All you heavenly angels and saints, pray for us

Lesser-known WWII saints and blessed teach importance of mercy and love

PLUS

From Bishop Folda: Returning to the Eucharist

This year’s seminarians, religious in formation, and diaconate aspirants

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ON THE COVER:
Divine Mercy mosaic at Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo. (Diocese of Fargo)

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Returning to the Eucharist

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta expressed so well our need for the Eucharist: “We cannot separate our lives from the Eucharist; the moment we do, something breaks… Our lives must be woven around the Eucharist.” And why is this? Mother Teresa knew, as the Church has always known, that the Eucharist is Christ, and when we distance ourselves from the Eucharist, we ultimately drift away from Jesus himself.

Last spring, when public celebrations of Mass were suspended for several weeks because of the COVID-19 outbreak in our country, it was necessary to worship our Lord from a distance. Huge numbers of people took advantage of live-streamed and televised Masses when they couldn’t attend Mass in person, and these virtual Masses became a spiritual lifeline for them. We learned how to make a spiritual communion when we couldn’t receive Holy Communion in person. And even now, there are large numbers of people who refrain from attending Mass for reasons of personal health and safety. Some who are vulnerable to infection are refraining from coming to Mass, and still depend on the Masses that they can view on television or on their computers. Communications technology has been enormously helpful to us in these uncertain times, and has made it possible for us to stay connected and participate remotely in the Church’s worship.

But we should never conclude that “watching Mass at home” is just as good as attending Mass in person. As Cardinal Robert Sarah from the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship recently said, “No broadcast (of the Mass) is comparable to personal participation or can replace it.” When we are separated by distance from a loved one, it is wonderful to be able to converse by phone, or even better by a video connection like Zoom or Skype. But no one would settle for a Zoom call to their beloved when it is possible to be in the same room, to embrace and to speak face to face. In a similar way, we come to Mass to be in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord, to participate personally in his sacrifice, to adore him, and to receive him in Holy Communion. That personal encounter with Christ in the holy place where we gather as a parish family matters, because the incarnate Son of God came among us in our humanity and called us to personal communion with him. He invites us to come close, and not to remain at a distance.

For those who have no other option, the broadcast of Mass is a great blessing and is deeply appreciated by many. But relying on these broadcasts alone could distance us from the personal encounter with Christ, who comes to us in an intimate way through the celebration of the Eucharist. We also risk isolating ourselves from the community of all the faithful, from the Church. When Jesus began his public ministry, he called companions to himself, who became the first members of the infant Church that he founded on the apostles. From the very beginning and all through our history, the faithful have gathered together for the celebration of the Eucharist, “the breaking of the bread,” as it is called in Acts 2. Even in times of persecution and disaster, the faithful have instinctively come together in prayer and adoration, and especially for the celebration of the Mass. We should not lightly separate ourselves from the living community of the Church, which is the mystical Body of Christ on earth. Nor should we deprive ourselves from celebrating and receiving the Eucharist. As Jesus told his followers, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (John 6).

Are we lifting the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass? Not yet, or at least not as I write this column. The health crisis in our state and in our diocese is still unfolding, and I do not feel it is the right time to reinstate the obligation while many are still at an elevated risk of infection. But with appropriate safeguards and precautions, it is possible to attend Mass with very little risk. Infectious disease specialists in our own diocese tell me that with the common practices of social distancing and wearing masks, we can attend Mass with little risk to ourselves or to those around us. Fortunately, there have so far been no outbreaks of the coronavirus that are traced back to church events since we reopened to the public, and most of us can reasonably attend Mass without great fear of infection. In fact, I am hopeful that our normal participation in Mass can be restored in the very near future, and I encourage those of you who can attend Mass to do so. Just as we would rush to be with a loved one after a long separation, so we should rush to rejoin our Lord in the celebration of Mass.

Allow me to thank all of you who have done so much to support our parishes during these last several months. Your generosity has made it possible for us to keep going, even within the limits of our present situation. Certainly our pastors will continue to reach out to those who are still at risk and unable to attend Mass in person. Our parishes will continue to include all members in prayer, especially those who are ill or homebound, or those who must be in quarantine. We will bring the sacraments to those who cannot come to church to receive them. But I also offer a heartfelt invitation to all the faithful to return to Mass and the Eucharist as soon as reasonably possible. As we all know, there is no substitute for being in the same room with the one we love.
I offer a heartfelt invitation to all the faithful to return to Mass and the Eucharist as soon as reasonably possible. As we all know, there is no substitute for being in the same room with the one we love.

- Bishop John Folda

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

The Laity’s Mission in the Church

We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church.

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

Oct. 6 • 5:30 p.m.
Operation Andrew Dinner, St. Joseph Church, Devils Lake

Oct. 7 • 3:30 p.m.
First Mass and Blessing of new school chapel, St. John’s Academy, Jamestown

Oct. 8 • 5:30 p.m.
Operation Andrew Dinner, Bishop’s Residence, Fargo

Oct. 17 • 5 p.m.
Youth Rally, Lidgerwood, virtual event

Oct. 22 • 9 a.m.
Diocesan Schools Professional Development and Mass, Fargo, virtual event

Oct. 26 • 7 p.m.
Liturgy for Institution of Acolytes, St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul

Oct. 28 • 3 p.m.
St. John Paul II Schools Board Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Oct. 31 • 10 a.m.
Ordination Mass for Permanent Deacons, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Nov. 4
Catholic Rural Life Directors Meeting

Nov. 5
Sub-Committee on Native American Affairs

Nov. 12 • 5:30 p.m.
St. John Paul II Catholic Schools President’s Dinner, Plains Art Museum, Fargo
Saint Ignatius of Antioch was the second Bishop of Antioch, Syria. He was a disciple of the beloved Disciple John, and was consecrated Bishop around the year 69 by the Apostle Peter, the first Pope. A holy man who was deeply loved by the Christian faithful, he always made it his special care to defend orthodoxy among the early Christians.

In 107, during the reign of the brutal Emperor Trajan, this holy Bishop was sentenced to death because he refused to renounce the Christian faith. He was taken under guard to Rome where he was to be brutally devoured by two lions in a public spectacle. During his journey, his travels took him through Asia Minor and Greece. He made good use of the time by writing seven letters of encouragement, instruction and inspiration to the Christians in those communities.

He is quoted in one of these letters as saying “I would rather die and come to Jesus Christ than be king over the entire earth. Him I seek who died for us; him I love who rose again because of us.”

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.

**Saint Ignatius of Antioch**

**Feast day:** October 17  
**Patron:** All spiritual retreats  
**Birth:** 1st Century AD  
**Death:** 108 AD

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**Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements**

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

Rev. David Brokke, SOLT, has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Ann’s Parish, Belcourt, ND; St. Anthony’s Parish, Alcide, ND; and St. Michael’s Parish, Dunseith, ND effective August 23, 2020 and continuing ad nutum episcopi.
How is Natural Family Planning (NFP) different from other means of non-chemical contraception?

**ASK A PRIEST**

Father Dale Kinzler  
Pastor of St. George’s, Cooperstown; Sacred Heart, Aneta; St. Olaf’s, Finley; and St. Lawrence, Jessie

First of all, we need to distinguish between “birth regulation” and “contraception.” When Pope Paul VI released his 1968 landmark encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* (HV), whose English title is “On the Regulation of Birth,” he clarified this distinction. First, he notes that “responsible parenthood” may be exercised “either by the deliberate and generous decision to raise a numerious family, or by the decision, made for grave motives and with due respect for the moral law, to avoid for the time being, or even for an indeterminate period, a new birth” (HV 10).

**Natural Family Planning is a way of life that allows couples to build on their marriage relationship with greater trust, care, and concern, and to experience the ways of true love.**  
—Diocese of Fargo

Married couples who duly respect the moral law “must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and its acts” (HV 10). The conjugal act, as God intends, has two inseparable meanings, the “unitive meaning and the procreative meaning” (HV 12). The unitive meaning is the physical, emotional, and spiritual bond expressed and strengthened in the act of conjugal union. The procreative meaning is the openness to the transmission of human life.

Pope Paul wrote to affirm the constant teaching of the Church, that “each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life” (HV 11). On the basis of this teaching, then, he distinguishes “natural means” from “artificial means” of birth regulation. Artificial means would be any of those methods, chemical or mechanical, which “either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible” (HV 14).

Natural means, on the other hand, are those which lictly “take into account the natural rhythms inherent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles described earlier” (HV 16). So, as we can see from his statements, both the intent of the couple and the method used are factors in the inherent moral good or evil of their particular choice of birth regulation.

The great moral concern about chemical means of contraception, in addition to the deliberate separation of the unitive and procreative meanings of the marriage act, is the potential abortifacient character of the various pills used. They may either prevent conception or prevent the implantation of a life already conceived. So a couple concerned with this aspect of chemical contraceptives might opt for mechanical barriers to conception, such as a condom, diaphragm, cervical cap, and so forth. Yet the intent is still the same: to deliberately render procreation impossible. Hence such means are still morally illicit.

