinary where most of the conflict truly takes place. It is a realistic portrayal of humanity and family life, as they strive to live each day with hope. Franz and Fani are far from perfect, and they face constant temptations. Between scenes, a church bell often rings in the distance, depicting that God is always present even in the darkest moments.

The film is based on the true story of the now Blessed Franz Jägerstätter. While *A Hidden Life* is nearly three hours long, it never feels drawn-out. Each scene provides plenty of intellectual and moral questions packaged with brilliant cinematography, music, and writing. While watching it, I felt I should be writing all the good quotes to ponder later, but then I’d be pausing the film every five minutes.

Perhaps we don’t face as dramatic of a struggle as Franz and Fani, but it’s inspiring to see how the smallest, every day “yes” to God can give us the strength to endure great trials and the courage to be joyful in spite of them.

“*A Hidden Life*” written and directed by Terrence Malick. PG-13. 2019
Catholic Charities Sunday this year was a true blessing! We had great feedback about our video that it was one of our best yet. They especially liked the story about the expansion of our guardianship and adoption programs, maybe because you are part of that story. Your support, encouragement, and belief in US—United and Strong—over the years helped us take the leap of faith to build that program and commit to offering guardianship for the vulnerable.

We are deeply inspired by your generous responses to help others in need. This is a concrete way that you and I can help our brothers and sisters in need, right here in North Dakota, right now. More people watched our video and gave online this year than last year. While the total number of supporters may be down a little so far, some who gave were new to Catholic Charities or hadn’t participated in Catholic Charities Sunday in recent years and wanted to be a part of this great mission to serve those in need.

Additionally, the Sunday readings for the weekend of Oct. 24–25 could not have been more perfect for the Catholic Charities Sunday celebration. The first reading tells us of the love of the Lord for widows, orphans, and strangers, and God’s compassion and justice for them (Exod. 22:20-26). One of Catholic Charities North Dakota’s first ministries was helping find adoptive families for children at the local sisters’ orphanage in Fargo. That mission is still being fulfilled 98 years later with our pregnancy, parenting, and adoption services which—thanks to your faithful support—are free to all women who are pregnant and men in North Dakota. The expanded Adults Adopting Special Kids program also finds forever homes for kids in foster care, and our ND Post-Adopt program offers caring support to adoptive families throughout their lives.

The first reading called us to be compassionate like God the Father, so Catholic Charities has a growing charity care financial assistance program to help people turn their lives around across North Dakota. This program has nearly doubled in the past few months due to the effect of COVID-19. Catholic Charities also added telehealth options so individuals, families, and spouses can receive video or phone counseling, with a sliding fee scale for those who can’t afford to pay full cost.

In the second reading, the Apostle Paul encouraged us to serve God and follow Christ, praising the Church in Thessalonica as a model of faith for all believers (1 Thess. 1:5-10), and in the Gospel reading from Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus teaches us the greatest of all the commandments. First, Christ tells us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Second, Jesus tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves. That teaching is at the heart of Catholic Charities North Dakota’s values.

As I write this in early November, we are halfway to our goal of $175,000. As a reminder, you can still watch our new video and make an online gift through catholiccharitiesnd.org. Thank you for your gifts to Catholic Charities North Dakota and all you do out of love for God and your neighbor. May the Lord bless you and your family always.
“Can you come in?”

My grandma’s favorite question is one we now discourage her from uttering.

The impulse to swing open her door and her arms, honed over nine decades and stitched into her Irish-Catholic DNA, is not easily thwarted. Yet we have attempted to do so this year.

She’s doing her best, but she doesn’t like it one bit. Social distancing goes against every fiber of her being.

At 90, Grandma still lives in the two-story brick home where she raised her six kids. It is the hub for our sprawling extended family. We all gather there on Christmas Eve, when she’s perched at the piano, plucking out carols we sing along to across the living room.

Individually, we flee there on bad days, when we need a sympathetic ear and a soft place to land. She sits by the fireplace, a candy dish at one elbow and a basket of newspapers and magazines at the other. She listens so wholeheartedly, with appreciative sounds and interjections, and instantly everything seems better.

That is hospitality in its truest sense. The word originates from the Latin word for hospital. Grandma’s expression of hospitality does indeed turn her home into a hospital: a refuge for the sad and lonely, a place for healing.

I’ve been reflecting on the virtue of hospitality, which feels more needed than ever and also harder than ever to exercise amid a pandemic. How are we to practice hospitality now, when our faces are covered and our reserves are depleted? How are we to embrace the stranger while keeping six-feet distance?

If hospitality is defined as kindness toward strangers, the friendly reception of guests, then the opposite is judgment. It’s forming unfair and unfavorable ideas about others based on our own insecurities and ignorance. This means hospitality is not so much an act as a disposition. It is recognizing the opportunity to be Christ to others and to receive Christ from others.

It does not require uncluttered counters. It does require an uncluttered heart.

Emily Stimpson Chapman, author of “The Catholic Table,” taught me this back when visions of immaculate Pinterest boards held me back. “When we think of hospitality not as impressing people but as loving people, it’s easier to let go of all the extras that make welcoming people into our home stressful or expensive,” the Pittsburgh mom told me.

The Biblical command to care for those in need does not exclude times of pandemic, Emily pointed out. It does require greater creativity and greater courage. “What God calls us to, he always gives us the grace to do,” she said.

The Benedictines consider hospitality a charism, a special spiritual gift. St. Benedict explored the topic in a chapter of his book “Rule of Benedict,” written in the year 516. He believed guests should be warmly received upon arrival and departure. Doesn’t it feel good when a host grabs your bag as you enter or walks you out as you leave?

