A "new" Advent
Preparing ourselves and others for Christ’s coming

From Bishop Folda:
Synod of Bishops on Synodality

First Nepomuk Narly brings fun and community to Pisek

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**FROM BISHOP FOLDA**

4  Synod of Bishops on Synodality

**SANCTIFYING GRACE**

7  The Sacrament of Matrimony:
The love between Christ and the Church

**AROUND THE DIOCESE**

11  First Nepomuk Narly brings fun and community to Pisek

**COVER STORY**

12  A “new” Advent

**FAITH AND CULTURE**

15  Glorious Splendor: Do you have a stack of funeral memorial prayer cards?

**US/WORLD NEWS**

33  Pope names auxiliary bishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis to Crookston, Minn.

**SIDEWALK STORIES**

35  Post-abortion woman named her child “Mistake”
Synod of Bishops on Synodality

Last month, an important event was launched in the Church. Pope Francis inaugurated a Synod of Bishops in Rome that will convene in two years’ time after a period of preparation around the world. But first, what is a Synod of Bishops? It is a gathering of bishops and other representatives that come together every three years or so to discuss the doctrinal and pastoral needs of the Church. Previous synods have dealt with issues like evangelization, catechesis, the role of the laity, the formation of priests, family life, marriage, and many others. The word “synod” loosely means to “walk together,” or to “journey together.” But then, why launch a synod now that won’t meet for another two years? That’s where we come in.

Pope Francis wants the entire Church to play a part in this synodal process, and he offers three key themes for us to reflect on. First is communion. God gathers us together as many peoples throughout the world united in one faith, and he makes a covenant of love with us. It is Jesus himself who reconciles us to the Father and unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit. Together we are inspired by the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, and we’re united in grace through Baptism, the Eucharist, and all the sacraments. The communion that is offered to us happens through our relationship with Jesus and his Body, the Church.

The next theme is participation. Like all the popes of recent times, Pope Francis is calling all the members of the People of God—laity, religious, and clergy—to play a part in the life and mission of the Church. Together we pray and listen to the Holy Spirit, allowing him to guide the Church on its forward path. Together we listen and collaborate to serve others and meet the needs of all God’s people. All the faithful are called to be servants through the gifts they have received from God, and to follow the example of Jesus himself. Everyone has a part to play in the life of the Church and the work of salvation.

And the final theme is mission. The Church exists to evangelize. We can never just be centered on ourselves. Our mission, whether we are laity, consecrated religious, or clergy, is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. The Church by its nature is missionary, and our mission is to reach out not only to those who are already in the fold, but also to those who are on the margins, those who have not yet come to know the love and mercy of Jesus in their lives. We are to be a leaven at the service of the coming of God’s Kingdom.

When Jesus calls us into communion, into relationship with himself, he invites us to participate actively in the life of his family, the Church. And from that communion he sends us out as his witnesses into the world, as his ambassadors and as servants to others. That begins from the moment we are baptized and continues throughout our lives here on earth. The Holy Father wants us to take an active part in this synodal process, and so there will be opportunities for all the faithful of our diocese and for each of our parishes to contribute their input on the way forward for the Church. This form of journeying together, which the Pope calls “synodality,” is a way for the Church to hear the voice of God and to carry out more fervently the mission that Jesus gave to us, to make disciples of all nations. When your parish offers these opportunities, I hope you will take part, so that our experience as a diocese can be passed along to the Holy Father and the Synod of Bishops that will meet with him in two years. And let us pray that this time of preparation will be fruitful for us and for the Church.

This concept of synodality isn’t entirely new, and has already existed in various ways in the Church. I think, for example, of the parish pastoral councils, finance councils, and many other groups that offer counsel and cooperate with the pastor in the leadership of his parish. The representatives on the diocesan pastoral council give their counsel to the bishop on the needs and future plans for the diocese. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has its own National Advisory Council, a gathering of lay Catholics from across the country who advise the bishops on the issues that come before them at their annual meetings. You might remember too that several years ago Pope Francis asked for input from the faithful for the Synod on the Family. We received hundreds of comments from around the diocese which we sent on to Rome.

Contrary to some media-generated notions, the Synod of Bishops is not a parliament or legislature that changes Church doctrine. And it is not the same as a diocesan synod, which deals in a similar way with the more local needs of the local
church. I will say more about that another time. The bishops who will gather around the Holy Father in 2023 will look at the needs of the Church in light of divine revelation as found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Along with the faithful around the world, they will discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit as they look to the ongoing mission that Jesus gave to his Church. This synod will inevitably be followed by others that will continue this work of proclaiming the Gospel and interpreting the working of the Holy Spirit in our times. Pope Francis invites us all to be part of this Synod, so that we may journey together with Christ in a spirit of communion, participation, and mission.

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Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements

Most Rev. John T. Folda, Bishop of Fargo appointed the following as members of the Priests’ Council:


He has recognized the following elected members of the Priests’ Council:


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BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

**Nov. 14–18**
USCCB Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

**Nov. 20 • 5 p.m.**
Mass for Musician’s Workshop, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

**Nov. 25–26**
Thanksgiving, Pastoral Center closed

**Dec. 1 • 3 p.m.**
St. JPII Schools, Board of Directors Meeting, Pastoral Center

**Dec. 3 • 5 p.m.**
St. Michael School Dinner and Auction, Alerus Center, Grand Forks

**Dec. 4 • 5 p.m.**
Mass for Knights of Columbus Winter Meeting, St. Joseph, Devils Lake

**Dec. 5**
Vespers for Installation of Bishop Cozzens, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Crookston, Minn.

**Dec. 6 • 1 p.m.**
Mass of Installation for Bishop Cozzens, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Crookston, Minn.

**Dec. 8**
Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pastoral Center closed

**Dec. 8 • 7 p.m.**
Mass for Feast of Immaculate Conception, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

**Dec. 12 • 7 p.m.**
Shanley Christmas Concert, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

**Dec. 14 • 3 p.m.**
Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

**Dec. 15 • 5 p.m.**
Women’s Care Board Meeting, Fargo

**Dec. 16**
North Dakota Catholic Conference, Jamestown
The story of St. Cecilia is not without beauty or merit. She is said to have been quite close to God and prayed often. Cecilia came from an extremely rich Roman family and was given in marriage to a youth named Valerian. During her wedding ceremony she was said to have sung in her heart to God and before the consummation of her nuptials, she told her husband she had taken a vow of virginity and had an angel protecting her. Valerian asked to see the angel as proof, and Cecilia told him he would have eyes to see once he traveled to the third milestone on the Appian Way and was baptized.

Following his baptism, Valerian returned to his wife and found an angel at her side. The angel then crowned Cecilia with a chaplet of rose and lily. When Valerian’s brother heard of the angel and his brother’s baptism, he also was baptized and together the brothers dedicated their lives to burying Christians who were murdered each day by the prefect of the city. Both brothers were eventually arrested and were executed after they refused to offer a sacrifice to the gods.

As her husband and brother-in-law buried the dead, St. Cecilia spent her time preaching, and in her lifetime converted over 400 people. Cecilia was later arrested and condemned to be suffocated in the baths. She was shut in for one night and one day, as fires were heaped up and stoked to a terrifying heat, but Cecilia did not even sweat. She was then condemned to death by beheading. The executioner struck her three times but was unable to decapitate her so he left her bleeding. She lived for three days. Crowds came to her and collected her blood while she preached to them or prayed. On the third day she died and was buried by Pope Urban and his deacons.

