“Let the children come to me:”
Handing on the gift of faith

Day of Remembrance for Unborn Children scheduled for Sept. 18

Youth experience “restoration” in Christ after Steubenville weekend

ATHLETICS and Faith
Life and moral lessons found in sports
Matrimony: A calling to forgive

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ON THE COVER:
Shanley head football Coach Troy Matten puts the team through pre-season drills at Sid Cichy Stadium. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

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“Let the children come to me:” Handing on the gift of faith

With the end of summer comes the start of school and the ongoing work of religious education—passing along our Catholic faith to our children and youth. Many of our families have the opportunity to send their children to Catholic schools, where they will learn about our Catholic faith on a daily basis. And some parents choose to teach the faith themselves to their children through homeschooling. But most of our families depend on the religious education programs sponsored by our parishes and run by fellow parishioners who generously give of their time and talent out of love for God and his Church.

Catholic parents have an obligation to see that their children are raised and educated in the faith, and that doesn’t just happen automatically without determination and effort. It takes commitment and even sacrifice to make sure our children get to their religious education classes each week, or to enroll our children in Catholic schools, where they will learn about our Catholic faith at home and neglect to teach this faith to our children, it is naïve to think that they will still be believing Catholics when they reach adulthood.

Research tells us again and again that parents have a paramount influence on the faith lives of their children. The most important factor in handing on the faith to our sons and daughters is that live that faith at home. In homes where the faith is lived and cherished, children will absorb the faith and bring it with them into adulthood. But if we fail to live out our faith at home and neglect to teach this faith to our children, it is naive to think that they will still be believing Catholics when they reach adulthood.

Essential for any experience of religious education is attending Sunday Mass. What our children learn in their classrooms are raised and educated in the faith, and that doesn’t just happen automatically without determination and effort. It takes commitment and even sacrifice to make sure our children get to their religious education classes each week, or to enroll our children in Catholic schools, where they will learn about our Catholic faith on a daily basis.
This work became his passion. He later extended his con...
Anointing of the Sick shows God’s promise to be with us through every danger

FATHER JAYSON MILLER
Liturgy/Priest Secretary to the Bishop

Anointing of the Sick shows God’s promise to be with us through every danger. The power of oil is a physical sign, easily recognized. As a Sacrament, Jesus gives it a new meaning and a new power.

The first effect of the sacrament is the forgiveness of sin. As oil heals the body, so does this holy oil heal the soul wounded by sin. Mortal sin must be eradicated by Baptism or Reconciliation, but Anointing of the Sick forgives venial sins that make us lethargic towards God. In the case when one is anointed while unconscious, a mortal sin may be forgiven, provided the sick person had contrition for the sin when they lost consciousness.

Death causes fear for many reasons. To a person of faith, the remembrance of all the sins committed may add to an already powerful fear of death. A person may imagine their looming judgment, and cower in fear knowing their unworthiness. The Sacrament of Anointing provides a rush of grace, to comfort the soul and bring it strength and courage in the battle.

Another effect of the Sacrament of Anointing stems from the need of spiritual protection when nearing death. It stands to reason that Satan and his minions would throw their full force against the soul nearing death to try to capture it at the last moment. The Sacrament of Anointing bolsters the soul against the snares and whiles of the enemy so that it may joyfully and confidently look forward to a life with God.

One may ask the questions: who may receive the sacrament and when? The Church offers this sacrament to any of the baptized above the age of reason who have come into danger of death due to sickness or old age. One doesn’t have to be on the point of death to receive it but only in grave danger. In fact, it is best to call the priest as early as possible in a grave illness, to ensure a conscious participation on the part of the ill person (see Catechism of the Catholic Church 1511). A gravely ill person may also receive Viaticum, or the last Holy Communion, during the liturgy. Quinn Krebs was installed as a lector, someone specially tasked to proclaim scripture.

When a man first enters seminary formation, he is in the early stages of discerning the Lord’s call. Seth Skjervheim was installed as a lector, someone specially tasked to distribute Holy Communion. With each ministry, seminarians take on a deeper priestly identity.

Photo by Father Kyle Metzger
Healing hurting marriages: A lifeseline that can help

By Kristina Lahr

I felt that there was no turning back after everything,” said Dawn Rossow. “Luckily, Josh was strong and had hope that we were meant to stay married. That God wanted us to stay married.”

Josh and Dawn Rossow of Zeeland have been married 18 years and have four children. They work construction and carpentry together and hope to open a German restaurant in the future. When communication issues in their marriage hit their peak, Dawn moved out. Shortly after, their marriage counselor recommended they attend a Retrouvaille weekend.

They hesitated at first, uncertain what the weekend would be like or if they’d be able to relate to anyone there, but for the sake of their marriage and family, they attended a weekend in October 2020.

“We were afraid we might have to talk in front of people, and it wasn’t like that at all,” said Josh. “Your issues stay between you and your spouse. The word that kept coming up for me over the weekend was ‘hope.’ When we first got there, there was this heavy feeling in the air. No one really wanted to be there with each other, but by the end, it was a completely different atmosphere.”

The focus of the weekend experience is to help husbands and wives reestablish communication and restore trust and intimacy in their relationship.

“It’s helped our kids, our whole family,” said Dawn. “We’re living under the same roof again and learning to communicate again. When we’re slacking on communicating, we’re able to realize that and start again.”

“It’s like pushing a reset button,” Josh said. “If we can’t make 10-20 minutes a day for our spouse, there’s something wrong. I’m more aware of Barb’s need to do simple things like helping around the house. It’s meaningful for her.”

The weekend experience is followed by six aftercare sessions that deepen the skills learned during the weekend. They provide a foundation for the long-term health of the couple’s marriage.

Monthly support meetings are also available moving forward to keep marriages on track.

Retrouvaille talks about being an organization that helps marriages that are struggling, and that’s true,” said Paul, “but I think Retrouvaille is also a place for couples who want to go deeper and to love more. I encourage retired folk to do it. It doesn’t mean your marriage is in deep trouble, but if you take a hard look at your marriages, there’s always room for improvement. We’ve always been together these 52 years, but we were walking our separate paths. Now we’ve come together, walking hand-in-hand, literally, more than we ever did before.”

There are two initial weekends in Fargo each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. The next Retrouvaille weekend is Oct. 22–24. Retrouvaille is open to any married couple regardless of faith tradition. More information can be found at helpourmarriage.org.

“No matter how big or small your problem is, no matter how long or short you’ve been married, Retrouvaille is for you,” said Dawn.

“It’s never too late,” said Josh. “There’s always the opportunity for forgiveness and healing. Every obstacle can be overcome.”

Only with prayer—prayer that storms the heavens for justice and mercy, prayer that cleanses our hearts and souls—will the culture of death that surrounds us today be replaced with a culture of life.” – Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Catholic Bishops

Day of Remembrance for Unborn Children scheduled for Sept. 18

By Susan Richard | Member of Sts. Anne and Joachim Respect Life Committee

The front of the large granite memorial at Holy Cross Cemetery North commemorates the babies and mothers who chose life and healing to women who regret their abortions. The front reads, “Baby, Died by Abortion, Commemorating the War on the Unborn.”

