From Bishop Folda:
Walking towards Christmas with St. Joseph

Reclaiming the spirit of Christmas

Saints and hayrides part of outdoor fun at St. Ann's Indian Mission

Christmas blessings to you and yours
From Bishop John Folda and the priests of the Diocese of Fargo

NEW EARTH
The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo
December 2021 | Vol. 42 | No. 11
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Priests gather outside the Basilica of St. James in Jamestown during Presbyteral Days on Sept. 27. (Lisa Lang at Happy Mermaid Images)

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For the past twelve months, the Church has been celebrating a Year of St. Joseph, a time of renewed devotion to the foster father of Jesus who is also the Patron of the Universal Church. In fact, this Year of St. Joseph concluded on Dec. 8, but the graces of this special year will continue if we remain close to this holy man, the protector of the Holy Family. There is no better time to keep him in mind than in these days before Christmas.

In an old family Bible, there is an image of St. Joseph that once caught my attention. Joseph is alone, leaning over his workbench. He is surrounded by his work and holding a tool in his hand, but he looks distracted. He has been asked to do something completely unexpected, and he wonders what this will all mean. Of course, we know what distracts him: he has learned that Mary is with child, but not just any child. This child will be God’s own Son, and the angel of the Lord has revealed to Joseph that God wishes him to take Mary and the child Jesus into his home. Who wouldn’t be distracted? But, as we all know, Joseph accepted God’s invitation. He was reassured by God and given the grace to do what was needed. He accepts, he obeys, and he says, “Yes, I will do what you ask.”

Joseph was a man of silence, or at least that is how we know him. He says not a word in Sacred Scripture, and you might even say that he is mute, awestruck before the mystery of God’s plan. Even though he was a carpenter, Joseph comes across as being contemplative, a quiet participant in the drama of salvation that was unfolding before him. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Mary pondered all these events in her heart, but can there be any doubt that Joseph was also pondering, reflecting, wondering, and praising? Several times during this holy year, I’ve mentioned that my favorite image of Joseph shows him standing over the crib with the infant Jesus, gazing in wonder at the miracle of the Christ child. He was probably wondering what this child would become, and what he would do. I suspect he was filled with determination to be a good father, to protect this beloved Son of God, and to cherish his mother, Mary.

Joseph was also a man of compassion and courage. Matthew tells us that Joseph was a “righteous man,” which is certainly true, but we can safely say that he was also a man of compassion. According to the law, he had every right to dismiss Mary from their betrothal when she was found with child. But he wanted no harm to come to her, and at the message of the angel he took Mary into his home as his wife. It took courage to go against the conventions of the time and to allow his own world to be turned upside down. He provided a place for Mary when it came time for her to deliver her child, and I imagine he was more than a little nervous at the prospect of Mary giving birth in a stable. Joseph’s courage was also evident in the efforts he made to protect Mary and Jesus from harm when their lives were in danger. A lesser man might have turned away and run, but Joseph took them in his care and kept them safe. He slipped by the agents of King Herod and took his little family into exile in Egypt. None of this could have been easy, but Joseph’s compassion and courage made it possible for him to put his trust in God and keep going.

So, what does Joseph have to teach us as we approach the celebration of our Lord’s birth? He teaches us first that this is a season of faith and trust. Like Mary, he put himself into the hands of God and allowed God to take the lead. He also teaches us the value of silence and prayerful listening. We’re entering a busy time of year, with lots of holiday activity and festivity. But we all need a little stillness in our lives so we can hear the voice of God speaking to us, as he spoke to Joseph. This should be a time for prayer and meditation on the place of Jesus in our lives. Even if the world is consumed by a material and secular celebration of Christmas, we should keep our eyes on the One who is the “reason for the season.” Joseph gazed with love on the child Jesus lying in the manger, and he invites us to do the same. He also teaches us that we are all called to compassion and courage. There are many who feel they have no reason to celebrate, or no one to celebrate with. So, we should do what we can to help the weak, the poor, the hurting, and the lost. The compassion and courage of Joseph urge us to persevere even when the easier way looks more attractive.

As the Year of St. Joseph comes to a conclusion, this great season will end, but the graces will continue. I pray that each one of you will have a most blessed and merry Christmas. May St. Joseph be your guide to the Christ child of Bethlehem, and may you rejoice in the joy of his birth as our Savior.

--Bishop John Folda
man still invites us to draw close to Jesus. He still walks with us on our way to Bethlehem, and he still accompanies us on the daily journey of our lives. Keep in mind that besides Mary, no one was closer to Jesus than Joseph. We can’t go wrong by asking his help in our daily prayers. If he was the protector and foster father of the Holy Family, I’m sure that he’s protecting our family of faith as well.

Dear readers, I pray that each one of you will have a most blessed and merry Christmas. May St. Joseph be your guide to the Christ child of Bethlehem, and may you rejoice in the joy of his birth as our Savior.

"All saints give testimony to the truth that without real effort, no one ever wins the crown."

Quotable
St. Thomas Becket
Feast day Dec. 29

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis
December

Catechists
Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

Dec. 24–Jan. 2
Christmas Break, Pastoral Center closed

Dec. 24 • 11 p.m.
Office of Readings, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

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

Jan. 8–15
Region VIII Bishops’ retreat, Venice, Fla.

Jan. 17
Martin Luther King Day, Pastoral Center closed
St. Lucia

By Paul Braun

Feast day: December 13
Death: Fourth Century
Patron: Blindness

St. Lucia, known also as St. Lucy, is best known for a traditional Swedish custom leading up to Christmas. On St. Lucy’s Day (Dec. 13) a young girl wearing a wreath and candles on her head leads a procession of women holding candles in honor of the saint who sheds light for all.

Lucy’s actual history has been lost, and all we know for certain is that this brave woman lost her life during the persecution of Christians in the early fourth century. Because people wanted to shed light on Lucy’s bravery, legends began to crop up. One tells the story of a young Christian woman who vowed to live her life in service of Christ. Her mother tried to arrange a marriage for her with a pagan. Lucy knew her mother could not be swayed by a young girl’s vow, so she devised a plan to convince her mother that Christ was the better partner for life.

After several prayers at the tomb of St. Agatha, Lucy saw the saint in a dream. St. Agatha told Lucy her mother’s illness would be cured through faith, which Lucy used to persuade her mother to give her dowry money to the poor and allow her to commit her life to God.

While Lucy and her mother were grateful to God, the rejected bridegroom was deeply angered and betrayed Lucy’s faith to the governor, Paschasius. The governor attempted to force her into defilement at a brothel, but the guards who came to take her were unable to move her, even after hitching her to a team of oxen. The guards then heaped bundles of wood around her, but they wouldn’t burn so they finally resorted to their swords, and Lucy met her death.

Lucy’s legend did not end there. According to later accounts, Lucy warned Paschasius he would be punished. When the governor heard this he ordered the guards to gouge out her eyes; however, in another telling, it was Lucy who removed her eyes in an attempt to discourage a persistent suitor who greatly admired them. When her body was being prepared for burial, they discovered her eyes had been restored.

Lucy, whose name means “light” or “lucid,” is the patron saint of the blind. She is often depicted with a golden plate holding her eyes and holding a palm branch, which is a symbol of victory over evil.

Historical information from catholic.org.

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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.
Several of my children have stopped going to church. When my family gets together this Christmas, how can I get them to come to Mass without starting a fight?

**ASK A PRIEST**

FATHER GREG HAMAN
Pastor of churches in LaMoure, Dickey, and Verona

As much as people look forward to the holidays, they often bring stresses as well, and family dynamics are among the greatest ones. That may have always been the case, but families currently experience greater divides between the generations than many might be able to remember. The differences from one generation to the next have many facets, but religious differences are among the strongest. A Pew study from 2017 measured that 52% of baby boomers saw Christmas as a religious holiday, compared to only 32% of millennials. Some, like myself, may be shocked to see that only half of baby boomers, some of whom are well into their 70s today, think of Christmas in religious terms. Nonetheless, that helps us understand that even smaller cohorts of younger generations are thinking in religious terms, and that is no less true of college-age adults right now.

If we layer this widening division on top of our nostalgic images of happy families and picture-perfect holidays, we are set up for disappointment. We naturally love our family members, but the idea of a happy family gathered around the living room has taken on something of a sacred ideal in our culture. Everybody is “supposed” to be smiling and happy at a holiday celebration, but is that ever the case? Perfectly united families are a bit of a fiction, it’s sad to say, and they always have been. Thus we have Jesus’ own words, “They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother” (Luke 12:53). Jesus wants the entire human family to be united in our communion with him, but he also knows that will not always be the case.

