Spring is coming!

From Bishop Folda:
A new Calvary and the promise of Resurrection

Ask a Priest:
Should I attend the Easter Vigil?

Catholic Action: Who takes care of the poor? Church or government?

Believe it or not, spring is coming!

Devotional gardens inspire prayer, peace, and beauty
Matrimony: A calling to forgive

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*A section of Terrie Mann’s Trinity Gardens south of Grand Forks. (Photo by Terrie Mann)*

**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.

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A new Calvary and the promise of Resurrection

Every year during Holy Week, we look to the cross of Jesus with wonder and awe. The suffering and death of our Lord still amaze us. And then on Easter Sunday, our hope is renewed by the celebration of his resurrection, an event that the apostles could hardly believe was possible. Jesus lives again, and he offers new life to the world.

But when we look to Jesus upon the cross this year, we should remember that he still suffers in his suffering brothers and sisters around the world. Nowhere is this more apparent now than in Ukraine. As we celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord, our prayers should turn to the people of Ukraine, prayers for an end to the war and violence that have been launched against that country. As I watch the news of this tragedy, I am in a state of disbelief at the cruelty and futility of war. No one will win, and everyone, including the aggressors, will lose. We have seen other wars in our time, but this war seems to carry with it even greater peril for the world than we have seen before. This latest chapter of war and violence is yet another sad reminder of the sinfulness of humanity and our need for a redeemer, our need for healing by Jesus, and our need for resurrection.

Over a thousand years ago, Christianity came to what is now Ukraine, and it was embraced by rulers and common people alike. Religious faith is deeply embedded in the character of the Ukrainian people, and like so many other nations, Christianity has been part of their national identity; it is part of who they are. Of course, there have been many attempts to suppress this religious instinct. After the communist revolution of 1917, faith was viciously attacked throughout the Soviet Union, including Ukraine. Churches were destroyed, clergy were murdered, and the faithful were forced to hide their faith or pay the consequences. Ukraine suffered in a particular way in the 1930s when the atheistic communist government engineered a famine that deliberately led to the starvation and death of millions of its citizens. We don’t hear much about this criminal campaign, but it’s a fact of Ukrainian history, and the scar is still vivid and real in the memories of the Ukrainian people.

Our Catholic faith has been the object of hatred in a particular way. After World War II, the Soviet government suppressed the Ukrainian Catholic Church and tried to absorb it into the Orthodox Church, which they could more easily control. But the Catholics of Ukraine kept their faith, and continued to live as Catholics in a sort of underground existence, attending secret Masses in forests and in basements, concealing priests from arrest by secret police, and quietly maintaining their devotion to the Pope. Finally, in 1991 when Ukraine became independent and free, Catholics too were free to live their faith openly, even as a minority of the population. The Catholics of Ukraine have shown us an example of faith, perseverance, and courage in the face of obstacles we can’t begin to imagine.

But now our brothers and sisters in Ukraine are experiencing a new Calvary as they suffer once again. They are wounded by the sin of war, and we are wounded with them. They are threatened with annihilation, and they cry to God for mercy and relief. So, we cry out with them. We beg our Lord upon the cross to save the people of Ukraine, and all people who suffer from warfare and violence. We beg him to heal the wounds that have torn all of us away from God and from each other. We pray for the conversion of hearts that are bent on destruction and death, that have no regard for the lives of others. We pray that their hearts will be turned to mercy. As we continue our own journey through Lent, we strive for conversion, our own change of heart and turning back to the Lord. But let us pray and fast as well for Ukraine, so that peace and reconciliation can take place there. Let us pray that the powers of darkness will be banished, and that new life in Christ will be restored. And let us put our faith in the crucified Christ, who brought our sins to the cross, and who now lives in risen glory. “By his wounds you were healed” (1 Pet. 2).