In the encyclical, Pope Paul encouraged men and women of science to continue working toward “providing a sufficiently secure basis for regulation of birth, founded on the observance of natural rhythms” (HV 24). That is exactly what many have done in developing the various systems of Natural Family Planning in use today. They have in common the observance of signs of fertility, so that couples can utilize the marriage act during the infertile phase of the monthly ovulation cycle and thereby legitimately avoid a pregnancy. Mechanical or non-chemical means, on the other hand, deliberately prevent conception during the fertile period as well. This would be the “moral chasm” between the two choices, “natural or artificial.”

I was a student in theology at the time the first of these natural systems was being promoted. That peaked my interest, and my hopes, in seeing couples learn the art of Natural Family Planning. I continue living in that hope today.

The Diocese of Fargo requires instruction in Natural Family Planning for all engaged couples preparing for marriage and offers the same programs of instruction for couples already married. Engaged or married couples of childbearing age can access these instruction programs by searching www.fargodiocese.org/nfp. The site says in its introduction: “Natural Family Planning (NFP) is a way of life. While NFP provides a scientifically sound means of achieving or avoiding pregnancy, it is so much more. NFP is a way of life that allows couples to build on their marriage relationship with greater trust, care, and concern, and to experience the ways of true love.”

Editor’s note: If you have a question to suggest for consideration in a future column, send to news@fargodiocese.org.
Please welcome our new deacon class of 2025. The deacon class of 2020 will be ordained October 31 at Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo.
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The deacon class of 2020 will be ordained October 31 at Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo.

Hometown: Fargo
Temporary Vows
Order of St. Benedict, Richardson, N.D.

Hometown: Fargo
Junior Professed
Sisters of Life, Stamford, Conn.

Hometown: Moorhead, Minn.
Simple Vows
Eastern Province of St. Joseph, Washington, D.C.

Hometown: Oakes
Postulant
School Sisters of Christ the King, Lincoln, Neb.

Hometown: Napoleon
1st Vows
Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, New Ulm, Minn.

Hometown: Fargo
Regency
Society of Jesus, Midwest Province

Hometown: Fargo
Theology
Society of Jesus, Midwest Province

Hometown: Langdon
1st Vows
Poor Clare Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Belleville, Ill.

Hometown: Fargo
Temporary Vows
Apostolic Sisters of St. John, Princeville, Ill.

Hometown: Fargo
Senior Professed
Eastern Province of St. Joseph, Washington, D.C.

Hometown: Fargo
Postulant
School Sisters of Christ the King, Lincoln, Neb.

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Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, New Ulm, Minn.

Please welcome our new deacon class of 2025.

The deacon class of 2020 will be ordained October 31 at Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo.
Catholic men from across Fargo gathered to pray the Rosary at the quarterly meeting of Men of the Cross in Lindenwood Park in Fargo on Sept. 15. Bishop Folda was the honored guest and speaker at the event. The organization states that “Men of the Cross are a band of brothers with the commission of growing in their love for Jesus, and to share that love of the Lord with others.” There are over 700 members of Men of the Cross at several parishes across the Fargo Diocese, and are easily recognized by the crucifix with the St. Benedict medal that they wear. For more information on how to take part, contact Deacon Bruce Dahl at Nativity Church in Fargo at (701) 232-2414. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)

Bishop Folda hosted the bishops of Provence Eight from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota Aug. 27–29. The annual meeting, held each year in a different diocese, gives the bishops an opportunity to discuss issues facing the dioceses in the region. Pictured are (back row l to r) Bishop Donald Degrood, Diocese of Sioux Falls; Bishop John Folda, Diocese of Fargo; Bishop John Quinn, Diocese of Winona/Rochester; Bishop Peter Muhich, Diocese of Rapid City; Monsignor Douglas Grams, Administrator, Diocese of New Ulm; Father James Bissonette, Administrator, Diocese of Duluth; (front row l to r) Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis; Bishop Joseph Hoeppner, Diocese of Crookston; Archbishop Bernard Hebda, Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis; Bishop Donald Kettler, Diocese of St. Cloud. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)
Demolition" was the verdict when the parishioners of St. Bernard's Church in Oriska assessed the condition of the brickwork in their cemetery. God's hand went to work almost immediately.

Who could do the build? A chance meeting between a parishioner and a long-time friend revealed that her son was a generational bricklayer, working in the region for 20 years. Josh Larson, Larson Masonry, Valley City, was excited about the prospect of renewing the cemetery. He likes knowing his work lasts into eternity. God's hand?

Rather than traditional brick, Larson suggested structural block from Structural Materials Inc. in Fargo. It has a stately appearance, could be color-matched to our church, and costs less to install than traditional brick. Mike Opatril, president of SMI, was almost as excited as Larson about the project and generously donated the blocks. God's hand?

Our forefathers had left us "good bones" for the cemetery renewal. The magnificent Christ statue stood over a remarkable granite base proclaiming "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The four pillars at the entrances and the planters were topped with that elegant granite. The first two pillars announced "St. Bernard's Cemetery," the year of consecration and the year it was enlarged. The other two had no plaques. It was determined to use the exact same model with the addition of a rampart behind the statue connecting the planters.

However, the Christ statue needed refreshing. Liz Schwankl, known in the area for repairing statues, was tapped for the job.

Sonya Gillen and Sarah Coulthart, Colorado, had developed a real passion for the cemetery in which their parents and so many of their Winkler family members are buried. They underwrote Schwankl's work. God's hand?

But what about the actual build? It needed footings and who should step up with his sons to do the work, but Ron Pommerer, Oriska, whose family members are buried there. He had been fighting a serious autoimmune disease, but rallied to plan and pour the all-important footings. God's hand?

But the weather was against us as soggy grounds prevented the start of the work. The footings were poured, but Larson hesitated to damage the grounds. Finally, the rain held off long enough to firm the ground enough to get started.

But unbeknownst to us at the time, there was a real impetus to finish. Ron Winkler, long time parishioner, passed away and would be buried at St. Bernard's Cemetery. The day of Ron's funeral, August 24, Larson finished placing plaques on the final two pillars only hours before the burial. God's hand?

Why were two west pillars left without plaques by our forefathers? There is a sunburst compass that rises above the altar in our church. Curiously, it is the logo of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. That image and 2020, the year of renewal, now top the last two pillars. A copy of New Earth went into the time capsule. God's hand?

So, if you are passing on the interstate, head into Oriska and take the first street headed west. Go a half mile to our cemetery. Linger at the shrine and feel God's hand.
Legion of Mary glorifies God through pursuit of holiness

By Mary Stoa
Secretary of Our Lady of Victory Praesidium, Legion of Mary and parishioner of St. Anthony’s Church, Fargo

The Legion of Mary is an international association of the faithful of the Catholic Church who serve the Church on a voluntary basis. It was founded in Dublin, Ireland by a man named Frank Duff as a Catholic Marian Movement.

The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members, developed by prayer and active co-operation in Mary’s and the Church’s work. The unit of the Legion of Mary is called a praesidium, which holds a weekly meeting where prayer is intermingled with reports and discussion. Persons who wish to join the Legion must apply for membership in a praesidium. The members participate in the life of the parish through visitation of families, the sick, both in their homes and in hospitals and through collaboration in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by the parish. Every legionary is required to carry out a weekly apostolic work in the spirit of faith and in union with Mary. Realizing the necessity for a strong support of prayer, the Legion has auxiliary members, who associate themselves with the legion by undertaking a service of prayers in its name.

Reasons to Join the Legion of Mary

1. School for saints
   If we want to “get good” at holiness, we must practice it every week just as is done with a sport or hobby. The Legion gives us the opportunity; it provides an ideal expression of the Catholic vocation.

2. Fulfill canon law
   The Legion offers a proven method and motivation for sanctity, thus fulfilling Canon 210 which states: “All Christian faithful must make an effort, in accord with their own condition, to live a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its sanctification.

3. Keeps its members young
   This is not found in Canon Law, but it can be shown. For example, Father Aedan McGrath, official Legion visitor to the Far East, is 92 years old, still active and looks to be 75. Frank Duff, founder of the Legion, was still riding his bicycle at age 91. The Legion kept him young in spirit and in body.

4. Teaches the Catholic faith
   During the weekly Legion meeting, spiritual formation is found in the rosary, in the Legion prayers, in the spiritual reading and discussion, and in the talk by the spiritual director.

5. Community
   The Legion’s main purpose is the holiness of the members. It improves our “vertical” relationship we have with God and the Blessed Mother, but it also enriches the “horizontal” relationship of friends we gain as we live the Legion way of life.

6. Means of tithing
   The Legion requires that about four hours each week be set aside, which is only two percent of our time (a form of tithing). Therefore, when we give time to our Lord and His Mother, they bless us in many ways, and we find even more time and more blessings in life.