St. Benedict emphasized the “humility” at the core of hospitality, and he described it in action: a host should bow to their guests to adore the Christ within, pray with them, sit with them and wash their hands.

The spirit of those gestures can be done from a distance, even remotely: listening well, affirming others, praying for them, checking in, mailing cards, leaving banana bread at the front door.

We can smile with our eyes even when our mouths are masked. Perhaps that’s a metaphor for hospitality in 2020: We have less to work with, but we’re doing what we can. We’re trusting that, once again, God will give us the grace.
CATHOLIC ACTION
Christopher Dodson
Executive director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference, which acts on behalf of the Catholic bishops of N.D. to respond to public policy issues of concern to the Catholic Church

Last June, the United States Supreme Court decided in Bostock v. Clayton County that employment discrimination on the basis of “sex” for purposes of the federal Civil Rights Act now includes “sexual orientation” and “transgender” status.

The decision, written by Justice Neil Gorsuch, was much criticized for its tortured logic and for effectively redefining human nature. As the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop José H. Gomez stated, “Every human person is made in the image and likeness of God and, without exception, must be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. Protecting our neighbors from unjust discrimination does not require redefining human nature.”

Gorsuch’s decision makes several attempts to downplay concerns that this reinterpretation would have far reaching consequences, especially for those with religious objections to equating “sex” with “sexual orientation” and “transgender.” None of which, however, is convincing.

First, he notes that the Bostock decision itself applies only to employment matters under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act. That law applies to businesses with fifteen or more employees. However, activists have already filed lawsuits to expand Bostock’s redefinition of “sex” to the hundreds of other federal nondiscrimination laws.

Moreover, many states could reinterpret their own nondiscrimination laws similar to Bostock. North Dakota’s discrimination law, known as the Human Rights Act, uses language nearly identical to that used in Title VII. In fact, it was modeled after the federal Civil Rights Act. It applies to all North Dakota businesses of any size.

North Dakota legislators have repeatedly refused to expand the Human Rights Act to include “sexual orientation” and “gender,” but so had Congress. That did not stop activists from using the courts to pursue their agenda. The same could happen in North Dakota.

We do not know for certain how the North Dakota Supreme Court would interpret “sex” in the Human Rights Act. It might, as the U.S. Supreme Court should have done, conclude that because legislators did not intend “sex” to cover “sexual orientation” or “gender” when the law was passed in 1983, the court should not change the law’s meaning now. It could also take note that the legislature has expressly rejected including those terms in the act.

However, the state supreme court could decide that since the state law was intended to mirror the national legislation, “sex” should be reinterpreted in line with Bostock, which would pose problems for religious employers.

Even if the court did not address the issue, there is a very real possibility that state agencies, boards, or commissions could adopt their own interpretation of “sex” to cover “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.” If this occurs, it could affect the ability of people and organizations with a different viewpoint from being licensed or from receiving government contracts.

Justice Gorsuch pointed out that the Civil Rights Act expressly exempts religious employers. North Dakota’s Human Rights Act, however, has no religious entity exemption.

Justice Gorsuch also noted that the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) would make it difficult to apply the ruling to employers with a sincere religious objection. That law says that the federal government cannot substantially burden a person’s sincere religious beliefs unless it has a compelling government interest and does so with the least restrictive means. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, however, applies only to federal laws.

North Dakota is one of the minority of states that does not have a state RFRA or a court-interpreted state constitutional provision doing the same. It could use one, but until now legislators have either not seen the need or fear being accused of supporting legislation that its opponents will portray as sanctioning discrimination.

There might exist a few constitutional defenses, but those are limited. The ministerial exception protects the right of religious entities to choose its own ministers. The protection exists, however, only for religious entities and only for the hiring of “ministers,” something the courts are still defining.

The First Amendment, which most people think of when it comes to religious freedom, actually provides little protection from such laws and agency decisions. In Employment Division v. Smith, decided in 1990, Justice Antonin Scalia held that religious protection did not exist if, like nondiscrimination laws, the law did not target religion and was applicable to everyone.

There is hope that Smith will be reversed soon with the help of Justice Amy Coney Barrett who, ironically, was Scalia’s clerk. Such a reversal would provide protection similar to RFRA. Until then, the extent that North Dakotans have religious and conscience protections from the reach of Bostock is unknown.
My 2020 year was planned to be very different. After I completed my three years of service as the local leader in the Fargo Presentation Community, I planned to make a 30-day retreat to put my life back into perspective. I began with a visit to see my daughter and son-in-law in Arizona and then to get acquainted with my Presentation Sisters in California. Our merge with the Union of Presentation Sisters only took place within the last four years. I also had cousins in California I hadn’t seen in years, and they were near the sisters I wanted to visit.

It was time well spent, but the pandemic began while I was in California. It was suggested I not fly back to Arizona, so one of the sisters drove me half way and my daughter and son-in-law met us to drive back to their home.

I was planning on doing my retreat in Arizona, but the news about the pandemic was getting worse day after day. At the time, it was more severe in Arizona than it was in North Dakota, and I made the decision to return home. Little did I know that it was going to last so long.

Under the circumstances, our convent took all of the warnings and suggestions seriously. The employees were sent home and no visitors were allowed in the facility. The sisters did their own cooking and cleaning. Based on the ages of the sisters, it was recommended we all be tested for COVID-19. Months went by, nobody tested positive, and the employees came back to work. What a relief that was for the sisters. Unfortunately, it didn’t last. More recently sisters tested positive for the virus, and anyone exposed was quarantined.