The backside has a quote from Romans 5, “But God proves His own love toward us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” At the base, it says, “Our Little Ones to Him Belong.”

Terry Melby, a member of the Post Abortion Ladies (PALS) group that tell their testimonies and speak about the effects of abortion, designed the back of the monument specifically for women who regret their abortions and need healing.

“One hundred precious children are buried here, precious little ones, created by a loving God, in his own image,” she said. “We mourn for them, for their mothers and fathers who know the inconsiderable grief of empty arms and irreversible decisions. We mourn for the families who are living without them. They would be 33 years old now. Many would have children of their own. We mourn for those missing from our communities. These 100 babies in their own small way, represent the 64 million children who are missing from homes and communities across our country. May we be encouraged to pray and keep on doing whatever job God have given us to do as we keep on fighting to protect unborn children.”

The National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children began in September of 2013 by Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, Priests for Life, and the Pro-Life Action League. Almost 200 Memorial Services were held in 2020 at memorial and burial sites throughout the United States. A listing of states with memorials and gravesites for the unborn can be found at abortionmemorials.com.
Teams of Our Lady thanks Father Ermer for dedication to local marriages

By John and Jan Klocke | North Central Regional Couple for Teams of Our Lady

It is with much gratitude that we’d like to highlight and thank Father James Ermer, pastor of St. Leo’s Church in Casselton, for his efforts to bring Teams of Our Lady to Fargo and Moorhead. As a second-year seminarian, Father Ermer was assigned to St. Michael’s Parish in Prior Lake. Father Ermer has a passion and dedication for this Catholic couple lay movement. His story with Teams of Our Lady began as a third-year seminarian in 1977 at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

As a second-year seminarian, Father Ermer was assigned to St. Michael’s Parish in Prior Lake, Minn. Some of his duties included helping with 2nd grade education. At that time he was told about Teams of Our Lady, that “it wasn’t a support group; it was a group of couples really alive in their marriages.”

“I learned about the Endeavors. The Sit-Down was very interesting to me. I didn’t know of any marriages that did that!” said Father Ermer.

Soon the Team was looking for a chaplain, and he was asked if he would be willing to serve in that capacity. As a seminarian, Father Ermer became chaplain for a team that year with six couples.

“These were couples that had great marriages and wanted to grow deeper,” said Father Ermer. “In December, they had a Christmas party where all family members were invited. That was such a great experience of marriage and family life. I said to myself that when I became a pastor, I would like to start Teams of Our Lady. After a number of diocesan assignments, I became pastor at St. Anthony’s in Fargo. I never lost that passion for Teams that I learned at St. Michael’s in Prior Lake.”

In January 2005, Father Ermer invited several couples from St. Anthony’s for a dinner, along with Ted and Janet Windus, from Duluth, Minn. (already in Teams, and a Pilot Couple), for an information meeting.

Twenty-three couples came, and out of that, 10 couples joined, thus starting the first two teams in North Dakota. Since then, we have grown to 11 teams, and all teams are blessed to have a priest chaplain. Father Ermer personally reaches out to his brother priests, to tell them about teams and recruits them to be a team chaplain.

Father Ermer states that the best fruit of teams for a chaplain besides a delicious meal each month is the opportunity to “sit with couples who have rich marriages.”

“You see the dynamics of married couples and what they go through—joys and struggles: kids leaving the faith, deaths in the family, raising children, learning how couples resolve issues,” said Father Ermer. “It’s an enrichment for the priest in his work with marriage preparation and struggling marriages.”

Father Ermer cited Father Henri Caffarel’s wisdom, after WWII, that Teams of Our Lady not evolve into a social or dinner club. Similar to the Benedictine Rule, Father Caffarel proposed a “rule” to married Christians who wished to progress spiritually, thus starting the Teams’ Spirituality of the Endeavors to guide teams, and help couples grow in holiness. This founding document is called the “Charter of the Teams of Our Lady.”

“Over the years as a priest chaplain, one begins to see the wisdom of Father Caffarel, the importance of the Endeavors, and the intentionality that grounds the Teams movement,” said Father Ermer. “I often say that the Endeavors are the ‘heart and soul’ of Teams.”

Thank you, Father Ermer, for bringing Teams of Our Lady, to the Fargo/Moorhead area! Thank you also for being the Fargo/Moorhead Sector Chaplain since 2005, and also saying yes to the additional role as the North Central Regional Chaplain starting in October 2020.

Teams of Our Lady is an International Lay Catholic Couple Movement, to help couples discover, in and through their own sacrament of matrimony, that the riches and joys of married love are part of God’s plan, and a path to holiness.

The Fargo-Moorhead Sector consists of 11 teams, with a total of 62 couples. If you are interested in this couple spirituality movement, visit teamsofourlady.org.
ATHLETICS and Faith

Life and moral lessons found in sports

By Paul Braun

It’s North Dakota’s version of Friday Night Lights. The high school fall athletic season is underway, and thousands of fans from across eastern North Dakota are filling stadiums and gymsnasiums each week to watch high school athletes vie for supremacy in their particular sport. For many parents and athletes, high school athletics is the culmination of years of sacrifice and dedication in the pursuit of perfecting athletic skills. For most, high school will be the end of their competitive sporting careers. For others, college and even professional sports await.

Part of that strategy involves the schools subscribing to Sports Leader, a program that incorporates faith into athletics. According to the organization’s website, the program is based on three pillars: virtue, ceremony, and Catholic identity. The service is for those institutions interested in a structured, intentional, and specific methods and curriculum to help form leaders and teach virtue.

“Our mission is to make sure our faith-life is passed down from what we learn in the classroom to athletics and other activities,” said Father Slattery. “We encourage one-on-one time between coaches and athletes, to give our coaches the opportunity to witness to our athletes as leaders not only in their sport but also leaders of faith. We encourage daily prayer of our coaches and athletes together, to spend some time each week that’s focused on a lesson based on a weekly virtue. For a moral life, it is so important to grow in habits that sustain us and allow us to grow in holiness. Education and sports aren’t just intellectual things, but they have those habits of life that we try to form that allows the person to experience that freedom they’re called to as sons and daughters of God.”

For some coaches, teaching the faith on the field or court is all they know. Rick Neumann is coach of the women’s basketball team at the University of Mary in Bismarck. He has spent his entire coaching career at Catholic schools, most notably St. Mary’s Central High School in Bismarck before joining the staff at the University of Mary.

“I don’t know if there’s a more meaningful way to preach, discuss, and exercise your faith than being part of a team,” said Coach Neumann. “What we’re asking these young women to do is to have faith in your teammates, to have faith in your coaching staff. We’re all in this together, and I think that’s what allows us to recruit some unbelievably talented, grounded, and faith-filled young women. It’s the mission of our University, it’s the mission of the Gospel, and the mission of our basketball program, to take these young women and put them in a position where the standards and the bar are set so high, and the faith we have in each other is so strong, that we can leave UMary a different human being than when we walked in.”

One of the more popular and visible fall sports anywhere in the country is football, and North Dakota is no exception. Shanley High School has had great success in the past when it comes to winning conference and state titles. Current Shanley head football coach Troy Mattern has won state championships at both Shanley and Fargo South High School. But while winning championships is always on the minds of his players and coaches, it’s not the ultimate goal of the program.