7. Help you face judgement day
   The spiritual works of mercy—the Legion of Mary’s primary program of works, such as encouraging people to come back to the sacraments, making the Catholic Church known to others—are crucial because the soul, unlike the body, is eternal and will last forever in heaven or hell.

8. Save souls
   If the Legionary is God’s instrument to bring back a fallen away Catholic or brings a convert into the Catholic religion, the Bible says that they will cover a multitude of sins and save their own soul from death as well. The Legion with its program of works, which includes the friendly encouraging of the lapsed to live again, their Catholic faith ensures its members of this future blessing.

9. Masses will be said for your soul
   At present, throughout the world, there are approximately 600,000 Legion groups and by rule, each group has a Mass said for all deceased Legionaries in the month of November. As a Legion of Mary member, you can be sure of having 600,000 Masses celebrated for you after your death (credit to legionofmarytidewater.com).

If you are moved by the Holy Spirit to either join a Legion of Mary Praesidium that has been established by your current parish or if you want to establish a new Praesidium, please contact Pat Paumen at (701) 235-0308, President of the Our Lady of Victory Praesidium, St. Anthony’s Church in Fargo, or Mary Stoa (701) 219-9939. Today Our Lady of Victory is the only Praesidium in the Fargo area. We are seeking new members throughout the Fargo Diocese active or auxiliary (praying) to join with us in bringing Our Blessed Mother, Mary, to the world as a means of winning souls to her son, Jesus.
Bishop John Folda, Diocese of Fargo, and Bishop David Kagan, Diocese of Bismarck, have announced a special giving opportunity for all Catholics in North Dakota called #GiveND-Catholic. This first-ever, joint fundraising event for the Diocese of Fargo and the Diocese of Bismarck gives all Catholics in North Dakota an opportunity to support their favorite Catholic organizations and charities on Dec. 1–3.

A designated, secure website link will be created and featured on both dioceses’ websites, which will allow anyone to choose Catholic organizations and charities highlighted by each diocese. Both bishops have selected the Catholic organizations and charities they want to focus on for this inaugural #GiveND-Catholic event.

This special three-day donation event helps kick off the charitable season, promotes year-end giving, and brings the North Dakota Catholic Community together to give thanks for all the blessings God has bestowed on them. The event is being held at the same time as the #GivingTuesday event, which is a 24-hour, global day of online giving held on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday.

An exciting benefit of donating to this inaugural #GiveND-Catholic event is that $25,000 has been secured to be used as matching gifts for the first $25,000 raised in each diocese. Donations of any size are appreciated, and all donations qualify for a charitable tax contribution. Donations may be made online or mailed directly to each diocese. More information and a list of all the Catholic organizations and charities will appear in the next issue of the New Earth and Dakota Catholic Action.

West Fargo man to lead North Dakota Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus

Brian Heger of the West Fargo Assembly of the Knights of Columbus at Holy Cross Church, has been named District Master for the State of North Dakota. Heger is responsible for overseeing 24 Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree assemblies and 1,600 Fourth Degree Knights across the state. He assumed his new duties Sept. 1. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)
Sister Frances Marie Voigt, 87, of Valley City died at Maryvale Convent Aug. 23. Her funeral Mass was held Aug. 27 at the Maryvale Convent Chapel, Valley City.

Sister Frances Marie (Beverly Anne) was born Nov. 24, 1932 near the town of Elbowoods in McLean County to ranchers John and Frances (Gondringer) Voigt. She attended high school at Notre Dame Academy, Willow City, and St. Catherine’s School in Valley City, graduating May 1950. She professed her vows as a Sister of Mary of the Presentation Sept. 4, 1951. She received her Bachelor of Elementary Education from the College of Great Falls, Mont. in 1963 and a master’s degree from Creighton University, Omaha, Neb. in 1988.


Sister Frances Marie was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Bernard and David, her sister Arlene (Ed) Jacobson and her sister-in-law Alma Voigt. She is survived by her Religious Community, the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, her brothers Duaine, Michael (Bonnie), and Jerome, sister Diana (Jack) Hull, and numerous nieces, nephews, grand-nieces, and grand-nephews.
I was out to lunch recently with an old friend from my second assignment 27 years ago. I can remember that year like it was yesterday—and the people there too—although many have since discovered the joy of the Kingdom of God.

The woman was relating how in a dream, she and her husband had been at a summer sports tournament. It was a multi-day event. “We’d been to many of these over our years of marriage,” she said. “We stayed in this motel many times, but this day I was lost.”

She was looking for their room, number 161. She looked at the signs near the elevator. It said numbers 100-140 to the left and numbers 141-199 to the right. She admits she’d been outside in the bright, hot sun for about eight hours with little food and drink and was a little confused. She went left and found no number 161.

She asked people in the hallways if they knew where number 161 was. She says: “They would look at me, shake their heads and point in the other direction. They acted like I was stupid.” She went that way, but did not find room number 161. She noted that the room numbers did not follow in proper order. The evens were not on one side of the hallway and the odds on the other side of the hallway. They were all mixed up.

She asked this to the next person she encountered. He looked at her, turned her around and said she should go down the hallway again and look more closely.

So she went as directed. She saw number 150, and 153, and 157, and 159, and 160, and then there it was—number 161.

Then, she realized her husband was not behind her. All this time, she thought he was trailing her up and down the hallways—as he had always done on their trips away from home. She was now alone and fumbling with her card key to get into the room. All she needed was for this card not to work. Suddenly, the door popped open.

In the room, her husband folded a newspaper and came across the room to greet her. He said, “Honey, what took you so long? I’ve been waiting for you.”

Suddenly, the woman woke from her dream. It was the middle of the night and she was alone in her bedroom at home. Her husband had left for the Kingdom of God a couple of years ago. Now every once in a while she has a dream about him. It is usually about a trip of some kind where he’s waiting for her to arrive.
All you heavenly angels and saints, pray for us
Lesser-known WWII saints and blesseds teach importance of mercy and love
By Kristina Lahr

On May 8, 1945, World War II in Europe came to an end. As the news of Germany’s surrender reached the rest of the world, joyous crowds gathered to celebrate in the streets, clutching newspapers that declared Victory in Europe (V-E Day). Later that year, US President Harry S. Truman announced Japan’s surrender and the end of World War II. The news spread quickly and celebrations erupted across the United States. On Sept. 2, 1945, formal surrender documents were signed aboard the USS Missouri, designating the day as the official Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day)” (National WWII Museum, New Orleans).

Can you imagine the joy and relief of these moments? After years of uncertainty, political unrest, extreme racism, violence, fear, and countless atrocities against human life, nations looked forward to rebuilding lives of peace and stability. While hardship and trauma from this time may linger into today, the many saints and blesseds to come during these moments of strife remind us that Christ is the ultimate victor, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

To commemorate the official end of WWII 75 years ago and recognizing All Saints Day approaching Nov. 1, New Earth would like to share the stories of a few lesser-known saints whose faith in Christ flourished during the horrors of WWII.

Blessed Šára Salkaházi, 1899–1944

“She was willing to assume risks for the persecuted... in days of great fear. Her martyrdom is still topical... and presents the foundations for our humanity.”

–Pope Benedict XVI at Sister Šára’s beatification Sept. 17, 2006

Šára was known to be fun-loving, intelligent, and strong-willed from a young age. She was born to a wealthy family in upper Hungary, now Slovak territory. As a teacher and journalist and later a bookbinder and milliner, she continuously advocated for the poor and women’s rights.

While working as an editor for the Christian Socialist Party’s newspaper, she met the Sisters of Social Service, a newer order dedicated to charitable, social, and women’s issues. At the time, she was not religious and a chain-smoker. She felt a strong call to be part of their community, but they initially rejected her. Never one to be deterred, Šára quit smoking, reformed her life, and was permitted to take temporary vows with the sisters at age 30.

Her energy remained, and she kept busy organizing work for Catholic Charities, publishing for a women’s journal, managing a bookstore, and teaching, cooking, and supervising a shelter for the poor. The work exhausted her spiritually and physically, and some of the sisters accused her of “showing off” in her work.

As national director of the Catholic Working Girls’ Movement, Sister Šára built the first Hungarian college for working women and opened several homes for working girls. When the Hungarian Nazi Party was gaining strength, the Sisters provided a safe haven for the Jewish people. Sister Šára started smuggling Jewish refugees out of Slovakia to the working girls’ homes and was known to be exceptionally good at cheering up the anxious and discouraged. Sister Šára is credited with saving 100 Jewish lives and her Community saving 1,000.

Just hours after giving a meditation to her fellow Sisters about martyrdom, Sister Šára returned home to see Nazis standing in front of the house. She could have escaped, but as the director of the home, she decided that her place was with the Sisters. She was immediately arrested.

On the night of Dec. 27, 1944, the Nazis took her to a river where she made the Sign of the Cross before she was shot and her corpse thrown into the river. Miraculously, none of the other Sisters in her community were harmed (Credit: Aleteia.org, Vatican.va).