So how can we navigate these inherently religious holidays if we know that there are religious divides in our family? First, let’s keep our expectations realistic. If you know members of the family have drifted from practicing the faith, you can predict that it will come up when everyone is together. We need not seek conflicts (the Gospel is not served by being hard-headed) but, as St. Peter says, “Be prepared to give an account of the reason for your hope, in all gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Your family members are their own individuals. Treat them as such. Have real conversations, but do your best not to get upset with them even if they get upset with you.

If you’re planning to host a get-together in your own home, then be a gracious host yet without apology for the faith that is central to this holiday. You get to set a faithful atmosphere if you so choose. Read aloud the story of Jesus’ birth from the Gospel of Luke before dinner is served or around the Christmas tree. Thank God for your food by leading grace before the meals. If some people are not believers, then it can be a good moment “to give an account of the reason for your hope.” If anyone has a problem with it, they can host next year.

If you will be spending Christmas at someone else’s home, like your adult child’s, then be a gracious guest and let the hosts be the hosts. Pray “in your inner room,” (Matt. 6:6) if no one leads grace before the meal. Even still, be sure to go to Mass yourself, without question. Your own relationship with Christ must be valued above all, yet do so again with graciousness and without apology. Invite others along, yet be ready to take a “No, thank you,” politely without getting upset. “Your kindness should be known to all” (Phil. 4:5).

We cannot expect, if one ever could, that our families will be united and will happily fill up a pew again at Mass this Christmas. If that is happily the case for you and your family, be grateful and pray for those for whom it is not. Yet if it’s not the case, remember that we celebrate Christmas because “the light shines in the darkness” (John 1:5). Come to Christ with your sorrow, and he will comfort you.

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All of us have been challenged with finding safe ways to build community and continue to nurture our children during the ongoing pandemic. St. Ann’s Indian Mission, Belcourt, created an outdoor Fall Family Festival and hosted an All Saints Day Trunk-or-Treat which allowed them to do just that.

The day of the Fall Family Festival started out dreary, windy, and cold, with low expectations for a good turnout. However, families from Turtle Mountain reservation are used to the unpredictable North Dakota weather and showed up in spite of the chill. They gathered for the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass then followed the path toward the bonfire where a warm plume of smoke enticed the adults to gather. The children ran for the hot cider and the pumpkin patch where each one quickly selected the perfect pumpkin.

Children spent the rest of the afternoon painting pumpkins, going on hayrides that circled through St. Ann’s beautiful property, trying their archery skills, and roasting marshmallows over the fire.

It was a great opportunity for the parents to spend a day outdoors with their children. When asked what their favorite part of the day was, many said the hayride. For several young people, it was their first time on a hay-filled wagon.

The event was a true community affair. A local farmer sold several bales of hay to the church later. After realizing the nature of the event, he promptly drove to St. Ann’s and refunded the money! Additionally, students from the University of Mary, in Bismarck, lent a hand with the event, and a number of St. Ann’s Church members cooked or baked to supply everyone with treats.

A few weeks later, St. Ann’s School celebrated All Saints Day with a Trunk or Treat event. The teachers, volunteers, and Father Dave Brokke, SOLT, dressed up as various saints and shared candy with the children. As the children traveled to each car, the “saints” shared a little about their lives.

Included in the line-up of “saints” present to greet the children were: Blessed Pier Giorgio with a hand-painted mountain to depict his love of mountain climbing, St. Bernadette carting a large statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Francis accompanied by a live cat, Edith Stein, Mother Teresa of Kolkata, Blessed Stanley Rother, and others. The children loved meeting so many saints and enjoyed showing off their own costumes. It was a fun, safe way to celebrate All Saints Day and brought joy to all the children.
**St. Charles Borromeo Church, Oakes, nears campaign goal for renewal project**

By Curt Halmrast | Lay Director • Martha MacLeod | Parishioner of St. Charles Church, Oakes

St. Charles Borromeo Church of Oakes is updating its facilities and adding more space for community fellowship. The church was built in 1967 and the fellowship hall was added 10 years later. For nearly two years, the parish council and building committee have been exploring various options to update the facility. Late last winter the project was given approval from the Diocesan building committee, and in May the parish renewal campaign launched. Curt Halmrast is lay director and co-chairman along with Red Iverson.

A new east entrance will provide an inviting gathering space, a fellowship room, and visible parish offices. A restructured rectory floor plan will allow for more functional use of the rectory space, in addition to modernizing and enhancing the priest’s living quarters. Finally, this project will upgrade the west entrance restrooms by making them considerably larger and handicap accessible.

Since St. Charles has the largest seating capacity in the Oakes area, it is often used by other churches for large funeral services and other events. The addition of more room for gathering is a benefit for all.

Pledges, gifts, and memorials have already exceeded 82% of the campaign goal. A grant application will also be submitted for the Hommerding Incentive Fund, a matching grant program administered by the Catholic Development Foundation. For more information on this building project and how you can participate, go to stcharlesoakes.org.

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NEW EARTH December 2021
I spent many hours over the past month trying to decide what *New Earth* should address in a story relevant to the Christmas season. It wasn’t until I attended Mass at St. Mary’s Church in Aberdeen, S.D. last month that it dawned on me, thanks to the homily given by the presiding priest. His homily centered on how we are constantly chasing things in our life to make it more comfortable and satisfying while ignoring our true purpose on Earth—to be ready to spend eternity with our God and Savior.

A quote the homilist cited from Bishop Fulton Sheen stuck with me. “We have not been placed on this earth to be satisfied.” No matter what comforts and niceties we try to attain in life, it won’t matter if we don’t first care for our souls. While listening to the homily, I realized that as a society we have lost the true meaning of Christmas as hyper-commercialization has taken over. Our attempts to provide for our loved ones that “perfect Christmas” many times revolves around department stores and online shopping, and sometimes the birth of the Christ child takes a back seat.

Think back over the past few months how the national news media has been reporting on the supply chain shortages. Retailers blasted us with message about getting that perfect gift soon because supply chain issues could mean that item may not be available much longer. We’ve been bombarded with dire warnings to spend now so as not to disappoint our loved ones.

It also seems that each year the Christmas decorations come out in the stores earlier than before, along with the blaring of holiday music. We hardly have time to put away the Halloween
decorations before the inflatable Santas and holiday lights are on display.

“We increasingly live in this secular world that has lost its boundaries,” said Father Chad Wilhelm, pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake. “If marriage in our country does not have to be strictly speaking between a man and woman, then why would we expect appropriateness from advertisers who break boundaries of time and seasons? Around Halloween time we see advertisers pushing for Black Friday deals for the holidays. I thought to myself, when did the Friday after Thanksgiving become the Black Friday holiday?”

Of course, we all know the reason for the season is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the Father’s gift to us. There’s nothing wrong with giving family and friends a memorable Christmas, but that the gift-giving can outweigh the gift receiving, especially the recognition of the gift of the Christ child, if we aren’t attentive.

So, how do we as Catholics reclaim the true meaning of Christmas? How do we make this holy day the holiday it is meant to be?

Let’s start by what we can do in our homes. Through this month of December, take the time to celebrate Advent. Light the candles on an Advent wreath displayed prominently in your home, preferably at mealtime. Read a scripture passage when you light each new candle on Sunday, and keep lighting them throughout the week. This is especially important for families with young children to help them realize we’re waiting for Jesus, not for Santa. Next Advent consider getting a liturgical Advent calendar. Each day reveals a reading from scripture that pertains to the coming of the Messiah.

Nativity scenes set up in your home are also great ways to explain to your children who it is that will be coming on Christmas. When I was growing up, my parents kept the figure of the Christ child out of the manger until the night of Christmas Eve. At that time, my siblings and I would process in with the figure of Jesus, singing *Ihr Kinderlein Kommet* (O Come Little Children) and place the figure of the infant Jesus in the crib. Read from scripture (my father’s preferred reading was from Luke 2:1-20) on Christmas Eve and sing Christmas carols before opening gifts. And of course, attend Mass Christmas Eve, at midnight, or on Christmas day!

