Faith, farming and the future
Rural Life Celebration honors farm families and communities

PLUS
From Bishop Folda:
A celebration of Rural Life
Getting to know our new priests of the diocese
Seven Sisters Apostolate ensures continuous prayers for priests
ANNOUNCING AN UPCOMING RETROUVAILLE WEEKEND FOR COUPLES

OCTOBER 2-4, 2020
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.

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**ON THE COVER:**
A little girl pets a calf at the Rural Life Celebration on July 12 near Napoleon. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)
A celebration of Rural Life

One of the more pleasant duties I have as bishop is traveling throughout our diocese for confirmations, parish visits, and a variety of other events. On July 12, I traveled to Napoleon for our third annual Rural Life Mass and Celebration, sponsored by the people of St. Philip Neri Parish and hosted on the farm of Frank and Helen Braun. It was a warm, sunny day, and people from throughout our diocese came together to pray and celebrate the beauty and goodness of rural life. There were horse-drawn wagon rides, games for kids, a wonderful lunch, and lots of conversation between friends. But the heart of the event was our common prayer and the celebration of Mass.

Rural life is so much a part of our diocesan culture that it deserves our attention, prayer, and support.

-Bishop John Folda

We began with blessings of seeds, soil and the land to remind us that God brings forth the good things of the earth for our use, and we depend on his providence. We also blessed farm animals, creatures placed on earth for our use and also for our companionship. With their voices, they too give praise to our Creator. And finally, we blessed farm machinery, marvels of human ingenuity that help us work the land and bring in a great harvest. My intention was to include all our farmers and ranchers in those blessings, and I trust that our Lord heard our prayers.

We celebrated Mass and participated once again in the Lord’s Eucharistic sacrifice. The word Eucharist literally means “thanks-giving,” and it was fitting that we should give thanks on that occasion for the saving love of God and his glorious creation. By a happy coincidence, the gospel passage for that day was the Parable of the Sower, a perfect image to recall God’s own spiritual planting and harvesting in our human hearts, and a mirror of what happens every day in rural life. The Mass is our highest act of worship, but we also give worship to God through our work on the land. Our work in the fields and among the herds is a participation in God’s work of caring for his creation, and really is an act of worship and praise if we set our hearts on his purposes.

At the conclusion of our Mass, we held a Eucharistic procession around the farm. The custom of a Eucharistic procession is ancient and solemn, a reminder that Jesus Christ is among us, and comes to us with his grace and mercy. The elements of the Eucharist come from the fruits of the earth, so it makes perfect sense to bless the earth and all those upon it with the sacrament of our Lord’s real presence. Jesus walked the fields of Galilee and often taught with agricultural imagery, so it’s good to remember that he still walks among us and accompanies us in our lives and work.

During our procession, we prayed the Rosary, asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for all farmers, ranchers, and rural families and communities. As Mother of the Church, Mary has a special place in our family of faith, and a place in heaven with her Son. We can always turn to Mary in our need, and ask her to lead us more surely to Jesus. We also prayed to St. Isidore, the patron saint of farmers, who with his wife, St. Maria de la Cabeza, was an example of steadfast faith, charity, and trust in God’s assistance. He was diligent in his work as a farm laborer, and gives good example to all who are stewards of the earth and collaborators with God in the work of creation.

It was a full and spiritually rich day, and it brought to mind the noble calling of rural life. During this growing season, we can’t help but think of the hard work of so many farm and ranch families who dedicate themselves to cultivation of the earth and all God’s creatures. They have a special connection to creation, an awareness that they are united with God in this very special work of tilling the land. There are very serious challenges in rural America today, and many farmers have been forced to walk away from this life. It isn’t easy to be always at the mercy of adverse weather and unfavorable economics. Too often our farmers feel isolated and even powerless to make it all work. Just a few months ago, I wrote of the very difficult crisis affecting our farmers, a crisis that continues now, and it remains to be seen if things will improve this year.

Rural life is so much a part of our diocesan culture that it deserves our attention, prayer, and support. Most of us have at least some connection with rural families, and we should all remember that the well-being of our communities and parishes is tied to the health of rural life. In his encyclical letter Laudato Si, issued five years ago on the care of our common home, Pope Francis urged all the faithful to be more aware of our bond with God’s creation. Respect for the land and its resources is a way of life for those who live and work in rural North Dakota, and the Holy Father’s teaching is an excellent encouragement to remember the sacred gift of creation that God has placed in our care. The spirituality of rural life aligns beautifully with our Catholic faith, and I look forward to our next annual celebration in another region of our diocese. May the Lord of all creation bless all those who live and work in the country and prosper the work of their hands.
**BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR**

Aug. 7 • 4:45 p.m.
Vespers for Candidacy,
Sts. Anne & Joachim, Fargo

Aug. 7 • 5:15 p.m.
Mass for Institution of Lector and Acolytes,
Sts. Anne & Joachim, Fargo

Aug. 8 • 10 a.m.
Ordination of Priests at Cathedral
of St. Mary, Fargo

Aug. 15 • 10 a.m.
Mass to receive final vows of Brother Francis
Reineke, FMI, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Aug. 16 • 5 p.m.
Field Mass, Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton

Aug. 20 • 8 a.m.
Mass for St. JPII Schools Staff
development day, Shanley Chapel, Fargo

Aug. 22 • 5 p.m.
Mass for Pro-Life, St. John Church, Grafton

Aug. 26 • 3 p.m.
St. JPII Schools Board Meeting,
Pastoral Center, Fargo

Aug. 27–29
Region VIII Bishops Gathering, Fargo

Sept. 7
Labor Day, Pastoral Center closed

Sept. 9 • 10 a.m.
St. JPII Schools Board and Council Retreat,
Pastoral Center, Fargo

Sept. 10 • 9 a.m.
Diocesan School Principals and Pastors
Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

**Prayer Intention of Pope Francis**

**The Maritime World**
We pray for all those who work and
live from the sea, among them sailors,
fishermen, and their families.

**“In the long run there will be
two kinds of men: those who
love God and those who love
something else.”**

St. Augustine
feast day Aug. 28
Saint of the month
St. Rose of Lima
By Paul Braun

Feast day: August 23
Patron: Latin America and the Philippines, embroiderers, gardeners, florists, those who suffer ridicule for their piety, and people who suffer family problems
Birth: 1586  Death: 1617
Beatified: 1667 by Pope Clement IX
Canonized: 1671 by Pope Clement X

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.

St. Rose of Lima was born in 1586 in Lima, Peru to Spanish colonists, and named Isabel Flores de Olivia. She was thought to be exceptionally beautiful. According to legend, a servant had a vision where her face turned into a rose. At her confirmation in 1597, she officially took the name of Rose.

From an early age, Rose wanted to become a nun. She often prayed and fasted in secret. She performed secret penances, some of which were painful and severe. She performed daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and took daily communion.

As a young woman, her beauty began to attract suitors. To deter these men, St. Rose marred her face, rubbing it with pepper to make it blister. She cropped her hair short. Her parents opposed her plan to take a vow of chastity. This resulted in a clash of wills, because her parents wanted her to marry. Her father eventually relented and gave her a room to herself. St. Rose kept herself cloistered in her room, spending long periods in prayer.

When she turned 20, she was permitted to join the Third Order of St. Dominic. She continued a life of extreme prayer, fasting, and penance. She was known to wear a heavy silver crown, with spikes that could pierce her flesh. The spikes reminded her of the crown of thorns. At one point, one of the spikes become so lodged in her skull that the crown was removed with great difficulty.

St. Rose died in on August 25, 1617, at the age of 31. According to legend, she accurately predicted the date of her death. Her funeral was a major event attended by all the city’s authorities.
Seventy years ago, as I was preparing to be an altar boy, I memorized several responses in Latin so I could respond to my pastor during Mass. Once I memorized the Latin responses, I served Mass with the older servers for a while. I would come out of the sacristy and go directly to my position at the foot of the altar against the east wall with the tabernacle incorporated in the center of the elaborate reredos (works of art situated behind and above the altars of churches). Six tall candles were incorporated into the reredos, with two shorter candles on either side of the tabernacle. The priest and all of us, including the people attending the Mass, were facing east towards the main altar.

We also had the duties to change the altar missal from one side of the altar to the other. Before distribution of Holy Communion, we had to flip the communion cloth up over the communion rail so the people could place their hands under it as they knelt to receive Holy Communion.

There is something unifying about the fact that the use of Latin meant that the altar boys in China were memorizing the same Latin words that we used at our St. Benedict’s Church in the countryside northeast of Devils Lake. The Latin words I remember most from that time are: Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam, which means, “The God who gives gladness to my youth.”

By the year 1959, I had outgrown my youthful practice of being an altar boy and joined the choir. On Jan. 25, 1959 Pope John XXIII, just 90 days after being chosen as Pope, convoked the Church’s 21st Ecumenical Council. After nearly four years of preparations, the Second Vatican Council opened on Oct. 11, 1962.

During the spring of 1962, I transferred to St. John’s Seminary in Collegeville, Minn. after completing my first two years of college at Assumption Abbey in Richardton. What an exciting time to enter a major seminary! Father Godfrey Dieckman, O.S.B. from St. John’s Abbey was a consultor to the Bishops at the Second Vatican Council. He would return to St. John’s between the sessions of the Council and offer us lectures on the proceedings.

One of the first topics that Pope John XXIII, bishops, and consultants—including individuals from other faiths—addressed was the liturgy. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium was given to the Church on Dec. 4, 1963. The introduction to The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states:

“The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all mankind into the Church’s fold. Accordingly, it seems particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.”