“I am cut off from everything and everyone and I hear nothing any more about the world... I try to pray and offer everything in sacrifice. God does not ask anything else of me at the moment or he would have disposed things differently.”

–Rupert Mayer in a letter to his mother while at Oraniënburg-Sachsenhausen concentration camp, 1939
Father Rupert Mayer was born in Stuttgart, Germany and was ordained a priest in 1899. He soon joined the Jesuit novitiate in Austria and preached missions in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

When WWI began, Father Mayer volunteered to be a military chaplain. He remained close to the soldiers at the front of battle and often crawled from one soldier to another to administer the Sacraments to them. In December of 1915, he was awarded the Iron Cross in recognition of his bravery.

A year later, he was wounded by a grenade and had one of his legs amputated. He then went to Munich to work with the poor and became affectionately known as the “limping priest.” He traveled the city to give as many as 70 talks a month and celebrated Mass at the main railroad terminal for the convenience of travelers. His physical suffering transformed him into an even more generous and understanding man.

When WWI ended, Father Mayer spoke against Communism, Socialism, Nazi propaganda, and was a strong supporter of church-affiliated schools. He was banned from preaching in 1937 by civil authorities, but he refused and was arrested for a brief time. When released, he continued to work and preach privately with small groups.

The Nazis arrested him again in 1939 and sent him to Orianienburg-Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin. Within a few months, his health deteriorated so badly that the camp officials feared he would die and become a martyr for the other prisoners. Father Mayer was then placed in solitary confinement in the Benedictine abbey at Ettal in the Bavarian Alps. He remained there until American soldiers freed him in May of 1945.

His health was still poor, but he immediately returned to serving the people of Munich. On Nov. 1, 1945, All Saints Day, he suffered a heart attack or stroke while celebrating Mass and died soon after. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987 (Credit: PapalArtifacts.com, CatholicSaints.org).

Elizabeth Hesselblad was born in Sweden and moved to New York City when she was 18 to work as a nurse to support her family. She first came into contact with Catholics while caring for those injured building the present-day St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.

After a powerful experience in the Real Presence of the Eucharist, she was received into the Catholic Church in 1902. Of the moment of her baptism, she wrote, “In an instant the love of God was poured over me. I understood that I could respond to that love only through sacrifice and a love prepared to suffer for His glory and for the Church. Without hesitation I offered Him my life, and my will to follow Him on the Way of the Cross.”

Elizabeth worked throughout her life to bring others to Christ through the Catholic Church and through the Brigittine order, which had been established by Sweden’s St. Bridget centuries before. She took Brigittine vows in 1906, reestablished the order in Rome, and opened two convents in Sweden in 1923. All of her sisters worked and prayed “that all [churches] would be one.”

During WWII, she sheltered Jews in her convent in Rome. During and after the war, she was known for promoting better relationships between Catholics and non-Catholics and for bringing both Christians and non-Christians to the Church. She was particularly attentive to the needs of her fellow sisters and their formation, whom she saw as her spiritual daughters. She urged them to live in close union with God, to possess a great love for the Church and the pope, and to pray constantly that there be only one flock and one shepherd, saying, “This is the prime goal of our vocation.”

Her reputation for holiness only increased throughout her life. The cause for her beatification began almost immediately after her death in 1957. She was canonized by Pope Francis on June 5, 2016 (Credit: Vatican.va, Catholic Online, Diocese of Lasing, Michigan).
primary school, he enrolled in the Salesian College at Oswiecim (Auschwitz), Poland.

The journal entries he wrote as a student show his devotion to Mary and the Eucharist when wrote, “Oh my Mother, I must be holy because this is my destiny. O Jesus, to you I offer my poor heart... Grant that I may never depart from You and that until death I remain faithful: I would rather die than offend you, even with a small sin.” He was ordained a priest on May 29, 1938 in Krakow.

While Germany occupied Poland in 1939, the Salesians continued their educational work. The Gestapo arrested Father Kowalski and 11 others of the community in May 1941. Father Kowalski was sent to Auschwitz concentration camp a few weeks later.

There he secretly celebrated Mass, heard confessions, held lectures, and encouraged his fellow prisoners to fight for survival. He was known to hear confessions of those condemned to die in secret but at least once in front of prisoners and guards at the moment of a mass execution. He was mocked and severely beaten for being a priest.

When he was discovered with a rosary, he was ordered to trample on it. Refusing, he was assigned to hard labor and isolation. On the night of July 3, 1942, guards pulled him out of his barracks and beat him to death. He was 31 years old.

Following the war, faithful began to venerate his memory. Pope John Paul II knew Father Kowalski personally when Father Kowalski served at St. Stanislaw Kostka, the young Karol Wojtyla’s parish in Krakow. Pope John Paul II beatified Father Kowalski on June 13, 1999. Father Kowalski was one of 108 Polish Martyrs from WWII beatified that day (Credit: Salesians.org, SalesianSisters.org).

Following the end of WWII, our own bishop of the Diocese of Fargo at the time, Bishop Aloisius Muench, said that “hate must be put into chains at once; it must not be permitted to roam about where treaties of peace are being drafted. As Christians and Americans we are charged with the duty of praying and working with all our effort that a just, generous, and lasting peace will come to the nations of the earth. It must be our daily prayer that God will dispose us to be humble, unselfish, and magnanimous toward all in the spirit of the Prince of Peace. Only in Him and through Him can we have genuine peace.”

What Bishop Muench asked for then sounds exactly like what we need now. Our time of social unrest, economic hardship, and global health concerns is not so unprecedented.

May our faith in Christ be as full as it is in these and all his saints. St. Maximillian Kolbe, St. Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), St. John Paul II, St. Faustina, Our Lady of Sorrows, and all you heavenly angels and saints, pray for us.
Diocesan schools go back to school with in-person learning

By Michael Hagstrom, Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools

Students, parents, and staff of the Diocese of Fargo’s 14 Catholic schools are grateful to be back in session for another school year in spite of all the challenges of COVID-19. Most of our Catholic schools have opted for full-time in-person learning after their boards approved Health and Safety Plans and Distance Learning Plans (if needed) for the new school year.

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. Our annual school census is scheduled again for October.

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.

See www.fargodiocese.org/catholicschools for more information on a Catholic school near you.

Students at Holy Spirit Elementary in Fargo don their JPII Schools face masks for protection and school spirit. (submitted photo)

Masks and staying in one classroom the entire school day is the new normal for Sullivan Middle School students in Fargo. (submitted photo)

Students at St. Michael Elementary School in Grand Forks are getting used to new iPads this school year. (submitted photo)

Father Jered Grossman, Parochial Vicar at St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, and St. Michael Elementary School Principal Sara Dudley welcome students back to in-person learning. (submitted photo)
Using your gifts to build up the Body of Christ

Catholic Culture in the Home

Jeremy and Angela Schmaltz
Parishioners of St. Michael's Church, Grand Forks

Hearing the Church referred to as the “Body of Christ” is common. The disciples themselves referred to it by this title multiple times throughout the New Testament. Hearing this title so often can result in another life-long Catholic ideal that becomes mentally glossed over, or only just scratched. If we aren’t the “obvious” parts of the body (i.e. the mouth, which preaches, or the hands, which serve) we can see ourselves as unimportant in building up the Church. Unfortunately, that leaves many of us feeling discouraged or “not cut-out” for the task.

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians gives us an opportunity to dig deeper: “...living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love” (Eph. 4:15-16). Ooo, ligaments! We are all called to build up the body. On that note, let’s get visceral, shall we?

Are you good at holding people together by helping them overcome their differences? Perhaps you are a ligament. Are you good at helping people filter out toxic waste in their lives? Perhaps you are the liver. Are you good at listening? Perhaps you are the ears. Are you good at helping people digest the Word of God, who is love itself. After that, ask God: What are the gifts you have given me? How would you like me to use these gifts?

The Lord made each of us with unique gifts and talents. Some may be obvious while others are subtle. All have merit and all have value! We encourage you to take time with the Lord and meditate on this truth. First, let your Father who created you, your Savior who gave his life for you, and the Holy Spirit who sustains you, love you as you are. We can do nothing apart from God, who is love itself. After that, ask God: What are the gifts you have given me? How would you like me to use these gifts? We recommend spending time with Eph. 4:1-16 to help you discover your role in the Body of Christ.

These are difficult times. However, it is in the most difficult of times that the greatest saints emerge. Let us allow the Lord to teach us how to be saints by using the gifts he has placed within us. In this way, he will show us our vital role in the Body of Christ.

OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF GUARDIAN ANGELS, HOLY ROSARY, AND PRO-LIFE

Send in your prayer intentions to be remembered during our daily Rosary.

Carmel of Mary Monastery
17765 78th St. SE, Wahpeton, ND 58075
(701) 642-2360 carmelofmary@gmail.com
On the beauty of death and the afterlife

I t's been said that human beings are the only creatures created with the knowledge that they will die. The older we get, and the more life we live, the more the reality of death is present to us. This is true whether we are confronting our own deaths, or the death of a loved one.