I had no clue how that would impact my life. I knew I would be spending time alone for at least two weeks, and there is no better way to spend my time than praying. All this time, I was aware that I had not made the 30-day retreat I wanted. I pondered what I could do and found a contemporary novena written by Joan Chittister, OSB, entitled “Mary, Wellspring of Peace.” The more I pondered my alone time, the more I realized this time is the perfect setting for prayer and meditation.

This time of quarantine became my opportunity to experience the presence of God here and now, praying, listening, and opening my mind and heart to Jesus. During Advent, we have another opportunity to reflect on how we have coped with the pandemic. May we make time to ponder God’s blessings and to give thanks for the subtle hints that have brought us to a deeper more loving relationship with God, our neighbors, and friends.

Advent an opportunity to meditate on this year’s blessings

SISTER’S PERSPECTIVE

Sister Stella Olson, PBVM

Give a gift to help keep the TV Mass on the air

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MAIL TO: Diocese of Fargo - TV Mass
5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104

Your support is treasured by all those who are unable to join in our greatest form of prayer, the Mass. Watch Sundays:
10:30 a.m. – Fargo, WDAY, Ch 6 or Grand Forks, WDAZ, Ch 8.
11:00 a.m. – Bismarck, KNDX, Ch 26 or Minot, KXND, Ch 24.
I know exactly what I want for Christmas! I know the perfect gift, and the best part: I don’t have to wait until Christmas morning.

Christmas is still a few weeks away, but this is the time of year when we’re thinking about presents, wish lists, and children’s anxious anticipations of what will be under the tree. I’m no exception. If I were to write out a whole list, I’d have all kinds of cool stuff written down, from sacramentals and religious goods to camping gear and airsoft guns. We all have hopes and desires this time of the year, be it gifts, good food, playing in the snow, or time with loved ones. Whatever those desires are, they all have somethings in common: we see good in them; we see something that we think will make us happy.

You hear parents say sometimes that they like to give their kids “whatever they want for Christmas.” They love their children and want them to be happy. Our earthly parents, however, can only do so much to fulfill their children’s desires. Sometimes this is because their children’s desires go beyond their parents’ means. Sometimes it’s because children want what’s bad for them, and as truly loving parents, they must refuse.

What about with our heavenly parents? God the Father certainly desires our good, as any loving father would, since he is the source of all good fatherhood. Since Mary, our mother, has perfectly conformed her will to God’s, she also desires our good. God is not limited (by anything, let alone by means), so he can provide for all our desires and uses all kinds of ways to shower us with gifts that show his love. He does this every day, but we remember this in a special way on Christmas, when God gave his only begotten son through Mary: Jesus Christ.

Out of all the good things that we can desire this Christmas, Jesus is the one I long for the most. It’s been beautiful to see how this desire has grown at the seminary. I desire now more than ever to be with Jesus, to encounter him in the gifts he gives us. Kids usually want every morning to be Christmas morning because that’s when they receive their presents, but when Jesus is the top of your wish list, every day is Christmas morning. Every day has the thrill of getting everything you want in the whole world. Every day we receive more gifts than could fit under a tree.

The beauty of God’s creation, the generosity of another person, the growth in love after a holy hour: these are all ways God showers us with gifts, but especially in the Most Holy Eucharist. Communion has become for me like that moment when you tear back the wrapping paper and see your number one item, the first thing on your wish list. As Christ strengthens my devotion for the Eucharist, I get a similar joy when I kneel back down in the pew and know that I have everything I ever wanted and so much more.

Jesus is the fulfillment of all our desires. We desire what is good, and there is nothing that exists, or ever has existed, or ever will exist that is more good than God, who is goodness itself. I’ll appreciate some presents for Christmas, but the box I want more than any isn’t under the tree. It’s in the chapel, with the greatest gift inside.

Kids usually want every morning to be Christmas morning because that’s when they receive their presents, but when Jesus is the top of your wish list, every day is Christmas morning.

– Brendon Schneibel
I have always loved a particular prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe since receiving it five years ago. As members of the Fargo Catholic Medical Association (CMA), my husband and I received the prayer and venerated the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe while attending the National CMA Conference in Philadelphia. It is based on Our Lady’s endearing maternal words to Juan Diego whom she appeared to in 1531.

When COVID-19 hit, it had a whole new relevancy. Our Lady said, “do not fear any illness.” However, with the political upheaval in our country, this prayer has even more significance, especially when you know the story behind it. Could this be the time referred to by Our Lady to a holy nun back in 2008 who requested this image and prayer to be spread throughout the USA and beyond to promote the Culture of Life, when she said, “soon all will need to turn to me?” The following is taken from the prayer card telling the miraculous story of how it all came about.

“Many miracles will come from this”

In 1993, Sister M. Paula Beierschmitt, I.H.M., answered Pope John Paul II’s “Call to Artists” by forming the “American Academy of the Sacred Arts” to promote sacred art and to assist artists.

On Aug. 3, 2008, Sister Paula, while visiting Mount St. Mary’s University, photographed an outdoor wall mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe. When the photograph was developed, it showed an unexplainable “luminescence” image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in front of the mosaic. This “luminescence” image was not visible when the photograph was taken. Through prayer, it was subsequently revealed to Sister Paula that a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe (the Patroness of the Americas), was to be created. This statue (and prayer) was then to be replicated many times, placing them throughout the USA and beyond. Sister Paula said, “The Blessed Mother wants these because they will create a new resurgence in the Pro-Life movement (respect for human life) and because the people don’t know her (Blessed Mother) and soon, they will need to come to her.”