It is also important to remember that Catholic tradition tells us that Christmas does not end on Christmas day. The famous “Twelve Days of Christmas” carol was based on the belief that the Christmas season lasts until the Feast of the Epiphany. In many countries and in some families here in the United States, Epiphany, the observance of the visitation by the wise men to the manger, is the day for giving and receiving gifts, not Christmas. In one family I knew growing up, each family member was asked to give up one gift they received, and give it to the needy the Friday before Epiphany. Sometimes, the children in that family would give up the gift they most wanted! As a youngster, I never understood that tradition, but as an adult, I can see the beauty of the lesson that was being taught.
“It is very significant for Catholics to hold their excitement and to live the appropriate season of the Church year,” said Father Wilhelm. “It is equally important for our parishes and priests to really promote Advent, the preparation for Christmas, and then celebrate the 12 days of Christmas from Midnight Mass until Epiphany.”

Of course, Christmas traditions vary from family to family. No matter what traditions you observe during the Christmas season, the one tradition we should all honor is making sure we know the true reason for the season and not to let our pursuit of worldly possessions get in the way. This is true all year long as well. Enjoy life. Enjoy the comforts one is afforded. However, realize that those comforts are a blessing and gift from God, and don’t lose sight that the Father’s gift to the world was his only begotten Son for the redemption of all. That is the true worldly and heavenly possession that should be strived for.

“We have not been placed on this earth to be satisfied.”

- Bishop Fulton Sheen
On Dec. 6 we celebrated the feast of St. Nicholas. Many Catholics celebrated this feast by hanging stockings the night before and feasting the next morning on a variety of treats found in them. Others will place their stockings out Christmas Eve and the feasting of the stocking treats will go along with the opening of presents either that night or the next morning.

The tradition of hanging the stockings or putting out the shoes comes from a legend passed down to us about a 4th century bishop named Nicholas of Myra. It is the story of how Nicholas came upon a poor father and his three unmarried daughters. There was no money for a dowry, which was expected for a good and noble marriage, and so while the girls’ stockings where hung by the fireplace to dry, Nicholas tossed gold coins through an open window which landed into their stockings, thus giving the girls what they needed. Nicholas was canonized and given the feast day of Dec. 6. The traditions of giving little gifts and festive celebrations have occurred ever since.

The celebration of this feast has varied throughout the centuries. In parts of Europe, such as Italy, Bavaria, and the Netherlands, it can be quite an elaborate celebration with fireworks, religious processions, and parties. It was the first immigrants from these countries that brought St. Nicholas traditions to the United States. By 1810, the Catholic Dutch in New York were already hanging their stockings by the fireplace on the eve of Dec. 6 expecting Sinterklass, the Dutch name for St. Nicholas, to fill them. A few years later in 1823, Clement Clark wrote a poem in a newspaper titled A Visit from Saint Nicholas which begins, “Twas the night before Christmas” and within his poem is the line, “the stockings were hung by the chimney with care.” Another author a few years later named Washington Irving, wrote an article that included the idea that Santa Claus, thus changed from Sinterklaas, was now a jolly, fat, white bearded man who road over treetops and handed out presents to children. These articles sparked a wave of new Christmas traditions for everyone. American Protestants who wanted to participate in the festive stocking hanging tradition began to hang their stockings on Christmas Eve. American consumerism took on from there.

Regardless of when people hung stockings, or what faith tradition was practiced, there were still some common customs of what type of goodies were stuffed in the stockings. First you had to be good or the threat of coal in your stocking loomed weeks beforehand. As for the treats, the most common item in times past was an orange. One story recalls that the gold St. Nicholas threw in the house was actually gold balls, therefore resembling oranges. In the past oranges were considered a special treat and were not available year round as they are now. The orange eventually gave way to the popcorn ball, which had the same shape and was a bit more delightful for children to receive. Then there were the chocolate gold coins, also to represent the money St. Nicholas gave to the girls. The candy cane, shaped like a bishop’s crozier, became another popular stocking stuffer. Today, it is pretty much anything goes, from candy bars to gift cards and of course the threat of coal for bad behavior.

There are many things families can do for the feast of St. Nicholas beyond hanging of stockings. Check out some great ideas at stnicholascenter.org.
Children are jewels of the Church

By Becky Rohrich | Parishioner of St. Andrew’s Church, Zeeland

It is always special when children attend Mass, but when you belong to a smaller parish, it is even more special. Children are a sign of life and hope in the next generation of the Church in our small rural parishes. It is a blessing that everyone within our parish acknowledges the children and makes them feel special, especially our priest Father Wenceslaus Katanga.

Our family are members of St. Andrew’s Church in Zeeland. My husband Allan and I have 4 children: Matthew (8), Grace (6), Nathan (3), and Michael (1). For Easter this year, we gifted our children vestments and a Mass kit since they are very interested in pretend play at their ages and love to re-enact Mass in our home. I asked our son Nathan some mornings if we could surprise Father Katanga by wearing his new vestments to Mass. However, most weeks he would be shy and tell me no.

Father Katanga and Nathan have always had a special relationship. When Nathan was two years old, he would sometimes want to stay with Father Katanga after we went up for communion. Father always told Nathan that he was welcome to stay with him. Father would show Nathan where he could sit.

On Aug. 19, Nathan agreed to wear his green vestments for Ordinary Time to Mass, but only if he could take his green John Deere combine along too. When we got to the church that morning, we were greeted with “hellos” and smiles from parishioners. Frank Weigel, who is a parishioner at St. Andrew’s, took Nathan by the hand to find Father Katanga. Father Katanga was surprised and excited to see Nathan in his matching green vestments and welcomed Nathan. Before Mass started, Father invited him to take some photos. Shortly after Mass started Nathan found his way back to his parents. It was a special day, not only for Father Katanga but also for our parishioners at St. Andrew’s.

As a mother of four in a small, rural parish with few young children, it brings me peace and joy knowing that my children are welcomed and cherished within our parish and especially by our priest. Experiencing the love of our parish for my children constantly brings me the perspective that children are gifts and true jewels of the Church.

Setting youth straight on the horrors of abortion

Six women representing PALS (Post Abortion Ladies Speak) shared their stories on the emotional cost and consequences of abortion with youth and adults from Lidgerwood, Wyndmere, and Hankinson at St. Boniface Church in Lidgerwood on Nov. 10. All six presenters shared their pre and post-abortion stories, reminding teens that abortion is permanent and abortion is murder. They also shared their stories of redemption and God’s forgiveness. The event, sponsored by St. Boniface Church, was part of the 40 Days for Life recently observed by the Diocese of Fargo. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)
You’re invited to be part of New Earth!

The diocesan publication, New Earth, aims to provide informational, educational, and inspirational stories and photos about the people and places of the Diocese of Fargo. You are invited to be part of this outreach to our diocese by letting us know what kinds of stories you’d like to see, what news and events happening at your parish, and what ways the Lord is working in our area.

You are also invited to be a featured writer for the recurring columns Catholic Culture in the Home, and Stories of Faith. For details on how to write for these columns, contact Kristina Lahr at:

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

The following are the 2022 printing deadlines. All submissions must meet approval before being published. No item is guaranteed with the exception of paid advertising.

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Holiday lights and lanterns.

Offering hope and healing to families who have lost a loved one.

We invite you to participate in our month long series of events and activities to enjoy the holidays while we celebrate the lives of all those we have lost.

December 1, 2021 – January 1, 2022
Riverview Place | 5300 12th Street South, Fargo

For a complete list of scheduled events and ways to participate, scan the QR code here, visit homeishere.org/lights, or call 701.237.4700.

All activities are free & open to the public.

Independent Living | Assisted Living

CHI Living Communities
Riverview Place
What kind of classified ad might Jesus run today calling people to discipleship? Cardinal Seán, as he calls himself, after mentioning post office wanted posters, online dating services, and job want ads, imagines Jesus using a simple one-liner, *Wanted: Friends and Footwashers*.

The Cardinal’s slim volume meditates on this job description embedded in Jesus’ Last Supper discourse. The call to ministry is taking on a new profile with the launch of the 2023 Synod on Synodality. It is in this context I encourage reading this book by Boston’s archbishop.

On Oct. 10, Pope Francis opened a three-year process that will culminate in the 2023 Synod on Synodality. He asks bishops and priests first and foremost to prepare the way by listening. As ministers of the Word, we’re more comfortable with proclaiming and explaining. There’s place enough for that, but a new element is being introduced, and Francis says God is calling for this.

The synod will have three stages: diocesan, continental, global. A Synod on Synodality is like a chant about praise. Each voice arises from the resonance of multiple fibers capturing the breath that passes over them. Each parish has a voice, and the pastor is the curator of that voice coming together through parishioners and how they experience the Holy Spirit.