In his latest book, Hope to Die, Scott Hahn confronts this reality head-on, with a beautiful, compact look at the Church's teaching on death and the life of the world to come. The idea of our own deaths is difficult enough to accept, without the added complication of the bodily resurrection, heaven, hell, and judgement. Even the most faithful among us, myself included, have a difficult time with the idea that our life goes on after our mortal body passes away. Even though we say every Sunday in the creed: “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come,” it remains an abstract concept. As Hahn says:

> I think many of us believe we’ll get a new body once we enter eternal life... but we don’t see how this body... could possibly be resurrected to eternal life. Surely God has better material he can work with?

In Hope to Die Hahn walks us through a basic catechesis on the Church’s teachings on death with his typical scholarly approach, including plenty of references to the early fathers as well as Old Testament figures. He speaks about the ancient Israelites’ development of understanding of life after death and connects this back to the patriarch’s desires to all be buried in the promised land, as an early understanding of the Communion of Saints. This understanding pushes back on our Western culture’s twin mistaken beliefs about death: either that we are only mortal, and there is nothing left of us at all once we die, or that our bodies are simply vehicles for our souls, to be discarded once our time is up.

To be a Christian is to live with the reality that the life of the world to come is just as real, and even more real, than the world in which we presently find ourselves. To live fully in this life is to prepare fully for the life of the world to come, by following our Lord’s teachings, and also by honoring the bodies he gave us, by taking care of ourselves physically, and not by mistreating our bodies, or the bodies of our loved ones, upon death. Hahn delves deeply into this concept, reviewing the Church’s teachings, and the reason behind those teachings:

> Tobit says that God “brings up again” those who went down to Hades... Tobit believes God will raise the dead—not just spiritually, but physically. After all, if the resurrection were just going to be spiritual, what happened to bodies in death wouldn’t matter. But with a physical resurrection, bodies matter (page 50).

My mind doesn’t deal with infinity well. I can grasp the idea of being judged after death, but the idea of living forever, in the body I presently have, boggles the mind. The idea that I must honor my body, not simply because God gave it to me, or that I have to take care of it to have a good life, but that I will live in my resurrected body for eternity puts a new importance on it. In this bodily resurrection, we also are given the gift of participating in the bodily resurrection of Christ:

> ...for those who die in Christ’s grace, death isn’t a solitary act; it’s “a participation in the death of the Lord,” and when we die with the Lord, we also rise with the Lord; we participate in his resurrection (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1006)... When we know death is not the end, when we know that death is just the beginning of everlasting joy, everlasting life, and everlasting communion with the One we love, hope drives out fear (page 169).

I would recommend Hope to Die to anyone who is interested in a brief introduction to the Church’s teachings on death and the afterlife. It would also make a good primer for anyone who needs to have some hard conversations with a loved one, while also providing them with a reason for hope. It’s a short read at only 176 pages. In a culture that tries to deny the reality of death, it’s good to have this reminder that death isn’t the end but the beginning of our eternal life and friendship with God.
“Celebrating Us” this Catholic Charities Sunday

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTH DAKOTA

Chad Prososki
Director of Development and Community Relations for Catholic Charities North Dakota.

This year we moved back our annual celebration of Catholic Charities North Dakota Sunday to the weekend of Oct. 24-25. We also understand that people are still gradually returning to participate in person at the celebration of the Mass. Therefore, we are making our video and materials available online at catholiccharitiesnd.org.

Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

—Abraham Lincoln

Despite all that’s going on today, and these difficult times, do we make time to find the joy in our lives? Abraham Lincoln was said to have been quoted, “Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” Today, why not see if you can embrace the wonderful gift of life? Then take it a step further and use an extra minute to see if you can make someone smile. Smiles are also contagious, but in a good way! Did you know that people can even tell if you’re smiling on the phone? You may not see or know it now, but those simple moments can last for eternity!

During this pandemic, we hear about underlying conditions, which can still make some people more susceptible to COVID-19. Examples you can’t always see include heart or kidney problems, breathing and lung problems, and diabetes or obesity. While some of these conditions may be obvious, many of them are hidden and we don’t know what conditions the person next to us may be suffering.

Isn’t it even more true that we don’t always know what someone else is going through emotionally? In fact, many of the saints went through great unknown sufferings. Do you remember Mother Theresa of Calcutta, and how joyful she always was with the love of Christ shining through her eyes and a smile lighting up her face? Yet many of us were shocked later on to learn in her personal writings about her own dark night of the soul, and the trials she went through feeling that Christ was separated from her.

How many others in our society feel separated not just from God but also from each other? Maybe you can make a difference in someone’s life, just by being there for them. Is there someone you know that could use a helping hand or a listening ear? With continued social distancing, and all the divisions and challenges to the family in our country, what’s needed more than genuine concern and love for others?

Catholic Charities North Dakota continues to serve those most in need, through our adoption, guardianship, and counseling services. This past year we added a new Guardianship program for vulnerable adults due to age or mental health issues, expanded our Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program that finds forever homes for children in foster care, added ND Post Adopt Services, and started new telehealth counseling services for clients that could help us continue serving our rural communities in the future.

We are trying to turn the challenges of this pandemic into blessings. During this time, we have a choice to be thankful for what we do have, instead of dwelling on the opportunities that have been taken away. That’s why our theme is “Celebrating Us,” which truly includes all of us! It is our clients and staff, and especially our supporters like you. We hope you will join in and celebrate with us in person or online the weekend of Oct. 24-25!

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MAIL TO: Diocese of Fargo - TV Mass
5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104
What would Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

You have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., right? If you’re drawing a blank, you might be excused. For amidst all the strife and violence we are witnessing, rooted in claims about “systemic racism,” no one is discussing his vision. And there’s a reason for that.

What we are witnessing (and, for some readers in urban areas like Minneapolis, experiencing) is an implicit rejection of King’s vision. This radical movement is revolutionary, driven by the Marxist, anti-family organization formally known as “Black Lives Matter” (to be distinguished from the broader, important claim that black lives do in fact matter), is rooted in a rejection of everything Western, finding it to be rotten to the core.

Revolutionary movements always want to erase the past and start from scratch. The inaugural year of a revolution becomes “Year Zero” on a new calendar, such as happened with the French Revolution. The French revolutionaries tried erasing all vestiges of the past. Even the months were renamed with concoctions like Thermidor, because most months bore the names of Roman gods, families, and emperors. January comes from the god Janus, while June and July come from the noble Junii and Julii families (the most famous member of the latter being Julius Caesar), and August memorializes Gaius Octavius, whom we know better as Caesar Augustus, under whom Jesus was born (see Luke 2).

And so the past must die. There’s a reason today’s revolutionaries are destroying statues not only of Confederates and slaveholders but also abolitionists(!) and saints. Even statues of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary have been defaced and destroyed. Every statue is a monument to the past, and must be erased in an act of damnatio memoriae (the damnation of memory) so that the revolutionaries can begin with an absolutely blank canvas to refound history in a new Year Zero. The destruction of statues isn’t a judgment on the individuals they record in stone and marble but on history itself.

The new progressive vision is racialist, even Maoist, setting racial identity groups against each other culturally, legally, economically, and politically, so that those groups who deserve to lose find themselves either marginalized or (God forbid) eliminated altogether—some Black Lives Matter (BLM) leaders have called for this. Damnatio memoriae leads to damnatio personae (damnation of persons), as Stalin’s Russia, Hitler’s Germany, Mao’s China, and Pol Pot’s Cambodia demonstrated. And that’s why King’s vision finds no footing today.

For King’s vision was ultimately Christian and colorblind—he was interested in racial reconciliation on Christian principles, not domination and subjugation rooted in postmodern critical theory. He closed his famous “I Have A Dream” speech on Aug. 28, 1963 with stirring words anticipating “that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

King also believed in Natural Law, and quoted St. Thomas on the subject in his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail:” “To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law.” Today’s revolutionaries hate Nature and its Law because it gets in the way of their grand designs, which, if one looks at the website for the “Black Lives Matter” organization, involves things besides racism like transgenderism and pansexuality.

King also delivered a famous sermon in 1957 entitled “Loving Your Enemies,” and in his context his enemies were hardcore racists in the Deep South: segregationists and members of the Ku Klux Klan in a time when a lot of black men, women, and children were murdered in lynchings, many of them quite brutal, public, and carried out in a carnivalesque atmosphere. Preaching on Our Lord’s words in the Sermon on the Mount, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,” King intoned, “Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, this command is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. Yes, it is love that will save our world and our civilization, love even for enemies.”

He was committed to loving the racists who hated him for his color, and (something that BLM ought to think about) rejected violence: “Violence creates many more social problems than it solves... as the Negro, in particular, and colored peoples all over the world struggle for freedom, if they succumb to the temptation of using violence in their struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence isn’t the way.”