Sister Paula believed the Blessed Mother always leads others to her son, Jesus Christ. Sister Paula gave the artist, Steven F. Kilpatrick specific instructions on how she believed the Blessed Mother wanted this statue created. Sister Paula said, “Many miracles will come from this.” Sister Paula passed away on Sept. 28, 2013.

The statue is presently in the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. On Sept. 26, 2015, before the start of Mass, Pope Francis walked over to this special statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, prayed and placed roses in front of it. Following the instructions given to Sister Paula by the Blessed Mother, the statue will eventually be installed in its permanent location on South Broad Street, Philadelphia. To learn more go to ologamerica.com.
Deacon Tom and Mary Geffre, parishioners of St. James Basilica in Jamestown, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Dec. 30. They were married at St. Mark’s Church in Conway. They have 8 children, 28 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.

Richard (Rick) and Mary Ann Ginter, parishioners of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, celebrated their 50th anniversary on Oct. 10. There were married at St. Joseph’s as well. They have 3 sons and 9 grandchildren.

Jim and Lydia Jean Hillerson celebrated their 50th anniversary on Nov. 28. Jim is a parishioner of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo, and Lydia Jean is a parishioner at Triumph Lutheran in Moorhead, Minn. They were blessed to have 4 children and many grandchildren. One of their children passed away in 1978.

Mary Frances Becker, parishioner of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Dec. 15. Her husband, Gerald Becker, passed away on Feb. 5, 1990. Mary and Gerald were blessed with 9 children, 22 grandchildren, and 19 great grandchildren.

Eva Heilman, former parishioner of Notre Dame Church, Willow City, celebrated her 100th birthday on Nov. 20. She was married to her husband Pete for 59 years before he died in 2000. She and Pete were blessed with 9 children, 22 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, and 13 great-great-grandchildren.

Christina Long, parishioner of Transfiguration Church in Edgeley, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Dec. 29. She was married to her husband, John, for nearly 62 years when he died in 2010. They have 11 children, 32 grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren.

Florence Maurer of Jamestown will celebrate her 100th birthday on Dec. 9. Florence is a parishioner of St. James Basilica and lives at Heritage Center Assisted Living in Jamestown. Florence and her late husband have 5 children, 13 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.

Charles Morehead, parishioner of St. Anthony’s Church in Fargo, will celebrate his 100th birthday Dec. 16. His wife, Kay, turned 95 on Oct. 7. He has 6 children, (two deceased), 28 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.

Bette (Griffin) Parsons, parishioner of St. James Basilica in Jamestown, will celebrate her 96th birthday Dec. 20. Bette has played music for Masses at the State Hospital and numerous nursing homes in Jamestown for many years. She now resides at Ave Maria Nursing Home in Jamestown.

Francis E. “Hank” Weber, parishioner of St. Leo’s Church in Casselton, will celebrate his 96th birthday on Dec. 27. He was married to Dona Aasgaard for more than 50 years before her passing. He has 2 sons and 4 grandchildren.

As a way to celebrate life and love, we encourage parishioners in the Diocese of Fargo to send a photo and news brief for anniversaries of 50 years or 60+ years or birthdays of 80+ years to: New Earth, Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd. S., Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 or news@fargodiocese.org.
Please remember in prayer the faithful departed from our parishes, our diocese and throughout the world. These names and corrections were submitted after the November New Earth deadline. Included are those who passed away between Oct. 1, 2019 and Sept. 30 2020.

COOPERSTOWN – St. George’s Church:

FARGO – Nativity Church:

FAIRMOUNT – St. Anthony’s Church:

FINLEY – St. Olaf’s Church:

HANKINSON – St. Philip’s Church:

JESSIE – St. Lawrence Church:

KENSAL – St. John’s Church:

ST. MICHAEL – St. Michael’s Mission:

WIMBLEDON – St. Boniface Church:

This name was mistakenly missed from 2018.

BECHYNE: Sts. Peter and Paul’s Church:
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With praise and thanksgiving to God, I am deeply grateful for your generosity during the past fiscal year. In a year of unknowns, church shutdowns, limited capacity, sickness, and loss of life, the response to the diocesan needs was impressive. A pandemic does not stop the work of the Church, it only makes it more interesting in the delivery. Jesus is not limited by these earthly things.

We have continued our emphasis on evangelization and rural life. Agriculture sustains all of us, and Jesus used many examples of crops and animals in his teaching. We must all be mindful of the struggles that our farmers and ranchers face.

Your support helps us to be Christ to others, and provides for catechesis, Catholic education, charity, justice, worship, personal spiritual growth, and pastoral ministry.

What follows is the annual accountability report, which covers the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The Diocesan Finance Council, which includes 10 laypersons from throughout the diocese and five diocesan representatives, assists me in the painstaking task of overseeing diocesan finances. We are thankful for your generous and consistent financial support. May God bless you and reward you for your financial assistance, prayers and acts of service in response to his call.

The condensed summary of our reports, found in this issue, is intended to give you a broad view of the normal operations of our diocese and its ministries, as well as the contributions made by our diocese to the national and international work of the Church. This report summarizes many pages of audit reports on the Diocese of Fargo, and the Catholic Development Foundation. Complete audited financial reports are available to the faithful of the diocese via links on our website under the Finance Office. A copy of each report may also be reviewed in the Diocesan Finance Office.