The introduction to The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is amplified further in paragraph 21:

“In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These later not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time; if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable. In this restoration both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as a community."

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy brought about many changes in the way we celebrate the Eucharist. Churches that were built after this time have one main altar situated in the most prominent position in the sanctuary. The tall candles incorporated into the reredos were now placed on the floor around the main altar, which stood in the center of the sanctuary. This permitted the priest to stand at the altar facing the people with no obstruction of the view of the people.

Most noticeably, the Mass is now celebrated in the language the people speak. No longer did the faithful have to translate the words the priest spoke or be unable to see what the priest did at the altar. The faithful see him pick up the unleavened bread and hear him say the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper, “Take this all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.”

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

What was your experience of Vatican II?

ASK A PRIEST

Father Donald Leiphon
Chaplain to the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation at Maryvale, Valley City
Seven Sisters Apostolate ensures continuous prayers for priests

By Kristina Lahr

When Jackie Weigel, parishioner of St. Philip Neri Church in Napoleon, first heard about the Seven Sisters Apostolate on a bus trip to a healing conference in Minneapolis, she held off from starting a chapter in Napoleon at first.

The mission of the Seven Sisters Apostolate is “a call to strengthen the Church by ensuring that a Holy Hour is prayed each day of the week for the sole intention of a specific priest or bishop—a ‘holy wasting’ (Matt. 26:10) or lavishing of prayer for his deeper conformity to Christ.”

“With our priest being so busy taking on the parishes in Ashley, Wishek, and Zeeland for a time, I felt he could use some extra prayers,” said Weigel. “I brought it to the parish council even though I was still holding off. Father Pfeifer liked the idea. Then Denise Weigel came to me, saying she heard I was interested in this. She gave me the encouragement. I spoke in front of the church and invited seven women to each take a day of the week to pray for our priest. I said that it scared me to commit, but I trusted that God was asking me to do this.”

According to the Seven Sisters Apostolate website, a “Seven Sisters group begins when at least seven women respond to a call to the mission of the apostolate. If more than seven women desire to pray in this manner, a core group of seven should be designated while others may substitute or provide additional hours of prayer.”

The mission specifies that the initial recipient of a Seven Sisters group should be their parish pastor and after that, more groups can be formed to pray for parochial vicars, retired priests, missionary priests, and bishops. The purpose of these prayers is about the parish as well as the individual priest, so if a priest is reassigned, his successor is to become the recipient of the group’s prayers.

The group who prays for Father Pfeifer at St. Philip Neri in Napoleon began in December 2019. Each of the seven sisters commits to praying a Holy Hour at any time on their designated day in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament or in front of a tabernacle.

Jackie says she frequently sees the fruits of their prayers.

“My day is Saturday, and sometimes I pray for a certain thing, and the next day Father Pfeifer’s homily is about that. I know the graces are flowing. Father said that he feels it too. I know our prayers are being heard. If you want your parish to be more revitalized—to have more energy—I feel that these prayers help. My hope is that more parishes would start this apostolate as a way to support their priests and parishes.”

According to the Seven Sisters Apostolate website, several parishes in the Diocese of Fargo already have groups in place.

- St. Catherine, Valley City
- St. Cecilia, Velva/Sts. Peter and Paul, Karlsruhe
- St. Helena, Ellendale/St. Patrick, Fullerton
- St. Mary’s, Grand Forks
- St. Philip Neri, Napoleon
- St. Therese, Rugby/Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Balta/St. Mary, Knox

To learn more about how to start a Seven Sisters Apostolate at your parish, visit www.sevensistersapostolate.org.

In strengthening the priest you strengthen the whole Church... Strengthen the priest and you strengthen the whole foundation, you strengthen everything in the Church. —Father Gerald Fitzgerald, S.P.
Diocese hires Brady Borslien as Youth and Young Adult Director

By Kristina Lahr

Brady Borslien joined the Diocese of Fargo staff on July 6 as the new Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Originally from Crookston, he spent the last nine years serving as the Director of Youth Ministry for Holy Rosary Church in Detroit Lakes, Minn. He also served as the Director of Youth Events/Ministry for the Diocese of Crookston for about three years.

“My hope is to help create more opportunities for youth and young adults to encounter Jesus on a very personal level through the retreats, conferences, and events and to become lifelong disciples. I look forward to serving this diocese and assisting all those that I can.”

The Youth and Young Adult Director plans events such as summer retreats for young men and women, middle school and high school rallies, and National Catholic Youth Conference and as well as supports youth ministry efforts in the diocese such as SEARCH retreats, NET ministries, scouting awards, and Center for Ministry Development workshops.

Four generations of altar servers from the Piatz family of Napoleon took part in serving at Mass on June 21 at St. Philip’s Church as a Father’s Day tribute. All have served in the past or still serve, but this was the first time the family all served together. Pictured left to right are Fargo Diocese seminarian Matt Kensock, Deacon Allen Baumgartner, Father Neil Pfeifer, Justin Piatz, Justin’s father Randy Piatz, Randy’s father Willie J. Piatz, and Fargo Diocese seminarian Robert Foertsch. The two young boys from left to right are Jackson and Carter Piatz, sons of Justin Piatz. (submitted photo)
Getting to know our new priests of the diocese

By Paul Braun

Bishop John Folda will ordain transitional Deacons Jered Grossman, Eric Seitz, and Riley Durkin to the priesthood on Aug. 8 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. *New Earth* asked them a few questions so readers could get to know them as they prepare to serve their new parishes.

**Jered Grossman**

*St. Michael’s Church, Grand Forks*

Where are you from? Who are your parents and siblings?
I am from Harvey. My father is Larry Grossman and my mother is Kathy Grossman. I have one brother, Jason and one sister, Shauna.

What kind of support for your vocation did you get from family and friends?
I have always had great support from family and friends. There were not many people surprised by my entrance into seminary at age 39.

Why did you want to become a priest? When did you first feel the calling for your vocation?
I first felt a call to the priesthood at ten years old. From a young age, I felt something whenever I would enter the church. Though I could not understand it at the time, what I was feeling was the Trinitarian relationship lived through the Church. It was that same feeling of relationship that ultimately led me to seminary many years later.

What was your most memorable experience in seminary?
My most memorable experience in seminary was traveling to Oklahoma City to sing with my seminarian brothers at the beatification of Blessed Stanley Rother. It was one of those rare and beautiful moments when you could truly feel the presence of the whole universal Church in one place at one time.

Did you have a favorite instructor or class?
My favorite instructor was Dr. John-Mark Miravalle. He taught some of my Moral Theology classes as well as my favorite class, Mariology. Perhaps it was the timing of the class, being in my last year, but it filled me with a much deeper knowledge and love for Our Blessed Mother who will be absolutely essential in my priesthood.

What are your feelings leading up to your ordination?
I am steadfast and humbled as I near ordination. I am, by the Grace of God, eager to serve the people of God through this most sacred office.

**Eric Seitz**

*St. John’s Church, Wahpeton*

Where are you from? Who are your parents and siblings?
I grew up in an Air Force family with many moves. In 2008, my dad retired, and we moved to Fargo, which is now home. I have three older brothers and one younger sister.

What kind of support for your vocation did you get from family and friends?
Almost everyone I know has given me great support. My parents were on board immediately, which was great support.

Why did you want to become a priest? When did you first feel the calling for your vocation?
I first felt called in 7th grade, but I didn’t think seriously about it until my senior year. I’ve come to realize that giving glory to God as a priest is the best possible way for me to live my life.

What was your most memorable experience in seminary?
At the beginning of my first year of seminary in Detroit, four of us from North Dakota went out to get a pizza. At one point, we drove the wrong way on a one-way street then bought pizza at a place with bullet-proof glass and a turnstile. It was an eye opener. And the pizza tasted especially good.

Did you have a favorite instructor or class?
Dr. Stephen Hipp, Systematic Theology. If I believed in reincarnation, then I’d say he was St. Thomas Aquinas returned to Earth.

What are your feelings leading up to your ordination?
It’s about time. I’m excited to begin priestly ministry in earnest.
What do you think it will be like to say your first Mass in your hometown church?
Hard to say. I am praying that I will have the grace to recognize the importance of the Mass, and to give thanks to God for the stupendous gift of the priesthood.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?
The opportunity to celebrate Mass, hear confessions, and be there for God’s people.

Where are you from? Who are your parents and siblings?
I am from a town called Inkster, which is about 35 miles northwest of Grand Forks. My parents are Kevin and Lisa Durkin and I have two younger siblings. My sister, Allyson, is an elementary school librarian in Fargo, and my brother Michael works full time with the Air National Guard.

What kind of support for your vocation did you get from family and friends?
My friends and family were very supportive of my vocation. I experienced nothing but encouragement and support from those who are closest to me.

Why did you want to become a priest? When did you first feel the calling for your vocation?
I have been told that I first talked about becoming a priest when I was young, although I don’t remember that. What attracted me to the priesthood in my adult life is the need I saw for spiritual fathers in our world. If we want to create a culture of saints, people need strong examples. I wanted to be one of them.

What was your most memorable experience in seminary?
While it’s not a specific memory, I really enjoyed all of the time I spent in fraternity with the other men in the seminary. When people look back at their college experiences, they don’t remember the times they were sitting in front of the textbook. They remember laughing and enjoying the company of others.

Did you have a favorite instructor or class?
All of my professors have been excellent. They were great examples of the importance of the intellectual side of Christianity!

What are your feelings leading up to your ordination?
After eight years of preparing, I feel ready to be ordained and begin my work in the vineyard!

What do you think it will be like to say your first Mass in your hometown church?
Saying my first Mass at St. Stephen’s in Larimore is something I have been looking forward to for many years. It’s where my vocation started!