King’s colorblind vision of peace, then, was rooted deeply in the Western, Judeo-Christian intellectual and moral tradition—the very things BLM hates. He knew that this tradition wasn’t perfect; while he condemned Communism absolutely, he critiqued the oppression, colonialism, and imperialism that all too often had marked the West. But he knew that the Western, Judeo-Christian tradition had borne forth God’s own truth into the world, among many other things the truth that every man and woman, black, white, and otherwise, is created in the image of God and thus equal in God’s sight, and thus should be equal in man’s sight. Peace and reconciliation in our day, then, depend on a rediscovery of King’s vision, and that means recovering the riches of the Western, Judeo-Christian tradition on which he drew.

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In Catholic teaching, the laity has the primary responsibility in political affairs. That means it is your responsibility to find out where the candidates stand on the issues. It is also your responsibility to make sure the candidates take a stand on the issues.

The questions listed here can help Catholics make moral and prudential decisions about candidates and public policies. Please use this when contacting candidates. Some issues are more important than others. Some concern policies, like attacks on human life, a Catholic can never support. Catholics can legitimately disagree about how to address some other issues. All the issues, however, deserve our attention.

Where does the State candidate stand?

Right to Life & Dignity of the Human Person
- Protecting unborn human life and ending abortion?
- Keeping bans on assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, human embryo research, and commercial surrogacy?
- Preventing tax funding for abortion and abortion advocacy?

Religious Liberty
- Stopping the government from substantially burdening the exercise of religion?
- Protecting the right of religious organizations to serve the public in accordance with their beliefs?

Family and Education
- Enabling parents, financially and in other ways, to choose the best educational setting for their children?
- Opposing policies that mandate acceptance of false gender ideologies?
- Ensuring that COVID-19 relief equitably includes nonpublic schools?

Poor & Vulnerable
- Prioritizing the poor and vulnerable in COVID-19 relief?
- Ensuring access to health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and the conscience rights of health care workers?
- Providing services to those in need, especially families facing financial hardship and persons with disabilities, mental illness, and addictions?
- Protecting families and communities with a criminal justice system that focuses on restoration, rehabilitation, prevention, and elimination of racial and ethnic bias?

Economy and Environment
- Providing safe havens for properly-vetted refugees, regardless of race, nationality, or religious affiliation?

The Poor and Vulnerable
- Prioritizing the poor and vulnerable in COVID-19 relief?
- Ensuring access to health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and the conscience rights of health care workers?
- Providing services to those in need, especially families facing financial hardship and persons with disabilities, mental illness, and addictions?

Where Does the Federal Candidate Stand?

Human Life
- Protecting unborn human life and ending abortion?
- Repealing the federal government’s use of the death penalty?
- Prohibiting the use of federal funds to pay for or provide insurance coverage for abortion?

Religious Liberty
- Stopping the government from substantially burdening the exercise of religion?
- Protecting the right of religious organizations to serve the public in accordance with their beliefs?
- Making religious freedom a priority in dealing with other nations?

Family and Education
- Enabling parents, financially and in other ways, to choose the best educational setting for their children?
- Opposing policies that mandate acceptance of false gender ideologies?
- Ensuring that COVID-19 relief equitably includes nonpublic schools?

Immigration
- Achieving comprehensive reforms that offer a path to citizenship for the undocumented who live in the U.S. and do not have a criminal record, expand family reunification, secure our borders, and establish humane enforcement?
- Providing safe havens for properly-vetted refugees, regardless of race, nationality, or religious affiliation?

The Your Faith, Your Vote website from the North Dakota has tools to help you email these questions to the state candidates for your district. Find it at tinyurl.com/yfyvemail

The following questions are offered to assist in discerning where the federal candidates (Congress and President).
• Maintaining and increasing funding for poverty-focused
development assistance to poor countries?

**Economy and Environment**
• Ensuring a just wage, economic initiative, and pro-family work policies?
• Promoting family farms, rural communities, and a just food system?
• Protecting our natural resources?

When all candidates hold a position that promotes an intrinsically evil act, the voter may take the extraordinary step of not voting for any candidate or, after careful deliberation, vote for the candidate deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods.

Catholics have an obligation to participate in the democratic process. Remember to vote and, no matter what the outcome, become involved in the legislative process.

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Join us in your parish or on-line on October 24-25

Hear and see from Catholic Charities North Dakota clients, staff, and supporters how your generosity helps enrich the lives of North Dakotans in these rough times.

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**Soirée for Religious Life**

November 2, 2020 | 6:30 pm
Sts. Anne & Joachim Social Hall | Fargo

**Speakers**
Hear the vocation story of a professed religious & a parent of a religious

Young men & women interested in religious life, along with their parents and friends, are invited to a formal dinner to celebrate this noble vocation.

The Soirée is free, but pre-registration is necessary.
Contact vocations@fargodiocese.org.
How important is a devotion to the Blessed Mother?

From a very young age, Catholics all over the globe are educated about the importance of prayer and growing close to Jesus. One way in which we come to a more profound understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and our personal vocation is through the Blessed Mother Mary.

Before understanding the importance of a devotion to Mary, it’s important to recognize where this practice comes from. The Gospel of John reads, “When Jesus had seen His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing there, He said to His mother: ‘Woman, behold thy son.’ And He said to the disciple: ‘Behold your mother.’ And from that hour, the disciple took her into his home” (John 19:26-27).

St. Joseph had the grace of contemplation in the midst of the noise, precisely because he knew to seek silence in order to grow more intimate with the tiny whisper of God speaking in his heart.

– Jasper Keller

When Jesus utters these words while he’s hanging on the cross, he gave his mother to John and in turn Mary became the mother of all the living. It is from this moment on that the Catholic Church esteems Mary with great respect and admiration because she is our mother. The Gospel of John instills another precedent for the love and respect we should have for the Virgin Mary during the wedding at Cana. As the gospel relates, the wedding party runs out of wine, and “…the mother of Jesus said to Him: ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her: ‘Woman, what is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the waiters: ‘Do whatever He tells you’” (John 2:3-5). Listening to his mother’s request, Jesus turns six large water pots into wine. This passage shows the amount of respect Jesus has for his mother and how he listens to her requests.

The Blessed Mother wishes to lead us to her Son. As all great mothers do, Mary loves each of us, her children, no matter what. We are human, and with our humanity comes a sinful nature. Mary recognizes this from heaven above and knows that each of us needs help in living a virtuous life. She recognizes the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus and wishes to take us by the hand to his throne.

Because of the great love Our Lady has for us, she wants what is best for us, which is a true authentic relationship with God. With this in mind, there is no contradiction between having a profound devotion to the Blessed Mother and a relationship with Jesus Christ because they have the same ends, namely, holiness and sanctity of life.

Critics may question, however, “Why go to the Blessed Mother when I can just pray directly to Jesus?” The truth is, that when we go to the Blessed Mother, we go to Jesus with assistance. It would be similar to asking for prayers from friends and family when a loved one is sick. The only difference is, instead of asking your friends to offer prayers, you are placing each of those intentions in the hands of the Blessed Mother who then in turn offers them to her Son, pleading on our behalf.

Let us allow Mary to lead us through every walk and challenge of life and thus allowing ourselves to be transformed, with the help of the Blessed Mother, into the saints we are all called to be. Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!

Editor’s Note: Seminarian Life is a column written by current Diocese of Fargo seminarians. Please continue to pray for them.
Four reasons to advance a bequest

1. **Increase your income now**
   
   One of the more important benefits of a Charitable Gift Annuity is the attractive rates that are offered, especially to older donors. For example, a 75-year-old person qualifies for an annuity rate of 5.4 percent. Thus, establishing an annuity with $20,000 would provide $1,800 every year for the duration of that person’s life. An 85-year-old annuitant would fare even better with a rate of 7.6 percent.

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   In addition, the state of North Dakota provides a 40% tax credit for Charitable Gift Annuities.

3. **Stabilize your retirement now**
   
   Gift annuity payments are fixed. Once the payment dates are established (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually) you would receive the identical amount with every check or direct deposit. No need to guess or worry about the ups and downs of the financial markets. Your annuity will be backed not only by our scrupulously maintained annuity reserve fund but by all the assets of the Catholic Development Foundation.

   While it would be incorrect to suggest that people should place all of their assets into a Charitable Gift Annuity, a gift annuity can help folks diversify and stabilize their retirement income.

4. **Enjoy your giving now**
   
   When you establish a gift annuity, you will experience the satisfaction of completing a gift now by arranging a major gift to your parish. Furthermore, you will give them the opportunity while you live to express their gratitude and possibly include you in their recognition program.