These ministries and other diocesan services link together the parishes that constitute the Diocese of Fargo. Good stewardship begins with the faith and understanding that we all are called to give back to God a first portion of the gifts he has bestowed on us. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are reflected in this annual report. Your trust in God is reflected in your gifts to the Church and your parishes.

As in the past, we planned and evaluated the compelling needs of the diocesan Church against available resources. I believe that responsible and creative stewardship guided this process, and I pledge to continue good stewardship in the future.

I am convinced that through the goodness and generosity of the Catholics of our diocese, we will continue to rise to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. Your continued support through prayer, volunteer service, and financial commitment, is a positive sign of a community alive in our Catholic faith. May God generously reward and bless you and your families.

You are in my constant prayers. Please pray for me.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John T. Folda
Bishop of Fargo
Diocese of Fargo statement of operating income and expenses for year ending June 30, 2020

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<th>Revenues:</th>
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<tr>
<td>God’s Gift Appeal Income</td>
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<th>Expenditures:</th>
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<td>Faith Education</td>
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<td>Sick and Elderly Priests</td>
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<td>Cathedral Subsidy</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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Complete audited financial statements are available for review on our website under the Finance Office link www.fargodiocese.org/finance or by contacting the Finance Office (701) 356-7930 for an appointment.

Dear Friends,

We have all heard the saying, “We reap what we sow.” Since 1985, the Catholic Development Foundation (CDF) has been sowing the seeds of generous Catholics throughout the Diocese of Fargo. Because of this generosity, hundreds of Catholic programs and ministries within the framework of our diocese will continue to grow and strengthen our Catholic faith community for years to come.

CDF is a securely structured organization that was incorporated in 1985. As a publicly supported 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, CDF helps donors achieve their charitable and financial goals. The foundation ensures the security of all donated funds. The funds are used only for their intended purposes as designated by the donors. CDF has produced wonderful benefits for many parishes and diocesan programs over the last five years. Distributions from the CDF for parishes, diocesan programs and clergy/seminarian education have totaled $11,335,549.

On pages 34, you will see a list of endowments currently established for various Catholic ministries and parishes. I encourage you to review this list to see which ones are created in your community or otherwise important to you. All Diocese of Fargo parishes have an endowment established in the CDF.

God has planted within us a desire to give and to receive. The CDF’s ability to easily receive gifts and help donors offer gifts is rewarding both for donors and for those who are assisted. Donors know their gifts are long-term investments for current and future Catholics. I encourage you to become a Catholic Development Foundation donor. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a difference in the lives of Catholics in our diocese. Planning and making a gift now will allow you to witness your charity in action.

Thank you and may your blessings be multiplied through your generosity to the CDF. For more information about Catholic Development Foundation, visit www.cdfnd.org or call (701) 356-7926.

Sincerely,

Steve Schons | President

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A message from Catholic Development Foundation

**Serving the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo**

**Catholic Development Foundation**
Other financial funds and related information

**CUSTODIAL FUND**

The Custodial Fund is used for monies that are from national collections taken up in the parishes, and the Diocesan Insurance Program. When national collections (i.e. Black & Indian Mission, Peter’s Pence/Holy Father, Good Friday/Holy Land, Religious Retirement) are taken, the monies from each parish are sent to the Diocese. Once all the monies from all parishes are received, a single check is sent on behalf of the people of the diocese to the intended national office or agency.

During this past year, the following collections were forwarded to national offices:

- **Black & Indian Missions**.......................... $23,196
- **World Mission/Propagation of the Faith** ........ $40,482
- **Religious Retirement**............................ $35,781
- **Catholic Relief Services**...................... $9,250
- **Diaster/Hurricane Relief**..................... $30,698
- **Archdiocese for Military Services**.............. $8,717
- **Others (e.g., Aid to Eastern Europe, Haiti, CCND)**... $3,083

The Diocese of Fargo received $101,000 from the Black & Indian Mission Office this year for direct aid to Native American communities in the diocese, and $25,000 from the Catholic Home Mission Office for Diocesan programming and economic assistance to three parishes.

All parishes participate in the diocesan insurance program through Catholic Mutual. Catholic Mutual sends bills to the parishes based on a $1,000 deductible. The parishes make payments to the Diocese for these insurance premiums. Catholic Mutual bills the Diocese based on a $25,000 deductible, and the Diocese makes payments to Catholic Mutual. The premium difference or spread between the $1,000 and $25,000 deductibles is retained in the Insurance Reserve and is used to pay insurance claims between the $1,000 and $25,000 level.

**CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

The Catholic Development Foundation was established in 1985 as a separate entity that exists as an “umbrella Foundation” for Catholic churches and institutions. The Foundation serves as a vehicle for Catholic entities to accumulate endowments, perpetual care funds, and the like through bequests and deferred gift planning. Gift planning tools such as charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder unit-trusts, charitable lead annuity trusts and other deferred gift plans utilize the Foundation as a means of providing for the Church after our earthly existence.

At June 30, 2020 there were:

- **Endowments for parishes and agencies**........... $16,955,988
- **Endowments for Seminarians/Clergy Education**... $21,920,861
- **Perpetual Care Cemetery Funds**.................. $3,093,039
- **Endowments for Catholic schools**................ $19,636,099
- **Annuities/Uni-trusts**............................ $2,783,303
- **Donor Advised Funds**........................... $5,744,503

The Catholic Development Foundation provides a permanent way for donors to make a positive impact for years to come on the well-being of the Catholic Church and people served through its many ministries. As an umbrella foundation for the Catholic entities in the Diocese of Fargo, the Catholic Development Foundation seeks to support financially the spiritual, educational, and social well-being of our Catholic Faith community and to help donors achieve their charitable and financial goals through a legacy gift. All endowments are qualified endowment funds making contributions eligible for the 40% North Dakota Tax Credit.