Catholics believe the priesthood of Christ resounds in two participations. The anointing with chrism at Baptism aligns one with Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king, making the whole community of believers priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood by living Christ’s mission of self-sacrificing love. The ministerial priesthood of bishops and priests exists to serve the common priesthood of the faithful.

The current synodal process requires a certain kind of priest. Cardinal O’Malley’s book addresses such a man. The eight chapters tease out a portrait of a “man of the cloth” woven of Scripture, tradition, and a string of stories told with Irish-American wit. By my unofficial counting, there are some 34 anecdotes in 82 pages, not including quips and comparisons at every turn. If the word “synodality” does not appear, the spirit and style certainly do. For instance, when it comes to preaching, O’Malley nods to a study indicating the number one thing that drives Catholics away from a regular practice of their faith: bad homilies. He risks encouraging what few priests dare to do—ask input from their pastoral councils.

I’ll be the first to admit that’s a scary proposal for me. God grant me the courage to slip it onto the agenda and see what happens. Reminds me of a lovely parish in our diocese that recently had an auction to raise money for their Catholic school. One item auctioned was a “3-minute homily.” It raised a few thousand dollars! Does it make you wonder, with a smile, why somebody might pay so high a price to hear less?

Cardinal O’Malley’s Jesus-centered spirituality, humorously illustrated, speaks to priests and laity alike. Still, a dignified tone and seriousness about discipleship distinguish these pages. His conclusion, that it’s easy to judge others until I end up in the same circumstances and discover my own weakness, is not meant simply for confessors.

In another chapter, he characterizes Jesus’ life as moving between two poles: Nazareth and Capernaum. Nazareth stands for hidden, ordinary, safe, family life. We all need a comfort zone in which to be refreshed. Then there’s Capernaum, the messy life, the field hospital; this is the place of encounter with strangers and suffering, where we spend ourselves in service. These two towns show up in almost every lifestyle.

When we speak of the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian living, it can translate as this: the one priesthood of Christ transforms the world through friendship and footwashing.

“Synodality” is a new word for us, and it’ll take time to get used to it. This collaborative spirit, walking a road together, is a shift in style bound to shape the life and structure of the Church ever after. This easy-read thoughtfully celebrates a newly emerging look on the face of our beloved Church and the voice with which she’ll speak to our future.
The Christmas season is a marvelous time for everyone to reflect on the concept of time. Time drags before Christmas. Then time accelerates from the “night before Christmas and all through the house”—completely shutting down when it’s “time” for unwrapping presents, for parents to wonder if all the hassle was worth it, for hearing the gleeful exclamations, and for observing the ear-to-ear smiles of their offspring. Then time resumes its previously plodding pace as the presents are put away, the silvered tinsel and delicate ornaments are boxed, and Dad drags the dry-needled tree out to the berm.

Each Christmas, my family loses track of time recalling the anniversary of one particular Christmas. When we were youngsters, we had a big, affectionate dog named Woof Woof. He was a yellow lab and the world’s greatest, good-natured dog. It was a frigid Christmas Eve (~20 degrees). My little sister pestered Dad to bring Woof Woof indoors from his shivering-cold doghouse. He, with Mom’s permission, finally relented.

Well, Woof Woof thought he was in heaven as we two boys wrestled-with him on the warm, living room carpet. My little sister was Woof Woof’s favorite. After all, she insisted on nightly bringing him his dog food with a few table treats on the side. She was petting his fur, but it was so cold, she pleadingly looked-up at Dad and blurted, “P’ease get Woof Woof warm water.” Dad dutifully found an old kitchen bowl and filled it with water from the tap. My little sister put her index finger in the water to assure that it was not too warm, and Woof Woof lapped-up the whole bowl. Then we children went to bed reluctantly but expectantly, eventually falling sound asleep.

Mom and Dad were relaxing in the living room when suddenly Woof Woof got up, sauntered over to the Christmas tree, lifted his hind leg, and piddled all over the Christmas presents. Mom was beside herself, though Dad couldn’t stop laughing. She spent the rest of Christmas Eve throwing-away ribbons we children made and tied ourselves, peeling off icky, wet wrapping paper and re-wrapping most of the presents. Dad pulled Woof Woof by his collar down to the basement and set the culprit on an old rug before the furnace.

By Christmas morning, the weather changed for the better. It was much warmer, and Dad took Woof Woof back to his lair with ne’er a whimper. Then off we drove in our old Chevy to Christmas morning worship.

Mom was not quite herself until after Christmas dinner when she ate five of grandma’s jellied pecan finger holiday cookies. We asked her what happened to all our pretty, home-styled ribbons and bows, but neither she nor Dad answered us then.

Yearly at Christmas time, we laugh about this for surely it was a time for laughing, immortalized party because time was inconsequential.

Don’t let time “trip you up.” Enjoy the moment, the “stopped now,” that allows us a taste of the feeling of eternity.

May the same joy of the very first Christmas—with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—be with you.
In beginning my first year of Theology studies, I’ve done much reflecting on these nearly seven years since graduating high school. I am no longer the same man I was then. I left my home in Fargo and lived a while in Warsaw. Then I lived in Nebraska for seminary and would be back on occasion to Fargo and Warsaw during holidays and summers. Now here I am in St. Paul, Minn.—the last place my younger self would have chosen to live.

In these transitions, there has been sorrow, joy, frustration, and a sense of feeling lost. None of these places have ever been truly “home” to me since I left Fargo the first time. I belonged in each, and always the most in Fargo with my family, but even Fargo no longer has the same sense of peace and refuge it had when I was growing up. Not because of my family, but because of me. I’ve changed, grown, and found that my home in this world depends not on my family, a religious community, or even my diocese but upon my God.

Hearing this, one might think I would have then found my place of refuge, but God is infinite, and I needed a special niche to call my own in the vastness of his glory. Yet as the snow begins to fall and the world changes from green and gold to silver and blue, I have begun to reflect once again, and I realized that the place I am looking for is a place that I already know.

From my earliest memories, this time of year has been the one I love the most. This time when the crystalline ice and gentle snow transform the world into a palace with a silver floor and a sapphire roof—this time when all the world remembers that this winter palace was given a new royal chamber, that is, a new Holy of Holies. This new Holy of Holies which contains the New Ark of the Covenant and the presence of God made man within her, this is my home. My home is a little cave where I can worship the divine infant who sleeps on the breast of his mother. This is my little niche in all the infinite gifts God has given.

I look back now upon my life and find that this has always been the case. From before my use of reason, I was most drawn to the lady in blue and the baby she held. When I was an altar server, my favorite Mass to serve was the Midnight Mass. That night is the one night when the world seems most like heaven, as the perfect woman cuddles her perfect son. To me the winter has never been bleak but beautiful.

Now as I write this article in the last place I would have chosen to live, I find that I am quite content. I am happy and at peace amidst the tests, the homework, and the rigors of seminary formation because, no matter how long or short my up-coming break will be, I am already home. Now as the yellow light of my lamp illumines a small corner of this room as I type, I think of Bethlehem and the little lamp which illumined the faces of Jesus and Mary—and I am at home with them. No matter what happens in life, no matter where my bishop sends me, I will never need to leave home. No matter the loneliness or fatigue that might come upon me, I will always have this place of refuge.

I was once tempted to think that I would never have a home. I feared that the frequent moving from seminary to seminary and parish to parish would leave me feeling like a vagabond who didn’t belong anywhere. Now I know that my home is in God, not just as an abstract idea but as a profound part of my life. My Jesus and my Mary welcome me every day to warm my soul in the little cave of Bethlehem. My Jesus and my Mary are my home.
Structures of sin and their social consequences

Many Christians, including Catholics, have difficulty understanding that “structures of sin” may exist separately from our own individual sins. I suspect that certain religious and political strains of thought in the United States that emphasize the individual as paramount contribute to this problem. The false idea that we are autonomous individuals acting in isolation prevents us from accepting and addressing the social consequences of our sins and the sins of others.

A sin is a personal act (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 1868). Only individual persons can sin. The consequences of sin, however, are always personal and social. Sin ruptures our relationship with God, but it also ruptures our relationships with each other.

St. John Paul II put it this way: “The mystery of sin is composed of this twofold wound which the sinner opens in himself and in his relationship with his neighbor. Therefore one can speak of personal and social sin: From one point of view, every sin is personal; from another point of view, every sin is social insofar as and because it also has social repercussions” (Reconciliatio et Paenitentia).