Officials exhumed her body in 1599 and found her to be incorrupt, the first of all incorrupt saints. There was also reported a “mysterious and delightful flower-like odor” which proceeded from the coffin.

St. Cecilia is regarded as the patroness of music, because she heard heavenly music in her heart when she was married and is represented in art with an organ or organ-pipes in her hand.

Feast day: Nov. 22  
Death: Early 3rd century  
Patron: Musicians and Church music

O Jesus, our great High Priest, hear my humble prayers on behalf of your priests. Give them a deep faith, a bright and firm hope and a burning love, which will ever increase throughout their priestly life. In their loneliness, comfort them. In their sorrows, strengthen them. In their frustrations, remind them that through suffering the soul is purified. Show them that they are needed by the Church; they are needed by souls; they are needed for the work of redemption. Amen.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis  
November  
People Who Suffer from Depression  
We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.
We know that marriage existed before Christ, because it was instituted by God when he created Adam and Eve (Gen. 1–2). God put into our hearts a natural inclination for marriage. Marriage responds to our desire for companionship and assistance and also our innate desire for a family, to become a mother or father, to care for another, and to pass on to another the good things we’ve received. Marriage exists as a help to our fallen human state. In our weakness, we are subjected to grave temptations to sensual pleasure. St. Paul says that God provides marriage as a help to avoid the sins of lust (1 Cor. 7:2). Thus, the Jews and gentiles alike had traditions of marriage.

How do we know marriage is a sacrament? One clue is from Ephesians 5:32. After speaking about how husbands and wives should love each other, the Apostle says, “This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church.” The word used here for sacrament is usually translated into English in modern Bibles as “mystery.” Without going into the linguistic details, the Church, from the Fathers onward, saw this passage as affirming marriage as a true sacrament.

What does this elevation mean for marriage? It means that marriage, like the other sacraments, is a sacred sign, something visible pointing to something invisible. Marriage signifies a certain grace and actually confers that grace on those who receive it. Specifically, St. Paul tells us that marriage signifies the love of Jesus Christ for his bride the Church, and her receiving and returning that love to the divine bridegroom. In marriage, a husband and wife point to and make present in mystery, the love between Christ and the Church.

What are the elements of this love? First, unity. Christ’s sacrificial, self-giving love made him and his bride one. He and the Church became one mystical body, joined together by an unbreakable bond. So much so, that Jesus would ask Saul, on his way to persecute the Church in Damascus, in Acts 9:4, “Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?” To persecute the body is to persecute the head. Jesus promises to love only one bride, and she strives to return that exclusive love. In marriage, the spouses are likewise joined together in a unity that mirrors this bond between Jesus and his Church. Through vows, the couple promises to love each other exclusively.

Further, the bond of unity is indissoluble—it cannot be erased. The Lord God does not approve of divorce and has expressly forbidden it in the new law of grace: what God has joined together, man must not separate (Mark 10:9). This command comes because Jesus does not throw off his love for the Church. He doesn’t “put her away” when he’s tired of her, or when her members are unfaithful. And so, he asks married couples to make that love visible and present in the world and gives them aid through the grace of matrimony.

Finally, this analogy of marriage as sacrament and sign points to fruitfulness. Jesus’ self-giving faithful love bore and still bears great spiritual fruit. Jesus poured out blood and water from his side on the cross, a symbol of Baptism and Eucharist. In Baptism, new Christians are born; in the Eucharist, souls are united to the bridegroom. Christ’s love for his bride constantly overflows into an ocean of grace, giving life to souls.

Husband and wife receive the privilege to bear fruit in their marriage through children. Immediately after declaring marriage indissoluble as quoted above, Jesus goes on to say, “Let the children come to me” (Mark 10:14). The disciples wanted to keep the children from him. The disciples had a “contraceptive mentality.” They didn’t see the beauty in the overflow of God’s life; they didn’t want to be bothered or inconvenienced. While all of Christ’s disciples are called to imitate Jesus’ love, husband and wife have a unique opportunity to show forth this generosity. Thus the Lord’s command: let the children come to me! What an amazing privilege to give physical life, yes. But how much more so, to present a child to the font of Baptism giving them entry into communion with the most holy Trinity!

This article concludes our brief survey of the sacraments. In thanksgiving for all the supernatural life-giving sacraments, let us pray: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.
Walk with Christ for Life emphasizes that every person is an “unrepeatable gift”
By Kristina Lahr

On Oct. 3, Respect Life Sunday, faithful gathered for the annual Eucharistic procession from the Cathedral of St. Mary to the Red River Women’s Clinic where abortions are performed in Fargo. Prior to the procession, Bishop Folda celebrated Mass and emphasized in his homily that every human person is a “unique and unrepeatable gift of God, a beautiful manifestation of his love.”

“He doesn’t create us because he needs us, or because he’s bored and needs company,” Bishop Folda continued. “He creates each one of us out of sheer love, a desire to share with us the gift of life, the gift of his life. And for this reason, every human person is deserving of our love and our protection, from the unborn child in the womb to the elderly person approaching the end of their days here on earth.”

Let us renew our commitment to defending all life from conception to natural death through both prayer and action. May our hearts be open and may every child be cherished.

St. Benedict’s Church in Wild Rice celebrates 150 years of service

Bishop John Folda processes in with Monsignor Daniel Pilon at the 150th anniversary Mass of the establishment of St. Benedict’s parish in Wild Rice on Oct. 9. What started as a small mission church along the banks of the Red River in 1870 has grown to a thriving parish of nearly 800 registered members. After Mass, parishioner Paul Richard gave a presentation on the history of Holy Cross Mission, St. Benedict’s Church, and St. Joseph Academy. Dinner, fellowship, and a lot of storytelling followed in the social hall, along with a slideshow providing a photo history of the parish. (submitted photo)
On Oct. 1, Bishop Folda visited CHI Lisbon Health, toured the facility, and presided over a special Mass to bless the altar and to celebrate the dedication of the chapel to St. Catherine of Siena.

CHI (Catholic Health Initiative) Lisbon Health is the Catholic Healthcare Ministry in Ransom County. In 2019, CHI joined with Dignity Health to become CommonSpirit Health, the nation’s largest non-profit healthcare provider. CHI Lisbon is a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital with a Level V Trauma Center and Clinic.

CHI Lisbon Health is unique among its Midwest Division in that it was not founded by a religious community, rather, it was initially founded by Lutheran Hospitals and Home Society in 1952 and was later purchased by CHI in 2002. It is our Catholic Healthcare Ministry that sets all CommonSpirit Healthcare facilities apart. CommonSpirit Health’s Mission states, “At CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.”

As the Mission Integration Leader and Human Resources Manager, my role is to nurture the Catholic identity of our ministry, to reach out to patient and staff in pastoral matters, and to ensure that we are living out our mission and values in our respect for the dignity of all with compassion, integrity, and excellence.

At the request of Father Scott Sautner, we discerned St. Catherine of Siena as patroness of our chapel. The image of St. Catherine in the chapel depicts the Church, represented as a boat, on her shoulder. She is bowed under the weight of it, and you can see the papal flag on the mast. There was a great deal of suffering in the Church of St. Catherine’s time, and through prayer, faithful suffering, intercession, bold speech, and courageous action, she helped to bear the Church through that time, as we are all called to do. She also served the poor and cared for victims of the plague. For these reasons, she is an excellent patroness for Catholic Healthcare today. We too are faced with many challenges, and staying faithful to our Catholic heritage continues to require great prayer, bold speech, courageous action, and faith-filled suffering.