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**Quotable**

*St. John of Kanty*

*Feast day Dec. 23*

"Fight all error but do it with good humor, patience, kindness, and love. Harshness will damage your own soul and spoil the best cause."
### North Dakota Tax Credits benefit the Church and you

A few years ago, ND legislators passed a bill that allowed a very generous tax credit to those who make a charitable gift to a ND qualified endowment. If you are a North Dakota resident and make a gift of $5,000 or more to a ND qualified endowment, you are eligible for a 40 percent tax credit on your ND taxes. Tax credits are much different than a tax deduction because they reduce your tax liability dollar for dollar. The maximum tax credit allowed is $20,000 for individuals or $40,000 for married couples filing jointly. However, credits may be carried forward up to three years.

The following is an example of how tax credits may benefit you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIFT AMOUNT</th>
<th>$5,000</th>
<th>$20,000</th>
<th>$50,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Federal tax savings</em></td>
<td>-$720</td>
<td>-$2,880</td>
<td>-$7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND state income tax credit</td>
<td>-$2,000</td>
<td>-$8,000</td>
<td>-$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net “Cost” of Gift</td>
<td>$2,280</td>
<td>$9,120</td>
<td>$22,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on individuals that fall in the 24 percent Federal tax bracket. Please consult your own financial or tax advisor for your unique situation.

### Your guide to giving

Catholic Development Foundation (CDF) offers many ways to give and leave a legacy. CDF accepts gifts of cash, appreciated securities, and real estate. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. And, you choose the parish, school, or organization which will benefit from your gift.

**Gifts that start making a difference today**

- Existing Endowment Fund
- Donor Advised Fund
- New Endowment Fund

**Gifts that give back – Life income gifts**

These types of gifts provide income for the donor’s lifetime, any remainder goes to the donor’s charity of choice.

- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Charitable Remainder Trust
- Charitable Unitrust

**Gifts that bear fruits later – Deferred gifts**

The benefits an organization receives from these gifts are deferred until a later time, typically after a donor passes away.

- Charitable Bequest
- Life Estate

For more information, please contact Steve at (701) 356-7926 or visit www.cdfnd.org.

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**Diocesan policy: Reporting child abuse**

The Diocese of Fargo is committed to the protection of youth. Please report any incidents or suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, to civil authorities. If the situation involves a member of the clergy or a religious order, a seminarian, or an employee of a Catholic school, parish, the diocesan offices or other Catholic entity within the diocese, we ask that you also report the incident or suspected incident to Msgr. Joseph Goering, vicar general, at (701) 356-7945 or the victim assistance coordinator, at (701) 356-7965 or by email at victimassistance@fargodiocese.org.

To make a report of sexual abuse of a minor and related misconduct by bishops, go to ReportBishopAbuse.org or call 1-800-276-1562.

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**Endowments Awarded**

**July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminary/Clergy</td>
<td>$951,542</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>$498,544</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Schools</td>
<td>$672,775</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>$80,760</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocesan</td>
<td>$85,282</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$325,546</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,614,449</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endowment Funds in the Catholic Development Foundation

The Catholic Development Foundation has 500+ funds supporting a variety of Catholic parishes, cemeteries, schools, ministries and programs. Because we simply don’t have the space to print the entire list, go cdfnd.org/endowment to review the list established in the name of Parishes, Cemeteries, Seminarians and Clergy Education, and Catholic Schools.

The following is a partial list of individual, family and other sponsored endowment funds that are most active. Please refer to cdfnd.org to view complete list. If you have questions, or seek additional information, contact Steve Schons at (701) 356-7926 or email steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endowment Fund Name</th>
<th>For the benefit of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Ritzke Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John’s Church of New Rockford and Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anawim Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Thomas Newman Center of Grand Forks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Samuel Aquila Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Experience Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Beginning Experience Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop James S. Sullivan Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Cathedral of Fargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob and Dayle Dietz Memorial Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John the Evangelist’s Church, Wahpeton, ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Aloisius Muench Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities ND Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Catholic Charities ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles and Mary Ellen Frey Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. James Basilica of Jamestown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck and Meghan Breen Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Rose of Lima Church of Hillsboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallum Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s Maternity Home, Minto, ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Fargo Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for general purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enderlin - St. Patrick’s Rectory Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Church of Enderlin Rectory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross Church “R.E. and Youth Ministry” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Holy Cross Church of West Fargo, RE and Youth Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and JoAnn Kitchens Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Church of Devils Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John and Jan Klocke Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s, Real Presence Radio, Women’s Care Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcella Feist Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Tribunal Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Marriage Tribunal Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracle of Cana Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo, various ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity Faith Formation Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Church of Fargo for faith formation ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity Social Justice Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Parish, Fargo social justice ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Presence Radio Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Real Presence Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Darin Didier Memorial Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Donald Leiphon Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Duaine Cote Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Scholarship to Seminarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Maurice Mueller Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Church of Fargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert and Sally Artz Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo and Crookston, Catholic Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Gianna’s Maternity Home</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s Maternity Home, Minto, ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes “Music” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes for Music ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes “Teen Life” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes for Teen Life ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s Church of Grafton “Poorest of Poor” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John’s Church of Grafton for poor ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s the Evangelist Church “Education” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John’s of New Rockford for Education ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s, Wahpeton, Hunger Fund Endowment</td>
<td>St. John’s of Wahpeton Hunger ministry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Government leaders and authorities must not exploit the COVID-19 pandemic to discredit political rivals but instead set aside differences to find “viable solutions for our people,” Pope Francis said.