“I think football is the epitome of life,” said Coach Mattern. “There’s so much adversity that you face in football. It could be routines, injuries, or other issues, but the biggest things these kids face on a daily basis is the adversity of the day-to-day things that is football. But you have to face them, just as you have to face those adversities in life, and I think football and athletics in general really helps them as they prepare to move forward in life.”

Coach Mattern believes success comes from the faith you put in God and your teammates. He says coaching at Shanley has allowed him to incorporate and nurture those morals, virtues, and values into the team.

“First and foremost we are playing through the faith of God. He’s number one, and the kids understand that,” said Coach Mattern. “But secondly, we’ve incorporated Testimonial Tuesday, where Coach Alfers reads a different scripture each week, and it gives the kids an opportunity to share with the team some of the struggles they may be having. Our athletes get that in the classroom at Shanley, but we want to make sure that we’re an extension of what they’re learning and sharing in the classroom. We know it’s important to be competitive, but you’ve also got to do it in the right way.”

“Education and sports aren’t just intellectual things, but they have those habits of life that we try to form that allows the person to experience that freedom they’re called to as sons and daughters of God.”

— Father William Slattery, Chaplain for Sacred Heart/Shanley Catholic Schools, Fargo

But not all Catholic and Christian coaches are coaching at Christian schools. Many are at a public school, where they need to be wary of incorporating faith values into their coaching outcomes. Coach Mattern can attest to that, having coached several years at Fargo South High School. He says you can still teach life lessons through football at secular schools, but coaches need to be wary of crossing the line.

“It’s a little trickier at a public school,” said Coach Mattern. “You want to bring it in from a moral and character standpoint. I try to hire coaches that fit that mold. They have the high morals...
I strongly believe in the role athletics plays in teaching athletes life and moral lessons,” said Maddie Noesen, assistant girls volleyball coach for the Shanley Deacons. “Throughout my coaching career, I have seen the way athletes grow, not only as athletes but as individuals. Every player who has stepped in the gym has been on her own unique path for growth. For some it may be because of their teammates, the lessons of faith, or the coaching staff, but no matter what that path has been, they have all grown during their time in the Shanley gym.

All of the coaches that were interviewed for this article agreed that the main job of a coach is to not only teach the skills needed to be successful on the field or court but to instill life lessons that help build moral, faith-filled young people. However, the way to achieve those outcomes vary between boys and girls. Coach Jennifer Modeen will be coaching 7th and 8th grade girls basketball this winter at Sacred Heart School in East Grand Forks, Minn. A parishioner of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, Modeen uses her experiences as an athlete to inspire the girls she’s now coaching.

“Our young people are at a pretty substantial crisis as far as understanding who they are in the world and understanding their relationship with God,” said Coach Modeen. “Because sports is such an important part of our culture, it’s an opportunity we may be missing in terms of how we instill our morals and faith into young athletes. One of the things I did for the entire Sacred Heart girls basketball program this year was lead a lock-in retreat. We did some team building around the worth and dignity of these girls, which comes from their relationship with God. We need adult role models to do this during team building. You can be a highly competitive individual and still conduct yourself as a strong Catholic coach and mentor.”

Of course, the best way to encourage and strengthen the lesson young athletes learn on the field or court is to have that same support system at home. Parents make a profound difference in the development of any child, whether they’re an athlete or not. However, some parents of athletes put more emphasis on winning and losing, along with individual performance, than on character building. This can confuse an athlete who is hearing one thing at practice but experiences another reality at home.

Helping a student athlete grow in their faith and development to adulthood starts at home. Many high school athletes have been playing their sport since they were very young through club and recreational leagues. The problem that arises is finding playing time for all of the different sports competing for space on fields and courts. Many league and tournament games at that level are held on weekends, Sunday mornings included. For some families, going to the games is more important than going to worship. The priority of athletics over faith is the wrong message to send to a young athlete.

“We made a priority that was communicated to the coaching staffs that Mass was always going to be a priority for us,” said Coach Modeen. “There were many times during our daughter’s fast-pitch leagues that it was a close call, but we always seemed to find a way to schedule both sports and Mass on a Sunday. It was a non-negotiable for us as a family and the coaches were very supportive of our faith priorities. More parents need to do this. I don’t understand why we can’t hold fast to those values and make time for the Eucharist. It’s best to make those decisions while our kids are young or else it will be difficult to expect them to hold fast to their faith as they go to college.”

“It is a challenge,” said Coach Neumann. “It’s a shame that so many of these events fall on a Sunday, because that should be time as a family for worship and togetherness.”

Teaching moral and faith values through sports and seeing the results can be an even greater thrill to a coach than winning a state championship. To some, knowing their efforts have resulted in a former athlete having success in life and maintaining their faith in God partly through their participation in sports is all the reward they desire. If an athlete has success on the field or court while learning faith and life values, those lessons are reinforced, for both the athletes and the coach.

“I think where I am blessed and have become a better coach is by having my kids in the St. John Paul II Catholic School network,” said Coach Mattern. “From day one, what I’ve learned from my kids in the Catholic school system is more than I ever learned before. The things they come home with on a day-in and day-out basis and what they learned in school through the faith of God is truly phenomenal.”

“It’s one of my greatest joys as a coach,” said Coach Neumann. “To see someone who comes in without the strongest faith in their life and see those roots grow is inspiring. I’ve seen some young women in our program become Catholic or volunteer to lead Bible studies with our team and the rest of the athletic department. I’ve seen the growth of young women as they become more active in their church, and how those things can just take off when they’re placed in the right environment.”

“I think that sports are a metaphor for the development of the whole person,” said Coach Modeen. “While our culture has sort of lost sight of the purpose of sports, which is teamwork, perseverance, humility, and being part of something bigger than yourself, but sports are a way to teach those values to young people to make them strong young men and women.”

Athletes have a spiritual helper willing to intercede on their behalf. St. Sebastian is the patron saint of athletes. Young people are encouraged to invoke his name in the following prayer:

Saint Sebastian, pray for us! Bless today’s game, our opponent, our team, and all watching our play. Thank you for the opportunity to compete and bring out the best in each other. Thank you, Lord, for the chance to compete and use our talents through sports.
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Fargo Parks

Thank you to all who sponsored the 15th annual Putt 4 a Purpose golf scramble held on August 22nd, at Rose Creek Golf Course in Fargo. This year 136 people participated to raise funds to benefit seminarian education and youth programs throughout the Diocese of Fargo.

Thank you to our SPONSORS for making the 15th Annual Putt 4 a Purpose Golf Tournament a SUCCESS!

Extraordinary father, ordinary son

Growing up in a small town in Minnesota doesn’t make me unique in this part of the country. I’ll go so far as saying you would be hard-pressed to find a reason that would label me unrepresentative of the Upper Midwest. There are probably very few things that make me abnormal, atypical, irregular, uncommon, unconventional, or unusual. Or so, I, and possibly many of you, would like to believe about ourselves.

Though this story is unique in the sense that it’s mine, it’s a story that’s likely familiar. As is to be expected, mistakes inevitably happened, and when they did, I became angry with myself and envious of others.