It was a joy to have Bishop Folda; Father Sautner, pastor of churches in Lisbon and Gwinner; and Father Chris Markman, pastor of churches in Enderlin, Fingal, and Sheldon, celebrate the Eucharist, bless the altar, and join us in dedicating our chapel. It is in the chapel that the beating heart of our ministry is found—Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament. He is the divine healer alongside whom every doctor, nurse, aide, dietician, technician, environmental service person, and administrator works to provide hope and healing to all who enter our facility. We encourage all our patients, visitors, and staff to visit Jesus in the chapel as often as they are able.
The Catholic Daughters of the Americas (CDA) Court Marquette (Grand Forks area) celebrated their 100th anniversary Oct. 2 at St. Mary’s Church in Grand Forks. Court Marquette #677 is the seventh North Dakota Local Court to celebrate 100 years of CDA. CDA is one of the oldest and largest organizations of Catholic women in the Americas, dedicated to strengthening their spiritual life through Christ and His Church. Front row: Therese Linnertz, Virginia Wilson, Lucy Hanninen, Msgr. Pilon (chaplain), Joan Scheett, Mary Anne Tupa, Cecelia Grembowski, Doris Zidon. 2nd row: Viola Wysoki, Virginia Esslinger, Suzanne Flom, Mary Jo Schill, Angela Scheett, Laurel Ann Dukart. Back row: Mary Helt, Marion Vasek, Sue Petterson, Janna Patnaude, Anna Seeba, Janice Korczak. (submitted photo)

Physicians, healthcare workers, and health profession students gathered for the annual White Mass on Oct. 17 at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Grand Forks. The White Mass, named for the white coats worn by physicians, is a yearly celebration to ask for God’s blessing on their work and is held in mid-October in honor of St. Luke, patron of physicians (feast day Oct. 18). Celebrant Father William Slattery, chaplain of Shanley High School in Fargo, blessed those in attendance. Following Mass, Dr. Paul Carson spoke on the topic of vaccine mandates. The day was sponsored by the Fargo Guild of the Catholic Medical Association. (Photos by Cambri Sullivan)
Church bells announced the start of the first Nepomuk Narly Gravel Grinder Bike Race in Pisek on Oct. 2. Racers gathered from as far as Colorado and Virginia to participate in this first of hopefully many races in the small northeastern North Dakota town. Over $7,000 of real gold and silver was given to the top three men and women in the 25- and 50-mile gravel trails north and south of Pisek. About 110 kids participated in the Ice Cream Division, a six-mile loop west of town.

The day also included a street fair with vendors, face painting, bouncy houses, and food trucks. Nearly 60 businesses showed their support.

“Everybody was just so happy with it,” said Father Jason Lefor, pastor of churches in Pisek, Lankin, and Bechyne. “People came out of the woodwork to help and volunteer and be hospitable. To prepare for the event, the townspeople filled potholes with gravel and helped tear down the house across the street from the church for a parking lot. They worked hard to make it happen. I’ve been involved in a lot of big events and I’ve never had so much fun putting something together and doing it. From the first moment, it was blessed.”

The event started as a “crazy idea,” but every time Father Lefor told someone about it, the idea was met with enthusiasm and more ideas. The name Nepomuk Narly was inspired by the name of Pisek’s church, St. John Nepomucene. The goal of the event was simple: to celebrate life.

“One of the reasons this came to be is because the farming economy is bad, crops were bad, the weather was bad, and politics were bad. And I thought, ‘can’t we just have one day where we all come together where we don’t have to think about any of that and celebrate life together?’ And we did, right in the middle of harvest season.”

Father Lefor began planning by having an open meeting every Sunday at noon. Anyone who wanted to be a part of the event could come any time. Each Sunday, more people came.

“We did it in a month,” said Father Lefor. “G.K. Chesterton said, ‘anything worth doing is worth doing badly,’ so I thought well, if nothing else, we can just do it badly. But it went well. We had a really great time.”
Growing up in a faith-filled, Catholic household, Advent was always a wonderful time of anticipation. My parents strived to make Advent a special and holy time. We would light the Advent wreath each Sunday, sing a hymn, and read from the Bible (usually from the Book of Isaiah), and we would peel a tab off our Advent calendars to reveal a Bible verse... and a piece of chocolate! Many of these traditions my wife and I carry on today with our son. Nevertheless, try as they might to impress upon us kids the reason for Advent, for me it was always a countdown to Christmas Eve!

The tradition of Advent in the Church has always been a time of preparation for Christmas, the coming of the Christ child. “Advent is simply preparation for Christmas,” said Father Matthew Kraemer, pastor of St. Cecilia’s in Velva and Sts. Peter and Paul in Karlsruhe. “Christmas is Christ’s coming into the world, so the Son of God, who always existed with the Father, comes and takes on a human body and becomes one of us. Therefore, Advent is a preparation to receive God himself in the flesh.”

As I was discussing this article with Father Jayson Miller, Secretary to Bishop Folda, he told me something that I never realized until now. Advent, which begins Nov. 28, is also preparation for the second coming of Christ. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website, “The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ’s second coming at the end of time and to the anniversary of Our Lord’s birth on Christmas. From the earliest days of the Church, people have been fascinated by Jesus’ promise to come back. But the scripture readings during Advent tell us not to waste our time with predictions. Advent is not about speculation. Our Advent readings call us to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world.”

One passage from the Gospel that truly speaks to being prepared for Christ’s return can be found in Matthew 25 in the
parable of the ten virgins waiting for a wedding feast. Those familiar with this passage will recall that the ten virgins were preparing for the arrival of the bridegroom. Five had enough oil to keep their lamps lit and five did not.

“While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us.’ But he said in reply, ‘Amen I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore, stay awake for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matt. 25:10-13).

How many of us are truly ready for that time? How many of us have our “lamps lit?” Advent, then, is a perfect time to reflect on our readiness to enter the Kingdom of Heaven while we also anticipate the coming of the Christ child.

“The concept of waiting can also be staying awake,” said Father Kraemer. “Or, being aware that we don’t let down our guard by not praying, not going to Mass, falling asleep spiritually. In certain aspects, we anticipate Christ through the lights of the Advent wreath, and Christ is the Light of the world that dispels the darkness. We need to be prepared for the coming of Christ and to keep our lamps lit.”

While we should use the Advent season to reflect on our own preparations to enter Heaven, we as Christians are also called to evangelize. We are called to witness and help others to learn of the good news of the Gospel and to help to prepare those who may not be ready to take part in the joy and promise of eternal life with God. In his Angelus of 2018, Pope Francis touched on using Advent for evangelizing.

“Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world.”

Part of helping others to be ready for Christ’s second coming could include reaching out to those who may have stopped going to Mass recently, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, there are those who continue to have valid medical issues and concerns that may be keeping them away from gathering with their fellow parishioners, but there may be others who, for whatever reason, fell out of the habit of attending Mass when public celebrations were temporarily discontinued in 2020. We all had to rely on present-day technology, like live-streaming, to be able to virtually experience the Mass.

Some parishes have continued to live-stream the Mass for those still uncomfortable with gathering in large numbers, and the Diocese of Fargo sponsors the TV broadcast of the Sunday Mass. But unless there is a legitimate medical concern, or perhaps mobility issues, technology should not take the place of in-presence worship.

