From Bishop Folda:
Vatican II: Sixty years later

We remember: A call to pray for those who have gone before us

Pope Francis: Prayer is medicine for the weary soul
PRAYER DAY
NOVEMBER 16, 2022 | 10 AM
“The Need for Everyday Saints”

Event is free and open to the public. Lunch tickets are available at the Crow’s Nest for $5.
Register at umary.edu/PrayerDay or at the event.

Register at umary.edu/PrayerDay

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Father Nathan Cromly, CSJ
Founder of the Saint John Institute,
Friend and Colleague of Michelle Duppong

Schedule of Events
9 am: Mass, Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel
10 am: Keynote, Founders Hall
11 am: Panel Discussion, Founders Hall
Noon: Lunch, The Crow’s Nest Campus Restaurant
1 pm: Breakout Sessions
- “Prayer in the Old Testament” by Dr. Michael Morris
- “Prayer in the Liturgy” by Dr. Michon Matthiesen
- “Prayer in the New Testament” by Dr. John Kincaid

University of Mary | for Life.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ON THE COVER:
The altar at St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks decked out in fall finery.
(Jackie Simon | St. Michael’s)

FROM BISHOP FOLDA
4 Vatican II: Sixty years later

FOCUS ON FAITH
7 Ask a Priest: What can I say to friends who say their prayers aren’t being answered?

NEXT GEN
11 Day care center opens at St. Joseph’s School, Devils Lake

COVER STORY
12 The Eucharist and Thanksgiving: Modeling the Real Presence through prayer and deeds

FAITH AND CULTURE
17 The Eucharistic miracle of St. Clare

OUR CATHOLIC LIFE
20 Catholic Action: How we treat the deceased reflects who we are

US/WORLD NEWS
33 Eucharistic Revival team releases playbook on how to “enkindle a relationship with Jesus”

SIDEWALK STORIES
35 Hasty exit near sidewalk belies abortion reality

NEW EARTH
(ISSN# 10676406)

Mission
Our mission is to inform, teach, and inspire readers about the Catholic faith and the life of parishioners in Eastern North Dakota. New Earth is the official monthly publication of the Diocese of Fargo.

Publisher
Most Rev. John T. Folda
Bishop of Fargo

Editor
Paul Braun

Assistant editor & designer
Kristina Lahr

Subscriptions
Parish contributions make it possible for each registered Catholic household in the diocese to receive 11 issues per year. Those outside the diocese are asked to consider a $9 yearly donation. To subscribe, change an address, donate, or see past issues of New Earth, go to: fargodiocese.org/new-earth.

Contact New Earth staff
news@fargodiocese.org
(701) 356-7900
New Earth
5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A
Fargo, ND 58104

Deadlines
Deadline to submit articles, events, and advertisements for the December issue is Nov. 11, 2022. All submissions are subject to editing and placement.

New Earth is published by the Catholic Diocese of Fargo, a nonprofit North Dakota corporation, 5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104.

Periodical Postage Paid at Fargo, ND and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104.

Member of the Catholic Media Association
Vatican II: Sixty years later

On Oct. 11, we marked the 60th anniversary since Pope St. John XXIII formally opened the Second Vatican Council. For most of us, this ecumenical council is a distant memory, or totally unknown. But Pope St. John Paul II, who attended the entirety of the Council, said it was the most significant event in the life of the Church for the past 100 years. Pope Benedict XVI was one of the principal theological contributors to the Council, and said recently that the Council was “not only meaningful, but necessary.”

So what was Vatican II, and what did it do? The Council was convoked by John XXIII as the first ecumenical, or general, council of the Church since 1870. All the bishops of the world participated in its four sessions from 1962 to 1965. In his opening address on Oct. 11, 1962, Pope John acknowledged the changing times and the need for the light of Christ to radiate more fully in the Church and in the world. He prayed that the Church would experience a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a “new Pentecost.” The Council was not called to cast aside the truths of our faith, but to proclaim them more generously and more effectively to a world that had grown more and more distant from God.

Perhaps the most immediate results of the Council were changes to the liturgy. The introduction of vernacular languages into the liturgy was most noticeable. The Council Fathers called for a renewal of the liturgy and, in the Sacred Constitution on the Liturgy, they urged “full, active participation” of all the faithful in the sacred liturgy. This doesn’t mean everyone has a job in the sanctuary, but that all who gather are intentional and deliberate participants in the mystery, the sacrificial act of Christ himself. No one is to be a bystander. The Fathers reaffirmed that the Eucharistic liturgy is the “source and summit” of the Church’s life, the high point of our prayer as a Church and the font from which it draws its life. Despite certain aberrations, the Fathers made clear that no one—not even a priest—is free to take liberties with the liturgy. It is the prayer of the Church. And despite some common misconceptions, the Council did not abolish the use of Latin in the liturgy but actually encouraged it.

During the last century, the very concept of truth had become relativized, and there were voices that questioned whether truth can even be known. The truth of Christ as our unique Savior was called into question. But the Council reaffirmed that God has spoken the definitive truth to humanity, and that truth is his Son, Jesus Christ. The Fathers taught that Jesus must once again be placed at the center of the Church’s life and our lives as Christians. And the mission of the Church, which is the “great sacrament” of Christ, is to go out into the world with renewed evangelical zeal, eager to make Christ known to all peoples.

The Council strongly emphasized the universal call to holiness as an essential aspect of the Church’s life in this new era. The call to holiness is not limited to an elite few within the Church, but is offered to all the faithful. In other words, everyone is called to a life of communion with God, a life of holiness and virtue that is lived out in their particular vocation. The Fathers placed special emphasis on the apostolate of the laity, calling all the faithful to sanctify the world in their own spheres of life and influence: family life and marriage, business and commerce, politics, education, labor, culture, etc. As our Lord tells us in the Gospel, the laity are to be a leaven in the world, making the Kingdom of God present in their own specific ways.

Taking their lead from Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, the Fathers also confirmed the missionary character of the Church. Just as Jesus had sent his own apostles out “to the nations,” so does he send the Church today to make him present to all the peoples of the world. The Council called the Church to engage the world rather than to hide from it. But the Fathers certainly did not call us to adopt the ways of the world, or to bend the truths of our faith to the whims of the times. Unfortunately, in a misreading of the Council’s intent, many have tried to accommodate the faith to the demands of the world, rather than living the faith to convert the world to Christ. Needless to say, there is much work still to be done.

In the aftermath of the Council, and in the turbulence of the world in the decades that followed, the Church experienced its own turmoil and struggles. Some tried to reinterpret the
I herewith recognize the election of:

- Reverend Timothy Schroeder, Deanery I, first term
- Reverend Joseph Littlefield, Deanery V, first term
- Reverend Greg Haman, Deanery VIII, second term
- Reverend Kevin Boucher, member at large, second term

as members of the Presbyteral Council. These appointments were effective Sept. 28, 2022, and conclude on Sept. 28, 2025.

Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements

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

FROM BISHOP FOLDA

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

Nov. 13–17
USCCB Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

Nov. 17–18
Mount St. Mary Seminary Retreat Master, Emmitsburg, Md.

Nov. 24–25
Pastoral Center closed

Dec. 6 • 6 p.m.
Catholic Man Night, St. Benedict, Horace

Dec. 7 • 3 p.m.
St. JPII Schools Board Meeting, Pastoral Center

Dec. 8 • 7 p.m.
Mass of Feast of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Dec. 9 • 7 p.m.
Shanley Christmas Concert, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

Dec. 10 • 4 p.m.
Mass for Knights of Columbus, Shanley Chapel

Dec. 13 • 3 p.m.
Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Pastoral Center

Dec. 15 • 12:10 p.m.
North Dakota Catholic Conference Meeting, Jamestown

FROM BISHOP FOLDA

meaning of the Council, and construed its teachings in ways that were completely at odds with its actual teachings. A so-called “spirit of the Council” emerged, and the actual texts of the Council were often ignored. The implementation of the Council remained incomplete or was even distorted, and some have asserted that the Council was the cause of all the problems we face today. Others maintain that the Council texts are irrelevant for our times, and we shouldn’t be bound by them. Both of these attitudes are incorrect. The Council remains the most authoritative teaching event of the last century, and the Council documents are still a necessary guide for the Church as she continues on her way in this third Christian millennium. The Popes have all referred to the importance of the Council, and we as a Church would do well to return to the beautiful teaching of the faith that we find in the Council documents. As we look back to the Council on this 60th anniversary of its opening, let us recommit ourselves to living out its vision, and let us pray for the “new Pentecost” that Pope St. John XXIII hoped for.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

November: Children who suffer

We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection.
At seven o’clock in the evening on Aug. 18, 1996, Father Alejandro Pezet was celebrating Holy Mass at a Catholic church in the commercial center of Buenos Aires. As he was finishing distributing Holy Communion, a woman came up to tell him that she had found a discarded host on a candleholder at the back of the church. Going to the spot indicated, Father Alejandro saw the defiled Host. Since he was unable to consume it, he placed it in a container of water and put it away in the tabernacle of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

On Aug. 26, upon opening the tabernacle, he saw to his amazement that the Host had turned into a bloody substance. He informed Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis), who gave instructions that the Host be professionally photographed. The photos were taken on Sept. 6. They clearly show that the Host, which had become a fragment of bloodied flesh, had grown significantly in size. For several years, the Host remained in the tabernacle, the whole affair being kept a strict secret. Since the Host suffered no visible decomposition, Cardinal Bergoglio decided to have it scientifically analyzed.