Eventually, I realized that the lie was not just a story that was repeated throughout the local communities, but a story that was reinforced by the coaches and teammates I interacted with. It was a story that was repeated by the reverends, recruiters, and radio hosts who would brag him up too. It was a story that was repeated by the newspapers, box scores, letters, and trophies. Local’s would talk about what a thrill it was to watch my dad play ball. And again, if you are thinking, “What’s the story?”

The story is likely familiar. It says that he was an anomaly that intoxicated a couple of rural generations in his hometown, he has you beat there too: rivals, recruiters, and radio hosts would brag him up too. His athletic prowess inspired people in amateur leagues decades after his college years. If you are thinking that I’m just another victim fallen prey to the exaggerated stories of a dad’s glory days, he had proof. He had newspaper clippings, box scores, letters, and trophies. Locals would talk about what a thrill it was to watch my dad play ball. And again, if you are thinking, “What’s the story?”

My dad was an athlete, and he was one of the best. At his high school graduation came around, my dad had amassed enough records to make any college scout shiver with elation. His athletic prowess inspired people in amateur leagues decades after his college years. If you are thinking that I’m just another victim fallen prey to the exaggerated stories of a dad’s glory days, he had proof. He had newspaper clippings, box scores, letters, and trophies. Locals would talk about what a thrill it was to watch my dad play ball. And again, if you are thinking, “What’s the story?”

In fact, I have managed to make a career and more than one friendship out of it. Most days I marvel at the fact that I am an embarrassment as a son. There is nothing I can do that would be considered exceptional to a man who has done so much? Why wouldn’t my dad’s love be equated with how talented I am? So I basically saw one option: work harder than anyone else and never make a mistake again.

As is to be expected, mistakes inevitably happened, and when they did, I became angry with myself and envious of others. Eventually, the lie became colossal enough to be projected onto my Heavenly Father. When I didn’t commit sins, God loved me. If I sinned, I was disowned. I could only work so hard before sins would eventually happen, then the shame and doubt would come. Neither God nor my dad did things to me that reinforced this lie; I was choosing to find proof that supported it. For years I nurtured this lie with my secrecy, nourished it with my self-esteem, and nestled it into my identity. It wasn’t until I started talking about these wounds and praying regularly that I began to find the healing I so desperately desired, the cure to kill this debilitating deceit.

You know this story because at its core, it is just another version of the same lie fed to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. As much as we may resist, as baptized sons and daughters of God, we are anything but normal, typical, conventional, or usual. We are meant for heaven, not Eastern North Dakota. I still enjoy hearing and sharing stories about my earthly father. I am still very proud to be his son. I also enjoy hearing and sharing stories about my Heavenly Father as well.

In fact, I have managed to make a career and more than one friendship out of it. Most days I marvel at the fact that I am loved by him, and I’m proud to be his son.
Divine Providence in the early history of the United States

In it he addresses the misunderstanding some have regarding the concept of “divine providence in the rise of the Republic,” confusing arguments of American exceptionalism with “fantasies about American perfectionism.” The author’s desire is that young people receive the lessons about our nation’s history with “an appropriate sense of balance.” That is, Medved seeks to focus on “the freakish good fortune and the prodigious good deeds of the United States not as a way to obscure our sins but in order to restore the missing context for consideration of such shortcomings.”

One of my favorite chapters addresses how America was able to nearly double its land area with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Initially, American diplomats sought to bargain only for the city of New Orleans, intending to secure commerce traffic along the Mississippi River. Napoleon surprised them by offering the entire North American territory because he regarded the sugar industry generated by French Caribbean Island territories as more valuable to protect with his scant resources. The American delegation couldn’t believe that they were acquiring such a prize without the need to take up arms.

If I were a parent of teenage children, I would invite them to pick up The American Miracle as an enjoyable supplement to their history classes. Michael Medved has chosen these events and presented them in an entertaining way. I know that they helped me to add to the “headlines” of my knowledge of the story of America.

The tradition of having a crucifix in your home

We will celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Sept. 14. The history of this feast day goes back to the 4th century when St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, traveled to the Holy Land and found the cross that Christ was crucified on. The story goes that she found three crosses but did not know which one belonged to Christ, so she brought sick people to each of the crosses and prayed for healing. One of them received a miraculous healing by touching one of the crosses. St. Helena believed this to be the true cross of Christ. She then built a church on the spot, now called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was dedicated on Sept. 13, 335 and the cross itself was presented to the faithful on the 14th so that all could come forward to venerate it. She also brought a piece of the cross back to Rome where she built the Basilica of the Santa Croce in Gerusalemme to house the relic and other relics of the passion.

Pilgrims came, and still come, from all over the world to venerate the pieces of the True Cross in Jerusalem and in Rome. In the early church, it was not common to actually show images of Jesus dying on the cross. Even after Constantine made Christianity legal by the Edict of Milan in 313, it was still not a popular practice to gaze upon an image of the dying Christ. In fact, the oldest image we have of the crucifixion is one that is mocking Christ and the practice of Christianity. It is a third century piece of wall graffiti that shows a human figure with the head of a donkey and arms outstretched in the form of the cross with the caption, “Alexamenos worships his god.”

By the sixth century through the Middle Ages, images of Jesus dying on the cross became more common and Catholics had crucifixes hanging in their homes. The crucifix was the norm for a wedding gift as it was expected the bride and groom would hang it over the bed reminding them of our Lord’s sacrifice, and their own wedding vows “for better or for worse.” Later on, one could get a crucifix with compartments underneath, called a “sick-call” crucifix, which held two candles, a bottle of holy water and a white cloth to facilitate the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick or Viaticum. In this case the family would prepare the “sick call” crucifix so that when the priest came and administered the sacrament it would be done so in a place that was blessed and marked with the cross of Christ and to remind the family where the grace from the sacraments come from.

But what about today? The tradition of hanging a crucifix in our homes is not as common as it once was, and perhaps forgotten in recent generations. This is a tradition that we need to bring back and teach our children.

When we gaze on the crucifix, we are reminded of Jesus’ sacrificial love for us. It can also help us better accept the words of Christ, “to deny yourselves, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24). It is also a powerful sign to our guests who enter our homes for it is him who we follow, “we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23). It marks our home as a Christian home, a Catholic home. Our homes should be claimed for Christ. Demons hate the image of Christ’s perfect loving sacrifice. Our Churches have crucifixes and our families are the domestic church, where the crucifix should also be present.

There is a ministry dedicated to get a crucifix in every Catholic home. The wooden crucifixes are beautiful, handmade, and free. They don’t do individual orders anymore but a parish could order in bulk for their parishioners at freecrucifix.org.
Youth experience “restoration” in Christ after Steubenville weekend

By Brady Borslien | Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Fargo

 Restoration is different than renovation,” said Sister Miriam James as she welcomed over 1,900 youth and adults from across the Midwest for the annual Steubenville Youth Conference in Rochester, Minn. “When you renovate something—a house, a car—you fix what is broken or outdated and add material to make it look good. When you restore, something, you bring it back to its original state when it was new. That is why you are all here. God doesn’t want to renovate your heart, he wants to restore it and restore you to what he created you to be.”