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?
I am most looking forward to celebrating the sacraments for the people. Feeding others with the Eucharist, forgiving them in the sacrament of confession, walking with them as they prepare for marriage, and attending to them while they are sick. What a great grace the priesthood will be!
Cathedral installs new cameras

Seminarian Tim Kraemer installs new digital cameras and wiring in the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. The Diocese of Fargo and the Cathedral of St. Mary have invested in the new cameras and equipment to provide a high-quality, high-definition digital experience for the live-stream of Masses and events at the cathedral. The installation is complete and the first digital broadcast on the diocesan website took place on July 12. To view the Sunday Mass from the Cathedral each Sunday at 10 a.m., go to www.fargodiocese.org. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

Deacon “Gene” Klien passes away June 25

Deacon Eugene C. “Gene” Klein, 85, Valley City, died peacefully at the Sheyenne Care Center in Valley City on June 25. The funeral Mass for Gene was celebrated July 2 at St. Catherine Church in Valley City.

Gene was born Sept. 4, 1934 in Jamestown to George and Anna (Fiedler) Klein—the seventh of seven sons. He attended Eckelson High School and the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks where he received a Master’s degree in chemistry. He considered Pre-Med but decided to farm near Eckelson. He served in the army from 1958–60. On Oct. 20, 1966, Gene married Dorothy (Ford) Diemert. With this union, he gained an immediate family of four children. He continued to farm while the family lived in Valley City.

Gene had a strong faith and was a parishioner of St. Catherine Church. In 1988, he was ordained a permanent Deacon for the Fargo Diocese, and along with his wife worked with engaged couples and couples with hurting marriages. For many years Gene used his gift of teaching for Confirmation preparation and leading Bible studies. He had many fond memories as an active associate member of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation at Maryvale. As a strong supporter of St. Catherine School, Gene was a board member and involved in the REACH organization which helps support it. He was also instrumental in the establishment of St. Catherine kindergarten.

Due to his strong interest in horticulture, he was an avid gardener, sharing the fruits of his labor with many. He sang with the Valley Troubadours and at countless funerals. He was involved with the Barnes County Soil Conservation District for many years and was a candidate for ND House of Representatives. Gene always looked forward to working as a steady volunteer at the Barnes County Museum and Nearly-Nu Consignment Store, which were a good fit for his social nature. Gene enjoyed going to auctions and buying old furniture that he refinshed and donated to charitable auctions. He enjoyed singing with his wife as she played the piano and also loved his cat Bow, who was his nap buddy.

Gene is survived by daughter, Corlee (Michael) Fink; son, Steven Diemert; brother, Robert Klein and many sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews from the Klein, Ford, and Diemert families.

Gene was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy; sons, Rob and Rick Diemert; brothers, Louis, Vernon, Cliff, Don, and Jim; and brothers-in-law, Ken and Don Ford.
Father Louden Flisk passes away July 1

Father Louden Flisk of Nortonville died on July 1, surrounded by family.

He was born on the south side of Chicago and was one of seven children of the late Malachy and Marie (Hackett) Flisk. After a career that included service in the United States Navy, law enforcement, and a family business, he attended seminary at Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo; Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, Conn.; and Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash.

Father Flisk was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fargo on June 2, 2001. He served in a number of parishes throughout the Diocese of Fargo including St. Maurice, Kindred; St. Elizabeth, Sykeston; Holy Family, McClusky; and St. Patrick, Hurdsfield. Father Flisk retired from active ministry in 2009.

He is survived by his brother, Brian, adopted children, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews. Mass of Christian Burial was held July 15 at St. James Basilica in Jamestown.

Sister Dorothy Bertsch passes away June 22

Sister Dorothy Bertsch, 92, died at Maryvale, Valley City on June 22.

Sister Dorothy was born July 29, 1927 in Harvey to Martin and Catherine (Becker) Bertsch. She made vows of consecrated chastity, obedience, and poverty to God with the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation on Aug. 22, 1946. She graduated high school from St. Aloysius Academy, Oakwood in June 1947. She received her bachelor's degree from the College of Great Falls, Mont. in August 1958 in elementary education and social studies. She completed her master's degree at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo. in education administration. Sister Dorothy was an elementary teacher and principal throughout most of her Religious Life.

Sister Dorothy served as an elementary teacher or principal at Notre Dame Academy, Willow City, 1948–50; Oakes, 1950–53; Oakwood, 1953–60; St. Joseph’s School, Wild Rice, 1960–64; Princeton, Ill., 1964–79; St. Joseph School, Pekin, Ill., 1979–84; St. Mary’s School, DeKalb, Ill., 1984–98; she served as a Director of Religious Education at St. Patrick’s Parish, Washington, Ill., 1998–99 and St. Rita’s Parish, Rockford, Ill., 2000–05; and St. Margaret’s Hospital as a volunteer from 2006–18.

She is survived by her Religious Community, the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, and numerous nieces and nephews. Preceding her in death were her parents, and her siblings: George (Eva), Joseph (Regina), Marian, Helen (Jack) Feather, Michael (Josephine), Anthony, Steve (Delores) and Anne Marie Comeau.

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.
Sister Thomas Welder, OSB, of Annunciation Monastery passes away June 22

Sister Thomas Welder, 80, a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, and president of the University of Mary for 31 years, passed into eternal life June 22 at the monastery, following a recent diagnosis of kidney cancer.

Mass of Christian burial was June 29 at Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel (OLA) at the Benedictine Center for Servant Leadership at the University of Mary.

Sister Thomas (baptismal name Diane Marie) was born in Linton on April 27, 1940 to Mary Ann (Kuhn) and Sebastian Welder. She was the oldest of three children. When she was two, the family moved to Bismarck.

A graduate of St. Mary’s High School, she joined Annunciation Monastery after a year of college in Minnesota. She made her monastic profession on July 11, 1961. Sister Thomas cherished Benedictine monastic life which she lived faithfully for 59 years.

She graduated from the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth with a Bachelor’s degree in music and earned a Master’s degree in music from Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. She directed the Sisters’ choir for 46 years and gave credit to the choir for the beautiful liturgical music.

A dedicated servant leader, she gave her life to the University of Mary for 57 years. She was president from 1978–2009. Under her leadership, the school attained university status in 1986, tripled in size from 925 students to 3,000, added the university’s first doctorate, grew onsite and online adult learning programs to 16 locations across the state, region, and nation, and moved to NCAA Division II athletics.

One of the most widely known and respected women in North Dakota, Sister Thomas loved visiting with people of all ages and walks of life. Her enthusiastic spirit, sense of humor, and gentle nature made others comfortable in her presence. Sister Thomas modeled many Benedictine values, such as hospitality, respect, prayer and service, with ease and grace. She committed herself to instilling these values throughout the monastery’s sponsored institutions, the communities of CHI St. Alexius Health and the University of Mary.

She served on many state and national boards including CHI St. Alexius Health and MDU Resources Group, Inc. She received numerous honors during her lifetime including North Dakota’s highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award.

Sister Thomas was particularly thankful to two kidney donors who gave her the gift of life through two kidney transplants. She often prayed for and stayed connected to these special people.

She is survived by her sister, Judy (Steve) Jankus, Navarre, Fla.; sister-in-law, Marcia Welder, Apple Valley, Minn.; aunt, Sister Alene Kuhn, SSND, Mankato, Minn.; six nieces and nephews, 11 grand nieces and nephews, one great-grandniece, and the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother George.

Sister Giustina Zanin passes away July 6

Sister Giustina (Angelica) Zanin, 96, died at Maryvale, Valley City on July 6. The funeral Mass was held July 9 at Maryvale chapel.

Sister Giustina was born Nov. 26, 1923 to Natale and Giustina (DuPont) Zanin in Vintondale, Pa. She made vows of consecrated chastity, obedience, and poverty to God with the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation (SMP) on July 23, 1959. On June 15, 1945 she completed her 12-year course of study at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Edgewood, Pa. She was a seamstress, sacristan, and cook in the SMP convents.


She is survived by her Religious Community, the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation; brothers, Raymond (Barbara) Zanin, Lanham, Md., and George (Lillian) Zanin, Ebensburg, Pa.; sisters-in-law, Margaret Zanin, Greenbelt, Md., and Evelyn Zanin, Sonoma, Calif.; numerous nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and great-great nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her northern Italy immigrant parents; sister, Zaira, and brothers, Attilio, Bruno, John, Sam, and Ben.
On Easter Vigil morning as I was waiting for the environment crew, I got a phone call from an old friend. I was very surprised to hear her voice.

We discussed the Stories of Faith article featured in the April 2020 New Earth about our visit to the Church of All Nations in Jerusalem in 1996. It was led by composer David Haas and Scripture scholar Art Zannoni of the Twin Cities. My friend said she was touched by the rock at the center of the Church—the place where Jesus had prayed before being betrayed by Judas.

At the time of our conversation, we were about three weeks into COVID-19 quarantine. My 94-year-old friend said she didn’t mind the isolation. She was in good health and taking care of herself like always. She spent her time praying.

She revealed how her faith had grown over the years. Once in her church’s daily Mass chapel, she encountered Jesus, she says. There was a white shadow behind him. He said, “I am Jesus, you know.” The woman said, “Yes, I know.” She was marvelously enthralled. How could this happen to her?

Last December, she came upon a new statue of Mary in the same daily Mass chapel where she encountered Jesus. She was surprised. She had been in this chapel many times but had not noticed this depiction of Mary.

She tried to iterate how Jesus and Mary are not visions to her but pictures in her mind. Her mind is filled with pictures of the life of Mary and Jesus.