Like so many other nations around the world, Ukraine has borne many heavy crosses. But their hope of resurrection endures, and so must ours. Jesus rose from the dead on the first Easter Sunday to prove that sin and death will not have the final word. – Bishop John T. Folda
first Easter Sunday to prove that sin and death will not have
the final word. He lives so that we all might live in peace, here
on earth and also eternally in heaven. Many times throughout
history, we have seen disaster, war, famine, pandemic, and the
daily effects of sin. It would be easy to give up hope and to
doubt God’s ability to save us. But the image of Jesus on the
cross, and the empty tomb of Easter morning are an enduring
sign that God has already won the victory. The apostles also
knew persecution and martyrdom, but their experience of the
Risen Lord sustained them and made it possible for them to
persevere in Resurrection faith.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter this year, let us re-
member the people of Ukraine and the Calvary that they are
experiencing. And with all those who suffer their own Calvary,
let us place our trust in Jesus, who rose from the tomb and
lives forever.

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

| Apr. 14 • 7 p.m. | Apr. 27 • 3 p.m. |
| Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo | St. JPII Schools Board Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo |
| Apr. 15–18 | Apr. 28 • 2 p.m. |
| Pastoral Center closed | Diocesan Pastoral Council, Pastoral Center, Fargo |
| Apr. 15 • 10 a.m. | Apr. 29 • 6 p.m. |
| Stations of the Cross at Red River Women’s Clinic, Fargo | Confirmation/First Eucharist, Nativity, Fargo |
| Apr. 15 • 3 p.m. | Apr. 30 • 10 a.m. |
| Good Friday Service, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo | Confirmation/First Eucharist, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo |
| Apr. 16 • 8:30 p.m. | Apr. 30 • 6 p.m. |
| Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo | Shanley Dinner and Auction, Holiday Inn, Fargo |
| Apr. 17 • 10 a.m. | May 1 • 2 p.m. |
| Easter Sunday Mass, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo | Confirmation/First Eucharist, Holy Cross, West Fargo |
| Apr. 21 • 1 p.m. | May 1 • 5 p.m. |
| Knights of Columbus Clergy Workshop, Holiday Inn, Fargo | Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Leo, Casselton |
| Apr. 21 • 5 p.m. | May 5 • 9 a.m. |
| Mass with Knights of Columbus Chaplains, St. Anthony, Fargo | Diocesan Principals and Pastors meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo |
| Apr. 22 • 6 p.m. | May 6 • 7 p.m. |
| Confirmation/First Eucharist, Holy Family, Grand Forks | Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Philip, Napoleon |
| Apr. 23 • 10 a.m. | May 7 • 10 a.m. |
| Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. John, Grafton | Confirmation/First Eucharist, Holy Rosary, LaMoure |
| Apr. 23 • 5 p.m. | May 7 • 7:15 p.m. |
| Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Timothy, Manvel | Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Charles, Oakes |
| Apr. 24 • 2 p.m. | May 12 • 6 p.m. |
| Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. John, New Rockford | Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Joseph, Devils Lake |
| Apr. 24–26 | May 13 • 6 p.m. |
| Spring Education Days, Carrington | Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Cecilia, Harvey |
**PRAYER FOR PRIESTS**

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)*

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**Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements**

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

**Eugene Fish**, who was ordained to the presbyterate for the Diocese of Fargo in 1997, was dismissed from the clerical state on November 23, 2021.

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**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 Goring, 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.

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**Quotable**

**St. Catherine of Siena**

*Feast day April 29*

“Remain with Him in thy chamber, for thou shalt not elsewhere find so great peace.”

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**Prayer Intention of Pope Francis April**

**Health Care Workers**

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

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**NEW EARTH APRIL 2022**
St. George was born to a Roman officer and a Greek native of Lydda, who were Christians from noble families. When George was old enough, he was welcomed into the Roman Emperor Diocletian’s army. George became a Tribunus and served as an imperial guard for the Emperor at Nicomedia.