“During the pandemic that we are still experiencing, technology has been a great help in reaching out to the faithful, especially those who are homebound or vulnerable to illness,” said Bishop Folda. “I believe this technology will continue to support our outreach to the faithful in a variety of ways, even in ways we didn’t consider before the pandemic. At the same time, there is no substitute for actually attending Mass in person and gathering with the Catholic community at the altar. You can’t receive the Body and Blood of Christ through a computer screen. I hope all the faithful who are able will heed our Lord’s invitation to
"Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world.” -Pope Francis, Angelus, 2018

Those who have come back to Mass are called to reach out to those who may still be staying away. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)

'come to the banquet,' which they will find in the Eucharist at their parish church.”

That invitation can come in a personal way. By reaching out to someone you may know who has not come back to the celebration of the Mass, you can make this season a “new Advent” for them and for yourself.

“The gentle invitation to come to Mass, to come back to the Lord would certainly be a good Advent practice,” said Father Kraemer. “Our own renewal flows out into inviting others back as well, and what happens in our own heart becomes a springboard in which we invite others back.”

Let us pray to use this season of Advent as a recommitment to God to “keep our lamps lit” and to be a witness of that light to others. Then we can truly pray with joy in our hearts, “O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.”

Retrouvaille is a program designed to help struggling marriages regain their health. It helps husband and wife rediscover or re-awaken the love and commitment that originally brought them together. The program is highly successful in saving hurting marriages, even bringing reconciliation to couples who have already separated or divorced. Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you learn the tools of healthy communication and healing.

Weekend for couples March 11-13, 2022

Retrouvaille is a program designed to help struggling marriages regain their health. It helps husband and wife rediscover or re-awaken the love and commitment that originally brought them together. The program is highly successful in saving hurting marriages, even bringing reconciliation to couples who have already separated or divorced. Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you learn the tools of healthy communication and healing.

For more information, Call (701) 356-7903 or visit HelpOurMarriage.com
Did you know there is a Catholic tradition of handing out prayer cards at funerals? They depict Jesus, Mary, or one of the saints on one side and a prayer, name of the deceased with the date of death, or rather, birth into eternal life.

This tradition can be traced back to 1700s in the Netherlands. Family members and anyone attending the funeral would take the prayer card and place it in their bible or prayer book to remind them to pray for the deceased. An older generation would be able to pull out many holy cards from family and friends who were important in their lives. They would be able to tell stories about family and friends to the next generation. It’s a great way to learn about family history.

The earliest holy cards for funerals favored an image of the suffering Christ and most of them began with the words of St. Ambrose, “We have loved him during life, let us not abandon him, until we have conducted him by our prayers into the house of the Lord.” Holy cards these days can have any religious image. More recent cards include Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Francis.

We see holy cards for other important events in our lives. For example, a newly ordained priest has a holy card made with a prayer on one side and a holy image on the other. It’s to remind the faithful to pray for him and his ministry. There was a time when it was a common practice to get a holy card made after a child’s first communion. It was to mark this special event but also to remind the child of the great gift they had been given and to always be faithful to God. It was also a reminder to the parents to pray for the spiritual upbringing of their child.

Today, at least here in North Dakota, it is more common to just have a booklet with the deceased’s obituary. Although this is very nice and helpful for those attending the funeral to be reminded or learn something new about the person who has just died, we as Catholics need to be reminded to pray for the soul of the dearly departed, not just on the day of the funeral but for the rest of our lives.

The Church continually remembers in prayer all those who have died. In the month of November, the Church especially remembers and prays for the souls who have died. Nov. 2, All Souls Day, is a day set aside as a commemoration of all who have died, and Masses are offered for them. Since we as Catholics are called to remember our dearly departed loved ones through prayer and Mass intentions all year, funeral holy cards can help us to remember this. They guide our prayer as we entrust our loved ones to God.

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.
In the 17th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, you will find the Evangelist’s telling of the Transfiguration. This is one of several moments when Jesus takes Peter, James, and John aside to reveal something special to them. In this particular event, Jesus’ face “shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light” and appearing alongside him are Moses and Elijah. Peter responds saying, “It is good that we are here.” In reflecting upon the events that happened in Binford on Oct. 22, I get a similar impression: “It is good that we were there.”

Now, the “it” that was good was the Diocesan Youth Rally, Relit, and the “we” was the nearly 200 youth and chaperones who gathered at Red Willow Bible Camp. An event of this magnitude has not taken place for the youth in the Diocese of Fargo since April of 2019 due to both pandemic restrictions and untimely autumn snowstorms. The last opportunity for these young people to experience something like this locally was when this year’s 8th graders were 6th graders. This year was not business as usual. In many ways, the youth that attended this year’s rally were in the position of Peter, James, and John during the Transfiguration. They chose to set aside a day to be with Jesus, and Jesus, in turn, revealed a glimpse of his glory to them, something they may have never seen before.

The vision for the day was set by Brady Borslien, director of youth and young adult ministries with the assistance of youth and advisors of Ignite Ministries, formerly Catholic Youth Advisory Council (CYAC). The day centered on Christ in a way that was positive, refreshing, and joyful. Partly a product of Borslien’s previous experiences as a youth director in the Diocese of Crookston, partly a product of living in a world winding down from a pandemic, this year’s rally looked different from rallies in the past. Though all attendants were still able to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament in adoration, and be challenged by different keynote and workshop speakers, Borslien also wanted to give the youth a positive and impactful experiences to associate with the faith. A clear example of this was the presence of a praise and worship band leading the students in charismatic and reverent worship of the Lord.

The location was also new. Red Willow Bible Camp is centrally located in the diocese, making it a natural choice for an event drawing from parishes in the eastern half of North Dakota. The site has a chapel to hold 210 people, a dining room to seat 120, and both indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate for crafts, contests, and inflatable games.

The keynote speaker for the day, Leah Butalid, spoke to the students in an inviting way, reflecting on the power they’ve been given in baptism. We are all adopted by God the Father, and with that comes tremendous power and deep intimacy. Both of these realities are made apparent in a flame, both powerful and passionate. In order to kindle the fire into a flame, all Christians must look to Christ as the determining factor in our lives.

As I reflect on the happenings of that day, I don’t see dozens of middle schoolers having a blast bouncing on inflatable games and enjoying friendly competition. I don’t see youth ministers pleased with the ease and comfort of their day, sipping some coffee and delighting in a mini cinnamon roll. I don’t see the countless phone calls, paperwork, and struggles that went into making this day happen. I don’t even see the young Church alive with a newfound appreciation for charismatic prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and holy friendships. No. When I look back on this event, I’m left looking with raised eyes, as Peter, James, and John did, seeing “no one else but Jesus alone.” That is what I hope these young people left with.

The feelings and desires of this day may fade. The circumstances and challenges of life may distract them from the convictions to break habitual sins, live life more virtuously, and commit to prayer. My hope is that when the excitement and novelty fade, these young people don’t go back to “business as usual,” rather they see “no one but Jesus alone.”
We saved a place for you at our table.

The research is in: Eating together has benefits, physically and mentally.

And, did we mention delicious?! Check out our sample weekly menu by scanning the QR code here.

Join us at our table. To schedule a tour, call today at 701.237.4700.

Riverview Place | 5300 12th Street South | Fargo, North Dakota
Independent Living | Assisted Living

Nearly 200 Catholic school staff members from the Fargo Diocese gathered for the annual Professional Development Day on Oct. 21 at the campus of Shanley High School-Sacred Heart Middle School in Fargo. Bishop Folda presided at the opening Mass. He cited Jesus’ words to his disciples in Luke 12:49, “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” and challenged the staff members to “set the world on fire” with holiness and charity—“one soul at a time” in our Catholic schools. Keynote speaker Sister John Dominic Rasmussen, O.P., outlined the call of the disciple of Christ to the life of virtue and how to witness and teach virtue in a Catholic school setting. She also shared elements of the Education in Virtue program and materials she and her religious community have developed. (Photo by James LaPlante | JPII Schools)
One summer a series of storms rumbled through a small town. There was one house in particular that seemed to get hit the hardest. Storm after storm, shingles blew off. Windows were broken and siding was damaged. Tree branches were scattered across the well-kept lawn.