This is easy for us to understand when the sin is of a direct social nature, such as lying to your spouse or stealing from your neighbor. What is harder to understand is how sin has a social consequence when the sin was not directed at another person, or we do not see the consequence.

One reason that is hard to understand is that it is part of the mystery of sin and the social nature of the human person. Created in the image and likeness of God—whom, being of three persons, is social by nature—we are social creatures, mysteriously connected to all persons, near and far, past and present. That connection is hard to see and even accept in this individualistic society, yet it exists nevertheless. When we sin, therefore, we rupture that relationship, and the consequences of our sins become social in ways that we may never see in our life in this world. St. John Paul II wrote: “By virtue of human solidarity which is as mysterious and intangible as it is real and concrete, each individual’s sin in some way affects others.”

The social consequences of our sin can build up and become what the Catholic Church calls “structures of sin.” The Catechism describes it this way: “Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. ‘Structures of sin’ are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn” (CCC 1869).

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church teaches that these structures of sin “grow stronger, spread and become sources of other sins, conditioning human conduct. These are obstacles and conditioning that go well beyond the actions and brief life span of the individual…”

Structures of sin are rooted and have their origin in personal sin. We, personally, may not have created them. Other persons, sometimes many others over decades or centuries, might have created them. Still, as members of the human family and because we are called to solidarity, we have an obligation to address them and eliminate them.

Where are these structures of sin? This is where the teachings of the last three popes can be difficult for people to accept. Structures of sin may not be obvious evils like an abortion clinic or acts of genocide. They can exist in our laws, cultural customs, financial systems, and business practices. Although these structures cannot themselves sin—only people can sin—these structures may be evil in and of themselves, further injustices, restrict the ability of people to develop to their full potential, impair the ability of people to freely choose what is right. This is what is meant when the Church talks about structures of sin “conditioning human conduct.”

Structures of sin, therefore, can make systems of law, business, and even technology that are racist, pro-abortion, anti-immigrant, hostile to the poor, and threatening to the environment. Whether or not we intend to further the wrongs built into these systems or the sins that created them, we can find ourselves living, working, and even perpetuating them.

In all forms, it is our responsibility to remove them. In Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, St. John Paul II wrote at length about how our common existence and the virtue of solidarity compels us to identify and address these structures of sin. The answer, he taught, does not rest solely in changing our own actions toward individuals, but also addressing the structures through the political process, but always with an eye on acknowledging our own sins and responsibilities.

During this Advent season, we should, in addition to taking time to acknowledge and confess our individual sins, identify and work to remove the structures of sin around us.
Why share this topic with you? It seems so natural and an imperative to write of joy since we will soon be celebrating with all the Angelic Choir, Our Lady, and St. Joseph, the birth of our savior, incarnate love and joy! Every infant cry of Jesus is a melodic song of merciful love to his heavenly Father for each one of us and our whole wounded and suffering world.

Our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist is exuding joy and his effect is peace.

–Sr. Joseph-Marie of the Child Jesus

There is also joy and gratitude in all the little things: the loving providence of the good God in the tiny things that can easily go unnoticed, and the big things too in our friends, benefactors, and families. This wells up into the Liturgical seasons and feasts, Community celebrations, and the Sisters’ feast days.

We see this exemplified in Our Lady Mary when in joy she speeds along the way to be with her cousin St. Elizabeth. The Latin word in the Liturgy seems to denote a joyful urgency. St. John leapt for joy in St. Elizabeth’s womb. On Pentecost, the Apostles were so exuberant that the people thought they were filled with new wine! Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This means that it is not a natural, emotional joy; it is not without trials, sorrows, and sometimes very heavy ones. We use these as prayer and sacrifice for priests, and for the whole Church. Our dear Lord promises to carry these burdens and sorrows with us, for his burden is light and sweet. St. Augustine calls the Holy Spirit “the sweetness, jubilation of the Father and the Son.”

How can interior joy exude from us? In Carmel everything is done with Our Lady. It must find expression in praise of the Blessed Trinity, by serving others in our diocese and parish communities and in prayer for the whole Church and the world. We see our vocation in the light of the mystery of the Church which makes it all-embracing and encompassing. Its expansiveness cannot be contained within.

Our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist is exuding joy and his effect is peace. Have you ever heard of the incident in the life of the Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney? Often when he went into the Church, he would find this poor elderly man just kneeling and gazing in quiet love before the Blessed Sacrament. St. John asked him one day what he was saying to Jesus. He answered, “Oh nothing, I just look at him and he looks at me.”

How wonderful! Jesus in the Holy Eucharist gazes upon us and transforms us into his beauty. We become what we contemplate and gaze at. And St. John Vianney leaves us with this tremendous mystery to ponder at each Holy Communion: “every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart.”

A contemplative community is like a lighthouse which never moves, but which radiates Christ’s love to the storm tossed world. Kept bright with loving prayer and sacrifice, its light of faith shows sojourners the way to safe harbor in the arms of Jesus, Who is the Light that wants to shine in each of us for the entire world to see.

-Sister Maria Teresa of the Sacred Heart

Contact Kristina Lahr
(701) 356-7900
newearthads@fargodiocese.org

Get Connected with the Diocese of Fargo
Why equity, diversity, and inclusivity are not absolute values

Not at all—and a moment’s reflection makes this plain. When the many is one-sidedly emphasized, we lose any sense of the values and practices that ought to unite us. This is obvious in the stress today on the individual’s right to determine his or her own values and truths, even to the point of dictating one’s own gender and sexuality. This hyper-valorization of diversity effectively imprisons each of us on our own separate islands of self-regard and gives rise to constant bickering.

Finally, let us cast a glance at inclusivity. Of the three, this is probably the most treasured in the secular culture of today. At all costs, we are told we should be inclusive. Once again, there is an obvious moral value to this stance. Every one of us has felt the sting of unjust exclusion, that sense of being on the wrong side of an arbitrary social divide. That entire classes of people, indeed entire races and ethnic groups, have suffered this indignity is beyond question. Hence the summons to include rather than to exclude, to build bridges rather than walls, is entirely understandable and morally laudable. Nevertheless, inclusion cannot be an absolute value and good. We might first draw attention to a conundrum regarding inclusivity. When a person wants to be included, she wants to become part of a group or a society or an economy or a culture that has a particular form. For example, an immigrant who longs to be welcomed to America wants to participate in an altogether distinctive political society; when someone wants to be included in the Abraham Lincoln society, he seeks entry into a very circumscribed community. In other words, she desires to be included in a collectivity that is, at least to some degree, exclusive! Absolute or universal inclusivity is, in point of fact, operationally a contradiction.

Perhaps this principle can be seen with greatest clarity in regard to the Church. On one hand, the Church is meant to reach out to everyone—as is suggested symbolically by the Bernini colonnade outside of St. Peter’s Basilica. At the same time, the Church is a definite society, with strict rules, expectations, and internal structures. By its nature, it excludes certain forms of thought and behavior. Cardinal Francis George was once asked whether all are welcome in the Church. He responded, “Yes, but on Christ’s terms, not their own.” There is a healthy and necessary tension between inclusion and exclusion in any rightly ordered community.

Having shown that none of the three great secular values are in fact of absolute value, are we left in a lurch, forced to accept a kind of moral relativism? No! The supreme value that positions every other value, the unsurpassable moral good in which all subordinate goods participate, can be clearly named. It is love, which is willing the good of the other as other, which indeed is the very nature and essence of God. Are equity, diversity, and inclusivity valuable? Yes, precisely in the measure that they stand athwart love. To grasp this is of crucial importance in the moral conversation that our society must have.
A message from Bishop John Folda

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With praise and thanksgiving to God, I am deeply grateful for your generosity during the past fiscal year. The pandemic did not stop the work of the Church, but it did make it more interesting. We keep seeing or hearing the questions, “What did we learn from COVID-19?” It is not what we have learned, but we have always known—Jesus is not limited by earthly concerns!

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

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

What follows is the annual accountability report, which covers the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The Diocesan Finance Council, which includes 10 laypersons from throughout the diocese and five diocesan representatives, assists me in the painstaking task of overseeing diocesan finances. We are thankful for your generous and consistent financial support. May God bless you and reward you for your financial assistance, prayers, and acts of service in response to his call.

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John T. Folda
Bishop of Fargo

Diocesan Financial Report 2021
Diocese of Fargo statement of operating income and expenses for year ending June 30, 2021

Complete audited financial statements are available for review on our website under the Finance Office link www.fargodiocese.org/finance or by contacting the Finance Office (701) 356-7930 for an appointment.