On Oct. 5, 1999, in the presence of the Cardinal’s representatives, Dr. Castanon took a sample of the bloody fragment and sent it to New York for analysis. Since he did not wish to prejudice the study, he purposely did not inform the team of scientists of its provenance. One of these scientists was Dr. Frederic Zugiba, a well-known cardiologist and forensic pathologist. He determined that the analyzed substance was real flesh and blood containing human DNA.

Dr. Zugiba testified that, “the analyzed material is a fragment of the heart muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves...The heart muscle is in an inflammatory condition and contains a large number of white blood cells. This indicates that the heart was alive at the time the sample was taken, since white blood cells die outside a living organism. They require a living organism to sustain them. Thus, their presence indicates that the heart was alive when the sample was taken. What is more, these white blood cells had penetrated the tissue, which further indicates that the heart had been under severe stress, as if the owner had been beaten severely about the chest.”

Two Australians, journalist Mike Willesee and lawyer Ron Tesoriero, witnessed these tests. Knowing where the sample had come from, they were dumbfounded by Dr. Zugiba’s testimony. Mike Willesee asked the scientist how long the white blood cells would have remained alive if they had come from a piece of human tissue, which had been kept in water. They would have ceased to exist in a matter of minutes, Dr. Zugiba replied. The journalist then told the doctor that the source of the sample had first been kept in ordinary water for a month and then for another three years in a container of distilled water; only then had the sample been taken for analysis.

Dr. Zugiba was at a loss to account for this fact. There was no way of explaining it scientifically, he stated. Only then did Mike Willesee inform Dr. Zugiba that the analyzed sample came from a consecrated Host (white, unleavened bread) that had mysteriously turned into bloody human flesh. Amazed by this information, Dr. Zugiba replied, “How and why a consecrated Host would change its character and become living human flesh and blood will remain an inexplicable mystery to science—a mystery totally beyond her competence.”

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen. (From USCCB)
S
ome of the greatest saints have acknowledged bewilderment at the seeming slowness or lack of response to particular requests. I would first acknowledge your friend is not alone in wrestling with this problem. I would own up to the fact of my own wonderment by sharing a personal example, then share from the lives of the saints, and conclude with words from Jesus himself in the Gospels.

One example of a seemingly unanswered prayer is the recent tragic loss of a young man who went missing when the weather turned bad on a difficult mountain trail in Colorado. Our entire Christian community joined in prayer vigils for his safe return. Our parish offered rosaries and Masses for his intention. He has yet to be found after over three weeks, so he is presumed dead. The lack of closure in this case is agonizing. When and how will we receive an answer to our pleas?

Our readers may each think of similarly agonizing situations in which our fervent prayers seem to be unheard, the response long delayed, or we’re unsatisfied with the answer we received. This is the unfortunate lot of a fragile and mortal humanity. God will not step in to heal every illness or prevent every tragic loss. We may look for immediate answers, but answers may come further down the road. While we wait, we are growing in the grace of patient endurance, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We learn the way of persistent prayer and never giving up.

St. Monica serves as one of our best examples in the lives of the saints. Her fervent and unrelenting prayer of many years led finally to the conversion of her son Augustine, who became one of our greatest writers on matters of Christian doctrine and spiritual life. We may not see results immediately, but answers may come further down the road. While we wait, we are growing in the grace of patient endurance, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We learn the way of persistent prayer and never giving up.

What can I say to friends who say their prayers aren’t being answered?

for the needs of the world. God is hearing my prayers when I open my heart to join in our prayers for the greater needs of the entire Mystical Body.

Jesus Christ, from the cross on Calvary, cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matt. 27:46)? In these words, the opening verse of Psalm 22, Jesus is actually praying during his hour of deepest abandonment. Fulton Sheen wrote of this word from the cross, “Christ’s cry was of abandonment which he felt standing in a sinner’s place, but it was not of despair. The soul that despairs never cries to God” (Life of Christ).

Encourage your friend to pray the Psalms regularly, as part of a daily prayer discipline. The Liturgy of Hours, available in text or online, provides just such a daily prayer pattern. Reading the Scriptures prayerfully and meditating upon them can open us to a more enriching life of prayer and sense of God’s presence. Listening to the voice of God within will open the ears of our soul to hear his answer to our prayers of intercession.

Jesus tells us to persist, to ask, to seek, and to knock. “If you, who are wicked, know how to give your children good things, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (cf Luke 11:9-13). God will not give us a scorpion when we ask for an egg. We may often feel as if we have been handed a scorpion during our roughest moments in times of loss or natural disasters. Our grief at the death of loved ones can certainly feel like a scorpion sting. Therein lies the age-old question, “Was this God’s will?”

Death itself, a seeming scorpion sting to those of us left behind, is really the “egg of life,” our beginning of everlasting life with Christ in the Resurrection. We can trust that our beloved now join with the saints of heaven, begging God to hear our prayers.

ASK A PRIEST

FATHER DALE KINZLER
Pastor of churches in Cooperstown, Aneta, Finley, and Jessie

NAPOLEON LIVESTOCK
SALE EVERY THURSDAY
1-800-932-8821
napoleonlivestock.com
3 Generations of Livestock Marketing Integrity
Dylan Bitz 521-0672 Paul Bitz 226-6199
Jacob Bitz 329-0315 Jim Bitz 226-6197
George Bitz 226-6198

NEW EARTH NOVEMBER 2022
“Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country”

Maryvale retreats to continue under new leadership

By Steve Splonskowski | Office of Evangelization for the Diocese of Fargo

The Sisters of Mary of the Presentation have gifted their property Maryvale, just north of Valley City, to the Diocese of Fargo to be maintained and used as a retreat center. I was asked by Bishop Folda to take on the Directorship of this facility. I have spent some time giving thanks to the Lord for the many retreats that I have been able to take part in at Maryvale. My first SEARCH retreat took place there when I was 16. Throughout my high school and college years, I attended many SEARCH retreats and then finally directed one.

When I was at Cardinal Muench Seminary for two years, we had our Christmas retreats at Maryvale. As an adult I’m still encountering Christ through retreats and now my children are doing the same at an upcoming SEARCH retreat. Maryvale will always have special memories for me of spending time away with Christ.

The name “Maryvale” means Mary’s valley, and I think this is worthy of reflection. Standing in Mary’s valley and surveying the rolling hills brings life to this amazing story and beloved passages in scripture when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Our Lady to announce her role in bringing salvation to the world: “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and be called the son of the Most High” (Luke 1:31-32).

The angel relays to Mary at the end of his message that Elizabeth, her cousin, was also pregnant though it would appear impossible. Thankfully, Mary accepts the invitation to cooperate with God’s plan for salvation. Her next step, according to scripture, is to “make haste to the hill country” there she would greet her cousin Elizabeth and remain with her a time.

My wife, Jacinta, and I have been married for 22 years and we have made it a priority to make an annual couples retreat, as well as periodic individual retreats. During our most recent time at Maryvale, I couldn’t help but recall how often over these years of marriage the retreat experience has been such a powerful opportunity to step away, retreat, as it were, from normal daily life. This allows us to take another look before plunging back in with renewed faith and clearer priorities.

The opportunity of retreat is one that has a long history not only in our area but also in our Church. Our lives are busy; it’s just a fact that we all have in common. Yet, a popular analogy in management and self-help imagery is being sure to take time to include in our perspective both the forest and the trees. As we walk through the trees, we can get lost and lose our sense of direction. We have to stop periodically, crawl up higher and look over the entire forest. From further up, we can make sure we are going in the right direction in order to reach the desired goal. After we crawl back down, we can make needed adjustments and continue forward with confidence. This act of stopping allows for reflection and a review of our personal expectations, priorities, goals, and ultimately, our purpose. On retreat we allow the Lord to adjust our priorities and goals and to see them from a divine perspective.