Emperor Diocletian hated Christians and decreed that every Christian the army passed would be arrested and every other soldier should offer a sacrifice to the Roman gods. George refused to abide by the order. In an effort to save George’s life, Diocletian attempted to convert him to believe in the Roman gods, offered him land, money, and slaves in exchange for offering a sacrifice to the Roman gods, and made several other offers that George refused.

Finally, after exhausting all other options, Diocletian ordered George’s execution. In preparation for his death, George gave his money to the poor and was sent for several torture sessions, which failed to kill him. Finally, on April 23, 303, George was decapitated.

St. George is best known for a legend about fighting a dragon (or some say a crocodile) that made its nest at a spring that provided water to Silene, believed to be modern-day Cyrene in Libya. The people were unable to collect water, but the dragon or crocodile would temporarily leave its nest when they offered it a sheep each day.

Eventually, the people ran out of sheep and offered human sacrifices. One day a maiden was offered to the dragon, but before she could be devoured, George appeared. He faced the dragon, protected himself with the Sign of the Cross, and slayed the dragon. After he saved the town, the citizens abandoned their paganism and were converted to Christianity.

Pope Gelasius I canonized St. George in the late fifth century.

Historical information from Catholic Online.

Feast day: April 23
(or first Monday after Easter)
Birth: unknown  Death: 303
Patron Saint of England

Cathy Schwinden honored with Caritas Award

Cathy Schwinden, parishioner of Nativity Church in Fargo, is the Catholic Charites North Dakota (CCND) 2022 Caritas Award winner. Schwinden was honored at a luncheon on March 15 at Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo. Schwinden received the award for her work dedicated to faith-based education and social justice. The Caritas Award is given each year by CCND to a person or organization in recognition for outstanding service and love for humanity. Pictured l to r are: Bishop John Folda; Cathy Schwinden; Father William Gerlach, Pastor of Nativity Church; Steven Lies, Chairman of the CCND Board of Directors; and Diane Nechiporenko, Executive Director of CCND. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)
Should I attend the Easter Vigil?

**ASK A PRIEST**

**FATHER STEVEN WIRTH**
Parochial vicar of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake

I love Easter! It’s my favorite time of the Church year. I love that from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday we get to walk with Jesus “in real time” as he presides at his Last Supper, experiences his agony in the garden, carries his cross, dies, is buried, and finally rises from the dead.

Easter Sunday is the celebration of Christ’s Resurrection. Interestingly, none of the four Gospels report any actual witnesses to the Resurrection itself. Rather, they only see the empty tomb. The night between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday morning is “worthy alone to know the time and hour when Christ rose from the underworld!” (Easter Proclamation, Exsultet, from the Easter Vigil). It is on this mysterious night that we celebrate the Easter Vigil.

Is the Easter Vigil obligatory? Yes and no. The obligation for Easter is either the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday Mass, which is similar to our regular Sunday obligation. So why should you go to the Easter Vigil when you could just go the Mass on Easter Sunday? There are many reasons, but let me give you four.

First, the **Lucernarium** or “the candle lighting.” The Easter Vigil begins after sunset when it’s dark. The church lights are extinguished, and the first light is the Easter fire. From that fire the Easter Candle is lit which is then brought into the dark church. But soon “The Light of Christ” is shared with all of us as we light our individual candles from Christ’s Easter Candle. The once dark church becomes filled with the light of everyone’s candles. The symbolism is beautiful. The darkness of doubt and grief that comes from Christ’s death and burial on Good Friday is illuminated by the light of Christ’s Resurrection. It’s an experience unlike any of the other celebrations throughout the year.