She said she particularly enjoys the image of Mary on Easter Sunday morning when she discovers that the tomb, where she lay her son only hours before, is empty. Imagine the panic of Mary. Imagine the sight of the gardener. Imagine when Mary realizes that the gardener is the risen Jesus.

Gazing upon the reality of that Easter morning, my friend said, “Our faces will look like that one day!”

Right now my friend says her work is to savor her mind-pictures of Jesus and Mary and to prepare for her Easter morning in the Kingdom.

Her work is to pray for everyone, especially those sick with COVID-19. She says that Jesus told her many years ago to pray. And he keeps telling her that he has a mission for her—to pray and pray and pray.

“Well,” she says, “what does an old lady have to do in isolation? Just pray for all those who need a prayer as they prepare to shine on Easter morning in the Kingdom of God.”
A rooster started crowing on the Frank and Helen Braun farm in Napoleon on July 12 but not at dawn. This rooster seemed to be heralding the afternoon start of the 3rd annual Rural Life Celebration held by the Diocese of Fargo. The rooster welcomed Bishop John Folda as he made his way to bless the farm animals gathered in pens, and it continued crowing throughout the Mass and sunny afternoon.

While the rooster seemed a bit confused about the whole event, the more than 250 in attendance were well aware of why they were there and what they were celebrating. According to Bishop Folda, rural life has always been and always will be an essential part of the character of the Fargo Diocese. “From its earliest days,” said Bishop Folda, “the faithful have formed rural communities and worked the land, and the Church has always recognized in rural life a special calling from God. Rural life presents a unique spirituality to those who live and work on farms and in small communities.”

Focusing on and celebrating rural life is even more important today as small farm operations are suffering under crushing weather and market conditions. Many family farms are in danger of going under, which is having a reverberating effect on smaller communities that rely on farmers and their families for survival. Fewer family farms mean fewer customers for local businesses and a smaller tax base for rural communities. If farm families give up and move away, the impact on local schools and parishes would be devastating, as many smaller communities have already experienced. Furthermore, if family farms shut down, the chance of them coming back are slim to none as there would be no opportunity for farming couples to pass along their land and experiences to the next generation of family farmers.

Missy and Jeff Axt are members of Holy Family Church in McClusky. They farm about 2,000 acres and raise cattle north of town with their twin daughters, Anna and Sarah, who will enter second grade in the fall. Missy also serves on the Sheridan County board for Farmers Union, and is on the Farmers Union statewide policy committee. She says most farm families just want to earn enough to raise their families, continue the family farm operation and pass the legacy and lifestyle of farm life along to
“I think this year if things don’t take a turn there are going to be family farms that will be in trouble and could be lost,” said Missy. “If things don’t change we’ll see a lot more farm auctions and early retirements, and farmers will say ‘No, I don’t want to deal with this and I’m done with it.’ We’re third generation here on the farm, and that weighs heavily on our minds.”

Missy’s husband Jeff agrees. “We just want to teach our girls how to do everything, and they really are interested in it. They take pride in what they do and work hard and see the results.”

Missy says during this time of pandemic, poor markets and last Fall’s wet weather, it’s important for non-farm families to realize where their food comes from and how it gets to the grocery stores. She says there is a need to educate consumers that food sources are in jeopardy due to these variables. Production costs keep rising but adjusted market prices are down to where they were during the 1930s depression.

“How long farmers can tread water in these situations is what everyone needs to be aware of,” said Missy. “Consumers seem to take for granted there will always be groceries and beef in the stores, but when the people that provide these food sources can’t keep going because of all of the different variables, consumers will eventually feel the pressure we’re feeling right now.”

“What others can do for us is go out and buy beef,” said Jeff. “Buy from the local processing house. Maybe give a farmer-friend a call and volunteer to do some labor for them. Can you drive a tractor? That’s the big need right now, finding laborers to help.”

Father Tom Graner is Missy and Jeff’s pastor at Holy Family and chairs the Rural Life Committee for the Fargo Diocese. Father Graner says supporting local producers and processors deserves to be a larger part of our consuming behavior.

“They mean local jobs for families in small communities, said Father Graner. “They provide mutual support. They show that we put a value on aspects of community that don’t get a fair shake in the regular commodity markets.”

Father Graner says one of the best ways to support small producers is to promote local farm to table food cycles, farmers’ markets, restaurants, and ice cream and cheese makers. He also says we should be willing to spend a bit more to support rural values. We also need to be stewards of the land and of these communities, and support our brothers and sisters in rural populations.

The Rural Life Celebration in Napoleon focused on support for the family farm, and how God is a necessary partner in these operations.

“There is a special affinity for the things of God in rural life,” said Bishop Folda in his homily during the Rural Life Mass. “Those who live and work on the land come to understand that they are stewards of that land. It was here before us, and it will be here after us. And now, while it is placed in our hands, we do our best to care for it, to cooperate with God’s grace, and to bring forth the fruits of the earth that are part of God’s design. We say that we own this land or that land, but really, it all belongs to God, and we are caretakers.”

Bishop Folda went on to remind the faithful that the faith of the Fargo Diocese has been lived out in small towns and rural parishes all across the countryside.

“Our ancestors built churches and handed on the faith to their children and grandchildren,” said Bishop Folda. “They cherished
the gift of faith that they had received, and they made great sacrifices to keep that faith alive. Now it falls to us to live that faith and to share it with those around us. Our rural parishes are a special seed ground of faith where we experience in an intimate way the family life of the universal Church. As the rural population has gotten smaller, I know our rural parishes have faced greater challenges, but they are just as necessary and precious as they ever were. Just as in the rural landscape, so too in our rural parishes can we come close and see the face of God."

One of the most important things we can do as members of the faithful in the diocese, besides our support through our purchasing power, is to add the power of prayer to lift up farm families, and those who’s livelihood depends on agriculture in our smaller communities. Pray for good weather, for fair markets, for the survival of the small family farm, and for the opportunity to pass on these farms to a waiting generation.

“Most of the people who belong to our church are farmers and ranchers,” said Missy. “Father Graner has been great, heading out to everybody’s farms and blessing the farms, visiting with everyone. We also pray for rain and adequate moisture at Mass every week. I feel our parish is helping to spread awareness by doing these things. I think it always helps to reach out and to offer help, and eventually families will say yes. It never hurts to keep reaching out, because you don’t know when a family could be hit with a huge expense or a devastating event. Most farmers won’t ask for help because of pride so keep asking if they need it.”

Here is a practical prayer addressed to St. Isidore, patron saint of farmers, we all can recite on behalf of our farmers.

O St. Isidore, patron of farmers, I come to you now asking your intercession on behalf of all farm families and all those whose livelihood is based on farming. I ask you to pray that their crops have sufficient water and minerals to grow to fruition and that they are abundant at harvest. I pray that their crops are protected from bad weather and every blight of worm and insect. St. Isidore, please intercede for us that God in his infinite love and wisdom will bless their labors so that they may reap the rewards of work well done here on Earth and in Heaven. Amen.
Catholic Schools prepare to reopen for new school year

By Mike Hagstrom
President of St. John Paul II Catholic Schools and Director of Diocese of Fargo Catholic Schools

The Diocese of Fargo’s 14 Catholic schools are making plans for opening the new school year in late August. Located in Belcourt, Devils Lake, Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Langdon, Rugby, Valley City, Wahpeton, and West Fargo, our diocesan Catholic schools served 1,840 students pre-K through 12th grade last year.

With high levels of collaboration with families, staff members, pastors, and school boards, school leaders successfully saw the completion of school last spring through all the challenges of COVID-19. They’ve also been meeting regularly through the summer to prepare school safety and learning plans for the coming school year. Each school will be preparing those plans in light of guidelines and information from local, state, and national authorities as well as diocesan leaders.

Please pray for our Diocese of Fargo Catholic Schools as they strive to accomplish their unique mission of educating the whole child—including integration of the spiritual dimension which unifies the human person.

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A wise friend once told me while I was knee deep in diapers and rambunctious boys that these were the easy times. More difficult or challenging times were ahead. I chuckled at her comment thinking she was crazy or lacked any sense of reality. Fast-forward through the teenage years and now wading into the realm of grandparenthood, I must admit I cherish the days of innocence and easily fixed timeouts for unruly behavior.

What have I learned? I learned that daily prayer is a must in the home and that above all, the rosary is the one practice that is essential. We were blessed being able to homeschool our children and in that, we began each school day with the rosary, personal prayer, and daily Mass. Our four boys served at daily Mass as well as many Sunday Masses throughout their school years. Our family had a deep commitment and connection with our faith community.

We also took the time to celebrate special feast days with our boys, especially their baptism anniversaries. We made that day as special as their birthdays by having special meals and doing fun things to celebrate the day they became a child of God. We would acknowledge their patron saint feast days or other special feasts of the saints too with some little treat or special dessert. As the world was and is always celebrating people and things that are not of God, it was important to instill in them where our true devotions and honors should be placed.

I must confess I believed that if we did all the right things in the eyes of the Church, we’d have no issues or problems, and the children would enter into the world solid, well-formed, evangelist-minded adults ready to take on the world. As time went on and they entered the workforce in their teen years, it did not take long to see how strong the world pressed upon them to conform to its ways. Their faith and morals were tested, but what I believe kept them from real harm was the foundation that we, as parents, laid before them with a consistent daily effort of prayer, sacrifice, and deep commitment to being an active part of our parish community.