I recall a clever thought once shared at a retreat: “Your Eternity is going to be spent with Christ or away from Christ. This life is much shorter than eternity. If you want to enjoy that time of eternity with Christ, start practicing now, or it’s going to be hell!”

Christ stands waiting with arms opened wide in invitation, he says: “Come, away by yourselves...and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31). I invite you to make haste as Mary did and come away for a while to the hill country at Maryvale.
On Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 2, faithful took part in a Eucharistic procession from the Cathedral of St. Mary to the former abortion facility in downtown Fargo. Bishop Folda prayed over the building so that in the name of Jesus Christ, the location might be cleansed. The Red River Women's clinic has now moved across the river to Moorhead, Minn. (Photo by Kristina Lahr | New Earth)

Parishioners from St. Margaret Mary Church in Buchanan stand with Father Neil Pfeifer after celebrating their patron saint’s feast day on Oct. 16. They also celebrated the completion of some much needed projects around the church including new shingles, fresh paint, and a new sidewalk. A potluck meal was held after Mass. (submitted photo)

“I travel, work, suffer my weak health, meet with a thousand difficulties, but all these are nothing, for this world is so small. To me, space is an imperceptible object, as I am accustomed to dwell in eternity.”

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
Feast day Nov. 13
Diocese of Fargo Catholic schools welcome four new principals

Kaja Kaste is the new principal of St. John’s Catholic School in Wahpeton. She received her Bachelor’s in Elementary Education degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead. Following graduation, Kaja had the opportunity to stay home with her children for 10 years. In 2019, she accepted the first grade teaching position at St. John’s. She is currently continuing her education through the University of Mary and intends to receive her Master’s in Educational Leadership this spring. She and her husband, Kory, have 4 children: Gracin (13), Nolan (12), Isla (11), and Declan (7).

Nick Lee is the new principal at St. Catherine School in Valley City. He graduated from Valley City High School and received his Bachelor’s from VCSU in Health Science with a minor in Biology in 2016. He received his Master of Arts in Teaching from VCSU in December 2021. Nick was employed previously in both higher education and the nonprofit sector. Through most of his adult life, he coached speech and student congress at Valley City High School. Over his many years as a coach, he coached over 25 State Champions and nearly 150 state finalists. Beyond the accolades, the greatest joy came from watching kids gain confidence and “find their voice.” Nick and his wife, Kaitlen, currently make their home in Valley City along with their three sons, Micaiah (6), Eliam (4), and Ezrah (1).

Kevin Leier is the new principal at Little Flower Catholic Elementary School in Rugby. Kevin taught at Rugby High School for 10 years as a Social Studies and Construction Trades Instructor. In 2021, Kevin moved from the classroom to a position at North Central Education Cooperative (NCEC) working directly with administrators and staff around the NCEC region as a professional development specialist and educational coach/mentor for new educators in the field. Kevin and his wife, Anne, have five children with another on the way in February 2023. They make their home south of Rugby on a ranch where they continue the family operation raising bison.

Mary Beth Lalka is the new principal at St. Ann’s Catholic School in Belcourt. She came to North Dakota last year as a missionary volunteer with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT) and served as the 5th–8th grade teacher. Mary Beth is a native of Buffalo, N.Y. For the past 25 years, she has worked in Catholic schools, parishes, and missions. She reports that it has been a blessing serving with SOLT on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and that the teachers and community there are amazing. She hopes that working together will help the school to grow and reach more students and families.

St. Anthony’s Youth Group in Fargo packed 15 Boxes of Joy for Cross Catholic Ministries on Oct. 12. A Box of Joy is a Christmas shoebox, donated and packed with toys, clothing, school supplies, and hygiene items. Each gift represents Christ’s love and may be the only Christmas gift children in developing countries are blessed to receive. The boxes will be sent to children in Central America and the Caribbean. (submitted photo)
The little feet that pitter-patter through the halls of St. Joseph School in Devils Lake have recently gotten considerably smaller. Since the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, St. Joseph now offers daycare for “Wee Disciples,” those aged three years and younger. The goal is to offer these toddlers a safe, warm, prayerful environment.

Father Chad Wilhelm, pastor of St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph School, and St. Mary Academy, and myself established the Wee Disciples Daycare in response to the needs of the community in Devils Lake. Daycare opportunities were disappearing, so it just made sense to open one in the school. Caring for people from the earliest age throughout their lives—as Father Wilhelm put it, “from womb to eternity,”—is the mission of the Church.

Not only is this daycare a blessing to the children who attend it, a place where the children “know they’re special,” it’s also a service to their families. The Catholic Church seeks “to accompany women not only through pregnancy, be it planned or unplanned, but also to birth and beyond, to affordable daycare,” in the words of Father Wilhelm. Although it is not necessary to have older siblings in preschool, kindergarten, the elementary or middle school offered in the same building, if there is another child in the family, this offers the convenience of a “one-stop shop.” It’s so nice because they can all be together. From your baby to your 14-year-old, it’s all the same building. It’s good for the big kids to have interaction with the babies, and vice-versa.

The Wee Disciples currently has nine children, but will have ten beginning in November, when the first grade teacher returns from maternity leave with her baby. Several teachers have recently retired, after having taught at St. Joseph’s for decades, and their replacements have been younger women with small children. Being able to have their babies right down the hall from their classrooms gives them the peace of mind to be able to resume teaching, often a financial necessity for their families.

The Wee Disciples Daycare, and indeed all the divisions of education at St. Joseph and St. Mary’s Academy, are open to everyone, not just Catholics. The daycare, however, currently has no openings, because during this initial year, the administration thought it best to take it slow. The St. Joseph family rejoices over these, their tiniest new members, and looks forward to offering their hearts and love to even more children in the near future.
Did you know that the Eucharist and celebrating Thanksgiving Day are connected? The Greek word *eucharistia* literally translates to “thanksgiving.” There is no better way to show thanks to God than attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the Holy Eucharist is “an action of thanksgiving to God” (CCC 1360). In fact, we give thanks to God at each Mass during the Eucharistic prayer when the priest says, “Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God,” and we reply in affirmation, “It is right and just.”

As we continue our three-year journey of Eucharistic Revival in the Diocese of Fargo, it’s imperative that we recognize the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and to thank him for sacrificing himself so we can obtain salvation through the partaking of his body and blood, soul and divinity.

We can model our gratefulness to God by giving thanks for the gifts he bestows on us daily. A prayer of thanksgiving when waking up in the morning, prayers of thanksgiving at mealtime, and grateful prayers at the end of the day are just some examples how we can outwardly show our gratitude and closeness to God.

As a nation, we have a day set aside to be thankful for all of the blessings we receive. Thanksgiving Day, established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, is marked traditionally with feasting and gathering with family and friends. However, many organizations and churches across the country have made it a tradition to show gratitude by serving others in need. One of the longest-running such traditions of service in the Diocese of Fargo takes place in West Fargo each Thanksgiving Day at Blessed Sacrament Church.

Since 1978, the parish has offered a traditional Thanksgiving meal every year to those who may be alone, have nowhere else to go, or otherwise are unable to access a meal. Due to COVID-19, there was no sit-down dinner in 2020. However, 400 meals were provided to the Meals on Wheels of Fargo/Moorhead. The event serves on average about 850 meals, but some years that has increased to nearly 2,000. There is no charge for the meals, but a free-will donation basket is set out for anyone to donate. Money left over is donated to the parish “Poor Fund.”

By Paul Braun | Editor of *New Earth*
The day starts with Thanksgiving Day Mass. The altar at Blessed Sacrament is decorated in traditional Thanksgiving flair. For many parishioners, the Mass is the highlight of the day.

“Even before the meal begins, the parish appropriately celebrates Mass, also called ‘the Eucharist,’” said Father Gary Luiten, pastor of Blessed Sacrament. “Eucharist’ is a word which means ‘thanksgiving.’ This is not only a spiritual meal but is the perfect sacrifice of Jesus to the Father, to whom we join ourselves in thanksgiving to feed our spirits.”

After Mass, it’s all hands on deck for the dozens of volunteers. In fact, many have been busy preparing the meal for several days.

“It is hard to estimate the total number of volunteers that come and help us,” said Mary Beth Odegaard, administrative assistant at Blessed Sacrament parish. “Typically we have about 30 or more helping in the preparation, like cooking and carving turkeys, cubing and drying the bread for stuffing, setting up the dining area, making the stuffing, rolling the silverware, etc. On Thanksgiving Day we’ll have 50 or more volunteers throughout the day.”

Volunteering is one way parishioners show their gratitude during the event. But it’s not just those who attend Blessed Sacrament that come to lend a helping hand. Volunteers come from around the Fargo/Moorhead metro area and even farther.