A message from Catholic Development Foundation

Dear Friends,

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

CDF is a securely structured organization that was incorporated in 1985. As a publicly supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, CDF helps donors achieve their charitable and financial goals. The foundation ensures the security of all donated funds. The funds are used only for their intended purposes as designated by the donors. CDF has produced wonderful benefits for many parishes and diocesan programs over the last five years. Distributions from the CDF for parishes, cemeteries, schools, diocesan programs, clergy/seminarian education and other apostolates have totaled $13,064,349.

On pages 28-29, you will see a list of endowments currently established for various Catholic ministries and parishes. I encourage you to review this list to see which ones are created in your community or otherwise important to you. All Diocese of Fargo parishes have an endowment established in the CDF. If you do not see your parish listed, it’s simply because it hasn’t been funded by a donation yet.

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

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

Sincerely,

Steve Schons, President
Other financial funds and related information

CUSTODIAL FUND

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

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

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<tr>
<td>Holy Land</td>
<td>$43,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter’s Pence/Holy Father</td>
<td>$25,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Mission/Propagation of the Faith</td>
<td>$31,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Retirement</td>
<td>$29,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
<td>$6,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Relief</td>
<td>$13,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (e.g., Homeless Shelters)</td>
<td>$3,389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Diocese of Fargo received $51,625 from the Black & Indian Mission Office this year for direct aid to Native American communities in the diocese, and $10,000 from the Catholic Home Mission Office for economic assistance to St. Ann’s School in Belcourt.

All parishes participate in the diocesan insurance program through Catholic Mutual. Catholic Mutual sends bills to the parishes based on a $2,500 deductible. The parishes make payments to the Diocese for these insurance premiums. Catholic Mutual bills the Diocese based on a $25,000 deductible, and the Diocese makes payments to Catholic Mutual. The premium difference or spread between the $2,500 and $25,000 deductibles is retained in the Insurance Reserve and is used to pay insurance claims. Parishes receive a rebate from the fund to bring deductibles down to $1,000.

CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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

At June 30, 2021 there were:

- Endowments for parishes and agencies: $22,554,187
- Endowments for Seminarians/Clergy Education: $25,200,626
- Perpetual Care Cemetery Funds: $4,001,530
- Endowments for Diocesan Programming: $2,454,774
- Endowments for Catholic schools: $25,606,949
- Other Apostolates: $1,074,952
- Annuities/Uni-trusts: $3,048,194
- Donor Advised Funds: $6,950,897

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

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.

HOLY FAMILY BOOKSTORE

For Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, weddings, and special occasion gifts and books.

Mon.-Fri. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m
1336 25th Ave. S., Fargo 58103 (south of K-Mart)
(701) 241-7842
North Dakota Tax Credits benefit the Church and you

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIFT AMOUNT</th>
<th>$5,000</th>
<th>$20,000</th>
<th>$50,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Federal tax savings</em></td>
<td>-$1,200</td>
<td>-$6,000</td>
<td>-$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND state income tax credit</td>
<td>-$2,000</td>
<td>-$10,000</td>
<td>-$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net “Cost” of Gift</strong></td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Endowments Awarded

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminary/Clergy</td>
<td>$978,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>$1,566,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Schools</td>
<td>$824,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>$90,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocesan</td>
<td>$90,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$198,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,614,449</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your guide to giving

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

**Gifts that start making a difference today**

These are gifts that are easy to make and see immediate impact.
- Existing Endowment Fund
- Donor Advised Fund
- New Endowment Fund

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

These types of gifts provide income for the donor’s lifetime, any remainder goes to the donor’s charity of choice.
- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Charitable Remainder Trust
- Charitable Unitrust

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

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

For more information, please contact Steve at (701) 356-7926 or visit cdfnd.org.
### Endowment Funds in the Catholic Development Foundation

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endowment Fund Name</th>
<th>For the benefit of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross Church “R. E. and Youth Ministry” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Holy Cross Church of West Fargo for Religious Education and Youth Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity Faith Formation Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Church of Fargo for faith formation ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity Social Justice Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Parish, Fargo social justice ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Maurice Mueller Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Nativity Church of Fargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Presence Radio Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Real Presence Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul Society—St. Anthony’s Church of Fargo Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Anthony’s Church of Fargo for St. Vincent de Paul Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Gustafson Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes “Music” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes for Music ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes “Teen Life” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Charles Church of Oakes for Teen Life ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallum Family 2 Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s Maternity Home, Minto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John and Jan Klocke Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s Maternity Home, Real Presence Radio, Women’s Care Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Gianna’s Maternity Home</td>
<td>St. Gianna’s Maternity Home, Minto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles and Mary Ellen Frey Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. James Basilica of Jamestown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s the Evangelist Church “Education” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John the Evangelist Church of New Rockford for Education ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob and Dayle Dietz Memorial Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John the Evangelist’s Church, Wahpeton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s Church of Grafton “Pooreset of Poor” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. John’s Church of Grafton for ministry of the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s, Wahpeton, Hunger Fund Endowment</td>
<td>St. John’s Church of Wahpeton for Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvester and Shirley Gores Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Church of Devils Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and JoAnn Kitchens Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Church of Devils Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop James S. Sullivan 3 Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Cathedral of Fargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Church of Forman Youth and Education Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Church, Forman for Youth and Education ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck and Meghan Breen Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Rose of Lima Church of Hillsboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Rose of Lima Church “Improvement” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Rose of Lima Church of Hillsboro for improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anawim Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Thomas Newman Center of Grand Fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert and Sally Artz Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo, Catholic Schools, and Catholic parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Experience Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Beginning Experience Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Tribunal Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Marriage Tribunal Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracle of Cana Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese Catholic Education, Respect Life, Marriage, Family, Vocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Duane Cote Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Scholarship to Seminarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcella Feist Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Aloisius Muench Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George and Marcella Allmaras Memorial Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul and Harriet Greving Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Fund Name</td>
<td>For the benefit of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Donald Leiphon Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Darin Didier Memorial Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Mass Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for TV Mass Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Disciples Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Young Disciples Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Ministry “Scholarship” Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Youth Ministry Scholarships (formerly known as Diane Brooks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Care Clinic Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Women’s Care Clinic (formerly known as First Choice Clinic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Fargo Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for general purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Samuel Aquila Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Ritzke Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Diocese of Fargo for scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities ND Endowment Fund</td>
<td>General Endowment for Catholic Charities ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas U. &amp; Patricia S. Crary Memorial Fund</td>
<td>For the benefit of St. Anthony’s Fargo, Richardton Abbey, and St. JPII Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enderlin—St. Patrick’s Rectory Endowment Fund</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Church of Enderlin Rectory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoselton Family Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Perpetual care and upkeep of St. Edward’s Cemetery at Drayton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Msgr. Val Gross Memorial Fund</td>
<td>The Diocese of Fargo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit cdfnd.org or call (701) 356-7926 for more information.

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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. These names and corrections were submitted after the November New Earth deadline. Included are those who passed away between Oct. 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2021.


**DAZEY - St. Mary’s Church:** Baby Wolff—July 3, 2021.


**FINLEY - St. Olaf’s Church:** Julie Haaland—Dec. 27, 2020; Pearl Welder—June 25, 2021.


**RUGBY - St. Therese Church:** Judy Muffenbier—Sep. 13, 2021.

**WEST FARGO - Holy Cross Church:** Donald Pick—Mar. 24, 2021.
**HOLIDAY EVENTS**

**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.

**LIFE’S MILESTONES**

Doug and Bea Berg, parishioners of St. Jude’s in Thompson, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Dec. 18. They were married at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Grand Forks. They are greatly blessed with 6 children, 16 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren (one deceased).

Mabel Thomason, parishioner of St. Aloysius Church in Lisbon, celebrated her 96th birthday on Nov. 30, 1925. She and her husband Elmer (deceased) have 11 children, 22 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren.

Norman and Donna Heisler, parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Devils Lake, celebrated their 65th anniversary on Nov. 26. They were married at St. Boniface Church in Esmond. They have 6 children, 8 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren.

Angie Steckler-Werner, parishioner of St. Boniface Church in Wimbledon, will celebrate her 100th birthday Dec. 24. She is the eighth child of 17, with her and her 91 year old “baby sister” still living. She is blessed with 8 children, 25 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild with 2 more on the way.