   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 form below, or contact me at (701) 356-7926 or steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.
Dispelling myths and misconceptions

SISTER'S PERSPECTIVE

Sister Christina M. Neumann

Member of the Dillingen Franciscans in the Hankinson province. Serves at St. Anne’s Guest Home, Grand Forks

When I was at our Provincial house earlier in August, I helped in the convent library, working with AV materials. A CD caught my eye entitled, “Myths & Misconceptions Concerning Vocations,” by Father Thomas Nelson, O.Praem., a Norbertine priest, whose lectures for the Institute on Religious Life we had used during my postulancy.

The curriculum during that time had been very influential to me, teaching me more of the beauty of the consecrated life and increasing my desire for it. I thought it would be enriching for me to listen to material of this nature again, and I was right.

The CD detailed five different myths/misconceptions about priestly and religious vocations which prove to be a hindrance, both in young people in following this call and for those encouraging and supporting religious vocations.

The first myth was that a person has to be perfect, that religious life presumes exceptional holiness. Father explained how this is not the case, and that religious, while definitely called to holiness, are still on the way. Convents and monasteries are full of sinners striving to be saints one day rather than full of people who are already “perfect.”

The second myth is that celibacy equals loneliness and unhappiness. Father shared statistics on the number of priest/s/religious who leave after making vows as compared to the number of marriages that “don’t work out.” Celibate commitments, according to his statistics (dated, by now), had a 1 in 10 “dropout rate,” as opposed to the 50% divorce rate. The unhappy priests or religious, he stated, get the press, but they are not the majority!

Another misconception discussed in the lecture was that all vocations are equal. Father made the point that religious life is objectively higher than marriage. This teaching was proclaimed by the Council of Trent and affirmed at the Second Vatican Council. This is not to say that religious men and women are better, but the vocation itself is superior. In marriage, people choose a human spouse where in consecrated life, we have a divine spouse. He made the connection to Mary, who, reading between the lines in the Gospel of Luke, we see as greatly valuing her virginity.

A lack of realization of the great good of a religious vocation, in Father’s opinion, could be partially responsible for the decline in vocations that occurred in the latter half of the past century.

The fourth myth shared in the talk was that religious life limits one’s freedom. In actuality, it makes us more free. Father stressed the fact that often people rush into a marriage, caught up in their emotions, and don’t go through adequate time, preparation, or testing (including experiential learning) to make a totally free and rational commitment. On the other hand, religious formation gives one a lengthy and experiential knowledge of the vocation, with ample opportunities to step away. He mentioned that there is no stigma in leaving before profession; in fact, religious formation or seminary experience has prepared many young people to embrace married life.

At this point, the presenter went into greater reflection on the role of parents, who sometimes are afraid of limiting freedom. The above-mentioned lengthy process enables great freedom and time for discernment. The decision is not made overnight, but rationally and with maturity. We should never be reluctant to encourage young people to explore the possibility of a religious vocation.

That a religious vocation is rare, exceptional, and extraordinary, is a lie. It is meant for normal Christians who are striving to keep the Commandments.

“The final misconception he shared was that a religious vocation is “rare.” Father stressed that God is generous. Although we do not know exactly how many young people are called to this life, saints estimate that it is quite a high percentage. Man’s generosity is what is rare, rather than God’s great gift of a vocation. He brought out the Old Testament precept that the firstborn should be consecrated to the Lord, and shared his reflection that the precept could be extended to families today, though the term “firstborn” need not be a chronological term.

The presenter also stressed the point that Christ advised the living of the evangelical counsels and that it would make sense to follow this form of life unless one had good reason not to do so. He shared that in times past, in a more Christian age, people would presume one had a religious vocation because this was the better way suggested by Christ.

Now, in our more secular time and culture, the opposite is true. Father made another point that the Church needs religious and priestly vocations and is dependent on them. That a religious vocation is rare, exceptional, and extraordinary, is a lie. It is meant for normal Christians who are striving to keep the Commandments.

He encouraged us to get the truth out and dispel the darkness by what we say and how we live.

Adapted from reflection first posted on the Sisters’ blog, Our Franciscan Fiat.
Dispelling myths and misconceptions

75 years ago — 1945
Mrs. Minnie O’Connor Trepanier of Grand Forks was selected from among the outstanding women of America by the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII as the recipient of the papal decoration, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (For Church and Pontiff). She is the first woman in N.D. to receive such honors. The decoration had its origin in 1888 as a memorial souvenir of the golden sacerdotal jubilee of Pope Leo XIII. In 1898, the decoration was made a permanent distinction. Its object is to reward those who deserve well of the Pope on account of services done for the Church and is the highest honor that can be obtained by women.

50 years ago — 1970
On a crisp but clear day, October 28, a procession of well over 300 priests and more than 40 archbishops, bishops, and abbots from across the country wound its way to the entrance of the Cathedral where Monsignor Justin A. Driscoll, 50, was installed as the fifth Bishop of Fargo.
In an unexpected and highly-emotional moment, retiring Bishop Dworschak went to the lectern and gave a final greeting to the people he had served for the past 24 years and assured all of his prayers for them.
In a plea for unity, the newly installed Bishop Driscoll said, “The greatest challenge before us is to be persons who truly care, and from that caring, draw the inspiration and energy needed to serve. Our activity binds us together in oneness of the Holy Spirit. In that spirit, we must forgive one another instead of concentrating on one another’s wrongs, seek to be reconciled instead of needlessly defending a position, and strive for an increase of charity instead of uttering constant criticisms. We must embrace God’s law of life and seek the peace of Christ instead of struggling for worldly power.”

20 years ago — 2000
St. Bernard’s Church in Oriska met its goal for the new millennium to have a monument dedicated to the unborn set in the cemetery. The monument reads “In memory of God’s Innocent Babies.” A pro-life dinner was held late June to raise funds for the monument which was dedicated and blessed after Mass Oct. 22.
WHAT'S HAPPENING

Life’s milestones

Leo and Lenore Beauchamp, parishioners of St. Boniface Church in Walhalla, will celebrate their 67th anniversary Oct. 10. They were married at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church in Olga. They have 6 children, 11 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Duane and Margaret Voeller will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Oct. 16. They are parishioners of Little Flower Church in Rugby, where they were married. They have 10 children (one passed away in 2017) and 6 grandchildren.

Dolores Davis, parishioner of St. Anthony Church in Mooreton, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Oct. 25. She and her late husband, James, who died in 1987, were blessed with 9 children, 15 grandchildren (two deceased), and 15 great-grandchildren. She still lives on the farm and has lived on one her whole life.

Kathryn Kay (Schweitzer Luiten Morehead), parishioner of St. Anthony’s Church in Fargo, celebrated her 95th birthday on Oct. 7. She has 4 children (Father Gary Luiten, Maureen Anderson, and 2 lost in infancy), 7 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Share life’s milestones  As a way to celebrate life and love, we encourage parishioners in the Diocese of Fargo to send a photo and news brief for anniversaries of 50 years or 60+ years or birthdays of 80+ years to: New Earth, Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd. S., Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 or news@fargodiocese.org.

Events across the Diocese

Catholic Daughters Sunday to be celebrated Oct. 18

Spirituality and service are the heart of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Catholic Daughters provide local spirituality, sharing activity under the support of a vibrant national organization. Members donate to charities, administer scholarship programs, and strive to be helping hands. They embrace the principle of faith working through love in the promotion of justice equality and the advancement of human rights and human dignity for all. Catholic Daughters worship together, pray together and help each other be the best Catholic women they can possibly be. For more information about ND Catholic Daughters of the Americas, see www.northdakotacatholicdaughters.org.

Presentation Prayer Center presents Francis of Assisi: A 12th Century saint for the new millennia

Join Presentation Prayer Center via Zoom for their Fundraiser Brunch Nov. 5 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. to explore major events in the life of Francis of Assisi, how he understood those events, and how they are fundamental to the Franciscan way of living the Gospel. We will look at the individual pieces of the Franciscan Charism and see how they can help address some of the compelling issues of our day. Presenter Rick Dietz has served as the Director of the Franciscan Life Center in Little Falls, Minn. since 2013. Cost is $15. RSVP to Scott at presentationprayercenter@gmail.com or (701) 237-4857.

Maryvale, Valley City, to offer Ignatian silent retreats

The Ignatian retreat is steeped in the Gospels and is based on the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. This is a silent retreat where one is able to meet Jesus in the experiences of Jesus’ own life. Conferences and individual direction are included in this retreat. Two weekend retreats are offered: Nov. 13–15 (register by Nov. 6) and Dec. 11–13 (register by Dec. 4). Suggested donation is $95, which includes meals. To register contact (701) 845-2864 or dorothy.bunce@fargodiocese.org.

Annual fall celebrations

The following is a list of fall dinners and festivals submitted to New Earth.