“We’ve had people from Minot, relatives of parishioners from Oregon, Texas, and South Carolina,” said Odegaard. “We’ve had Boy Scout troops and their parents and college students. At this point, it’s through word-of-mouth that we get our volunteers.”

The parish makes the meal available to anyone who wants to partake, but they also provide meals for those who can’t attend. Each year meals are provided to the West Fargo police, fire and ambulance service personnel who are on duty that day, and Churches United for the Homeless in Moorhead for their evening meal. The parish once did home deliveries but had to stop a few years ago when volunteers were difficult to find to make the deliveries. However, the parish does provide food for the Meals on Wheels program in the area.

The meal is financed partially through food purchased by the church itself, including ingredients for coleslaw, along with dinner rolls, and some canned goods. But the remaining parts of the meal, especially the turkeys, are provided through the generosity of parishioners and the outside community. This year, Blessed Sacrament expects to cook about 80 turkeys to meet the day’s demands. Diners may have their meal at

**Churches with Thanksgiving events:**

- **Park River:** St. Mary’s Church conducts a food drive in November culminating at the ecumenical Thanksgiving service on Nov. 23 at 7 p.m.
- **Grand Forks:** St. Michael’s Church collects gifts and prepares a food basket for families in the parish who could use a little help during Christmas. The program begins during the Thanksgiving season, which inspires folks to help others who are in need.
- **Lidgerwood:** St. Boniface Church provides a Thanksgiving meal to those in need in the community on Thanksgiving Day.
- **West Fargo:** Blessed Sacrament Church invites you to Thanksgiving Nov. 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thanksgiving Dinner includes roasted turkey and all the trimmings. Take-out available. Free-will offering.
the church or bring their meal home to enjoy. Many large families attend to have their Thanksgiving meal together. No one is turned away. “There is nothing like a Blessed Sacrament Thanksgiving,” said Odegaard. “The atmosphere is one of blessings. Those giving of themselves to provide and to serve others are happy to be in that position. Those who come to eat with us or take their meal home to eat are grateful and thankful. It’s a great day!”

This year’s meal will be served on Nov 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church, located at 210 5th Ave West in West Fargo. Donations are accepted by calling the church at (701) 282-3321. If you are unable to volunteer your time, a donation may just be a way you can show thankfulness for the blessing in your life by helping others. “Even before we begin serving the turkey dinner to the public, we have already begun to live in the spirit of the day,” said Father Luiten. “We hope to serve many people on Thanksgiving. But I always say that if for some reason nothing else gets done other than Mass, it’s still been a good day.”
Never shovel again!

Top 10 reasons to move to Riverview Place.
10. Fun events, performances, excursions and more.
9. Enjoy delicious meals without cooking or cleaning.
8. Live independently and only pay for the care you need.
7. Receive mind, body, and spiritual nourishment.
6. Free transportation to all medical appointments.
5. Stay in the same apartment, from independent to assisted living.
4. Enjoy nature views and walks on our lovely campus.
3. Homey atmosphere where everyone knows your name.
2. Attend church without walking on ice.
1. Never shovel again!

For a tour, call 701.237.4700.

5300 12th Street South | Fargo, North Dakota
Independent Living | Assisted Living
CHILivingCommunities.org/Riverview

Caring for you

SMP Health
www.smphealth.org

Our North Dakota Ministries
Bottineau  SMP Health - St. Andrew’s
Enderlin  SMP Health - Maryhill
Fargo   SMP Health - St. Catherine North
Fargo  SMP Health - St. Catherine South
Harvey  SMP Health - St. Aloisius
Jamestown  SMP Health - Ave Maria
Rolla  SMP Health - St. Kateri
Valley City  SMP Health - St. Raphael
A deep look at the difficulties facing the Church

By Mark Hollcraft | Executive Director of Real Presence Radio

About five years ago I was introduced to a book written by Ralph Martin entitled Fulfillment of All Desire. I was immediately drawn into the book but also the story of its author, Ralph Martin. In 2020, I discovered a new release from Dr. Ralph Martin entitled A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward. From the moment I finished reading it, I knew I could only hope to have him speak at our Real Presence Radio banquets (more on that later). I believe Dr. Martin’s insights, wealth of knowledge, and gift to think and speak from the heart of the Church are an antidote for our present day concerns within the Church and the cultural issues surrounding her.

We read from St. John’s Gospel that a “thief comes to steal, slaughter and destroy” (John 10:10a), and certainly, aspects of present day culture have subscribed to this as a kind of motto, but St. John in his very next line, offers hope, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10b). Dr. Martin follows a similar pattern in his survey of the Catholic Church in the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century. He offers piercing insight into human and sinful nature that has penetrated areas of Church leadership in the Catholic Church while also giving evidence that the same Church, as the vehicle of salvation, provides the answer to heal the Church from the interior and exterior.

These insights are not just evolutions within the last 20 years. Dr. Martin penned another book entitled, Crisis of Truth in 1982, which served as a precursor to Church in Crisis. In both editions, Martin carefully shares his homework, study, and reflections of the Catholic Church, including her leadership and trends within the last 40 years. These books offer a powerful 1–2 punch for the faithful to engage and to foster a culture of healing, conversion, and unleashing of the Holy Spirit. Without giving too many spoilers, I share the following five points Dr. Martin acknowledges as major hits to the Church; as well as key insights to possible solutions and pathways forward.

**Hits to the Church:** Gut-check on the confusion the Church is currently experiencing.

1. Surveying the problems we currently face. What led to this?
2. The fog of Universalism seeking to undermine holiness, evangelization, and vocations
3. The sexual revolution, it’s roots and consequences
4. Religious fervor surrounding secular causes
5. Culpability and watering down of mortal sin

**Pathways Forward:** What we can do and how we can engage and enable genuine renewal.

1. The scripture, tradition, and Church Magisterium as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church are indeed reliable
2. Signs of the times: repentance and judgment
3. Inexhaustible riches of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit

Let me be clear, these insights belong to Dr. Martin. I just find that “he had me at hello” with his insights, timing of message, and depth of charisma from which he writes. To hear him speak, please attend any of the following banquet locations by registering at yourcatholicroadiostation.com/banquet:

- Nov. 21 in Bismarck at the Bismarck Event Center
- Dec. 1 in Minot at the Sleep Inn & Suites Conference Center
- Feb. 6, 2023 in Fargo at the Delta Hotel by Marriott

It is my hope you would find yourself affirmed and convicted that the Catholic Church (amidst her faults) is indeed the institution Jesus Christ founded and chose as a remedy for an aching world in every age. I hope you will discover that you and I are called to holiness and that our Lord is so generous and confident in us that he invites us to participate in the sanctification of the world. Praise be Jesus Christ!
The Eucharistic miracle of St. Clare of Assisi

By Mary Hanbury | Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fargo

This painting of St. Clare of Assisi tells the story of the famous miracle that occurred in 1240 in which the Saracen soldiers stormed the convent cloister of San Damiano in Assisi where St. Clare and her sisters lived. The miracle story is taken from the writings of Tommaso da Celano; a Franciscan Friar who lived during the time of St. Clare.

He writes that the nuns were terrified and cried to St. Clare for help. St. Clare with a fearless heart though she was weak and sick, prostrated herself before the Lord and said, “Behold, my Lord, is it possible You want to deliver into the hands of pagans Your defenseless handmaids, whom I have taught out of love for You? I pray You, Lord protect these Your handmaids whom I cannot now save by myself.”

She suddenly heard a voice from the tabernacle, “I will always protect you.” She then proceeded to bring a silver case carrying the Blessed Sacrament out before the Saracens and, in complete trust, called upon the Lord for that protection. The Saracens were struck with fear from seeing the courage of St. Clare and her sisters standing before them without fear. They retreated and left Assisi.

In this painting, the story as told by Tommaso da Celano is shown slightly different as St. Clare is holding up the Monstrance with her eyes gazing on the Blessed Sacrament. Her eyes show her pleading to the Lord for protection. The Saracens seem to be frightened by the Sacred Host. For dramatic effect of the message and power of the Eucharist, the artist depicts in the background a cherub opening up a curtain and angels descend from the clouds; thus representing the omnipresence of God. Heaven has opened and his legions of angels are sent to witness this event. We see an angel kneeling in adoration behind St. Clare and three distinct cherub heads below the Monstrance to signify the Trinity. The other angel is holding a crozier, which signifies that St. Clare was the Abbess of her community.