Amidst a full Mayo Civic Center, a rock-star quality worship electrifying and invigorating. Deidra Lies, a chaperone from St. Anthony’s Church in Fargo said, “It was a beautiful, quality experience. Seeing young people’s faith grow in such a short time, thanks to the enriching speakers and, above all, access to the grace that comes flowing from Mass, adoration, and confession with their peers and parish leaders, gave my own faith life a welcome boost! Young people and adults alike can benefit from such a welcoming encounter with Christ.”

More than 100 high school students, leaders, and priests from the Diocese of Fargo attended this event—many for the first time. For most, it was a life-changing experience. Amanda, a youth from the diocese said, “I was having a hard time trusting in God and hearing his voice, but during a break, I went to the adoration chapel to pray and there was this wave of peace that I’ve never experienced before.”

Throughout the conference, various keynote speakers unpacked the theme “Restored,” which drew its inspiration from Psalm 80:3, “Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.” Participants were reminded of God’s love for them, and that they were created to be his disciples. Speaker and musician Cooper Ray said, “This is your gig, this is your church, and it’s time to rise up and go against what the culture says. Sometimes your yes will require a risk, just like it did for Mary.”

Father John Burns, a priest for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, spoke about the two thieves to our peace: anxiety and insecurity. “Peace is the normal condition of the heart, but we look around too much and we lose it.” He gave examples of the various lies that rob us of our peace and encouraged attendees to grow closer to Jesus through personal prayer and the sacraments.

Speaker Chris Mueller challenged youth with the mission of discipleship, saying, “We have to explode out of here with the love of Jesus and the zeal of the apostles.”

When asked about her youth’s experience, Audrey Gyolai, youth minister at St. John’s in Wahpeton, said, “They loved it! I heard a lot of great things about the speakers and the music. They were surprised by how moved they and other teens were by adoration on Saturday. I got a lot of promises to come back next year!” Father Reese Weber, pastor of St. John’s in New Rockford, said, “It was exciting to experience God’s grace with so many others at Steubenville, and I strongly encourage others to attend.”

As a former youth minister, Steubenville was one of the staples in my summer ministry because of the tangible fruit it bears. Participants encounter Jesus in a very real way that launches them into a curiosity about their faith. As Father Eric Seitz stated, “a week out, I noticed that some of the youth were attending Mass without their parents, and some of the girls seemed to be growing closer in friendship.”

Steubenville and other events throughout the year have the ability to transform and restore hearts. As we move forward from this experience, I ask that you spend a few moments praying for the youth of the diocese, for those who participated in our trip, and for guidance as we prepare for Steubenville 2022.

To help the youth of the Diocese of Fargo continue to encounter Jesus through these events, we rely on generous donations that fund our diocesan youth scholarship program. About 20% of the individuals who attended received some sort of scholarship from the diocese. To ensure that we can continue providing scholarships to our youth, I ask that you prayerfully consider making a donation to our scholarship fund. If you have any questions, contact Brady at (701) 356-7902.

Join us Sept. 25 and 26 for Catholic Charities Sunday

Since 2015, the start of fall has signified that Catholic Charities Sunday is drawing near. As the air gets a little cooler and farmers begin their harvest, our staff are getting ready for our biggest event of the year. Catholic Charities Sunday is a celebration in the parishes of North Dakota one weekend of the year when parishioners can learn about the services we provide and hear stories from staff and clients. This year’s celebration is set for Sept. 25–26, and we couldn’t be more excited.

Our theme this year is “Planting Seeds for our Future.” Through our programs and the passion and spirit of our staff, Catholic Charities North Dakota has been planting seeds for the future of North Dakota for nearly 100 years. This year 256 children were adopted through the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program and our Counseling program served 388 clients. Between both of our guardianship programs, we have served 565 individuals and 15 babies were born to Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services (PPAS) clients. We continue to work hard to plant seeds of love, hope, and compassion in communities across the state, and we truly rely on your generosity to make it happen.

In the past year, our PPAS program has implemented more outreach to assist families in our communities that need help with baby supplies. We have had two very successful Bundle up your Baby Bump events where we gave away donated baby supplies and clothing to families in need. We have also added Telehealth services to our Counseling program which allows us to provide counseling to anyone in North Dakota by phone or video no matter where they are located. These are just a few examples of how Catholic Charities North Dakota continues to plant seeds for our future and the future of North Dakota.

In the past you have heard from some of our guardianship and counseling clients, adoptive families, and birth families during our Catholic Charities Sunday video. We have shared program updates from each of our programs which include: Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK), ND Post Adopt Network, Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services (PPAS), Counseling Services, Guardianship Division: Intellectual Disabilities (GDID), and Guardianship Services: Vulnerable (GSV). You have also heard from donors about why they support Catholic Charities North Dakota. This year you will witness a story like no story we’ve shared before.

Our 2021 Catholic Charities Sunday video showcases the results of seeds planted nearly 60 years ago—seeds of courage, seeds of love, and seeds of selflessness. It will give you an inside look at one family’s emotional journey of reconnection after adoption. You will experience, firsthand, six adult siblings all gathering for the very first time. The joy radiates from this family as they reminisce about the past and discuss the peace they now feel after finding each other. Join us for Catholic Charities Sunday, Sept. 25–26, at your parish or online at CatholicCharitiesND.org as we share this amazing story and the great work that you support.
The migrant situation along the southern border poses significant challenges for our country and the church. Social media, selective or biased “news” sources, and our own geographic distance make it difficult for North Dakota Catholics to know the facts. To find out more, I turned to Jennifer Allmon, the executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference, and asked about the situation and the church’s response.

What is the current situation along the border?

We have been seeing more migrants and families coming to our humanitarian respite centers on the border recently. These numbers are certainly higher than 2020 during the pandemic, but it is not uncommon for there to be large influxes every few years. What kind of services does the Catholic Church in Texas provide to immigrants? Have those efforts been restricted or hampered by state, federal, or local governments?

Catholic Charities and other interfaith border ministries provide these immigrants and refugees with hope for their future and work to restore their dignity, including meals, medical examinations, laundry services, spiritual services in a dedicated chapel for worship and reflection. The staff cooperates with dedicated volunteers and state and local partners to provide and coordinate services. Recently, our efforts have been hampered by local and state orders that limit our ability to transport migrants or have state laws that restrict Catholic Social Teaching recognizes both the right of nations to make the exercise of the right to migrate subject to various juridical conditions, as well as the responsibility of the more prosperous nations and wealthy foreign investors in search of security and the means of livelihood that they cannot find in their own countries of origin (CCC 2241).

Is the situation contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in Texas?

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley released a statement responding to allegations that migrants spread COVID-19 in Texas. They take the necessary measures to make sure families who arrive in the community. They are kept in isolation until they test negative, “One incident caused a great deal of misunderstanding in Texas that they probably don’t hear from the news?”