I believe being parents of adult children is the greatest challenge of parenthood. We can no longer dictate what shows they watch, what music they listen to, or more importantly, what Mass they attend and how often they pray each day. My husband Candonn and I learned hard and fast that praying for our adult children is even more important—not only because of the crazy culture we are now living in but because our job is not finished. Our job as parents is to get our children to heaven. Therefore, our continued example of prayer and sacrifice needs to be even more evident as we step back from raising them to watching as they live out God’s plan for their lives. Now with the added blessings of grandchildren, my husband and I have the privilege of sharing that faith with them as well.

I believe the rosary prayed daily, personal prayer, frequent Mass, and a deep commitment to the parish and faith community are the essential tools that have helped us and will continue to help us form and protect the next generation within our family and hopefully many generations to come. – Cheryl Granger

Recently, Candonn and I have fallen in love with the devotion to St. Joseph. Coupled with our devotion to Our Blessed Mother, St. Joseph has brought us new strength and support as we continue to strive to set good examples for our sons and their growing families. I wish we would have found the resources of such a wonderful devotion sooner—especially since we had all boys—but we cannot look back, only forward, and share what we have discovered with them as they are starting their lives as husbands and fathers. I believe the rosary prayed daily, personal prayer, frequent Mass, and a deep commitment to the parish and faith community are the essential tools that have helped us and will continue to help us form and protect the next generation within our family and hopefully many generations to come.

I guarantee it will change your life and your family culture.
At the time Pope St. Gregory the Great was elected Supreme Pontiff in the 6th century, Rome was in rough shape. Sacked by barbarian kings, enduring less than stellar popes, and still suffering the effects of the fall of the Roman Empire from a century prior, the city was beset by evils. It is in this context that Gregory shares with his scribe, the Deacon Peter, The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict. Peter, overwhelmed by the evil and destruction around him, begins to lose hope. Gregory tells him to remain strong and remember the examples of the holy men and women who had gone before them, chief among these being St. Benedict. In The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict, Gregory shares stories of St. Benedict as an antidote to the troubled times.

Even though we are separated by fifteen hundred years, the historical events of St. Benedict’s life can still encourage us. Seeing how he responded to the evils of his time gives us courage to respond to the evils of our own day. The witness he gives to Jesus Christ in the way he recklessly abandons everything throughout his life emboldens us to do the same. Additionally, reading about the miracles throughout his life, we encounter the Holy Spirit. In these miracles, the Lord makes clear his promise of love and fidelity to St. Benedict and to us. The Lord will be with us, just as he was for St. Benedict.

Meant to inspire the Deacon Peter to persist in hope, The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict can be a source of inspiration to us too. If you are feeling the loss of hope as Peter did, grab a copy of this work, sit at the feet of St. Gregory, and allow him to encourage you through these stories. I promise, you will walk away renewed in hope. And in troubled times like the ones we are experiencing, who wouldn’t want an extra dose of hope?
A new image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was placed in the entryway of St. Mary’s Church in Grand Forks. It includes symbols of the Immaculate Conception: a crescent moon and a halo of 12 stars and is framed by the Memoriae (“Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary...”). The image was painted by Craig Gallagher. Father James Gross, pastor of St. Mary’s, thanks the family of Douglas and Pearl Winkler for donating the beautiful painting in their memory. (submitted photo)

Jerry Casavant places statues of Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia, the three children who witnessed our Blessed Mother’s appearance in Fatima, Portugal at Calvary Cemetery in Jamestown. After seeing a grotto in Morton, Jerry was inspired to include the children at the cemetery in Jamestown too. Jerry’s goal is to beautify the cemetery so people can enjoy it when they visit their friends and relatives who passed away. (submitted photo)

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Why “What are the Bishops doing about it?” is the wrong question

Bishop Robert Barron
Theologian and evangelist, known for his Word on Fire ministry. Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Recently, the bishops of California made a statement regarding the attacks on the statues of St. Junipero Serra in San Francisco, Ventura, and Los Angeles. While acknowledging that there are legitimate concerns about racism both historical and contemporary, we insisted that the characterization of Serra as the moral equivalent of Hitler and the missions he founded as tantamount to death camps is simply unconscionable. I put a link to this statement on my own Word on Fire social media accounts and was gratified to see that many people read it and commented upon it. My purpose in this article is not to examine the specific issues surrounding Padre Serra but rather to respond to a number of remarks in the comboxes that point to what I think is a real failure to understand a key teaching of Vatican II.

Perhaps a hundred times, commentators said some version of this: “Well, bishop, making a statement is all fine and good, but what are you and the other bishops going to do about it?” Now almost none of these questioners made a concrete suggestion as to what precisely they had in mind, but I will gladly admit that there are certain practical steps that bishops can and should take in regard to such a situation. We can indeed lobby politicians, encourage legislative changes, and call community leaders together, all of which bishops have been doing. But what struck me again and again as I read these rather taunting remarks is that these folks, primarily lay men and women, are putting way too much onus on the clergy and not nearly enough on themselves.

According to the documents of Vatican II, the clergy are, by ordination, “priests, prophets, and kings.” As priests, they sanctify the people of God through the sacraments; as prophets, they speak the divine word and form the minds and hearts of their flocks; and as kings, they order the charisms of the community toward the realization of the Kingdom of God. Accordingly, the immediate area of concern for bishops and priests is the Church, that is to say, the community of the baptized. Now the laity, by virtue of their baptism, are also priests, prophets, and kings (Lumen Gentium, 31)—but their sanctifying, teaching, and governing work is directed not so much inwardly to the Church but outwardly to the world. The proper arena of the laity is the saeculum (the secular order), and their task is the Christification of that realm. They are charged to take the teaching, direction, and sanctification that they have received from the priests and bishops and then go forth, equipped to transform the world and thereby find their own path to holiness.

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within.

Great Catholic lawyers, great Catholic politicians, great Catholic university professors, great Catholic physicians and nurses, great Catholic investors and financiers, great Catholic law enforcement officers, great Catholic writers and critics, great Catholic entertainers, each in his or her special area of competence, is meant to bring Christ to the society and the culture. And when I say “Catholic” here, I don’t mean incidentally so or privately so, but vibrantly and publicly so. This Christification of the culture ought never, of course, to be done aggressively, for as John Paul II said, the Church never imposes but only proposes, but it is indeed to be done confidently, boldly, and through concrete action.

It would be instructive to apply these principles to the present situation in our culture. The crisis precipitated by the brutal killing of George Floyd is one that involves many dimensions of our society: law, the police, education, government, neighborhoods, families, etc. Priests and bishops, to be sure, ought to teach clearly and publicly. The declaration mentioned above and the American bishops’ pastoral statement against racism from a year ago, Open Wide Our Hearts, are good examples of this. But I would argue that the lion’s share of the work regarding this massive societal problem belongs to those whose proper arena is the society and whose expertise lies precisely in the relevant areas of concern, namely, the laity. If I may be blunt, the question ought not be, “what are the bishops doing about it?” but rather, “what can I and my Christian friends do about it?”

The last thing I want to do is stir up any rivalry or resentment between clergy and laity—on the contrary. Following the prompts of the Vatican II documents, I have been stressing the symbiotic relationship that ought to obtain between them. If I might propose a concrete example of this symbiosis, I would draw your attention to the Catholic Action model that flourished in the years prior to the Council but which, sadly and surprisingly, fell into desuetude after Vatican II. In accord with the framework proposed by Cardinal Cardijn, the founder of Catholic Action, a priest would meet with a relatively small group of parishioners who shared a common interest or vocation, say, physicians, lawyers, financiers, or business leaders. The spiritual leader would interpret Scripture or lay out some relevant teaching of the Church and then invite his interlocutors to “see, judge, and act.” That is to say, he would encourage them to be attentive to the area of their professional interest, then to judge the situations they typically face in light of the Gospel and Church teaching, and finally to resolve to act on the basis of those judgments. When it was functioning at its best, Catholic Action involved priests and laity, each operating in their proper spheres and working together for the transformation of the world.

Not a bad approach to the cultural crisis in which we currently find ourselves.
Despite practicing social distancing, we remain social creatures. How then should we live together in society with others? Thankfully we have a gift from the Church about how to live together in this world. These teachings are often referred to collectively as Catholic Social Teaching. It can be helpful for us to look back at these principles as a guiding light from time-to-time.

**Care for God's Creation** is one of the main themes of Catholic Social Teaching. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), “We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.”

Right now much of our focus is on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Thus we are taking many extra precautions as a society. These steps can be good and necessary to slow the pandemic, but have we considered the possible environmental impact of so many disposable items? And if we start thinking deeply about all the extra items we throw away, what about the normal trash we throw out?

This summer I made a trip to the landfill for the first time in years and was shocked with the enormous scale of it. While others have told me stories of going to the junkyard to salvage old parts, I’d forgotten how much garbage there is because we rarely see it. As I reflected on this, I wondered how we could help, and how often do we try to restore or repurpose before replacing?

While we often think of recycling and not being wasteful, there’s so much more to being good stewards of the earth. In fact, even recycling isn’t free from problems. This past year there were national reports about too many recyclables in the United States because China and other countries have stopped importing them. This could impact the availability of options for recycling in the future.

These are good questions to ask. They also offer a chance to take caring for the environment to the next level. When we think of caring for the environment, we’re challenged to look beyond the simple answer to reduce, reuse, and recycle. What if we made a more intentional effort to repair and restore items before replacing them? There are how-to videos on YouTube for everything these days, so you don’t need to be a professional. What a blessing it is to see experts (and some not-so-experts) share their tips on all sorts of repairs!