Take note of the soldier’s lance: the light shines on part of the sharp blade pointed toward St. Clare to heighten the effect of danger she was in. Yet, our eyes are drawn right to the brightest part of the painting: the white host and the light streaming from it. The host shines brighter than the soldiers lance. Our eyes rest in the power of the Eucharist for protection. The protection is meant for us as well; as we too can go to Jesus in the Eucharist with all our life’s struggles and ask for protection, help, and guidance.
Have you ever set a goal and did all the right steps only to fail? Have you done this month after month and still fallen short? How did you feel? Hurt? Angry? Frustrated? Disappointed? Worthless?

Now, think of that couple you know who is struggling with infertility. Think of the excitement they felt the first month they tried to conceive a child. The women’s mind is always thinking, “Am I pregnant? Is this a pregnancy symptom? Oh, I hope I’m pregnant!” Then her period starts. She picks up her broken heart and hopes again the next month. Again, she’s left disappointed. This goes on for months and months. Even years.

The couple now decides to seek medical help. They test hormones and have a semen analysis done. One or both show there are issues to be corrected. The couple then goes through whatever surgeries are necessary to correct the problem. They start trying to conceive by using target hormone therapy and charting. Their hope returns. They try again month after month, year after year, getting the same result. No pregnancy.

By now, at least the woman, is wondering what is wrong with her. What has she done to please God? What is she missing? Why is God punishing her? She might be angry at God for not helping her. She sees her siblings, neighbors, and nieces getting pregnant. She may start showing signs of depression. She stops holding people’s babies. She stops holding other peoples’ babies. This couple suffers silently. People may give them advice like, “just relax; you are still young; it will happen.” These comments aren’t helpful for the couple. They want to share their story, but no one understands. No one they know has struggled with infertility. All they want is someone to listen to their pain and to hold them close and pray for them.

My husband and I are that couple. We’ve also had a miscarriage. I’ve had multiple surgeries to help fix the problem. I’ve tried every fertility drug, HCG, and progesterone, and God has continued to tell us no. It is a heartbreaking and silent journey. Many friends and acquaintances know we’ve struggled with infertility since we have not had a biological child. We adopted a sibling group of three. Not many of them knew we had a miscarriage. We only told a few people outside of the family. We’ve kept silent about it. How do you bring the subject up? So, we didn’t. I’m sharing now because God has been tugging at my heart to open up and let it out.

The journey in my heart has been a work in progress the last 19 years. Some days I’m good. God has blessed us with a beautiful family! We have a wonderful marriage. But there are still days when I cry, “God, what have we done wrong? Why is it so easy for others to get pregnant but not us?”

I still see a pregnant mother and wonder what it would be like. I see a mother caring for her baby and my heart melts. It saddens me to know that I won’t be passing any of my genes or my husband’s genes on to another. I won’t have a child that looks like either of us. Nowadays, the grief isn’t as bad as it once was, but I still have difficult days.

This year, God has been asking me to let go, to give it all to him. It’s difficult because if I give up on this precious dream, I fear he will take it away for good, and I’ll be left empty. I once spoke to a priest, “God is asking me to let go of a dream. It’s hard because it has been a part of me for so long.” He said, “Look to our Mother Mary. She was asked to change her course of life at 15. She dreamt of having a family but when she was older. Instead, she said yes to God. She followed his lead. So ask our Mary to guide you because she understands. Pray the Memorare and listen to the words.” I pray this prayer every time those feelings come up.

I felt God leading me to share our journey saying: “there’s someone out there who needs to hear they aren’t alone. It’s ok to share your story. Your pain. Your journey to the heart.”

I am also a Creighton Model Fertility Care Practitioner. I teach couples how to chart their cycles, learn what the woman’s body is doing each month, achieve and avoid pregnancy, guide them to doctors when they need medical help, and support them in pregnancies and infertility. I hold sessions in person and online. You can reach me at jilageinfertilitycare@yahoo.com.
L

ast week, I met with the deans of our diocese to discuss a number of issues, the most prominent of which was the ongoing process of merging some of our parishes and reorganizing others into clusters. These moves, which have been happening over the past several years, are necessitated by a number of factors: the diminishing number of priests, demographic shifts, economic pressures, etc. Even as I expressed my approval for some of these changes, I told the deans that, for every strategy of consolidation, I want a strategy for growth as well.

I simply refuse to accept the proposition that I, or any other bishop, should be presiding over the decline of our churches. By its very nature, Christianity is centrifugal, outward-tending, universal in purpose and scope. Jesus didn’t say, “Preach the Gospel to a handful of your friends,” or “Proclaim the Good News to your own culture.” Rather, he said to his disciples: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:18–19). He also instructed his followers that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church he established. Therefore, maintaining things as they are, or managing decline, or treading water is not what Jesus wants or expects of us.

Permit me to say that the expansion of our Church is by no means the exclusive responsibility of bishops and priests. As Vatican II clearly teaches, every baptized Catholic is commissioned to be an evangelizer. We’re all in this together. Therefore, what are some of the strategies of growth that can be employed by any Catholic? A first one is this: every family that comes regularly to Mass should make it their evangelical responsibility to bring another family to Mass this coming year. Every faithful Mass-goer reading these words knows people who should be going to Mass and aren’t. They might be your own children or grandchildren. They might be coworkers who were once ardent Catholics and who simply drifted away from the practice of the faith, or perhaps people who are angry at the Church. Identify these wandering sheep and make it your evangelical challenge to bring them back to Mass. If we all did this successfully, we would double the size of our parishes in a year.

A second recommendation is to pray for the expansion of the Church. According to the Scriptures, nothing great is ever accomplished apart from prayer. So ask the Lord, insistently, fervently, even stubbornly, to bring back his scattered sheep.

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON
Theologian and evangelist, known for his Word on Fire ministry. Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minn.

4 ways to grow the Church

Just as we have to beg the harvest master to raise up workers to gather in his harvest, so we have to beg him to increase his sheepfold. I would encourage the elderly and the homebound in a parish to take on this specific task. And I might ask those who regularly do Eucharistic Adoration to spend 15 or 30 minutes a day asking the Lord for this specific favor. Or I would suggest that liturgy planners include petitions for the growth of the parish in the prayers of the faithful at Sunday Mass.

A third enjoinder is to invite seekers to raise their questions. I know from lots of concrete experience over the past 20 years that many young people, even those who claim hostility to the faith, are actually deeply interested in religion. Like Herod listening to the preaching of John the Baptist in prison, even the seemingly anti-religious will go on religious websites and attend carefully to what is being discussed. So ask those who have disaffiliated why they no longer come to Mass. You might be surprised by how ready they are to tell you. But then, you have to have followed the recommendation of St. Peter: “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Pet. 3:15). In other words, if you elicit questions, you better be ready to give some answers. This means that you have to bone up on your theology, your apologetics, your Scripture, your philosophy, and your church history. If that sounds daunting, remember that in the last 25 years or so there has been an explosion of literature in just these areas, focusing precisely on the kinds of questions that young seekers tend to ask—and most of it is available readily online.

A fourth and final suggestion that I would make is this: be kind. Sherry Waddell, whose Forming Intentional Disciples has become a modern classic in the field of evangelization, says that a crucial first step in bringing someone to the faith is the establishment of trust. If someone thinks that you are a good and decent person, she is far more likely to listen to you speak about your faith. May I be blunt? Even the most casual glance at Catholic social media reveals a plethora of obnoxious behavior. Far, far too many seem intent upon trumpeting their own correctness, focusing on narrow issues that are unintelligible and irrelevant to most people, and tearing down their enemies. I fear that this reality on social media may be an amplification of attitudes in the Church outside of the digital space. These attitudes are inimical to evangelization. A colleague of mine has related that in his conversations with the alienated and unaffiliated that what keeps them away from the Church is their experience of what they describe as meanness from believers. So both online and in real life, be kind. No one will be interested in hearing about the faith life of bitter and unhappy people.

So, we have our marching orders: proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ to all nations. Let us start with our own parishes and families. Let us never settle for maintenance of the status quo.
There seems to be no limit to what people will consider doing with human remains. Most of us are familiar with cremation and the popularity of “spreading ashes” here and there. But entrepreneurs continue to find new ways to use human remains.

A person can now have remains made into all sorts of jewelry or glass art. They can turn them into artificial stones. They can get a tattoo with ink made with the remains. They can send the remains to space. They can make them part of a coral reef. They can shoot them off as part of a fireworks display. They can make them part of a vinyl record. They can have them made into bullets and shotgun cartridges. They can even make them into pencils. And yes, the shavings left over from sharpening the pencils are also human remains.

From a Catholic perspective, these actions are scandalous, disrespectful, and even horrifying.