Walter and Evelyn Paschke celebrated their 70th anniversary Oct. 24. They were married at St. John the Baptist Church in Ardoch and have 9 children (1 deceased), 20 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren.

Frank and Frances Weigel, parishioners of St. Andrew’s Church in Zeeland, celebrated their 67th anniversary on Nov. 8. They have 9 children, 20 grandchildren, and 18 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. This issue of New Earth includes 50 and 60+ year anniversaries and 80+ year birthdays. 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 the January issue is Dec. 14.
75 years ago — 1946
A marble liturgical altar and a bronze, cylindrical, tabernacle have been installed in St. Joachim’s Church in Rolla. The new additions, totaling a thousand dollars, are a gift from the Ladies of the Altar of St. Joachim’s who are to be heartily congratulated for their ardent love of the Church. Lest we forget our pastor. A new set of Mass vestments of medieval style in all liturgical colors has been purchased as well. Thank you Father Rondard and the Ladies of the Altar.

50 years ago — 1971
Nativity Church in Fargo hosted a special Christmas Eve party for any person who would otherwise be alone that evening. Personal invitations were extended to nursing home residents and those lodging at the downtown hotels. All the guests were met at the door and escorted to the cafeteria where they were given name tags. They were served apple cider, followed by a ham and turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Many of the families that volunteered said they had received more than they had given that evening and that it was the most joyful Christmas Eve they had ever celebrated.

20 years ago — 2001
The first Mass was celebrated at the new Sts. Anne & Joachim in Fargo and was followed by a parish center open house for registered families of the parish. The social hall will serve as a temporary worship space until Phase II, construction of the church itself, is complete. Two mosaics will be situated at the main entrance of the church. The first is an image of St. Anne with a young Mary kneeling by her side. It was created between 1921 and 1924 by German artist T. C. Essir for St. Ann’s Cathedral in Milwaukee. The second is a matching image of St. Joachim created by Fargo artist, David Hetland. Church tradition teaches that Anne and Joachim are the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the grandparents of Jesus.

Archbishop says eucharistic revival, congress will be “occasion of grace”
By Sean Gallagher | Catholic News Servic

Before their Nov. 17 vote to approve a National Eucharistic Congress for 2024 and their choice of the city to host it, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson told his fellow prelates gathered in Baltimore, “If you give us the green flag to this project, we’ll be ready with the checkered flag.”

The bishops voted for a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that will begin in June and culminate with the congress July 17-21, 2024. They chose Indianapolis to host it—home of the Indianapolis 500 and the iconic checkered race flag.

The 2024 event could be a pivotal moment for the Catholic Church in the U.S.—if it enters fully into the eucharistic revival, Archbishop Thompson said after the vote in an interview with The Criterion, the archdiocesan newspaper.

“Much will depend upon how well we prepare and pilgrimage to that moment and are prayerfully attentive to how the Holy Spirit will lead us beyond that moment,” he said. “The revival and the congress could have a profound effect on the renewal and enrichment of our eucharistic identity, witness and mission.
The eucharistic revival planned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and approved by the bishops at their fall general assembly is scheduled to begin June 16, the feast of Corpus Christi.

The first year will get underway at the local and diocesan levels with such initiatives as eucharistic adoration and processions, the development of parish teams of revival leaders and conferences on the Eucharist.

The next year will be regional revival events, which will lead to the eucharistic congress in Indianapolis in 2024, the first to be held since one took place in 1976 in Philadelphia. It is expected to draw at least 80,000 from across the country.

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the USCCB committee chairman, spoke about the revival in an interview with The Criterion in September. He noted that the eucharistic revival was developed in response to recent trends in the church and the broader society. Polling data in recent years suggests that a majority of Catholics in the United States no longer believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Mass attendance has also declined among Catholics in the U.S., a trend affected by the suspension of the public celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments at the start of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. When churches began to reopen, many dioceses made efforts to invite Catholics to return to the Mass. Bishop Cozzens hopes the eucharistic revival can build on these efforts and inspire a wider eucharistic movement.

“Now we are ready and eager to engage the people who come to Mass daily, weekly, or perhaps who still participate virtually to come to a deeper awareness of what the church teaches about Communion,” he told The Criterion. “It is not an ‘it’ in holy Communion. It is a real person: Jesus Christ.”

He also spoke of the goal of commissioning thousands of “eucharistic missionaries” at the congress.

“These men and women will be sent forth to continue the movement in parishes, the church and society at large,” he said. “They will help those who are currently attending Mass frequently to deepen their faith, as well as reach those on the margins who are far from Christ. We also want to hold a special place for the family in all of this.”

In Baltimore, Bishop Cozzens, who recently was named by Pope Francis Oct. 18 to head the Diocese of Crookston, Minnesota, told the bishops that Indianapolis had been one of three archdioceses that sought to host the congress—Atlanta and Denver were the other two.

Indianapolis was picked, he said, because of its experience in hosting large events such as the National Catholic Youth Conference. Indianapolis, he also noted, has the venues, hotel space and scheduling availability for such a large event. It also is within a day’s drive of approximately 50% of the U.S. population. Archbishop Thompson agreed.

“Our people are well equipped to pull this off, and to do so with incredible class and Hoosier hospitality,” he said. “This is an opportunity to really draw from the rich fabric of our Catholic parish, schools, health care, outreach, and associations. We are blessed with wonderful Catholic individuals and families.”

In Baltimore, Bishop Cozzens said the eucharistic congress will be structured similarly to World Youth Day, where multiple events will take place over a series of days in multiple venues.

The eucharistic congress can deepen the faith of Catholic in central and southern Indiana, said Archbishop Thompson, adding that the Eucharist “is the source and summit of all that we are about as Catholics—our identity, mission, ministries, and services.”

“A personal encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is essential to that identity and mission as individuals and communities of believers,” he said, noting that while “there are many ways to experience this personal encounter with Jesus Christ, there is none more profound than in the real presence of him in the Eucharist.”

The eucharistic revival and congress can “provide an occasion of grace to deepen our appreciation of the precious gift of Jesus Christ for our salvation.”

Bishops encourage cooperation to address church’s past in tribal schools

By Rhina Guidos | Catholic News Service

Two U.S. bishops have urged their fellow prelates to cooperate with any requests they receive from the federal government for an investigation on alleged abuses at tribal schools operated by church entities in the past.

In a Nov. 8 letter addressed to all U.S. bishops, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop James S. Wall of Gallup,

A dream catcher and crucifix are seen on the wall at St. Anthony Indian School on the Zuni Pueblo Indian reservation in New Mexico in this 2011 file photo. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)
New Mexico, chair of the USCCB’s Subcommittee on Native American Affairs, told prelates that “if the government asks for any records you may possess, we encourage cooperation.”

The letter comes in response to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s June 11 announcement of an investigation to look into the history of the government’s administration and funding of so-called “Indian boarding schools.” Some, but not all of the schools, were operated by entities affiliated with the Catholic Church and others were operated by other churches. A report on the investigation is due for release next April, the letter said. The painful history of the country’s tribal schools has come to light recently as researchers have been focused on uncovering what many American Indians long have shared in their communities: abuses and deaths of American Indian children at boarding schools in the U.S., from the 17th century to the 20th century.

“Some were set up by famous missionaries and saints,” the Coakley-Wall letter said of the schools operated by Catholics. “However, there are many accounts, publicly reported with evidence, that the experience for many at these schools was very bad if not disastrous.”

The letter pointed out a detail raised by the Interior Department: “The purpose of the Indian boarding schools was to culturally assimilate Indigenous children by forcibly relocating them from their families and communities to distant residential facilities where their American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian identities, languages, and beliefs were to be forcibly suppressed.”

And in some cases, there was abuse that sometimes resulted in deaths. The most recent of these cases uncovered that at least 87 children died at such a facility, the Genoa U.S. Indian Industrial School, which operated in Nebraska from 1884 to 1934.

Earlier this year, the bodies of more than 200 children were found buried on the site of what was once Canada’s large Indigenous residential school. In some cases, children were reported missing from the facilities and were never found.

While entities affiliated with the Catholic Church ran some of the facilities, by the 1900s, about half were operated by solely federal government, “one quarter of the schools in partnership with entities of the Catholic Church, and another quarter in partnership with Protestant churches,” said the letter to bishops. The extent of what happened is not known, but the letter said it hopes that “the government’s investigation may help to illuminate this,” while acknowledging that records may be missing or dioceses in the localities didn’t exist then.