The lady who lived there did her best to clean up after each storm, but it was wearing her down. She was poor, and she didn’t have the knowledge or tools to make repairs properly.

She heard many people in her neighborhood speak of a kind and charitable carpenter who lived nearby. People spoke of how he would repair things at no charge for anyone in need. In many of her conversations, she hinted how badly she needed his help, hoping the word would get back to him. Many times, she would see him fixing things for others in the neighborhood.

Why, she wondered, doesn’t he come to her house? She knew he saw the storm. She knew he saw the damage. He goes past every day on his way to fix things for everyone else! Why doesn’t he stop and see if she needs help?

That evening yet another storm roared through, breaking another window. More shingles were lost in the wind. Even the tall pine in her yard fell, skinning her front door, breaking off the knob.

The morning after, she carefully walked out to survey the damage. Once again she felt like her little house took the hardest hit. This was so unfair! Again, she reminded herself the world was not in her control, and the only control she had was her reaction. She took a deep breath and started cleaning up the mess.

Stopping to wipe the sweat away while clearing the tree branches, she noticed the carpenter next door patching a small hole. Frustrated, she wondered, why would he choose to do such a small patch job while clearly she had much bigger problems? Everyone talks of his generous nature, yet he saw her fighting with the branches all morning. If he was so kind to not ask for even a dime for his work, then why wouldn’t he stop and help her when he saw her struggling?

Exhausted, she finally decided to approach him. “I see you’ve been working on my neighbor’s house this morning,” she said with a fair amount of sharpness in her voice.

“Yes,” he replied humbly.

“How much do you charge?” she slyly asked.

“I don’t charge them a thing. I never charge people who are in need of help.”

“Well, did you happen to look over and see my house? Is there a reason you pass by every day to work for others who don’t have nearly the amount of damage as my house?”

Softly he replied, “I have been to your home. I have been outside your door knocking during each storm.”

Shocked, she stuttered, “I...I didn’t hear you.”

“Yes, I know you were home. I heard you crying inside.”

“Why wouldn’t you just open the door, come inside and fix me when you know the storm broke me?” I asked.

To which Jesus replied, “The door doesn’t have an outside handle. First you have to let me in.”
Young people today experience various pressures and expectations that can make them anxious. In a recent essay, Professor Timothy P. O’Malley, of Notre Dame’s McGrath Institute for Church Life, crisply describes some of the over-the-top pressures that graduating college students are likely to encounter in commencement addresses:

Notre Dame students are told that their degree is not exclusively an accomplishment earned through the completion of credit hours but a pledge to change the world. They are charged by a commencement speaker to go cure cancer, secure a spot on the Supreme Court, end political polarization and corruption, and renew communities on the margins through being a transformative teacher. In other words, the bar of anxiety is raised. The future is presented to these students as a series of endless accomplishments that they must complete to be judged as worthy by their alma mater. No wonder students get drunk and hook up on weekends to escape the impending and seemingly impossible responsibility of changing the very arc of human history before they reach the age of 30.

He notes that marriage and family life are seldom part of what commencement speakers at Notre Dame and other institutions of higher education propose to graduates. Students, he says, are “told, sometimes quite explicitly, to bracket out marriage and family life for the sake of their professional careers. And when the marriages and children of prominent commencement speakers are publicly raised on the commencement platform, they are always considered a lesser accomplishment.”

The commitments we make and faithfully fulfill are a source of stability and strength, particularly against the backdrop of life’s turbulence and uncertainty. While there are conflicts, boredom, trials, and other challenges, the consequential adventure of marriage and family life offers a fulfilling pathway toward human flourishing.

O’Malley notes that this is a narrative that young people are interested in: “They want to hear how to be happy, and they want this happiness not to be tied to their accomplishments.” They want to be able to say, “I cannot control every dimension of the future, but I can dwell with this person for the rest of my days. I can commit to a common project, to a hopeful future with this man or woman.” This is an important message for us to pass on to younger generations, especially as they commence post-university life.

In a sense, marriage and raising a family are becoming revolutionary acts in today’s world. They declare something positive and hopeful about the future and push back against the fear and insecurity that plague our human condition. They ground us in something beyond the passing security of worldly accomplishments and challenge us to a higher and more enduring goal.
When I began my religious life journey 68 years ago, apostolic religious life for women was in its heyday. There was lots of work to do and almost enough women to do it. While we were expected to be docile daughters of the church, prestige and privilege also came with the habit. Despite our prayers for vocations and the emergence of new groups, the number of women religious has declined significantly. One may ask, what is going on?

What’s going on is what’s been happening since Jesus walked the earth and the Holy Spirit descended to interrupt the status quo. Religious life has always been an interaction between the Gospel and the culture. The kingdom continues to come and the culture continues to change. The anchorites and mothers of the desert followed the widows and virgins of apostolic times. Monastic groups formed and later came the apostolic bands. No iteration of religious life completely disappeared, but one or the other dominated the churchscape at a given time. Change in how God is honored and people served is not an indictment of the past but simply the evolution of the Gospel-culture relationship.

Religious life remains what it has always been—a call to deepen and broaden the baptismal call through a recognition of the gift of a specific charism and participation in a particular way of life. While the nucleus of religious consecration is active participation in Christ’s mission continued by the Church, its electrons are the vows that vary in number and formula from congregation to congregation but generally contain the commonalities of celibacy, poverty, and obedience.

Before I began living the vows, I studied them. Poverty meant I could use things but could not own anything. Celibacy meant I could not get married and have a family. Obedience meant carrying out the mandates of hierarchy and superiors.

Those connotations continue, however, living the vows has enriched their meaning. Poverty is less about ownership and more about stewardship—about acting justly. Celibacy is less about sex and more about nonexclusive loving relationships—about loving Jesus tenderly in all whom I meet. Obedience has less connection to command and control and more to its root meaning of listening—about walking humbly with God and the people of God. And this vowed life continues to be held together with the glue of community—not the community of living under one roof and all rising at the same time each day, but the community of believers called to share a vision and is willing to work to make that vision reality.

For most of us the romance of quasi-medieval apparel and the comfort of doing things the way we have always done them is gone. What remains is the desire to divest of security and to follow Jesus. We do the best we can as we strive to allow the future of religious life to emerge. We step out in faith just as those before us faithfully strode and stumbled into transformation.

The philosopher Yogi Berra once said, “It’s tough to make predictions especially about the future.” But I am going out on a limb here to make one. Consecrated life (what we usually call religious life) of both men and women is neither dead nor gasping.

The Church doesn’t need me and perhaps does not need my congregation long into the future, but religious life will endure because it is essential to the Church—the same Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

I know not the results of this current transformation, but I am not worried, for in Isaiah 42:16 I hear the words of a loving God: I will lead the blind safely along strange roads. I will make their darkness light, their winding ways straight. I will do all this, I will not fail them.
How should Catholics react to the history of Native American boarding schools in the country?

**CATHOLIC ACTION**

CHRISTOPHER DODSON  
Executive director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference, which acts on behalf of the Catholic bishops of N.D. to respond to public policy issues of concern to the Catholic Church

Many North Dakotans know something about the Indian boarding schools. They remember the experiences that they, family members, or their ancestors had at the schools. Those memories, sometimes with fondness, sometimes with pain, are part of their family history. They are part of our history.