What should Catholics in other states know about the situation in Texas? Our state history has a rich Catholic history going back centuries to the time of the Spanish missions, European emigration, and more recent refugees from Asia and Africa. Our border communities are diverse, vibrant, and dynamic places. People live side-by-side with each other and have family members and friends on both sides of the Mexico-Texas border. There is a rich history of serving together, worshiping together, and working for their good. We have always served the hungry, the thirsty, and the stranger at our doorstep and will continue to do so, God willing, for many years to come.
The practical application of poverty, chastity, obedience

**SISTERS PERSPECTIVE**

Sister Suzanne Stahl, SMP
Superior of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation

"H
evangelically, Father, in order to respond to your love, I, Sister Suzanne Stahl, before our Superior General, promise to follow Christ in the Congregation of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, and I make perpetual vows of obedience, poverty, and consecrated chastity, according to the Constitutions of the Congregation."

I spoke these words Aug. 8, 1980 in the presence of our Sis
ters, my family, and friends. Many Religious women and men recite their vows every day as part of their morning offering to start their day and their prayer time with God. Our vows to God are an extension of our baptismal vows, agreed upon by our parents and godparents. In Religious life, we strive to live our vows in a specific and intentional way.

I will give some practical examples. I am obedient to God through the direction of my Religious Superior and the other Sisters with whom I live in community. Thus, when it came time to choose what I would finish as my college degree, I talked with Sister Kevin Strho (the Provincial Superior), and we discussed my desire to be a registered nurse. One year later we decided that it was the right thing for me to spread the Word of God directly by working with youth and in a parish rather than work in my primary attachment to God alone. Living with my Sisters in community life gives me healthy companionship and friendships to support my emotional needs as well as the joy of serving others. For example, Sister Anne Germaine Picard and I were freed from our ministries so we could travel to live for three months with our Sisters in southeast Cameroon, Africa. There we worked and prayed with our Sisters. We felt a closeness with them even though we had not met them before because we’ve made the same vows and lived the same vocation in the same Religious Congregation.

If you would like to hear more about our Religious Life, come to Holy Family Church, Grand Forks, on Sept. 14 at 7 p.m. 14. Sister Elaine Lange and I will be sharing more about our spirit and life.

A summer to grow in authentic priestly spirituality

**SEMINARIAN LIFE**

JASPER KELLER
Theology I at St. Paul Seminary; St. Paul, Minn.

This summer I was blessed to take part in the Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) program for seminarians in Omaha, Neb. It’s a nine-week formation "boot camp” focused intensely upon fostering a deep, real, and living relationship with God in the hearts of future priests. I’d like to share some of my thoughts on my experience.

The program began with a week-long crash course on honest and open prayer. Then we dove immediately into an 8-day silent retreat. During this retreat, we were all obliged to make four holy hours every day! I was surprised how natural it was for me to engage in these holy hours. At first, I thought there would be way too many. For me, this was an incredibly beautiful time of tranquil relationship with the Trinity and the Holy Family. There were many graces and encounters with God that laid the foundation for prayer throughout the summer and beyond. We also had daily spiritual direction and evening conferences on various aspects of retreat to keep each seminarian from going “off the rails,” since the Evil One likes to tempt and disturb during these intense times. Overall, I was very refreshed and consoled by the unique way that God loved me through those eight days.

Right after the retreat, we began a class on prayer and priestly identity. Much of it was a review of prayer, to solidify the fruits of the retreat to last through the more active routine. We explored various aspects of priestly identity and ways that the heart of the priest is conformed in its desires and longings to Christ’s. These identities were chaste spouse, divine physician, loving father, good shepherd, and the all-important foundation: beloved son. Of these, beloved sonship had already been God’s focus in my prayer and formation, and it will continue to be. In a new way however, divine physician and loving father resonated most poignantly with my heart. I was particularly touched by the example of our priest teachers. They illustrated generously the way in which these identities had blossomed in their own hearts so that it was spontaneous for me to recognize them in mine.

Then, we had a class on masculinity in Christ, which focused more on the natural humanity of each seminarian as it should be founded in relationship with Christ. My section was taught by a psychology professional who also happened to be a priest. There were many fruits and lessons gained from his experience of priesthood and of celibacy. We also read a book on celibacy called Virginity: Celibacy for the Sake of the Kingdom. I appreciated its contributions to giving celibacy a relational foundation with Jesus Christ.

Finally, we had a class on living the Liturgy—that is, living every moment in light of God’s all-conquering and all-surpassing work of love through all history and all existence, culminating in the paschal mystery. It sounds like a lot, and it was! Essentially, it was a class on living in joyful and powerful surrender. The class was based on the book The Wellspring of Worship by Jean Corbon, who wrote the section of the Catechism on prayer. I would highly recommend it, though it is demanding.

Throughout the summer, there were 156 seminarians all stay
ting together in one dorm building on the Creighton University campus. It was such a gift to enjoy each others’ presence and to meet seminarians from other seminaries and dioceses. Our fraternity was vital to keeping me sane through the program as well. God comes close through others. The priests and faculty were uniquely gifted people, and I understood why they were invited to help us grow in authentic priestly spirituality. The schedule was well-suited to promoting prayerful leisure and contemplation, and there were various activities available for sport or apostolic work.

Overall, I am glad that God gave me this summer before entering my first year in major seminary. There was so much growth and preparation for the challenges and blessings ahead, and I have a much more crystallized view of discernment and formation as I move toward the final years before ordination. God be praised.

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Three questions about your will

Perhaps you are thinking about your estate plan. You may even be ready to make an appointment with an attorney to obtain a current will. If so, the following questions will help you prepare for your visit. Thinking about these things before meeting with an attorney could save you time and money.

1. What?

This first question addresses your assets and liabilities. What do you own and what do you owe? Make a list of real estate, vehicles, collectibles, bank and brokerage accounts, insurance policies—everything you have. Estimate the current value. Also, list all of your financial obligations. This inventory will help your attorney immensely.

2. Who?

Decide beforehand who you want to settle your estate when you are gone. This personal representative should be someone you consider fully trustworthy. If you will need guardians for your dependent children, select those as well. What about one or more trustees to oversee any trusts you may have? In addition to these people, try to come up with backup names just in case any of your primary choices cannot serve. Also, be sure to ask all of these persons before including them in your will.

3. Where?

This can be the most difficult part of planning your estate. Where will you transfer your assets? A surviving spouse will likely receive all or part of your assets. Family members may be beneficiaries as well. You may want to consider an estate gift to those organizations you have supported during life, organizations like your parish that reflect your interests and values.

There are other things to think about as well. One of the advantages of meeting with an estate-planning attorney is that he or she can bring up important questions that you might not otherwise consider. A good advisor can also introduce transfer techniques like family trusts and can make sure your will conforms to state law.

If you do not have an estate-planning attorney, ask your trusted friends for suggestions. You might also ask the trust officer at a local bank for recommendations. The important thing is to act on your impulses to put your house in order. It may take a little effort, but the end result—peace of mind—is well worth it.

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**NEW EARTH**  
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**EVENTS**

**Come to Drayton for a classical music performance**

Dr. Jay Hershberger, piano, and Dr. Gregory Hamilton, cello, will perform music of Beethoven and Rachmaninoff at St. Edward Church in Drayton on Sept. 19 at 3 p.m. A dessert buffet will follow the event. Free will offering.