West Fargo: Holy Cross Church will host an Oktoberfest before and after each Sunday Mass in October and will include silent auction, raffle, 50/50, and chance baskets. Specific weekends include bingo, crafts, jewelry, cork pull, canned and baked goods, and kids’ activities. Swedish meatball dinner take-out only on Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Grand Forks: Holy Family Church Altar Society will hold a Christmas Bake Sale and raffle on Nov. 7 from 1 to 4 p.m. at 1018 18th Ave. S., Grand Forks. Contact parish at (701) 746-1454.
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The Dolan Agency
The Archbishop of San Francisco called Catholics to participate in Eucharistic processions across the city Sept. 20, which walked past city hall before public Masses were said outside the city’s cathedral—in part to protest the city’s revised limits on public worship.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed had announced that starting Sept. 14, houses of worship may have 50 people at religious services outdoors. In addition, indoor private prayer is allowed, but only one person at a time is allowed inside.

Previously, the limit for outdoor services had been 12 people, with all indoor services prohibited. In contrast, hotels in San Francisco are fully reopened; indoor gyms are set to reopen at 10% capacity; and most retail stores are allowed to operate at 50% capacity, while malls are restricted to 25%. Gyms operated in government buildings for police officers and other government employees have already reopened.

In addition, Archbishop Cordileone has noted, businesses requiring extended, close one-on-one contact reopened Sept. 14, such as hair salons, nail salons, and massage parlors, but “we are allowed only one person in church at a time for prayer.”

Cordileone said the archdiocese has ordered 100 banners in English, 15 in Spanish, and 5 in Chinese that read: “We Are Essential: Free the Mass!” He asked that parishioners carry the banners during the Eucharistic processions.

The archbishop has noted that the state’s legitimate concern for health and safety does have some bearing on how the Church operates—for example, there are good reasons why church buildings must be built with respect to code.

“But the state does not tell the Church how to arrange the liturgical space—that pertains to the internal life of the Church, over which the state has no authority. The same principle applies to worship services: the state has no right whatsoever to tell the Church it cannot worship, but it has every right and responsibility to tell the Church which practices it must observe to keep people safe during worship,” Cordileone told CNA Sept. 4.

Cordileone said priests at many parishes around the archdiocese, including the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, are celebrating multiple Masses every Sunday—outside, and spaced out—in order to adapt to the restrictions.

“The Body and Blood of Christ is the source and summit of our Faith. People are hungry for the Eucharist, and many priests are responding to the call as best they can,” he said.

The City of San Francisco has been closely monitoring Catholic churches in the city and has repeatedly issued warnings to the archdiocese for apparent health order violations.

Cordileone said he himself has noted “very few” violations of the city’s health orders by parishes in the archdiocese, although the few that have occurred have garnered heavy criticism in the secular press.

In advocating for a safe reopening of indoor Masses, Cordileone has cited a recent article on Mass attendance and COVID-19, authored Aug. 19 by doctors Thomas McGovern, Deacon Timothy Flanigan, and Paul Cieslak for Real Clear Science.

They said in their article that there is no evidence that church services are higher risk than similar activities when guidelines are followed, and no coronavirus outbreaks have been linked to the celebration of the Mass.

In several other states, churches have successfully challenged restrictions against houses of worship, on the grounds that public officials were not able to justify the decision to treat them more strictly than other secular gathering venues.
We cannot demand God’s forgiveness for ourselves unless we are prepared to forgive our neighbors, Pope Francis said in his Angelus address Sept. 13 at St. Peter’s Square. “If we do not strive to forgive and to love, we will not be forgiven and loved either.”

In his address, the pope reflected on the day’s Gospel reading (Matt. 18:21-35), in which Peter asked Jesus how many times he was required to forgive his brother. Jesus replied that it was necessary to forgive “not seven times but seventy-seven times,” before telling a story known as the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

Pope Francis noted that in the parable the servant owed a vast sum to his master. The master forgave the servant’s debt, but the man did not, in turn, forgive the debt of another servant who owed him only a small amount.

“In the parable, we find two different attitudes: that of God—represented by the king—who forgives so much, because God always forgives, and that of man. In the divine attitude, justice is pervaded by mercy, whereas the human attitude is limited to justice,” he said.

He explained that when Jesus said we must forgive “seventy-seven times” he meant, in biblical language, to forgive always.

“How much suffering, how many lacerations, how many wars could be avoided, if forgiveness and mercy were the style of our life. It is necessary to apply merciful love to all human relationships: between spouses, between parents and children, within our communities, in the Church, and also in society and politics.”

Pope Francis added that he had been struck by a phrase from the day’s first reading (Sirach 27:33-28:9), “Remember your last days and set enmity aside.”

“Think of the end! Think that you will be in a casket… and will you take the hate there? Think about the end, stop hating! Stop the resentment,” he said.

He suggested that the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant could shed light on the phrase in the Lord’s Prayer, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

“These words contain a decisive truth. We cannot demand God’s forgiveness for ourselves if we in turn do not grant forgiveness to our neighbor,” he said.

The pope then noted that protests had broken out in various countries in recent months amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Without mentioning any nations by name, he said: “While I urge the demonstrators to present their demands peacefully, without giving in to the temptation of aggression and violence, I appeal to all those who have public and governmental responsibilities to listen to the voice of their fellow citizens and to meet their just aspirations, ensuring full respect for human rights and civil liberties.”

“Finally, I invite the ecclesial communities living in such contexts, under the guidance of their Pastors, to work in favor of dialogue, always in favor of dialogue, and in favor of reconciliation.”

"Keep your heart in peace and let nothing trouble you, not even your faults. You must humble yourself and amend them peacefully, without being discouraged or cast down, for God’s dwelling is in peace."
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Paul Braun, Editor

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.
I t was my birthday, and the last place I wanted to be was on the sidewalk of our state’s only abortion facility. I know this is selfish, God, but I don’t know if I’m up for this today, I admitted.

It didn’t help that my prayer partner had been called out of town on a last-minute emergency. Knowing I couldn’t do it alone, I stopped by the diocesan chapel for Mass, to thank God for the gift of life, and to garner extra courage. Pausing briefly in the pew afterward, I felt inspired to pray for a “save” on my birthday. What a gift it would be to know a child had escaped death on the 52nd anniversary of the day I was given life.

I showed up on the sidewalk a while later, ready for whatever God had planned. I’d only be able to stay an hour, but I desired to make it count and do God’s will. Soon into my hour, God introduced me to the young women he’d sent me to encounter. They both came charging in rather boldly, though at separate times, with scrutinizing expressions. The first, a tall, beautiful college-aged woman on her way to lunch, who seemingly had just noticed us, crossed over to where we were. “You don’t have any right to do this. It’s their choice,” she began. And before we could answer, she added, “And what about in cases of rape? I was raped.”

With that invitation, two of us began engaging with her, acknowledging that, indeed, rape is a horrible crime, but abortion only worsens the violation and violence of it. And while, yes, abortion is a choice by our country’s laws, we are there to help expand that choice, not limit it, as well as offer the hope of life to the voiceless child. Because of her own birth mother’s choice, we added, she now has a voice, and that is a good thing.

Within only about five minutes of conversation, her stiff stance relaxed, and she said she better understood our purpose and was grateful. Her friend, standing quietly to the side, was a second witness to the truth we shared. Two seeds planted; only God knows how they will grow.

Just minutes later, another young lady walked by with a scowl, then turned back around to tell us how wrong we were to be there. This time, I was alone in reaching back. Little by little—largely because by now the escorts had hung up their rainbow-colored vests and disappeared—I was able to freely explain what we really had come to do. Her defenses up, she stood firm in her position that it was the woman’s choice, and our presence made things worse.

I calmly persisted, sharing what our post-abortive friends have agonizingly repeated to us about the enduring trauma—and regret—of abortion. We hadn’t come to coerce or judge, I insisted, but offer a way out for those who might feel powerless in their circumstances.

“It’s not even a child until it’s born, though,” she said. “It’s a fetus, not a person.”

In that moment, an inspiration came. “You know, you were a fetus once, too, and look at you now! You are a real human being. If you’d been killed as a fetus, you wouldn’t be standing here as a human now. Our size and location don’t determine our value.”

“Well I wouldn’t care because I wouldn’t exist,” she said.

“But we would,” I responded. “We would sense your loss somehow. Every person created makes a difference. You are wholly unique and unrepeatable, and the world would have been deprived of you.”

I saw a transformation come over the exterior of the person I was facing, as if watching tangibly the melting of her heart. It seemed she needed to hear these words, and I was glad to share them with her. Suddenly, I noticed her amber eyes, once dark and narrowed, now shining beautifully from within, a softness having emerged.

“Look, I can tell you’re trying to do good, and I am sorry for being like that earlier,” she said.

“And I’ve really appreciated our conversation,” I said. “Thanks for taking the time.”

I asked her name, then, repeating it back, assured her of my prayers and God’s love for her. “God loves you, too,” she said. After we parted, I beamed at my friend Nick, who, having overhead, was smiling. “Nice work,” he said.

“I feel like I got my birthday present,” I remarked, elated. “I know we didn’t have any official saves today, but maybe, hopefully, there were some saves, after all.”

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Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the November New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is of Seven Dolors Mission in Fort Totten.