Catholic teaching is centered on the life and dignity of the human person because each person is created in the image and likeness of God. The human body is a physical, material manifestation of God’s image and shares in that dignity (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 364). Even in death, we show reverence and compassion for God’s creation by praying for and laying to rest the departed and caring for those grieving the death of a loved one.

The Catholic Church does not forbid cremation, but she does ask that, when possible, the body be available for the funeral rite and that the dignity of the body be respected after cremation. This means that the remains should be placed in a respectable container and kept together.

The trend toward more “alternative” uses of the human body does not stop the use of cremated remains. Several states have legalized alkaline hydrolysis and composting of human remains. Alkaline hydrolysis reduces the human body to bone ash and a liquid substance through a chemical reaction. While the bone ashes might be returned to the decedent’s family, the liquid substance that is produced in the process, which can amount to 300 gallons, is usually flushed into the public waste system. Human composting involves placing the body in a box with wood chips. The box is covered and every few days the box—that is, the human body—is rocked, just as you would do with composting bin. The resulting “soil” is used like any other soil.

Usually, the only groups opposing legalizing these methods are the state Catholic conferences. The North Dakota Catholic Conference opposed a bill to legalize alkaline hydrolysis in 2017.

Someone might wonder why the Catholic Church would oppose legalizing these practices for non-Catholics. After all, Catholic teaching on respecting the deceased human body sounds very “Catholic.” It is about our creation in the image of God, Christ’s incarnation into a human body, and the resurrection of our bodies; all things that non-Catholics might not believe.

It is a good question, especially since the Catholic Church typically does not take a position on a public policy matters unless the position can be supported by reason alone and without resorting to doctrine. For example, someone does not need to believe in the Ten Commandments to conclude that theft is wrong.

The Church opposes legalization of these methods because how people treat the deceased says something about who we are as a community and society. It is not just a “Catholic thing,” it is a human thing.

That is why all communities have laws about how deceased human bodies are treated. North Dakota law, for example, tightly regulates how deceased persons are moved and interred. It prohibits dissection of the body except under limited circumstances. It prohibits selling human bodies. It prohibits exhuming human bodies after burial except under exigent circumstances. It prohibits desecration of, and sexual acts with, dead bodies.

Not all of these laws exist for health and safety reasons. Some of them exist because the acts prohibited offend the community’s standards for respectability. Human composting and alkaline hydrolysis offend—or should offend—the community. The more we treat the body as mere material that can be used and treated like a commodity, the more we diminish respect for our own bodies and the bodies of those around us. When that happens, human persons themselves—body and soul from conception to natural death—are disrespected.
Dean Martin echoed a basic truth in his signature song, *Everybody Loves Somebody*. Love’s reach extends beyond song and art into religion. Jesus, whose life is our greatest lesson about love, identified love as the path to salvation. Love goes beyond well-wishing to action, the “laying down” of life. Jesus saved us through giving. He gave us himself.

We’ve all experienced the joy of giving, the excitement of presenting an unsolicited gift or a particularly generous one. We enjoy witnessing the joy our gift brings. Parents experience this when they give to young children. We all experience it when we give to a friend, a neighbor, a charity, or a stranger.

However, the warm feeling that accompanies giving is the least important part of the experience. The truth is we need to give because we grow by giving. The world would have us believe that we grow by getting: the more I have, the more I am. In this view, persons are defined by things. Personal possessions count more than personal qualities, like character and virtue. But a fast car or a flashy cell phone is a poor means of self-expression. In order to express ourselves, we need to share our uniqueness with others, to create and to give.

Giving allows us to grow socially. We need relationships and relationships are enriched by giving. Giving helps us to understand the true purpose of our possessions. We should own things in order to increase our ability to serve others. Do our possessions also extend our ability to love? If they are shared with others, they can.

We sometimes hold back our giving because of fear. If I volunteer my time and donate my money, will I have enough left for me? Am I willing to risk sacrifice? Giving and sacrifice strengthen relationships. When we give, we strengthen the community. As St. Paul says, “Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13:8).

We all have a need to give—a need to love “somebody sometime.” Because God loved us first, he has given us abundant life and a unique combination of gifts. Through our baptism, Jesus calls us to join his mission of salvation, and our gifts are tools which contribute to that mission. When we give, we obey the first commandment, we practice the greatest virtue, and we reveal ourselves as Christian stewards.

Adapted from an article by Rev. Jon Thomas, Parochial Vicar, Christ Our Light Parish, Cherry Hill, New Jersey.
I’m in my first year of seminarian formation at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary. As with any big change in life, it’s full of emotions, excitement, apprehension, longing, and peace. I was struck on my way out to the Mount by a thought, “I’ve packed my entire life into a van, I’m driving halfway across the country to re-enter school at 27, but this does not strike me as odd.”

I told our diocesan Vocations Director, Father Metzger, this thought. He explained that not every seminarian feels as confident at first, and that I should be grateful to the Lord for the feeling of peace I have. When I arrived at the seminary, I had the move-in jitters, like the feeling of having too much coffee, or like the nerves of meeting 40 to 50 new people and praying that I don’t make a fool of myself. Fortunately, the new seminarians all managed to hit it off swimmingly, and we managed to bond quite closely over the week of orientation activities.

Orientation week went by in a blur, which I attribute to information overload. The range of information went from day-to-day routines and how to pray the liturgy of the hours, to an in-depth look at the history of the Mount St. Mary’s Seminary and the founding of Catholic education in the United States. Halfway through the week, the senior seminarians returned to join us and the formation process began again.

We start every day at 6:45 a.m. with Morning Prayer and Mass in Immaculate Conception Chapel, the large chapel for the whole university. We meet again as a whole seminarian body at 5 p.m. for Evening Prayer in the smaller seminary chapel, St. Bernard’s Chapel. It’s awe-inspiring to see and be part of an atmosphere of such reverence and devout prayer.

As a first-year seminarian, most of my classes are philosophy classes, such as logic and ancient philosophy. It was immediately evident that these classes, classes not specifically theological, are indeed linked to our understanding of the Church and help us understand and explain our faith. The professors and all our formators are experts in what they teach and are an endless fount of lessons, stories, and advice. The seminarians as well have come from all walks of life and thus all have unique experiences to share. All put together, it creates a fantastic, dynamic community where learning, prayer, and fraternity are all come together as a whole.

At the end of the second week of classes, we had a silent retreat. It was the first one that I had ever been on and was quite peaceful. There is nothing quite like pure silence to seek a deeper relationship with God in solitude, but also among other seminarians. This experience helped reinforce within me an understanding that one is never alone, even in silence, because we always have God with us.

All these experiences have helped—in so little time—to shape me into a new person, one whom is confident that God will keep me strong in times of desolations and hopeful for renewed consistations to follow. I thank God for all these wonderful lessons and people. Seminary is certainly a change in my manner of living, but if I had to make every step, every stumble, and every jump in life that I’ve made to be where I am, I wouldn’t change a thing.
Listening and Preparatory Phase begins for the Fargo Diocesan Synod

As part of the listening and preparation phase for our Fargo Diocesan Synod, we are doing a parish self-reflection survey. The goal of this survey is three-fold: to gauge where the faith of the Church is at in the Diocese of Fargo, to help the faithful reflect upon where they are at and where they could be, and to begin the discussion about what the next steps are to help get us where the Holy Spirit wants us to be.

The self-reflection can be accessed online at www.fargodiocese.org/synod. Paper forms of the questionnaire are also available at parishes. The faithful are asked to complete the self-reflection online or bring the paper form to their parish office before the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27.

Join Bishop Folda at any of these Regional Listening Sessions
(6:30 pm to 9 pm unless otherwise noted)

Tuesday, January 17: Holy Spirit, Fargo
Sunday, January 22: Holy Cross, West Fargo (2 to 4:30 pm)
Tuesday, January 24: Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo
Monday, January 30: St. Joseph’s, Devils Lake
Tuesday, January 31: St. James Basilica, Jamestown
Thursday, February 2: St. Michael’s, Grand Forks
Tuesday, February 7: St. Catherine’s, Valley City
Wednesday, February 8: St. John’s, Wahpeton
Tuesday, February 14: St. Alphonsus, Langdon
Wednesday, February 15: St. Ann’s, Belcourt
Thursday, February 16: St. Therese, Rugby
Tuesday, February 21: St. Philip Neri, Napoleon
Thursday, February 23: St. John’s, Grafton
Tuesday, February 28: Holy Rosary, LaMoure
Wednesday, March 8: St. Paul Newman Center, Fargo
Thursday, March 9: St. Thomas Newman Center, Grand Forks

All of the faithful are encouraged and invited to attend these events. The Listening Session will begin with adoration, reflection on Scripture, and prayer. This will be followed by a time in a gathering space to discuss and to reflect together as a community on these questions: What are the top three things that are working well at your parish/the diocese? What are the top three challenges to address in your parish/the diocese? What is one step I might be called to take to respond?
We Remember

We call to pray for those who have gone before us. Please remember in prayer the faithful departed from our parishes, our diocese, and throughout the world. Included are those who passed away between Oct. 1, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2022. If someone you love was not included in this list, we will include them in the Dec. 2022 New Earth issue.