We may be surprised by what we can do to restore or repurpose things when we try. For instance, a coworker let me know some free bikes were available from a neighbor. Some needed new tubes, tires, or break repairs. At first it was tough fixing up those and other old used bikes I’d collected. It took a couple weekends and at least a few evenings of learning but soon enough my kids all had working bikes with others to grow into and even some extra bikes to give away.

Everyone understands what it means to repair appliances or restore worn furniture, but what about repurposing them? Repurposing can simply be finding another use for something before getting rid of it. At Catholic Charities North Dakota, we recently moved around some offices. This challenged us to repurpose what we have as good stewards of the environment—and of our donor support! Tables became printer stands and desks or chairs that no longer fit worked great in another employee’s office.

Catholic Social Teaching also reminds us that people are more important than things. There is a strong satisfaction in restoring the beauty of physical goods or making them work again, but how much more is the beauty and satisfaction in restoring the lives and souls of others. Catholic Charities North Dakota’s adoption, pregnancy, counseling, and guardianship services offer hope and healing to restore human dignity, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Our supporters help make this possible. What an important and rewarding mission to become a part of!

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SCOTUS deals blow to existing Blaine Amendments

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.

The door is open, but will we grasp the opportunity?
In the final days of its most recent session, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a major victory for religious freedom and school choice.

Montana, like over 30 other states, has what is commonly called a “Blaine Amendment” in its state constitution. These provisions bar, in various phrasings, any government aid for religious schools, even for non-religious purposes.

They take their name from James Blaine, a 19th century politician who almost became president. Long before his narrow defeat to Grover Cleveland in 1884, however, Blaine proposed an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would have barred any state from using money for “sectarian” schools. It was popular among nativist and other anti-Catholic politicians who sought to curtail Catholic influence in the country by ensuring that only “common” schools that were Protestant in character received public assistance.

After failing by just four votes to pass Blaine’s amendment, supporters of the proposal turned to the states. Both explicitly and implicitly, Blaine Amendment supporters made adoption of state Blaine Amendments in state constitutions a prerequisite for admission into the Union. Born of bigotry, these amendments haunt us today, sometimes blocking any efforts to give parents a choice in education.

North Dakota has its own Blaine Amendment; its own vestige of anti-Catholic prejudice. It states: “No money raised for the support of the public schools of the state shall be appropriated to or used for the support of any sectarian school.”

Most school choice proposals do not actually use “money raised for the support of the public schools.” Nevertheless, the powerful government school monopoly has contended that any school choice program would take money away from the “money raised for the support of the public schools” and would, therefore, violate the state’s Blaine Amendment.

Supporters of educational freedom in the state House made an effort to repeal the amendment in 2013. The proposal would merely have given voters the opportunity to remove the Blaine Amendment from the state constitution. It would not have enacted vouchers, tax credits, or any other school choice program. Nor would it have allowed money expressly raised and appropriated for the public schools to be used for non-public schools. Nevertheless, the resolution failed by a 47 to 47 vote. It takes 48 votes to pass legislation in the House.

Montana’s legislation was simple. It provided a tax credit of up to $150 to any taxpayer who donates to a participating “student scholarship organization.” The scholarship program then could use the donation to award scholarships to children for tuition at a private school. The state’s tax department, however, cited the Montana Blaine Amendment and blocked the program entirely. Montana’s Blaine Amendment barred government aid to any school “controlled in whole or in part by any church, sect, or denomination.”

The case eventually found its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck a blow not only to Montana’s Blaine Amendment, but probably all other state Blaine Amendments. The Court’s ruling reflected a common sense interpretation of the Constitution. As Chief Justice Roberts wrote for the Court: “A State need not subsidize private education. But once a State decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious.”

Montana’s amendment did not bar religious use of state funds. It expressly disqualified schools solely because they were religious. On its face, North Dakota’s Blaine Amendment is, after Espinoza, worse than Montana’s. It disqualifies only “sectarian schools.”

At the time of its adoption, “sectarian” was code for Catholic, something the Supreme Court meticulously documented. Even if some people today think that the word means something different, it clearly still means “religious.”

North Dakota’s Blaine Amendment, therefore, appears to be dead. The Supreme Court, adhering to the Constitution, has done what the House in 2013 failed to start by one vote.

Although North Dakota’s Blaine Amendment may no longer have any force, its apparent demise does not mean that North Dakota parents automatically have school choice. It was only a potential barrier to helping students. The legislature must first pass programs to take advantage of its collapse. It must take advantage of this new opportunity.

Nor does the Espinoza decision mean that the anti-Catholic language no longer exists in North Dakota’s Constitution. It would take an act of the legislature or an initiated measure followed by vote of the people to remove it. In the meantime, it stays there; a reminder and lesson of how prejudice can become institutionalized.
Despite hardships, our vocations remain the same

Do you remember the pole at the playground that had a rope with a ball on the end? This spring felt a lot like being on the losing end of a tetherball game. Things were swinging along fine until part way through the semester. Suddenly, health restrictions got tighter and tighter until eventually, we lost. The seminarians attending Mount St. Mary’s Seminary had to go home and we continued our semester in the Fargo Diocese. But was it really a loss? Naturally, there were some things we did not have, but what did we really lose?

Father Marie-Dominique Philippe writes in The Mystery of St. Joseph: “In times of crisis—whether personal ones or those of a community—surely a return to the origin is needed, a return to what was chose and desired at the beginning, in order to overcome the crisis with love and intelligence. This is perhaps the ultimate meaning of a crisis and the very reason that God allows it to happen. Thanks to this return to the source, we are able to obtain a clearer vision of the profound intentions and profound finality of our personal vocation or of the vocation of the community.”

I want to examine again the results of the spring, but this time in terms of the source. Did we lose? To the contrary! In some sense, the COVID-19 crisis provided a pulling away of what was non-essential, trivial, or even not God’s will. Do we see it this way?

In some sense, the COVID-19 crisis provided a pulling away of what was non-essential, trivial, or even not God’s will. Do we see it this way?

– Timothy Kraemer

From a cultural standpoint, we saw the country examine what the source was—it seems it was all centered on preservation of my life. Additionally, this extended to others, the preservation of the community as a whole. We saw people unite together and cancel everything, let the economy take a tumble, and focus on what was important above all else—being alive.

Yet, this source is insufficient. Informed by faith, we know there is life after death, and this is only a passing time. We know that even if it looks like we lose (death in this case), we can still succeed as there is life after death. But we must go further. We know that the source is Jesus Christ, that we are called to enter into the divine life of God through participation in the body of Christ.

Some may be concerned for what we’re missing because of the crisis: children’s education, seminarian formation, cultural activities, economic progress, etc. While we are called to use our natural reason and strive to do the best we can to promote the natural course of events that help us become better, we must also remember to view reality in terms of the source. Our source is God and it is to him that we must return as our final and ultimate end.

God can and does provide. We can trust that despite a strange year of schooling, a child will still successfully achieve their vocation. And similarly, though my upcoming semester will appear different and perhaps not as comprehensive, we can trust that God will provide all that is needed.

I have seen some call 2020 the “worst year ever.” That depends. If you were playing tetherball with the economy, your job, or the perfect vacation, perhaps it was not what you expected. However, I want to argue that, in a sense, little has changed. The source remains the same. Our vocations remain the same. Yes, things are different—and some days I’m a bit grumpy about it—but the essentials are exactly the same.

Editor’s Note: Seminarian Life is a column written by current Diocese of Fargo seminarians. Please continue to pray for them.
Have you considered the benefits of obtaining a charitable gift annuity with Catholic Development Foundation? Here are five points to consider:

1. **Attractive Rates.** As an example, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, in their mid-80s, are receiving a modest income from their Certificate of Deposit. When the CD matures in two months, they plan to obtain a gift annuity through the Catholic Development Foundation and start receiving 7.5% percent. Many folks in their retirement years will be pleased when they compare their low investment rates with the current annuity rates offered by the Catholic Development Foundation.

2. **Tax-Free Payments.** Part of each annuity payment is tax-free. For example, Mrs. Jones, age 82, contributed a check for $25,000 toward a gift annuity. Every year, she will receive $2,000 (8%). Of this amount, $1,750 will be excluded from income taxes. The tax-free portion of the annuity payment is considered “return of principal” and continues through the annuitant’s estimated life expectancy.

3. **Income Tax Deduction.** Because a charitable gift annuity is partly a gift and partly an investment in an annuity contract, the donor who itemizes is entitled to an income tax deduction for the gift portion of his or her annuity amount. In the case of Mrs. Jones mentioned earlier, her $25,000 gift annuity produced a charitable tax deduction of $14,000.

   The deduction is available for the tax year when the gift annuity is established. If it cannot be used entirely, the donor has up to five years to carry forward the unused amount. The tax advantages with the charitable deduction make the effective rate of the gift annuity even higher than the rate used to establish the annuity.

4. **Fixed, Regular Payments.** It’s nice to be able to count on a specific amount of payment no matter what happens to the financial markets. Your annuity payments will remain the same every year. And since gift annuity payments are backed by the full assets of the Catholic Development Foundation, you have assurance that your check will be in the mail (or direct deposited) every payment date for the rest of your life.

5. **Personal Satisfaction.** Perhaps the greatest benefit of a Catholic Development Foundation gift annuity is the personal fulfillment you receive by helping your choice of a Catholic program as well as yourself.

   There are additional reasons for obtaining a gift annuity with the Catholic Development Foundation. Some like the idea of reducing the size of their estate, thus lowering potential estate taxes. Others like the ease and simplicity of establishing a gift annuity.

   People with highly appreciated stock can also benefit from a gift annuity. They particularly like the partial bypass of capital gains they receive.