In a video message Nov. 19 to participants at a virtual seminar about the coronavirus pandemic in Latin America, the pope said leaders should not “encourage or endorse or use mechanisms that make this serious crisis a tool of an electoral or social nature.”

“Discrediting the other only succeeds in destroying the possibility of finding agreements that help alleviate the effects of the pandemic in our communities, especially on the most excluded,” the pope said.

“Who pays (the price) for this process of discrediting? he asked. “The people pay for it; we progress in discrediting the other at the expense of the poorest, at the expense of the people.” Elected officials and public servants, he added, are called to “be at the service of the common good and not place the common good at the service of their interests.”

“We all know the dynamics of the corruption that goes on in this area. And this is also true for the men and women of the church,” the pope said.

Corruption within the church, he said, is “a true leprosy that sickens and kills the Gospel.”

The Nov. 19-20 virtual seminar, titled, “Latin America: Church, Pope Francis and scenarios of the pandemic,” was sponsored by Pontifical Commission for Latin America, as well as Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and Latin American bishops’ conference, commonly known as CELAM.

In his message, the pope expressed his hope that initiatives like the seminar would “inspire paths, awaken processes, create alliances and promote all the mechanisms necessary to guarantee a dignified life for our people, especially the most excluded, through the experience of fraternity and the building up of social friendship.”

“When I say the most excluded, I do not mean it (in the same way) as saying to give alms to the most excluded, or as a gesture of charity, no, but as a key to hermeneutics,” he said.

The poorest people are the key for interpreting and understanding the fault or benefit of any response, he said. “If we don’t start from there, we are going to make mistakes.”

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, he continued, will be felt for many years to come and solidarity must be at the center of any proposals to alleviate people’s sufferings.

Any future initiatives should be “based on contributing, sharing and distributing, not on possessing, excluding and accumulating,” the pope said.

“Now, more than ever, it is necessary to regain consciousness of our common belonging. The virus reminds us that the best way to take care of ourselves is by learning to care for and protect those around us,” he said.

Noting that the pandemic “amplified” existing socioeconomic problems and injustices in Latin America, the pope said that many people, especially the region’s poorest, are not guaranteed “the necessary resources to carry out the minimum measures of protection against COVID-19.”

Nevertheless, Pope Francis said that despite “this gloomy panorama,” the people of Latin America “teach us that they are people with souls who know how to face crises with courage and know how to generate voices that shout in the desert to pave the way for the Lord.”

“Please, let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!” he exclaimed. “The path of solidarity as well as justice is the best expression of love and closeness. From this crisis, we can come out better, and this is what so many of our sisters and brothers have witnessed in the daily giving of their lives and in the initiatives that the people of God have generated.”

World leaders must not use pandemic for political gain, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves | Catholic News Service
Wishing You and Your Family a very Blessed Christmas

The Dolan Agency

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1-800-906-6780

Joel Herman
FICF
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Sean Osowski
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Jim Suda
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Knights of Columbus®
McCarrick Report documents "tragic chapter" in Church’s life, USCCB president says

By Catholic News Agency

The president of the U.S. bishops’ conference said that bishops will be studying the McCarrick Report issued by the Holy See Nov. 10, and that U.S. bishops are committed to helping victims of clerical sexual abuse.

“I welcome the report of the Holy See’s investigation into its knowledge and decision-making regarding Theodore McCarrick during his long career as a priest, bishop, and cardinal. We are studying these findings, and we are grateful to our Holy Father Pope Francis for his pastoral concern for the family of God in the United States and his leadership in calling the Church to greater accountability and transparency in addressing issues of abuse and the mishandling of abuse claims at every level,” Archbishop Jose Gomez said in a statement released Nov. 10.

“This is another tragic chapter in the Church’s long struggle to confront the crimes of sexual abuse by clergy. To McCarrick’s victims and their families, and to every victim-survivor of sexual abuse by the clergy, I express my profound sorrow and deepest apologies. Please know that my brother bishops and I are committed to doing whatever is in our power to help you move forward and to ensure that no one suffers what you have been forced to suffer.”

The statement came after the release of a long-awaited report on former cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who was in 2018 acknowledged to have been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor. McCarrick was subsequently accused of serially abusing and coercing minors, priests, and seminarians, and was laicized in 2019.

The Vatican in 2018 announced an investigation into McCarrick’s decades-long career in the Church, which included ministry as archbishop in two large U.S. archdiocese, and appointment to the College of Cardinals.

The report, more than 400 pages long, catalogues various reports made about McCarrick to Church officials, some of which were ignored, and documents in 2000, before McCarrick that three U.S. bishops lied to the Holy See about their knowledge of McCarrick’s misconduct before the former cardinal was appointed Archbishop of Washington.

In his statement, Gomez urged victims of clerical abuse to report their abuse to both law enforcement and Church authorities, and called for repentance.

“This report underscores the need for us to repent and grow in our commitment to serve the people of God. Let us all continue to pray and strive for the conversion of our hearts, and that we might follow Jesus Christ with integrity and humility.”

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

These news items, compiled by Danielle Ottman, were found in New Earth and its predecessor, Catholic Action News.