Nevertheless, the history of the schools received broader renewed attention after the discovery of hundreds of bodies and unmarked graves at former indigenous boarding schools in Canada. This renewed attention has resulted in various private and governmental efforts to investigate and address this part of our nation’s and our church’s history.

The policy was engineered and conducted by the federal government, but the Catholic Church participated in the efforts. The idea was to force indigenous people to assimilate into “white American” culture by placing children in boarding schools around the nation. Although practices differed from school to school, the general policy was to strip them of their tribal identity, forbidding them from using their native language, requiring certain clothes, cutting their hair, and making them attend Christian services. In addition, cruel physical abuse occurred. The schools operated from the 1870s to the 1960s.

The federal government ran 360 boarding schools in 29 states. North Dakota had 12 such boarding schools, some involving the Catholic Church.

Some of these schools were on or near reservations. The reservations themselves were attempts to break Indian communities of their way of life, especially for the nomadic tribes of the Plains.

Here is where the church comes in. The federal government often required Christian denominations serve the reservations and boarding schools. In some cases, the government assigned denominations, which were mostly Protestant. In some cases, tribal leaders requested a particular denomination. On some large reservations in the Dakotas, elders requested and received Jesuits and Franciscans.

To the Catholic religious orders, this was missionary work. They were serving communities in need and also bringing them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, however, they became part of the country’s systematic attempt to wipe out Indian culture.

Many of the Catholic religious serving these communities came directly from non-English speaking countries. Ironically, they learned native languages only to forbid them in the schools they ran. While they learned English and became more “American,” voluntarily, they cooperated in the federal government’s program to forcibly do the same to indigenous peoples.

Despite the cruelty of the situation and the participation of church ministers in it, many Native Americans embraced the Catholic faith, and it endures to this day. Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk, the holy man of the Lakota whose cause for canonization has been sent to Rome, is an example of one who embraced the Catholic faith without losing his Lakota spirituality.

But no amount of good can excuse the bad that was done by our government or our church’s people. The pain of the practices at the boarding schools lives on. The consequences of the forced reservation system are felt to this day.

How do we, as U.S. citizens and Catholics confront this past? Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary, has started the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. The initiative will review the nation’s history with the boarding schools and give special emphasis to identifying burial sites.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops office supports the initiative. In response to the Interior Department’s project, USCCB spokesperson Chieko Noguchi stated: “We are deeply saddened by the information coming out of two former residential boarding school sites in Canada. We cannot even begin to imagine the deep sorrow these discoveries are causing in Native communities across North America.

“It is important to understand what might have occurred here in the United States. Therefore, we are following closely the announcement last week by the Department of the Interior of a formal inquiry into residential boarding schools. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will look for ways to be of assistance.

“By bringing this painful story to light, may it bring some measure of peace to the victims and a heightened awareness so that this disturbing history is never repeated.”

It can be tempting to dismiss what happened with a “the past is the past” attitude. Often, however, the past has never truly passed. The Church, especially, understands that we are connected to our past and our future. The federal government’s investigation is a start, and it is a start that we should embrace. Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk, pray for us.
How to give to your Church for 100+ years

Would you like to make a gift to your Church 100 years from now? You can, and here’s how: Simply add up your annual gifts for the year and multiply by 20. Then, make an estate gift for this amount (through your will or other device) and designate it to your “Church Endowment Fund.” That’s all there is to it.

The endowment will provide an annual gift to your Church at roughly the same dollar value you are giving now. Long after you are gone—even 100 years from now—your Church will continue to receive “your” annual gift.

Our managers invest the principal of the endowment, always being careful to make enough income to meet the payout requirements of the fund. Since the principal is kept intact, the endowment never dries up. It’s like an artesian well. Your giving to your Church goes on and on and on.

Here’s an example of how this works: Mary gives her Church $500 every year. She may give it in smaller chunks or as one annual gift. She realizes that her Church depends on her giving and wonders how her Church will fare when she’s no longer alive to send the $500.

Mary talks to our director of planned giving and learns about our Endow Your Giving program. She then instructs her attorney to add a codicil to her will, providing a $10,000 bequest to her Church Endowment Fund.

The initial income from her endowment gift will be $500 (assuming a 5% return), and income will grow as the endowment appreciates over time. She is pleased because she knows that money from the endowment fund will be given to the annual fund every year—just as though she was sending a check herself to her Church.

The idea of an endowment fund may captivate you to the point you will want to establish a larger fund—bearing your name—for either a restricted or an unrestricted purpose. This can be done now or through an estate gift when you are gone. If you would like to learn more about Endowment Funds, or establishing an endowment fund in your name, please contact me at (701) 356-7926.
Starting in first theology at Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary, all seminarians receive a pastoral field placement. Depending on their year in seminary, a seminarian spends a few hours each week doing ministry in a school, hospital, prison, or a local church.

Unlike college, which focuses generally on intellectual learning, seminary has a broader focus. The four areas—or dimensions—that seminarians are formed in are spiritual, intellectual, human, and pastoral. While there was a heavy emphasis on the first three dimensions in my pre-theology years, this is the first year that the pastoral focus really kicks in. It is daunting and exciting.

My pastoral placement is at a local K-8 Catholic school near the seminary I attend. So far, I’ve had the opportunity to work with the third, sixth, and eighth grade students. One of the main challenges has been learning to think in pedagogical (teaching) terms. It is one thing for me to sit in the classroom and learn about the Trinity at a university level. It is quite another thing to concisely teach an 8-year-old about the Trinity at a level he can understand.

I enjoy how quizzical the students are. When Halloween preparations were in full swing, I was asked a lot of questions about spiritual things and scary things (are ghosts real?). This has helped me think about how to integrate what the culture emphasizes (graveyards in front yards appear to be rather popular this year) and use it to emphasize the truth about spiritual realities, like life after death.

Besides being in the classroom, I have the opportunity to be at lunch and recess with the students. While teaching is important, even more important is for us to encounter Christ and to share Christ’s gift of love. By no means is knowledge unimportant, but to have an encounter with the Lord is key. I hope that by these little encounters of eating lunch, playing Four Square, and learning together we will be brought closer to Christ.

When I try to understand what the mission of God is supposed to be in my pastoral placement, two things come to mind. The first is to shepherd. The word “pastor” comes from a Latin root that means “to lead to pasture.” What does it mean to lead others to pasture? It means to feed their souls. Like the first disciples, I have little to offer, yet what I have to give is multiplied if I unite it to Christ, the Good Shepherd.

The second thing that comes to mind is clinicals. I know, that is a big jump from Christ the Good Shepherd, but hear me out. Before a nurse gets their license, they must participate in clinicals where they work under a mentor for a set number of hours in a clinical environment putting into practice what they learned in the classroom. I think this is an appropriate analogy for my pastoral placement. I have been sent to put into practice what I have learned from the heart of Mother Church.

I am thankful for this opportunity. When I graduated college and began my first full-time job, I discovered that there were several things college did not prepare me for. One of these gaps was how my supervisors expected me to proactively handle problem solving by doing as much to find the solution as I could before coming to them and asking questions. I had to change how I worked. While I did not switch careers because my job was not quite what I expected, many people do today.