**Clergy:**
- Father William Sherman—May 4, 2022
- Father James Lauerman—July 28, 2022
- Father Richard LaCorte—Sept. 11, 2022

**Deacons:**
- Deacon Jim Perius—Aug. 28, 2022

**Religious:**
- Sister Mary Ann Schmitz, SMP—Nov. 8, 2021
- Sister M. Edwardine Gerou, OSF—Jan. 27, 2022

**ALCIDE - St. Anthony’s Church:**
- Arnold Poitra—Oct. 6, 2021
- Hubert L. Parisien—Oct. 10, 2021
- Courtney Reyes—Oct. 14, 2021
- David L. Morin—Nov. 9, 2021
- William J. Decoteau—Jan. 25, 2022
- Roxanne Turlington—Feb. 5, 2022
- Tina K. Day—Feb. 20, 2022
- Leona LaFloe—Apr. 8, 2022
- Kimberly Azure—July 11, 2022
- Blair Thomas—Aug. 14, 2022

**ANAMOOSE - St. Francis Xavier’s Church:**
- Edmund “Eddie” Schatz—Apr. 29, 2022
- Rosie Ponzer—June 11, 2022
- Donald E. Mayer—July 5, 2022
- Robert D. Kapfer—July 20, 2022

**ARGUSVILLE - St. William’s Church:**
- Roger Hoffart—Oct. 4, 2021

**ASHLEY - St. David’s Church:**
- Wessly A. Overby—Aug. 21, 2022

**BALTA - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church:**
- Corrine Mack—Nov 19, 2021
- Wesley Muffenbier—July 12, 2022

**BECHYNE - St. Peter and Paul’s Church:**
- Stella K. Shirek—May 29, 2022
- Jennie J. Hodny—Sept. 2, 2022

**BELCOURT - St. Ann’s Church:**
- Dorothy Baumgartner—Oct. 2, 2021
- Gayle Decoteau—Oct. 6, 2021
- Lisa Desjarlais—Oct. 10, 2021
- Linda Williams—Oct. 15, 2021
- Dennis G. Lavardure—Nov. 16, 2021
- Ernest V. Parisien—Nov. 22, 2021
- Shirley A. Barron—Nov. 26, 2021
- Gerald L. Poitra—Dec. 10, 2021
- Jeanette V. Parisien—Dec. 29, 2021
- Marsha Wallette—Jan. 6, 2022
- Theresa M. Parisien—Jan. 9, 2022
- James R. Robbins—Jan. 11, 2022
- Sandy LaFromboise—Jan. 13, 2022
- Cecilia Cote—Jan. 13, 2022
- Geraldine LaFromboise-Marcavge—Jan. 16, 2022
- Timothy Gourneau—Jan. 19, 2022
- Dale J. Wallette—Feb. 8, 2022
- Madeline Keplin—Feb. 19, 2022
- Allen S. Poitra—Mar. 5, 2022
- Sheila J. Nadeau—Mar. 9, 2022
- Ronald Nadeau—Mar. 15, 2022
- Dorothy “SoSweet” R. Davis—Mar. 16, 2022
- David Decoteau—Mar. 23, 2022
- Iris D. Morin—Mar. 28, 2022
- Richard P. Lavardure—Mar. 28, 2022
- Dorene A. Malaterre—Mar. 31, 2022
- Michael Allard—Apr. 2, 2022
- Ellen M. LaFrombois—Apr. 10, 2022
- Michael J. Fox—Apr. 16, 2022
- Oliver F. Vallie—Apr. 17, 2022
- Velma Morin—Apr. 29, 2022
- Vernon A. Gourneau—May 5, 2022
- Melvin C. Morin, Jr.—May 6, 2022
- William R. Poitra, Sr.—June 13, 2022
- Austin Poitra—June 19, 2022
- James Bruce—June 23, 2022
- Myron Delong—July 1, 2022
- Frederick Delong—July 2, 2022
- Kristy M. Malaterre—July 19, 2022
- Linda Brunelle—July 28, 2022
- Lisa M. Allick—Aug. 12, 2022
- Alice Amyotte—Aug. 19, 2022
- Sherri Jerome—Aug. 19, 2022
- Deborah McGillis—Aug. 28, 2022

**NEW EARTH** NOVEMBER 2022

BOTTINEAU - St. Mark's Church: Carol Carbonneau—Nov. 24, 2021; Margaret “Margie” Mehlihoff—Feb. 8, 2022; Mitch Schmidt—Feb. 26, 2022.


COOPERSTOWN - St. George Church: Darlene Westergren—Dec. 8, 2021; Chad A. Zimpich—July 7, 2022.


IN MEMORIAM


FINLEY - St. Olaf Church: Denis R. Lndstrom—May 21, 2022.


“‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is my life’s refuge; of whom am I afraid?’”—Psalm 27:1


MILNOR - St. Arnold’s Church: Ramona “Mona” Bosh–Feb. 8, 2022.


MUNICH - St. Mary’s Church: Mary F. Goeser–Mar. 1, 2022.


SEELZ - St. Anthony’s Church: Leon Seefeld–Nov. 26, 2021; Marcella “Sally” Seefeld–Mar. 6, 2022.


STEELE - St. Francis Church: Kate Ternes–Feb. 14, 2022; Pauline Fettig–May 15, 2022.


“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.” —John 14:1-3

NEW EARTH NOVEMBER 2022
IN MEMORIAM


Charlotte Burt, parishioner of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Nov. 21. Charlotte is blessed with 4 children, 6 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

Ray and Doris Heiser, parishioners of St. Raphael's in Verona, will celebrate their 65th anniversary on Nov. 23. They were married at St. Catherine's in Valley City and are blessed with 9 children, 18 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Francis and Paula (Ebertowski) Kilichowski, parishioners of Sacred Heart in Minto, celebrated their 50th anniversary on Nov. 4. They were married at St. John's in Grafton. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

Russell and Joyce Hest, parishioners of St. Leo's in Casselton, will celebrate their 40th anniversary Nov. 26. They were married at St. Joseph's in Moorhead, Minn., and are blessed with 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

Nyle and LaVonne (Ritzke) Myhre will celebrate their 50th anniversary Nov. 17. They were married at St. John's in New Rockford where they are still parishioners. They were blessed with 3 children and 8 grandchildren.

Dennis and Vi Schwind, parishioners of Nativity Church in Fargo, celebrated their 50th anniversary on Oct. 20. They were married at St. Anthony's in Linton. They have 2 children and 9 grandchildren.

Stan Grigel, parishioner of Nativity in Fargo, celebrated his 90th birthday on Nov. 11. Stan and his late wife Alice were blessed with 1 son and 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Clara Elless, parishioner of Holy Cross in West Fargo, celebrated her 90th birthday on Nov. 6. Clara and her husband Richard have been married 71 years and are blessed with 6 children, 3 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Life’s Milestones includes 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. Send a photo with text 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 December issue is Nov. 11 and deadline for the January issue is Dec. 13.

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.
Fall and winter events

**Fargo:** Sts. Anne & Joachim’s Fall Festival is Nov. 13 from 4 to 7 p.m. Join us for silent auction baskets, farmers market, children’s games, bingo, and more! Raffle tickets for your chance to win up to $8,000! Pork dinner served in the social hall, adults $12, children under 5 - $5. Take-out available.

**Minot:** The Festival of Trees, hosted by Dakota Hope Clinic, is Minot’s landmark holiday event held at the ND State Fair Center Nov. 18 and 19, with fun and free activities for all ages. Visit festoftrees.com or call (701) 852-4675.

**West Fargo:** Blessed Sacrament Church invites you to Thanksgiving Nov. 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thanksgiving Dinner includes roasted turkey and all the trimmings. Take-out available. No deliveries. Free-will offering.

**West Fargo:** Holy Cross Church will host a Craft/Vendor Show on Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Over 75 artisans will be available for all your holiday shopping needs. This is the largest church-held craft/vendor show in the region. Lunch available for purchase. Admission $2.

**Milnor:** St. Arnold’s Church will host their annual Christmas Pantry on Dec. 7 from 4 to 6 p.m. Shop for holiday cookies, candies, and Christmas goodies. Enjoy a cup of coffee or cider with samples of baked goods.