   If a charitable gift annuity is a plan you would like to know more about, I’d be happy to provide you with a personalized illustration. Simply fill out and return the coupon below, or contact me at (701) 356-7926 or steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.

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**YES, I would like a personalized gift annuity illustration.**

___ please mail the illustration to me.

___ please contact me to arrange for a visit.

Name: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

City: __________________ State: _____ Zip:________ Phone:________________

**Information needed to complete illustration (confidential):**

Name and Date of Birth of person to receive annuity payments:

____________________________________

DOB ________________________________

Name and birth date of second person (if applicable) to receive payments:

____________________________________

DOB ________________________________

Amount to be used for illustration: $________

Type of asset: ___cash ___stocks/bonds (original cost: $___)

**Mail this form to:** Catholic Development Foundation, 5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104.
I thank God for calling me to the Carmel of Mary, where I have more opportunity to pray for our families, friends, and benefactors, especially at this time when the world is confronted with the pandemic which is taking many lives. We know that God is right here with us, helping people through dedicated doctors, nurses, researchers, and first responders. They risk their lives to care for us. What about me? What should I do to help? Fervent prayer for them is the answer, and the need contributes to my own prayer life. I personally pray for my own conversion every day, for all others to be able to endure this difficult time, and for an end to this global pandemic.

I was born in Vietnam. A few days after graduating from high school, my mom, younger brother, and I escaped from Vietnam by boat as did many other Vietnamese who were searching for human dignity and freedom of religion which could not be found in a Communist country. In 1989, we were fortunate to arrive in Pulau Galang Refugee Camp in Indonesia. In 1993, we left for the United States and lived in San Francisco for eight years with my other brother, sisters, and relatives who had come to the United States before us.

I am the second to the last of five siblings. My parents have two boys and three girls. My younger brother Martin Maria Nguyen, O.P. is a Dominican in the Order of Preachers Regional Vicariate of Saint Vincent Liem, O. P. My faith as well as my brothers’ and sisters’ faith was strongly developed because of my mom’s faith. Moreover, Our Blessed Mother Mary helped me with my vocational discernment and showed me how to love Jesus more and more. Besides her, I am also lucky to have my mom, brothers, and sisters who helped me to say yes to my vocation as a religious sister. What a great gift from God!

I worked and lived in the medical world for a while. I earned a two-year Associate degree in General Biology and a four-year Bachelor’s degree in Cell and Molecular Biology in San Francisco. In 2002, I worked at the University of Texas Medical School for three and a half years and later at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston for seven years.

I had the opportunity to meet many friends and so did not pay much attention to the call to religious life that I had experienced at a much younger age. Occasionally I reflected back to that younger age and asked God “Are you really calling me?” With God’s help, I realized more clearly what path God has chosen for me.

In 2013, I entered the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province in Houston and remained until 2018. In the month of May, our Blessed Mother’s month, I asked through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph to make known God’s will in a clear and visible way. One day I went to the internet to look into religious communities, and I sent out several emails. Carmel of Mary was the first community to respond. The clear and visible sign I was hoping for became clearer after talking to Mother Madonna on the telephone. I came for a visit on July 14, 2018 and decided to stay because I felt “at home.” I was accepted as an Aspirant, then as a Postulant on May 13, 2019 and a Novice on Nov. 14, 2019 when I received the religious name of Sister Theresa Marie of the Eucharist. I thank God for my mom, brothers, sisters, relatives, priests, and religious who constantly prayed for me.

The change from active sisters to contemplative sisters is obviously clear. The first choice of contemplative life in my younger years came back to me. Each day is a grace from God. Now I love what God has inspired me to do, striving to have zeal for his face like St. Elijah and for pure love like Mother Mary.

May God and the intercession of Our Blessed Mother of Mount Carmel, St. Joseph, and all the saints continue to bless the Carmel of Mary with many vocations because it is “good to be here!”
75 years ago — 1945

An assemblage of some 2,500 people gathered at the fifth consecutive annual Knights of Columbus Field Mass at Roosevelt Park in Devils Lake on July 29. Bishop Muench stressed in his sermon the stabilizing influence the Catholic Church can offer to a world devastated by war. The Bishop pleaded for greater unity in Catholic action. He pointed out that governments, industry, and social organizations are in chaotic ruin in many lands and that the sound Christian principles of the Church must find a wider application or they would be destroyed by such forces as communism.

50 years ago — 1970

Earthquake victims from the Chimbote and Andahuaylas areas of Peru get help from the diocese. Bishop Dworschak expressed his gratitude to the people of the diocese for their “generous show of Christian brotherly concern.” Monies totaling $21,841.48 have been collected or donated from various sources within the diocese to be given to earthquake disaster areas in Peru which left many dead and resulted in millions of dollars of damage.

20 years ago — 2000

In 1900, the predominantly Polish congregation of Warsaw commenced a new parish building project. The gothic style brick structure, ornately adorned in its early years with elaborately stenciled patterns and impressive murals based on the life of Christ, was aptly named the Cathedral of the Prairie. St. Stanislaus Church seats 1,500 people and, at the time of its completion, was considered the largest church in N.D. It stands as a testimony of hard work, great faith, and a testimony of love for God. The Polish immigrants used the little resources they had to build a church that would last. They knew that life is temporary and that it’s only the things of God that truly last. The church was damaged by fire in 1978 but restored. In 1979 it was placed on the National Registry of Historical Places and in 1986, was added to the North Dakota State Historic Site Registry. An estimated 1,000 people attended the daylong, July 2 celebration, which included Mass, a statue dedication, a picnic lunch, a time capsule burial, a performance by the Polish National Alliance Dancers, a parade, a baseball game and a dance. Saint Stanislaus Szczepanowski, born on July 26, 1030, is the patron saint of Poland and the city and Diocese of Cracow.

Life’s milestones

Larry and Gayle Coles, parishioners of St. Catherine of Alexandria in Valley City, celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 31. They were married at St. Alphonsus Church in Langdon. They are blessed to have 3 children and 10 grandchildren.

Richard and Clara Elless will celebrate their 69th anniversary on Aug. 20. They were married at St. Josephs’ Church in Crosby, Minn and have been blessed with 6 children, 3 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren. They are parishioners of Holy Cross Church in West Fargo.

Kenny and Evelyn (Kroll) Kilichowski celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 18. They were married at St. Rose of Lima Church in Argyle, Minn. and are now parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Minto. They have 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

Jerome and Christine (Leier) Schwartenberger celebrated their 60th anniversary on July 11. They were married at St. Boniface Church in rural Kintyre and have been parishioners of St. Philip Neri Church in Napoleon for 60 years. They had 3 children, but 1 died in infancy. They have 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.
Jim and Dottie Thompson, parishioners of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo, celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 6. They were married at St. Boniface Church in Esmond with Dottie’s cousin Father Bernard Pfau officiating. They have 3 sons and 4 grandchildren.

John and LeElla Trottier, parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Devils Lake, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on Aug. 31. They have 2 daughters, 2 sons, 10 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and 1 in heaven.

Deacon James and Rita West, parishioners of St. Jude’s Church in Thompson, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Aug. 29. Jim was ordained as a permanent deacon in 1993. They have 6 children and 13 grandchildren.

Eleanor Bommersbach, parishioner of St. John’s Church in Wyndmere, celebrated her 100th birthday on June 24. She was married to Ray Bommersbach who died in 1981. She has 6 children, 7 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

Kirk and Joan Smith, parishioners of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks, celebrated their 60th anniversary July 2. They were married at St. Joseph’s Church in Oslo, Minn. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

Margaret Doyle, parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo, celebrated her 90th birthday on July 3. She grew up in Fargo and attended Sacred Heart Academy. Margaret was married to Morris Doyle for 65 years until his passing in 2016. They have 5 children, 8 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Madonna Haberman will celebrate her 90th birthday on Aug. 14. She was married to Orville Adams for 7 years before he passed away. She was then married to Emeric for 17 years before he died in 1980. She has 6 children, 8 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren. She is a parishioner at St. Anthony’s in Mooreton and attends St. John’s in Wahpeton where she currently resides.

Alice Kotaska, Bismarck, a former parishioner of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, celebrated her 102nd birthday on July 26. She hopes to help her brother Bennie Nowek of Larimore celebrate his 100th birthday on Aug. 23.

Alfred Mongeon celebrated his 90th birthday on June 27. Alfred and June are parishioners of Sacred Heart Church in Rolette and have been married for 65 years. They have 2 sons and 5 grandchildren.

Share life’s milestones As a way to celebrate life and love, we encourage parishioners throughout the Diocese of Fargo to send a photo and news brief about golden anniversaries and anniversaries of 60 or more years or birthdays of 80 or more years to: New Earth, Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd. S., Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 or news@fargodiocese.org.
Calvin (Kelly) Shockman, parishioner of Holy Rosary Church in LaMoure, celebrated his 95th birthday on June 26. Kelly is married to Maxine (Rasmusson) Shockman, and they celebrated their 71st anniversary in July. They are blessed with 13 children, 39 grandchildren, 69 great-grandchildren, and are expecting their first great-great-grandchild in November.

Marjorie Emma Sweeney, parishioner of St. Timothy’s Church in Manvel, celebrated her 95th birthday on July 29. Marjorie was married to Gerald R. Sweeney until his passing in August 2012. Marjorie is blessed with 6 children, 21 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren.

**Events across the Diocese**

**Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Prairies Aug. 16**

All are welcome to the Carmel of Mary Monastery near Wahpeton on Aug. 16 for the 64th annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Prairies. The day begins at 2 p.m. with guest speaker Father Kurtis Gunwall, pastor of St. Anthony in Mooretown and Sts. Peter and Paul in Mantador. The day includes Mass, the rosary, confessions, and a picnic. For more information, call (701) 640-6162 or (701) 642-2360.