75 years ago — 1945

Riotous laughter and gay witticisms echoed through Central Auditorium, Monday evening, December 10, as Grand Forks Academy of St. James seniors, before a large and appreciative audience, romped through their class comedy, Campus Quarantine. Excellent casting resulted in the twelve characters’ portraying their roles with sympathy, real spirit and poise.

50 years ago — 1970

An inter-faith group of Bismarck area residents has formed and incorporated The North Dakota Right to Life Association, “because of the urgent need in North Dakota for a clear understanding and full appreciation of the existence of human life at all stages of development.” The Association will work toward its vision by educating its members and the general public about abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia in a peaceful, factual, and legal manner, through various films and guest speaker engagements throughout the state.

20 years ago — 2000

“The Blenders” made a special appearance at Holy Spirit Elementary School in Fargo. It worked in their favor that one of the members, Tim Kasper, is a graduate of Holy Spirit Elementary and Shanley High School. The group showed their “blending” talents by singing Christmas songs for grades K-5. The students had the opportunity to ask questions. “Do you know any other songs?” got a few good chuckles from the group.

Current note: “The Blenders” celebrate 30 years together and are working on a free series of LIVE performance videos for the holiday during quarantine, within a COVID-19 safe setting.
ANNOUNCING AN UPCOMING RETROUVAILLE WEEKEND FOR COUPLES

MARCH 5-7, 2021
FARGO, ND

Does your marriage need a tune up?
Or even a major overhaul?
Sometimes a marriage can run along fine and then things change. They may need your time and attention.

Sometimes lines of communication break down and they need repair. Sometimes our focus moves away from our marriage and family and needs a little redirection. Sometimes a fair or average marriage is just not enough. Have you ever thought to yourself, “How can I make my marriage better?” If so, Retrouvaille can help. Retrouvaille is a marriage program for couples whose marriage has become off course. It begins with a weekend program that can help get your relationship back on track. It is an effective program that has worked for thousands of couples and it can work for your marriage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (701) 356-7962 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: HELPOURMARRIAGE.COM
When someone responds to us without hurt-filled hate on the sidewalk of our state’s only abortion facility, it is usually a surprise, and it always feels like a gift from God. It’s the reason we show up—to find God somehow in the rubble of brokenness that piles up there each week, as those who approach lose hope; hope that diminishes to almost nothing the length of half a city block—the approximate distance it takes to get from a parked vehicle on the curb to the front entrance of the Red River Women’s Clinic.

Even as we’re trying to offer hope and expand the choices available to the women who show up on the day marked in advance for the death of their living child, we too pray for hope to appear. The day the girl with the dark brown eyes and the college sweatshirt walked out was one of those afternoons I wasn’t expecting much in the way of hope. I hadn’t been there that long when I saw her, her head hung low, leaving the facility with a brown sack and a purple, plastic bag.

The plastic sack indicates the presence of pills, and because we know chemical abortions are becoming more and more prevalent, there’s a high probability women clutching this purple bag have been given medication to expel their child from their womb. Since we never know for sure, we are sometimes direct, wanting to offer the right resources. So, I asked her pointedly, “Did you have an abortion?” “Not yet,” she responded quietly. This either meant she was still thinking about it, or she’d begun the process, but it wasn’t complete. Hopefully it was the former, I began offering literature to help her in her predicament. I expected resistance, but instead, felt her vulnerability as she looked at me squarely and said, “Could I have a hug?”

Though I try to talk tenderly to the women I confront there, if given a chance, and have reached out my hand before, I’ve never received a request for a hug. I could tell from the way she asked that it was sincere; that she was desperate to be held.

I can only imagine how broken a person must feel to ask for a hug from a complete stranger, and one you’ve been set up to feel is judging you. Somehow though, she knew that wasn’t the case, and as I spoke encouragingly, pointing the way to help and hope as well as I could, we embraced a second time. Though holding a weary stranger, I felt as if I were hugging my own daughter, and that my heart might break.

She briefly explained a bit of her situation. Things weren’t good with the dad and, well, it was complicated. It always is. Life is complicated. Unplanned pregnancy is complicated. How have we gotten to this point though, of convincing people that this kind of complication must result in erasing a human life? We have failed at the most important message of all: that life bursts from nothingness to something: something real, something beautiful, something of inestimable value.

Eventually, we exchanged numbers and she promised to follow up, but when I tried to check in by text later, only silence followed. I am haunted by this, concerned she later took the rest of the pills and participated in killing her child. If so, I know she is haunted too, and likely alone in her misery. She has been on my mind and in my prayers ever since.

Only a week or so later, at the same corner of our city, I saw a worker from the burger joint next door rubbing off a chalk message written by a prayer advocate earlier to offer hope. As I raised my phone camera to snap a picture, his broom brushed away the last sign of hope; the very word “hope” itself.

I thought again of that young lady with the deep brown eyes who’d asked me for a hug, and of the hope that’s washed away every time someone slips through the cracks. I want to believe that maybe I’m wrong, that this sweet soul changed her mind. If so, I can think of no better name for her child, if she is a girl, than Hope.

Mary, Undoer of Knots, mother of all, please pray for her, and for us in all our mangled messes.

Roxane B. Salonen, a wife and mother of five, is a local writer, as well as a speaker and radio host for Real Presence Radio. Roxane also writes weekly for The Forum newspaper and monthly for CatholicMom.com. Reach her at roxanebsalonen@gmail.com.

“Can I have a hug?” she asked as hope was erased

**Sidewalk Stories**

By Roxane B. Salonen
Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the January New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?
Last month’s photo is of St. David’s Church in Ashley.