**Join us for 40 Days for Life, starting Sept. 22**

Mark your calendars for the start of the National 40 Days for Life campaign Sept. 22–Oct. 31! You are called to be part of this prayerful effort to bring an end to abortion across our nation and world. The North Dakota 40 Days for Life effort will begin at 8 a.m. Sept. 22 in front of the abortion facility at 512 1st Ave. No., Fargo. Our campaign will provide a peaceful, prayerful presence there from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day of the campaign. Persons can sign up for an hour of prayer by contacting the Pregnancy Help Center at (701) 284-6601 or in Fargo (701) 356-7979. Email phc@polarcomm.com or visit 40daysforlifend.com.

**Discover Peace after abortion starts Sept. 27**

If you are one of the 25% of women who have had an abortion, you owe it to yourself to find help and healing. Discover Peace follows a curriculum proven to change the lives of women left broken by a past abortion. The six-week small group begins Sept. 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. To see if this free and confidential program is right for you, call Dakota Hope Clinic in Minot at (701) 852-4675 and ask for Shelly; or send a confidential text to (978) 705-3421. The location will be disclosed to those who register.

**Pam Stenzel returns for Dakota Hope Banquet and SEX-ED youth event**

Pam Stenzel will be speaking at the ND State Fair Center in Minot on Sept. 20 and at the Mountrail County South Complex in Stanley on Sept. 21. Both events begin at 6:30 p.m. and include a meal. All attendees will be asked to make a donation to Dakota Hope Clinic, a life-affirming pregnancy help center in Minot. Banquets are limited to adults and registration is required. Call (701) 852-4675 or visit dakotahope.org/events. Pam will also be speaking at several area schools and at SEX-ED screenings around, a free community event for youth, junior high and older. Parents, teachers, and youth leaders welcome. SEX-ED will be held at the ND State Fair Center on Sept. 19 at 7 p.m.

**Join us on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 3, for the Walk with Christ for Life**

Bishop Folda invites the faithful to join him in the annual Eucharistic procession, Walk with Christ for Life, on Oct. 3. The day includes Mass at noon at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo, a prayerful, peaceful procession to the state’s only abortion facility, a short prayer service held outside the abortion facility, Benediction at the Cathedral, and lunch in the church social hall. The walk is sponsored by the Diocese of Fargo Respect Life Office. Contact Tim at (701) 356-7910.

**Vaccinations and end of life decisions: A Catholic moral overview and guiding principles**

What is the Catholic understanding of vaccine morality and human freedom? Do you have questions about how to complete a Health Care Directive? Can a person discontinue treatments such as dialysis or have a DNR? What about providing nutrition and hydration? Join Father Tad Pacholczyk, PhD., in a discussion on Catholic health care principles that guide persons and family members who are facing current medical decisions or would like to plan for future health care needs. Father Tad currently serves as the Director of Education for the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia and is a featured columnist in New Earth. The workshop will be held Oct. 9 from 9–11:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo. If desired, join us for Mass at the adoration chapel at 8 a.m. with coffee and rolls to follow. This event is sponsored by St. Mary’s Cathedral and the Diocese of Fargo Respect Life Office and is free and open to the public. Contact Tim at (701) 356-7910.

**Come to Washington D.C. for the March for Life pilgrimage**

The Respect Life Office will be leading its annual youth pilgrimage to the 2022 March for Life in Washington, D.C. All youth grades 9-12 are invited. The pilgrimage begins in Fargo Jan. 17 and returns Jan. 22. Pilgrims will also participate in the Mass for Life at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and see the sights of Washington, D.C., Emmitsburg, Md., and Gettysburg, Pa. Cost is $800. Limit 26 participants. Register at fazardiocease.org/march-for-life.

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cility, a short prayer service held outside the abortion facility, Benediction at the Cathedral, and lunch in the church social hall. The walk is sponsored by the Diocese of Fargo Respect Life Office. Contact Tim at (701) 356-7910.

**Vaccinations and end of life decisions: A Catholic moral overview and guiding principles**

What is the Catholic understanding of vaccine morality and human freedom? Do you have questions about how to complete a Health Care Directive? Can a person discontinue treatments such as dialysis or have a DNR? What about providing nutrition and hydration? Join Father Tad Pacholczyk, PhD., in a discussion on Catholic health care principles that guide persons and family members who are facing current medical decisions or would like to plan for future health care needs. Father Tad currently serves as the Director of Education for the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia and is a featured columnist in New Earth. The workshop will be held Oct. 9 from 9–11:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo. If desired, join us for Mass at the adoration chapel at 8 a.m. with coffee and rolls to follow. This event is sponsored by St. Mary’s Cathedral and the Diocese of Fargo Respect Life Office and is free and open to the public. Contact Tim at (701) 356-7910.

**Come to Washington D.C. for the March for Life pilgrimage**

The Respect Life Office will be leading its annual youth pilgrimage to the 2022 March for Life in Washington, D.C. All youth grades 9-12 are invited. The pilgrimage begins in Fargo Jan. 17 and returns Jan. 22. Pilgrims will also participate in the Mass for Life at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and see the sights of Washington, D.C., Emmitsburg, Md., and Gettysburg, Pa. Cost is $800. Limit 26 participants. Register at fazardiocease.org/march-for-life.

**Holy Family Bookstore**

For Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, weddings, and special occasion gifts and books.
These news items, compiled by Danielle Ottman, were found in New Earth and its predecessor, Catholic Action News.

75 years ago — 1946
On the first of September at 3:00 P.M., the cornerstone was laid and blessed for the new St. Anselm’s Church at Fulda, in Pierce County, north central North Dakota. The day marked the completion of the 22nd year of Father Maurus Engel’s pastorate of the parish. Some 300 parishioners and visitors attended the celebration. The Vincent Volk family donated eight acres of land for the first church building which was completed in 1901 but which was sadly destroyed by a fire on Ash Wednesday of this year.

50 years ago — 1971
The numbers are in; Catholic school enrollment is down. There are 4,230 students currently enrolled in the 19 diocesan Catholic elementary and high schools and another 47 students enrolled through Cardinal Muensch Seminary high school and college. There were 4,361 students enrolled in 1970. It is noted that a number of the decreases reflect decreasing school populations in the diocese. On the flip side, Mary College of the parish. Some 300 parishioners and visitors attended the completion of the 22nd year of Father Maurus Engel’s pastorate. St. Anselm’s Church at Fulda, in Pierce County, north central North Dakota. The day marked the completion of the 22nd year of Father Maurus Engel’s pastorate of the parish. Some 300 parishioners and visitors attended the celebration. The Vincent Volk family donated eight acres of land for the first church building which was completed in 1901 but which was sadly destroyed by a fire on Ash Wednesday of this year.

20 years ago — 2001
Some food for thought by Father Al Bitz as shared in this month’s Guest Column, “America’s Response: Faith and Community—present in every Eucharist.” In a memorial service for the victims of 9-11, the speaker ended by saying: “We draw strength in faith and community.” Another spoke of our faith twin towers – the cross and the empty tomb. The Christian response to disaster is unique. It is called faith. God invites us to see past the chaos, the disorder, the devastation and the despair. Then in community we seek out family, friends, coworkers, et cetera, and in community we pray His wisdom will sustain us. Strengthened by faith and community. That is what we experienced in the days after 9-11. That is what is offered in every Eucharist.