A second reason is the Liturgy of the Word. A hallmark of any Catholic vigil is scripture readings, and the Easter Vigil does not disappoint. It has more scripture readings than any other liturgy in the Church’s rites. The readings of the Easter Vigil highlight the entire history of the Old Testament leading up to Jesus’ Resurrection. It can seem like a lot, and mercifully many pastors take the option to reduce the readings to a more manageable amount. However, I want to highlight one of the readings, the one from Exodus. This reading recalls when God split the Red Sea and allowed Moses and the Israelites to cross on dry land. This was the central event in all of Jewish history. It is what defined them as the people of God. But for us Catholics, the defining event is Jesus’ Resurrection where we are rescued not from slavery in Egypt but from slavery to sin and death. Including the Exodus story in the Easter Vigil is a signal to us that this night is the most important night of Christian history!

A third reason to go to the Easter Vigil is to support our newest members of the Church. Following ancient traditions, the Easter Vigil is the time when adult converts to our faith are baptized. Just as Christ received new life in his body at his Resurrection, so too do these converts receive new life from Christ in baptism. These people are the newest members both of the Church as well as our parishes. They reveal to us the newness and youthfulness of the Church (even if they are older). Our faith is still growing! And it is good of us to support our newest brothers and sisters in Christ.

My last reason is that Easter Vigil is the best transition from Lent into Easter. As human beings, we need transitions. We celebrate graduations, we proclaim the New Year, we start and end summer with Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Christian life too needs its transitions; without them it loses its dynamism and fades into the background. Just as Ash Wednesday was a great kickoff for Lent, so the Easter Vigil brings Lent to its close and initiates the season of Easter. Whether it’s the transition of darkness to light or the first triumphal singing of the Gloria and Alleluia or the return of Jesus to the tabernacle (which has been empty since Holy Thursday), the Easter Vigil displays in the most unique way the change of seasons and the switch from the solemn observances of Christ’s death to the joyous celebration of his Resurrection.

So no, the Easter Vigil is not obligatory. However, it is a most beautiful celebration that marks our holiest night, reveals the light of Christ, presents the new birth of Baptism, and transitions us into Easter joy. I encourage you to attend the Easter Vigil at your parish and experience this holy night.
As some prepare for full communion, let us all recommit ourselves to God and his Church

By Kristina Lahr

We often hear about those who drift away from faith in God and his Church. We may have plenty of family, friends, or coworkers who by bad experience or through a slow, steady apathy eventually decide they no longer believe in God or trust in his teachings. Maybe we’ve done our share of drifting away too.

Each year early in the Lenten season, a ceremony takes place at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo for those in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. This “Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion” is a turning point from learning about the faith in a formulaic setting to saying “yes” to a deeper, spiritual preparation for the sacraments to be received at the Easter Vigil.

These catechumens (unbaptized who will receive Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil) and candidates (baptized who will receive Confirmation and/or First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil) have attended RCIA classes for several months, asking questions and learning more about the Catholic faith. Before and during this process, God has whispered in their souls his desire to draw closer to them. They are now in the final stage, preparing to open themselves more fully to the love of God and his holy church through the sacraments.

During this “Call to Continuing Conversion,” the Bishop invites the sponsors of candidates to affirm the readiness of these candidates to receive the Church’s sacraments.

The Bishop begins the Rite, pausing after each question for the sponsors to say, “they have.” He says: “The Christian life and the demands that flow from the sacraments cannot be taken lightly. Therefore, before granting these candidates their request to share fully in the Church’s sacraments, it is important that the Church hear the testimony of their sponsors about their readiness. Have they faithfully listened to the apostles’ instruction proclaimed by the Church? Have they come to a deeper appreciate of their baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church? Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer? Have they advanced in a life of love and service of others?”

These are big questions, and as the Bishop mentions, approaching the sacraments “cannot be taken lightly.” While observing this ceremony, I couldn’t help but ask myself the same questions. Have I listened to the apostles’ instruction? Do I appreciate my baptism? Have I reflected on the tradition of the Church?

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, may we also ask ourselves these questions. Let us pray for continued conversion for all the faithful, and especially for those preparing to receive the sacraments for the first time at the Easter Vigil.
Ladies, we did it. After a two-year delay due to COVID-19, we finally were able to gather and see the Redeemed Women’s Conference come to fruition March 4–5.