**Walk with Christ for Life on Oct. 4**

Bishop Folda invites the faithful of the diocese to join him in the annual Eucharistic procession, Walk with Christ for Life, on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 4. It will begin with Holy Mass at noon, at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. This will be followed by a prayerful, peaceful procession to the state’s only abortion facility. A short prayer service will be held outside the abortion facility, and then those gathered will return to the Cathedral for Benediction.

**Grafton Church to host Respect Life Conference**

All are welcome to a free event, the Respect Life Conference Aug. 22 from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church in Grafton. Conference topics include abortion and the right to life, St. Gianna Molla and the ministry in Warsaw, and the effects of pornography. The day includes Mass, lunch, and a presentation by keynote speaker Leah Darrow, who is a former model and contestant on America’s Next Top Model and an international Catholic speaker, writer, and host of the popular Do Something Beautiful podcast. The day concludes with a Eucharistic procession following the evening Vigil Mass celebrated by Bishop Folda. Eucharistic Adoration available. Activities for children during the conference. For more information, call the parish at (701) 352-1648.

**Jesus Approaches: A women’s retreat**

The Diocese of Fargo is hosting Jesus Approaches: A Women’s Retreat at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Hankinson on Oct. 16–18, led by award winning author and writer Liz Kelly. The weekend will include conferences, time for prayer and rest, social time, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and the opportunity to go to confession. Overall, it will be a chance to step out of the routine and stress of daily life in order to encounter the Lord Jesus through prayer and inspiring talks. Social distancing guidelines will be followed. Space is limited. For more information and to register visit www.fargodiocese.org/evangelization-retreats-workshops or contact ashley.njaa@fargodiocese.org or (701) 356-7908.

**Join fellow catechists at the Catechist Retreat in Valley City Aug. 28**

The Catechist Retreat is open to everyone who is involved in catechesis, such as those who teach or coordinate religious education, youth ministry, RCIA programs, or anyone else who shares the faith with children or adults. There will be time for silent reflection, Mass, lunch, sharing, and a chance to enjoy the beautiful grounds. The day will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. Registration is $20. For more information, see www.fargodiocese.org/catretreat.

**Youth invited to March for Life**

Youth in grades 9–12 from the Diocese of Fargo are invited to a pilgrimage to the annual March for Life in Washington D.C. 2021. The trip will begin in Fargo on Jan. 25 and return Jan. 31. Father Greg Haman will be the spiritual director. In addition to participating in the March for Life and Mass for Life at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, youth will also see the sights in D.C., Emmitsburg, Md., and Gettysburg, Pa. The cost for the 7-day pilgrimage is $800 and includes air and ground transportation, lodging, meals, and tour fees. Spaces go fast, so register today! To obtain a registration form visit www.fargodiocese.org/march-for-life.
Orv Kelly Shanley Scramble

Monday, September 21, 2020
Moorhead Country Club
SHOTGUN START 12:30 p.m.

Burger/Brat Lunch at 11 a.m.
Sign-In Begins at 11:30 a.m.

Hole-in-One Contest -- $10,000 cash prize!
$150 Scramble & BBQ Dinner ● $20 BBQ Dinner Only

Proceeds benefit all schools in the St. John Paul II Catholic Schools Network

Team Registration

Golfer 1: __________________________  Handicap________ Email: ____________________________
Mailing Address: ______________________________ City: __________ State: _____ Zip: ________

Golfer 2: __________________________  Handicap________ Email: ____________________________
Mailing Address: ______________________________ City: __________ State: _____ Zip: ________

Golfer 3: __________________________  Handicap________ Email: ____________________________
Mailing Address: ______________________________ City: __________ State: _____ Zip: ________

Golfer 4: __________________________  Handicap________ Email: ____________________________
Mailing Address: ______________________________ City: __________ State: _____ Zip: ________

Questions?
Contact Joelle
(701) 893-3225
Joelle.Shewey@jp2schools.org

Send with payment by Sept. 14 to:
Shanley Scramble
5600 25th St S
Fargo, ND 58104

# Golfing & Dinner _________ x $150 = ______
# Mulligans (limit 2/golfer) ______ x $5 = ______
# BBQ Dinner only _________x $20 = ______
Total = ______
For the upcoming anniversary of the detonation of two atomic bombs on Japan, the U.S. bishops have encouraged Catholics to pray for peace alongside the Church in Japan.

Issued by the USCCB’s Committee for International Justice and Peace, a statement was released July 13, a few weeks ahead of the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“A world of peace, free from nuclear weapons, is the aspiration of millions of men and women everywhere,” he said. “Our response to the threat of nuclear weapons must be joint and concerted, inspired by the arduous yet constant effort to build mutual trust and thus surmount the current climate of distrust.”

In February, Pope Francis once again spoke against nuclear arms and the Committee of International Justice and Peace reemphasized the Pope’s position. They said fear is not a stable enough platform to sustain peace.

“Recently, we, the bishops of the USCCB’s Committee on International Justice and Peace re-affirmed the Holy Father’s call to ‘renewed effort to bring about a world of peace and justice that is not based upon fear or the threat of nuclear annihilation but justice and human solidarity.’”

“Fear, distrust, and conflict must be supplanted by our joint commitment, by faith and in prayer, that peace and justice reign now and forever.”

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“Fear, distrust, and conflict must be supplanted by our joint commitment, by faith and in prayer, that peace and justice reign now and forever.”
A Portfolio of Protection

- Our signature product. Insure your life for life.
- Affordable protection for temporary needs.
- Retirement income you can count on. Guaranteed.
- Protect your assets. Get quality care. Prepare for the future.
- Receive an income even when you are sick or can’t work.

The Knights of Columbus offers a full-line of quality, flexible products backed by our highly-rated financial strength* to help protect your Catholic family.

* As of 01/2018, rated A+ Superior by A.M. Best

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES
I’m likely not alone in having found the riots in downtown Fargo on May 30 disturbingly surreal.

One of our daughters discovered a live feed of the activity on Facebook and shared the source. As we walked our dogs around our neighborhood that bright evening, we watched the unfolding events from our smartphones. How troubling to see what was happening just a few miles away.

Part of my own dismay came from seeing the most intense phase of the rioting taking place near our state’s only abortion facility where we sidewalk advocates pray every week to bring hope to those who arrive with conflicted, confused hearts.

We walked and watched on that beautiful, cloudless evening as members of the restless, angry, mob in our city’s center shattered windows of eateries next door to the Red River Women’s Clinic; the same restaurants where hungry people flock every Wednesday for burgers, beer, and tacos, just feet from where babies are afforded protection.

As broken pieces of glass poured out onto the sidewalk, the camera capturing the scene panned toward the abortion facility, capturing a rioter attempting to break the security camera that keeps watch on the sidewalk from inside the facility.

And then we heard it: “No! Wait! Stop!” It was a male voice, yelling at the person trying to harm the building. “This place helps women!” At these words, the vandal halted, saving the security camera and its attached building from the same destructive fate neighboring structures had experienced just minutes prior.

I wouldn’t have called for any of those businesses to be vandalized, nor would I have ordered the starting of the fire that now blazed in a large pot in the middle of the street, just feet away. But one could hardly miss what seemed to be an invisible ring of protection encircling the place. To those of us who see the spiritual warfare play out on this corner weekly, it was a chilling reminder that the Father of Lies has a strong hold here, as evidenced now in plain daylight. This building, where so much destruction happens weekly within the hidden sanctuary of the womb, was being preserved for now.

A few weeks later, I thought of that reckless night when I was back in place, praying on the sidewalk. Weeks had gone by, but the nearby businesses were still completing clean-up efforts. You could see where windows had been replaced by new frames that stood out from the older ones as a reminder of that fateful night, which were followed by other, more peaceful protests at a nearby park.

I thought of all that had gone into constructing those buildings, the planning of every aspect, from the cash registers and menus to decorations on the walls. The fruits of years of thoughtfulness were destroyed in one fell swoop of anger gone awry. It would take weeks, even months, to recover and in some cases, years.

Then I thought of the babies who would die that day in that same spot. They, too, had been carefully planned, down to the last hair on their heads, in the silence of God’s own heart. The Father of Life had plotted each fingerprint and toenail, each dimple and eyelash, calling each finished work a masterpiece. Then, God assigned them each a unique mission of love, meant to unfold and refresh this tired earth in time.

But like the windows, the decor, and chairs of those businesses, in a moment of anger and hopelessness, each human creation had been destroyed in one fell swoop—by the cold, metal instruments and poisonous pills administered by an abortionist, paid to ensure these works of art would never have a chance to be gazed upon or bless others by their very existence.

These little ones, infinitely more valuable than the most expensive detail in any of those eateries, have been banished from earthly existence. We’ve been denied the chance to admire their exquisite perfection, for a decimated life whose heartbeat has been stilled by human hands cannot be revived.

“I praise you, for I am wonderfully made,” cries the psalmist in Psalms 139:14. Oh, Lord, we beg mercy on those who’ve been hurt by life, misunderstood your plan, and smashed your human masterpieces to bits. Though some of us see the truth, we all play a part. May we, through your grace, bring life more and more to this world gone mad.

Roxane B. Salonen, a wife and mother of five, is a local writer, and a speaker and radio host for Real Presence Radio. Roxane writes for The Forum newspaper and for CatholicMom.com. Reach her at roxanebsalonen@gmail.com.
Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the September New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?
Last month’s photo is from outside St. Michael’s Church in Dunseith.