FALL DINNERS

Horace: St. Benedict’s Church will hold a fall dinner on Sept. 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Silent auction, bake sale, country store, and kids activities. Adults—$12, children—$6, and children 4 and under—free. Takeout meals available.

Fargo: St. Anthony of Padua’s Fall Bazaar on Sept. 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. includes bingo, raffle, games for kids, crafts, baked goods, jewelry, plants, and used books. An old-fashioned turkey dinner will be served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., adults—$12, children—$6, and family—$40.

Grand Forks: Join St. Mary’s Church on Sept. 26 for their Old-fashioned Sunday Chicken & Meatball Dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Adults—$12, children—$6, and children 4 and under—free. Takeout meals available.

Medina: St. Mary’s Church will be serving a chicken dinner on Sept. 26, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Medina Legion Hall. Adults—$10, children—$5, children 5 and under—free. Country Store with baked goods and craft items.

Argusville: St. William’s Church invites everyone for a dinner, bake sale, country market, and raffle at the Argusville Community Center on Oct. 3 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free will offering.

Dazey: Enjoy the fall supper at St. Mary’s Church on Oct. 3, from 4 to 7 p.m. Famous homemade German sauerkraut. Takeout meals available. Adults—$12, children—$5. Gift baskets, pumpkins, and gourds for sale.

Langdon: St. Alphonsus Church will host a fall supper with turkey, ham, and all the trimmings on Oct. 17 from 4 to 7 p.m.

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 Mgr. 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.

15th ANNIVERSARY

St. Benedict’s Church of Wild Rice
SATURDAY, OCT. 9, 4 P.M.
Mass celebrated by Bishop John T. Folda
Program and dinner to follow. Free will offering.

Oldest Catholic parish in Cass County, third oldest in N.D.

www.stbensnd.org 11743 38th St. S. Horace, ND
Last night we had a meeting with the group, and we know Janvier is a member of St. Martha Church in Uniondale, N.Y., Aug. 15. Prayers were offered during the liturgy for the people of Haiti, who experienced a magnitude 7.2 earthquake a day earlier. (Gregory A. Shemitz | CNS)

A woman wears a face covering depicting the flag of Haiti as she attends a weekly Sunday Mass for worshippers of Haitian descent at St. Martha Church in Uniondale, N.Y., Aug. 15. Prayers were offered during the liturgy for the people of Haiti, who experienced a magnitude 7.2 earthquake a day earlier. (Gregory A. Shemitz | CNS)

Long Island’s Haitian American community is concerned about friends and relatives affected by the recent earthquake, and people want to help. From her home in Uniondale on Long Island, Marjorie Janvier said she was on the phone with friends and relatives in Jérémie, Haiti, when she first heard reports of a tropical depression moving into the area.

“Just a few minutes ago I had a phone call with someone there, and they tell me there are a lot of people on the street, and it is raining very badly,” Janvier told Catholic News Service late Aug. 16, two days after the magnitude 7.2 quake struck southwestern Haiti.

Janvier is a member of St. Martha Church in Uniondale and coordinator of Children of St. Louis Cathedral, a U.S. and Canadian charity bringing the Haitian diaspora from Jérémie together in support of charitable projects back in Haiti.

“Last night we had a meeting with the group, and we know we have a big project, but we don’t know exactly where to start, because they have so many problems; but we know we have to work hard to get something started quickly,” said Janvier.

She is also concerned that the St. Louis Cathedral in Jérémie is in need of a new roof.

Also working the phones from Long Island was Oblate Father Fenelon Sylfrard, a Haitian priest on vacation in the U.S. but based at the College St. Paul in Les Coteaux, a high school in the Diocese of Les Cayes.

Father Sylfrard spoke about the situation during a homily Aug. 15 in Uniondale. He said part of his school is demolished and some of the students and faculty have lost their homes. Two faculty members were injured, and classes will have to eventually resume outdoors for the foreseeable future, he said.

“Most of the parishes suffered damages, but some of them were destroyed completely,” the priest said through a translator by telephone. “The Catholic schools for the Oblates there was also completely destroyed; thank God the seminarians were on vacation. When I go back we will have Masses outdoors and hopefully get enough help to rebuild the parishes and schools over there. The community will be in need of lots of help.”

The major road connecting Les Cayes to Jérémie is impassable due to landslides and cracks on the road. The quake also leveled homes, leaving thousands without shelter. Countless others are injured and hospitals are already overwhelmed, according to staff at Catholic Relief Services, which has extensive operations in Haiti.

Sonia St. Rose-Bienvil, also a member of St. Martha Church, said she was cooking early Aug. 14 when she began to see the earthquake news through social media; she quickly phoned cousins and aunts to check on their safety, and she is getting requests to help with medications and supplies.

“To get help to Jérémie, you have to go to the capital, where they have the international airport, or we can send by boat, but that can take a long time,” St. Rose-Bienvil told CNS. She is president of Solidarity of Haitian Americans of Long Island, which sponsors education and other workshops for local Haitian Americans.

“We are thinking of communicating with pharmacies over there and get help paying for medications; people are afraid to go inside because it is constantly shaking,” she added.

“My husband has been talking with people down there now talking about aftershocks every few minutes, and the worst thing is the local hospital does not have enough supplies,” St. Rose-Bienvil added.

Prayers were offered during the liturgy for the people of Haiti, Aug. 15 in Uniondale. He said part of his school is demolished and some of the students and faculty have lost their homes. Two faculty members were injured, and classes will have to eventually resume outdoors for the foreseeable future, he said.

“Does that mean anything to you?” she asked. At that late hour, nearly midnight, I couldn’t recall any connection to the date. “Roe v. Wade?” Camille then proceeded to tell me how she’d acquired the bracelet, and all that it meant.

“The bracelet had to do with abortion.”

“I found out that there were a certain number of these bracelets made,” the nurse added. “They were meant to be worn until the new law was overturned. And here we still are.” Camille said she had never heard of the bracelets, nor their intent to remind people to pray for the babies and an end to the killing. “I told her I was amazed, but I was not quite sure when this law came to be, so would not have had any awareness of what was happening in our country then—or about bracelets and prayer.”

Wondering if the bracelets could still be found, Camille asked the question out loud, adding, “I know my sister would really like one.”

“Oh, what does your sister do?” the nurse asked.

“She’s a writer. She lives in Fargo and prays outside the abortion clinic every Wednesday—for the unborn babies and expectant mothers.”

At that, the nurse perked up, exclaiming, “I want her to have it!” Removing it from her wrist, she handed the bracelet to Camille. “Please give it to her.” Elated, Camille shared that she would, in fact, she’d be seeing her soon.

After her anesthesia wore off, Camille said, she saw the nurse and remembered the bracelet, thanking her once again, adding, “I can’t wait to give it to my sister!”

The Wednesday after receiving this meaningful gift, I wore it to the sidewalk, and will do so from here on out as I pray for our littlest citizens whose lives are in the balance. The bracelet will remind me that though this fight has been long, it’s not over. And no matter how far away people might be from the sidewalk in Fargo, anyone who cares about this ministry, and these children and their loved ones, can join us in spirit—including my sister, and a nurse in western North Dakota with a generous heart.
Do you know where we are?
The answer will be revealed in the October New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is of St. Lawrence’s Church in Michigan.