Father Michael Parrotta passed away Oct. 14

Rev. Michael Parrotta passed away on Oct. 14 in West Palm Beach, Fla. He was 85 years old.


Father Parrotta served as parochial vicar at St. John’s in Grafton, and was the pastor for Holy Rosary in LaMoure, Assumption in Dickey, and St. Francis in Marion. Father Parrotta also served as parish administrator for St. Leo in Casselton and St. Thomas in Buffalo. He retired in Nov. 2004.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Oct. 26 at St. Rita Church in Wellington, Fla.

A special word of gratitude was also extended to one of the pioneer members of the parish, Mrs. Margaret Houghton, who donated $5,000.00 toward the building in memory of her husband, Arthur. The Houghton’s first visited the Hurdsfield community in 1905 and became residents in 1909.

20 years ago — 2002

Nine parishes joined together to raise funds for improvements to Holy Cross Cemetery North and the development of the first 10 acres of the new Holy Cross Cemetery South in Fargo. The goal for the capital campaign, “A Sacred Place of Prayer and Remembrance,” is $2 million. The campaign was introduced Nov. 3 and will continue through Easter. The participating parishes include St. William, Argusville; Blessed Sacrament and Holy Cross, both West Fargo; and Holy Spirit, the Cathedral of St. Mary, St. Paul Newman Center, Nativity, St. Anthony of Padua, and Sts. Anne & Joachim, all in Fargo.
When a 2019 Pew survey revealed that only 31% of Catholics believe in a basic tenet of their faith—that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharist—the U.S. Catholic bishops decided to take action.

At the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2021, the bishops called for a multi-year National Eucharistic Revival to restore and promote an understanding of and devotion to the Eucharist. The initiative will culminate in a National Eucharistic Congress in 2024, which the bishops hope will be attended by more than 80,000 Catholics.

As a first step, the team organizing the revival released a “playbook” to assist diocesan leaders, priests, and Catholic school administrators in coming up with plans to stoke up fervor for the Eucharist within their communities.

Bishop Andrew Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, notes in the preface to “Leader’s Playbook: Year 1,” that the faithful are called to be “missionary disciples.”

The mission, Cozzens writes, is to “renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.”

Having a relationship with Jesus isn’t something new, Father Craig Vasek, a priest of the Diocese of Crookston and a member of the team of priests tasked with helping ignite eucharistic faith, told CNA.

“It’s something that Jesus asked of us at the beginning. This is what he’s doing with his 12 disciples, and what he wants to show the world,” he said. “He wants to share a living relationship with us, and in no place greater than the Blessed Sacrament.”

If some are not accustomed to talking about Christ in this way, Vasek says that’s a sign that something has been missing in the way Catholics practice their faith and pass it on to others.

“This has been the cry of the Church for decades, of those who are paying attention, who say, ‘We can’t just do things and promote programs. We have to introduce people to Jesus,’” Vasek said. “Pope Benedict was all about how our faith is not a number of ethical principles or something, but it is about a person. It’s about an encounter. It’s about a relationship with Jesus.”

“We all need to get on our knees and say, ‘Lord, I need your grace. I need your forgiveness, and I need your mercy so that I can become more like you, and that I might live more fully in the Holy Spirit.’ I mean, this is what we need. That’s what we’re talking about,” he said.

“So we’re recovering that basic element, we are re-proposing a living relationship with Jesus.”

The playbook includes practical suggestions for fostering personal encounters with Christ in the Eucharist, including eucharistic processions, retreats on the Eucharist, and “Mercy Nights,” evenings of adoration, music, and fellowship.

One of the suggestions is for parishes to request a visit of the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, special intercessors for the revival.

Vasek’s parish in Minnesota recently hosted the relics for an evening of adoration, confession, and veneration.

“A bunch of people afterwards commented that this was such a transformational night, with such a Catholic feel,” Vasek said. “It’s one thing that we were able to do that was an evening of great grace.”

The playbook’s suggestions for “reinvigorating devotion” include sharing inspiring stories about the Eucharist, such as testimonials from people in the diocese, and stories about eucharistic miracles and the transformative power of the Eucharist in the lives of saints. Promoting the practice of short visits to the Blessed Sacrament and instructing the faithful on how to make a holy hour are also recommended.

Parishes are advised to offer formation programs to teach the faithful about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and how to “open oneself more fully to the grace of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion.”

The executive team of the National Eucharistic Revival will soon make available additional resources for Catholic leaders and all lay people at its website, www.EucharisticRevival.org. Register for the free “Heart of the Revival” newsletter to stay informed about events related to the revival and new materials for formation and inspiration.
The best medicine for a weary soul is prayer, Pope Francis said Oct. 16 with a reminder that like many medical treatments, consistency is key.

“We often focus on so many urgent but unnecessary things. We occupy and preoccupy ourselves with so many secondary realities. And perhaps without even recognizing it, we neglect what counts the most and we allow our love for God to grow cold bit by bit,” Pope Francis said on Oct. 16.

“Today, Jesus offers us the remedy to rekindle a tepid faith. And what is the remedy? Prayer. Yes, prayer is the medicine for faith, it is the restorative of the soul.”

Speaking from the window of the Apostolic Palace, the pope said in his Angelus address that consistent daily prayer can heal the soul like medicine heals the body when taken “regularly in the right way and at the right times.”

“Let us think of a houseplant: we need to water it consistently every day. We cannot soak it and then leave it without giving it water for a week! Even more so with prayer,” he said.

“We cannot live only on strong moments of prayer or occasional intense encounters... We need the daily water of prayer, we need time dedicated to God, so that he can enter into our time, into our lives.”

Pope Francis said that it is in these consistent daily moments of prayer that “we open our hearts to him so that he can daily pour out on us love, peace, joy, strength, hope, thus nourishing our faith.”

Reflecting on Jesus’ instruction in chapter 18 of the Gospel of Luke to “pray always,” the pope suggested a traditional spiritual practice that “is a bit forgotten today.”

Aspirations, or short easy to memorize prayers that can be repeated often, can help one to stay “in tune” with God throughout the day, Pope Francis said.

“For example, as soon as we awaken, we can say: ‘Lord, I thank you and I offer this day to you.’ This is a short prayer. Then, before an activity, we can repeat, ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’ Between one thing and another, we can pray thus, ‘Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I love you,’” the pope suggested.

“How often we send instant messages to the people we love! Let’s do this with the Lord as well so that our hearts remain connected to him,” he added.
A

bortion does strange things to people. This statement should not come as a surprise, for we can never shrug off something as serious as ending the life of an innocent human being. If we try, it is bound to catch up with us eventually.

Recently, my comrades and I who pray, primarily in the afternoons, at the new abortion facility just across the Red River in Moorhead, Minn., peeked inside this strangeness when a client’s partner came to retrieve her.

In the new setup, a sidewalk lies perpendicular to the facility itself, and we prayer advocates are only allowed on that small strip of pavement. The building, surrounding grass, and large parking lot are off limits, and there is only one entrance from the road. Most of us stand near that entrance, and we have only a second or two to meet the gaze of the clients coming or going.

On a recent Wednesday, when the place is open for business, we caught sight briefly of a driver—perhaps the father of the baby who’d just died—coming to pick up a female client. He seemed to avoid our gaze, as do most.

After a while, the post-abortive woman he’d come to pick up emerged and got into the vehicle. What happened next was startling. The vehicle, instead of exiting onto the road to the south—the only exit—drove around the building to the north. There is pavement that wraps around the building from the parking lot, but it stops several hundred yards later. In other words, there is no way out that way.

“Wow,” I thought. “He really didn’t want to see us again.”

Later, I shared the photos I took during that brief investigation with my friends, and as I reflected further on this incident, I pondered just how that moment or two would have gone down. I thought of the passenger of the vehicle, fresh from having her womb emptied, now in the vehicle driven by a man who, it seemed, did not want to face what had just happened. So instead of driving out the only exit, he chose to illegally create his own pathway out.

Several things about this struck me; firstly, the desperation of wanting to avoid the reality of abortion. Our gazes are not unkind. We are there offering a way out, not judgment. But the conscience will do what it needs to do, and in this case, it needed to run.

Beyond that, I thought of that poor woman who’d just experienced a trauma. What was it like for her as her driver took the pathway that didn’t even exist? Did she scream? Did she cry? Or perhaps she was the one who had directed him out the “back door.” I think the former is more likely, and my heart lurches at the thought of it.

Abortion does strange things to us. It drives those who choose it to illogical places. Our only hope is the love of a savior, whose pathway is the only road that leads to true peace.
Do you know where we are?

The answer will be revealed in the December New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is from outside Shanley High School and Sacred Heart Middle School in Fargo.