“At the USCCB, we intend to cooperate with any requests from the government in connection to the investigation, and encourage you to do the same,” it said.

“To be clear, to the best of our knowledge, the USCCB, which traces its origins to a predecessor organization founded in 1917, never played any role in running these schools, never was a repository for records from the schools, and currently has no such records,” the letter said. “The federal government houses its repository of records of the Catholic-partner boarding schools at the Marquette University Library.”

In addition to cooperating with providing records and any information the government requests, the bishops also asked their fellow prelates to “consider reaching out to tribal leaders, and begin, if you have not already done so, a dialogue about the schools that were historically in your areas.”

The federal program that first initiated the schools ended in 1969 and the church no longer operates such facilities but there are day schools on tribal reservations that “serve almost exclusively Indigenous students,” the letter said.

It added that the USCCB Subcommittee on Native American Affairs “has long been aware of the church’s involvement with Indian boarding schools and has been fostering dialogues with Indigenous communities and engaging in efforts to reconcile.” But for the descendants of those who suffered in the schools “we are sensitive... that this is a very painful subject,” the letter said. “If there is a way to help bring forward the truth about what happened regarding specific schools in your diocese, state or region, that could very meaningful,” it said.

Bishops also were given names of Catholic organizations willing to help develop listening sessions, including the Tekakwitha Conference, which the letter noted is the largest organization of Catholic Native and Indigenous peoples.

Others include, it said, the American Catholic Indian Schools Network, based at the University of Notre Dame, which is an organization of Catholic schools on reservations that has long worked on how best to serve Indigenous students and address the legacy of the boarding schools; and the Catholics for Boarding School Accountability, an organization of religious and lay individuals that are working on healing and reconciliation.

The letter also listed the Black and Indian Mission Office, based in Washington, as a resource and noted the USCCB’s Subcommittee of Native American Affairs “has done much work in this area” and is available to “lend support or consultation on any local effort.”

“The report in April of 2022 will likely bring to light some very troubling information,” the letter said. “It will be important to reach out in advance and form relationships, if not already existing, so that you and members of local Indigenous communities can be in a real and honest dialogue about reactions to the report and what steps are needed to go forward together.”

Being forthcoming with information “can be a meaningful step toward healing,” the letter stated.

“Although some of these dialogues may be uncomfortable or even painful, if we cling to the love and truth that is Jesus Christ, we can face any fears or shame that these situations may bring,” it continued.

“If we can hold our ancestors in the faith in loving memory, celebrating the good and also being honest and transparent about failures and sin, while seeing our Native and Indigenous brothers and sisters as fellow beloved sons and daughters of God,” it said, “then we firmly believe that this time can mark a step forward in the relationship between the church and Indigenous peoples, and can deepen respect for the dignity of every person and the common good.”
The gift of hope becomes tangible in people’s lives through concrete actions that seek to relieve the suffering of the poor and console the downtrodden, Pope Francis said.

In his homily at a Mass for the World Day of the Poor Nov. 14, the pope said that true Christian hope is not “the naive, even adolescent optimism of those who hope things may change” but is instead built daily through concrete gestures that manifest “the kingdom of love, justice and fraternity that Jesus inaugurated.”

“We are asked to nurture tomorrow’s hope by healing today’s pain,” he said. “The hope born of the Gospel has nothing to do with a passive expectation that things may be better tomorrow, but with making God’s promise of salvation concrete today. Today and every day.”

The Mass capped a series of events marking the annual World Day, including a Nov. 12 pilgrimage to Assisi with hundreds of poor men, women, and children from across Europe.

Several Catholic charitable organizations helped in bringing pilgrims to Assisi as well as organizing local events. Fratello, a France-based charity, also organized a worldwide prayer meeting Nov. 14 dedicated to the poor.

During the meeting, the group shared a video message sent by Pope Francis to mark the occasion. In it, the pope asked the poor for forgiveness “in the name of all Christians who have wounded, ignored, or humiliated you.”

“Every man and every woman is a temple of God, you are the temple of God, you are the treasure of the church,” the pope told them. “Your place is not at the door of the churches, but instead in the heart of the church. Know that you are God’s favorites. Among you there are hidden saints.”

In his homily for the Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Mark, in which Jesus describes the days of tribulation when “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.”

While the grim description may “leave us bewildered,” the pope said Christ also invites his followers to hope in the salvation that is to come.

However, he added, it is also a word of consolation for the poor who are often forced into poverty and are “victims of injustice and the inequality of a throwaway society that hurries past without seeing them and, without scruple, abandons them to their fate.”

“The World Day of the Poor, which we are celebrating, asks us not to turn aside, not to be afraid to take a close look at the suffering of those most vulnerable,” the pope said.

While Christian hope is fundamental, he continued, it must translate into decisions and actions of “concern, justice, and solidarity” with the poor and with the environment, through tenderness and compassion.

“It is up to us to overcome the temptation to be concerned only about our own problems; we need to grow tender before the tragedies of our world, to share its pain. Like the tender leaves of a tree, we are called to absorb the pollution all around us and turn it into goodness,” the pope said.

After Mass, the pope greeted pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his Sunday Angelus address and reminded them of the need to help the poor who are the presence of Jesus in the world.

“Humanity progresses and develops, but the poor are always with us,” he said. “There are always the poor, and in them Christ is present. Christ is present in the poor.”
That Wednesday, my phone’s weather app warned of a rain shower, followed by three days of snowfall—the season’s first. It was my first day back on the sidewalk after several weeks dealing with illness, and I dreaded standing out in the rain. But the rain came.

So, by the time the red pickup that had been circling the abortion facility finally parked, and I saw the couple heading into the building, I was holding my umbrella firmly; my pamphlets secure in my pocket.

I never did see the mom up close, but I noticed the dad heading back to their vehicle. I began walking quickly toward the parking lot where he’d parked, catching up to him just as he was about to climb into the large rig.

There I stood for the next 15 or 20 minutes, rain pouring, urgently talking to the dad with the sad, brown eyes. He didn’t want the abortion, he said, but they had two little ones already. They’d been drinking one night and slipped up, he divulged. And she just couldn’t do this again.

It’s hard to be out on the sidewalk without developing a thicker skin, but even with strong spiritual armor in place, the tender heart remains. On that day, so acutely sensing the gift of life, I couldn’t bear the thought of a fresh, new soul being sacrificed.

I was meeting this challenge alone, with God, while the other advocates prayed around the corner. I was so certain this child was meant to live, and I fought for it with everything I had. Before I knew it, tears were flowing from my eyes. I didn’t care. It was raining. I was raining, too. It all blended together.

A short while before, a man had come walking up the sidewalk, yelling at all of us, including the escorts, about how we were blocking his path. He seemed mostly miffed at the escorts, though, and on his return back to his car, he stopped the only escort out at that moment and began berating her for blocking his way.

My heart lurched for her. Though we are at odds on the sidewalk, and she’d only a short time before yelled at me for trying to share information with an abortion client, no one deserved to be talked to like that.

The passerby’s anger stuck with me as I talked to the dad. It seemed to me that his anger was connected to the world’s anger, and that if we could only save this child, Satan would lose his hold on us.

I did everything I could think of to empower this dad, assuring him that God loves them and their babies, and would bless their decision to give this child life, and stay very near them in the challenges ahead.

It just seemed like the most important thing in the world: to save this one soul, because in the end, it would bring us all a step closer to salvation. I felt more desperate than I ever have to keep this little one from perishing.

Ultimately, he called the mom on his cell phone and asked her to reconsider. “She’s made the final decision,” he said to me, still on the phone with her. “I’m sorry, but she’s going to go through with it.” I persisted a while longer, but at some point, recognized the futility of my pleading.

I can’t get this little soul and its family out of my mind. When a friend of mine, a deacon from our diocese, thanked me for being there, I told him how little and powerless I felt, and still feel. “Satan’s grip is powerful, but you are sowing the seeds for his defeat,” he replied.

What an important reminder. God does the saving, not us, and he will save the world in time. In the meantime, we do what we can to help, and when it feels like we’re going backward, we must remember that God has not had his last word yet. Each word and action we do in love, for Christ, brings Satan’s reign closer to its inevitable end.

It’s all I can bring away from that experience in the rain, but for now, it must be enough.

God, some days, all I can offer are my tears. Know that each one carries my love for you and the good world you’ve created. Please stay with us in this vale of tears, and strengthen us with your almighty hand in the hard days ahead.
Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the January *New Earth*.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is of Sts. Nereus and Achilleus Church in Neche.