Because of this gift of working in pastoral fields before my possible ordination to the priesthood, I am confident that I am being well prepared to discover and discern the priesthood. It is a particular blessing this year to encounter God’s children and assist in guiding them towards heaven. Please pray for us, your Fargo seminarians, that we may have a fruitful year of learning and serving in the Lord’s pasture.
We

Remember

A call to pray for those who have gone before us

Please remember in prayer the faithful departed from our parishes, our diocese, and throughout the world. Included are those who passed away between Oct. 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2021. If your loved one was not included in this list, we will include them in the Dec. 2021 New Earth issue.


**GENESEO - St. Martin’s Church:** Rosina Manikowski–Oct. 30, 2020; Frank Ciesynski–Sept. 9, 2021.


“For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” –Romans 14:8


KINDRED - St. Maurice Church: Grace Thoeke—July 24, 2021.

KNOX - St. Mary’s Church: Joan Bosch—Jan. 9, 2021.


Pisek (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)


PEMBINA - Assumption Church: Rose M. Crotty–May 26, 2021.


WESTHOPE - St. Andrew’s Church: Gary “Frenchy” D. Leodoux—Apr. 21, 2021.


**A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST**

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

**75 years ago — 1946**

The Rev. James Wehlitz was installed as the first pastor of the newly founded parish of Holy Family at McClusky on Nov. 6 with the Very Rev. Howard Smith, Vicar General, officiating in place of His Excellency, Bishop Muench. It was a full day at McClusky opening with high Mass, blessing of the church, the installation ceremony and closing Benediction. Erected Oct. 15, 1945, Holy Family parish with its mission of St. Patrick’s at Hurdsfield were once served from Harvey. The church at Denhoff, also a mission at one time to Harvey, was moved to McClusky, renovated, and stationed next door to the priest’s house.

**50 years ago — 1971**

The Fargo chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society experiences growth too big and too fast to keep operating out of the little crumbling house on 1st Avenue South. The store first opened in May 1968 and was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in November 1970. The purpose of the organization is akin to the Salvation Army or Union Mission. It’s run by volunteers and all money made from the sale of goods is for the poor. Since January 1970, the society has dispensed over 1,000 pieces of clothing, furniture, and appliances to 64 families and assisted another 60 persons with monetary help amounting to over $900. As such, the group can’t currently afford a better facility and has established a building fund for a larger space.

**20 years ago — 2001**

Another chapter in the history of the former St. Anthony School and Convent is beginning to unfold in Warsaw. The facility, to be named Blessed Gianna’s Maternity Home, will serve as a pro-life residential shelter for pregnant women and their children. There is a real need for a place of respite and care for women who choose life for their unborn babies but have no means to provide adequately for themselves or for their child. The home is named for Blessed Gianna Beretta Molla, an Italian pediatrician who gave up her own life so her child could live.

**Quotable**

“Allow me, brothers, to look toward heaven rather than at the earth, so that my spirit may set on the right course when the time comes for me to go on my journey to the Lord.” —St. Martin of Tours, feast day Nov. 11

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**HOLIDAY EVENTS**

**West Fargo:** Join in the Thanksgiving spirit at Blessed Sacrament Church on Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for their 42nd Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Free-will offering. Take-out available.

**West Fargo:** Holy Cross Church will host a craft/vendor show Dec. 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Over 70 artisans will be available for your holiday shopping. This is the largest church-held craft/vendor show in the region. Lunch available for purchase. Admission: $2. For more information, call (701) 282-7217.

**Grand Forks:** St. Mary’s Social Concerns will be having a Christmas Cookie Walk Dec. 11 from 9:30 a.m. to noon in St. Mary’s Gym, 216 Belmont Rd. A container will be provided, and cookies and goodies are purchased at $7/pound. Breads, specialty items, and lefse sold separately. Cider and coffee available to enjoy while shopping.

**EVENTS**

**Beginning Experience: Peer ministry for divorced, widowed, separated**

A Beginning Experience will be held Nov. 19–21 at Maryvale retreat center in Valley City. Beginning Experience is a support program offered by the Catholic Church and open to divorced, widowed, and separated persons of all faiths or no faith. Grieving people are guided through a transformational process to a new beginning in their lives. Certified peer ministers who have suffered similar losses lead participants through presentations, personal reflections, and small group sharing. Beginning Experience of Eastern North Dakota offers weekly programs in Fargo, Grand Forks, and Fergus Falls, Minn., meeting once a week for ten weeks. For more information, call (701) 277-8784 and leave a message or visit beginningexperience-easternnd.org.
Gaylin and Sandy Borth, parishioners of St. John’s Church in New Rockford, celebrated their 50th anniversary Oct. 1. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. They renewed their wedding vows with Father Al Bitz who officiated their wedding.

Marie Boyle, parishioner of St. James Basilica in Jamestown, celebrated her 95th birthday on Oct. 27.

David and Kathy Edland, parishioners of St. Aloysius Church in Lisbon, celebrated their 50th anniversary Oct. 23. They have 2 sons and 2 grandsons.

Helen Degenstein, parishioner of St. Cecilia’s Church in Harvey, will celebrate her 97th birthday on Dec. 20. Helen (and her deceased husband Lloyd) have 2 sons, (1 deceased) and 1 grandson.

Pete and Donna Laturnus, parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Munich, will celebrate their 65th anniversary on Nov. 19. They have 5 children, 11 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

Richard Elless, parishioner of Holy Cross Church in West Fargo, will celebrate his 90th birthday on Nov. 19. Richard and his wife Clara have 6 children (1 deceased), 3 grand-children, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Ovide and Verna Marcotte, parishioners of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate their 73rd anniversary on Nov. 16. They have 11 children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Margaret Lange, parishioner of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, celebrated her 90th birthday Oct. 30. Margaret and Henry (deceased) were married 68 years and raised 8 children and have 29 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Beginning January 2022, we will be updating our milestone submission guidelines to include anniversaries for marriages, ordinations, and religious vows for 25, 40, 50, 60, 65, and 70+ years and birthdays for 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100+ years for those in the Diocese of Fargo. Submissions will only be accepted for milestones occurring during the month of publication, one month prior, or one month following. The November and December issues of New Earth will include 50 and 60+ year anniversaries and 80+ year birthdays as usual. Send photo and text announcements to news@fargodiocese.org or to Diocese of Fargo, New Earth, 5201 Bishops Blvd S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 with a stamped return envelope and phone number. Deadline for December issue is Nov. 15.
Pope Francis has named Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis to head the Diocese of Crookston, Minn.

He has been an auxiliary bishop for the Minnesota archdiocese since 2013. A native of Denver, he was ordained a priest for St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1997.

His appointment to Crookston was announced in Washington D.C. Oct. 18 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop Cozzens succeeds Bishop Michael J. Hoeppner, whose resignation was accepted April 13 by Pope Francis. As requested by the pope, Bishop Hoeppner, 71, resigned following a 20-month investigation into allegations that he mishandled claims of clergy sexual abuse.

The pope appointed retired Bishop Richard E. Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, to serve as apostolic administrator of the Crookston Diocese until the appointment of a new bishop.

Bishop Cozzens, 53, will be installed as the eighth bishop of Crookston Dec. 6 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston. Prior to the installation, he plans to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving Nov. 28 at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul.

“I am grateful to our Holy Father for entrusting to me this important mission and my heart is already filled with love for the faithful, the priests and the religious of the Diocese of Crookston,” he said in a statement from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

“At the same time, I also grieve the fact that I will be leaving my home,” he said.

“After almost 25 years of serving in the archdiocese, I have immense love and gratitude for the innumerable ways the people, priests, religious, and bishops have blessed and formed my life,” Bishop Cozzens said.

“The life of the church in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis is vibrant, and in many ways, unparalleled in our country,” he said.

“I have experienced personally that God is doing incredible things here through so many good people who love Christ and his church, and I expect that to grow as the archdiocese brings the synod to completion and begins a new phase of evangelization,” he added.

Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis said the archdiocese is honored that Pope Francis has chosen “our auxiliary” to be Crookston’s shepherd.

“I am not surprised that Pope Francis would have seen in him the extraordinary priestly gifts that have long been recognized by the priests and faithful of this archdiocese, who have come to know him and love him as an energetic and capable shepherd with a huge heart, sharp intellect, and unfailing love for Christ and his church,” he said in the archdiocesan statement.

Born Aug. 3, 1968, Andrew Harmon Cozzens is the son of Jack and Judy Cozzens and the youngest of three children. He attended Catholic grade school, high school, and college. He is a graduate of Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan, where he grew in faith through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Prior to entering the seminary, Bishop Cozzens served from 1991 to 1992 as a team leader of NET (National Evangelization Teams) Ministries, a traveling missionary outreach to youth. His first NET Ministries assignment was to the Crookston Diocese. The following academic year, he was co-director of campus outreach of St. Paul’s Outreach, a college campus ministry. Both NET and St. Paul’s Outreach have their headquarters in the Twin Cities.

As he discerned priesthood, Bishop Cozzens and a small group of other men formed the Companions of Christ, a fraternal community of priests and seminarians that has since established communities in the Archdiocese of Denver and Diocese of Joliet, Ill. The organization received canonical recognition in 1992.

As an auxiliary bishop, Bishop Cozzens has assisted Archbishop Hebda in leading the archdiocese and has been at the helm of several initiatives, including as chairman of the executive team for the 2022 archdiocesan synod, a process that began in 2019. He has served as vicar for Catholic education and overseen the...
archdiocesan offices of Latino Ministry, Evangelization, and Marriage, Family and Life.

He served as interim rector of St. Paul Seminary from June 2018 until January 2019 and has long been a leader in national efforts to strengthen seminary formation.

He is president of the board of directors of the Seminary Formation Council and also is the president of the corporate board for the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Neb.

He is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, and in that position is leading a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that will begin in June. He also serves as chairman of the board of NET Ministries and St. Paul’s Outreach.

Bishop Cozzens’ episcopacy has coincided with exposure of the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

As an auxiliary bishop, he helped lead the archdiocese through a Chapter 11 bankruptcy from 2015 to 2018 that involved more than 450 abuse claims and resulted in a $210 million settlement with victim-survivors.

He also was involved in working to resolve criminal and civil charges filed against the archdiocese in 2015 related to its handling of clergy sexual abuse. That case and its settlement brought about serious, positive reform in the archdiocese’s culture and safe environment efforts, Bishop Cozzens has said. A month after he was ordained bishop, he also became involved in an internal investigation of sexual misconduct against Archbishop John C. Nienstedt, who led the archdiocese from 2008 until he resigned in 2015.

Bishop Cozzens later called that investigation “doomed to fail” because it was conducted internally and without its leaders having authority to act. He joined other U.S. prelates calling for a national, independent structure to investigate bishops accused of wrongdoing.

A structure was ultimately established worldwide through Pope Francis' 2019 legislative document Vos estis lux mundi, which revised and clarified norms and procedures for holding bishops and religious superiors accountable for protecting abusers.

In his statement, Archbishop Hebda praised Bishop Cozzens for “his steadfast advocacy for those who had been hurt in any way by the church, his passion for Catholic education and evangelization, his creative guidance of our synod process, and his love for immigrants, refugees, and those on the peripheries.” These qualities have “have all left what I hope will be an indelible mark on me and on this archdiocese,” he added.

Located in northwest Minnesota, the Diocese of Crookston was established in 1909. It comprises 17,210 square miles and 14 counties.

According to its website, it has about 35,000 Catholics in 66 parishes served by 41 diocesan and three religious order priests; eight Catholic grade schools and one Catholic high school; and three Catholic hospitals and two Catholic nursing facilities.

It is considered “entirely rural in nature,” the diocese’s website states, with farming, logging, and tourism as its main industries.

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On the sidewalk of our state’s only abortion facility, conversations are often quiet by necessity. That day, my fellow advocate whispered to me, as a passerby approached: “Be careful with this one. She’s angry.”

I hadn’t been there earlier when the woman first walked past. Apparently, my comrade had tried to talk to her then, and was only met with verbal venom. Not feeling up to a confrontation, I was fine letting her go by.

But she wasn’t fine with it. Recognizing my friend from their earlier exchange, perhaps, she turned toward us both as we stood silent and, as it often happens when consciences are stirred, began to unleash her rage.

I would be hard-pressed to remember the exact words she uttered in her moments of fury, but she was yelling and accusing us of being on the wrong side of the issue. After a while of allowing her to get it all out—we tried but could hardly get a word in edgewise—I finally cut to the chase.

Looking into her eyes, I point-blank asked, “Have you had an abortion?” She answered quickly, “Yes, I have!” And there it was. Now that the truth had been plainly stated, we could maybe get somewhere.

However, she couldn’t stop her tirade, and thoughtful questions seemed impossible to sneak in amidst her hurling of words. Finally, I butted in again, sincerely wanting to know: “Did you name your baby?” After a slight pause, the woman responded emphatically, “Yes, yes I did! Mistake! It was a mistake, and aborting that Mistake was the best decision I could have made!”

Stunned, my friend and I went silent. What could we say in response? “God doesn’t make mistakes?” That would have seemed trite in that moment. After all, only a short while earlier, the woman had told us God was an imaginary sky fairy. Even if we’d said it, she would have discounted it.

Soon after her confession, the yelling woman walked away, and we were left standing with the raw thought of a dead child who’d never had a chance to breathe fresh air.

Reading about these kinds of exchanges might elicit thoughts such as, “I could never do sidewalk advocacy and deal with angry people like that.” It’s true, perhaps, that not everyone is cut out for this ministry. But if you’ve ever entertained the idea, let me offer some helpful thoughts.

In the years before coming to the sidewalk to pray and fight for the unborn and their parents, I never would have imagined myself in these conversations either. But I’ve learned a few things over time, including this imperative: Look past the anger and to the pain.

While I’m no psychologist, I can reasonably conclude that most of the raw emotion which lands on the sidewalk comes from a place of deep hurt and excruciating mental, emotional, and spiritual unrest. Understanding this, we can also realize that it’s not personal. From there, we can see these wild shows of emotion for what they are.

Any unkind word or gesture becomes a simple note to keep in mind: Hurt person ahead. Knowing this, we don’t have to take that hurt onto ourselves. We can instead give it to God and allow him to use us to simply hear the pain and pray for their healing.

Despite my not having recalled everything she said, I do remember the yelling woman mentioning choice. She probably isn’t aware that 64 percent of post-abortive women report having felt pressured into it, and nearly 80 percent say they were not informed about available resources should they choose life for their child.

Being denied important information to make an informed choice or being pressured doesn’t sound like much of a choice to me. That’s why we’re there. We don’t give up our time to shame women or men, but to offer reasonable alternatives to abortion: life and helpful, caring support. Those who do listen, and leave with a living child, may experience the pain of childbirth, which is fleeting, but they won’t carry the pain of a dead child, which is forever.

Pray, if you would, for the mother of “mistake,” and as you do, consider the name God might have given this dear child. In my heart, I hear, “Beloved.”
Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the December New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?
Last month’s photo is from St. Joseph’s Church in Lankin.