In my eight years living in Fargo, I can honestly say this was my favorite conference. Perhaps it was the relief that it finally happened. As part of the planning committee, I experienced the frustration of canceled dates, speaker changes, and constant unknowns from COVID-19 that at times made our efforts feel meaningless. Perhaps I needed—more than I realized—time away from my usual schedule to be with friends and fill my mind with what we, as women, need and what it is we offer to our communities.

But I believe the most powerful factor that made this conference stand out is witnessing just how much we all needed this one.

The conference started Friday evening with music, adoration, a witness talk by Amanda Vernon with the Vigil Project, and Reconciliation. I entered the conference tired from the week’s work and nervous that the efforts for this conference wouldn’t pay off. After Amanda’s lively presentation and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, I left the evening rejuvenated, excited for what else God had in store for me. This seemed the consensus for the many women I met and chatted with throughout the weekend.

The following day, we gathered for Mass celebrated by Bishop Folda. Following breakfast, Dr. Helen Alvaré addressed the big picture of women’s roles, struggles, and desires in our individualistic and isolated culture today.

“When we see the individual as the highest good, the role, traits, and gifts of women make less sense and are less valued. Women have a great capacity for the other, where relationships have special priority in their lives.”

In response to Dr. Flanagan’s presentation, Monica Houim, parishioner at St. Therese Church in Rugby, said, “My biggest takeaway was to take care of my heart. It’s okay for me to take time for myself and with my ‘sister’ friends. Dr. Flanagan said...
that when women get busy, they put their relationships on hold and that is what I tend to do. So I will be aware of that and make some changes to keep in touch with my friends even through busy times.”

Finally, Marcie Stokman, founder of Well-Read Mom, encouraged us to make time for not just community but the formation of our hearts and minds through reading. She shared numerous stories how wholesome books brought about conversion, unity, and friendship with women involved.

The weekend ended with a social, complete with refreshments. It was the perfect ending for a conference focused on friendship and sisterhood.

While I experienced the conference at the Delta Hotel by Marriott in Fargo, more than 100 women experienced it via livestream from one of five parishes located in Rugby, Jamestown, Grafton, New Rockford, and Carrington. There were whispers of their presence throughout the weekend with the use of Slido, a software participants with a smartphone can use to ask questions and comment on the events of the day. I hoped their experience was as edifying as my own, but it wasn’t until after the weekend I was able to connect with some of those parishes and see for myself.

Jackie Schmaltz, parishioner at St. John’s Church in New Rockford, said that many from her parish wouldn’t have gone to Fargo simply due to the inconvenience of travel.

“Instead of a handful, if any, women from our parish going, growing in fellowship among themselves, and experiencing the life-giving topics of the amazing speakers, we had about 45 women, mostly from our parish and some close-by parishes, all growing in fellowship in our own community. The satellite locations allowed us to grow community within our own community. I’ve been a part of my parish for 12 years and before where I only knew people’s faces, I now know each of these women by name.”

“It was a gift to the folks who live a distance from Fargo to be able to have the livestream option,” said Katie Dubas, parishioner of St. James Basilica in Jamestown. “We had people come from Rock Lake, Langdon, Dazey, and Napoleon and it was wonderful to experience fellowship together as a smaller group of women. My biggest take-away was that we need to pursue and seek out other sisters in Christ to spend time with and support one another in their walk with Jesus in the midst of his Church. We need good sisterhood! We are not meant to walk this journey without sisters!”

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this Trusted Sisters conference. Rest in God the Father’s gaze often, and remember to take care of your heart.
Fargo’s Catholic high school alumni gather for annual get-together in Arizona

By Paul Braun

It has been a tradition since the 1990s. The Arizona Alumni and Friends gathering takes place each year (with the exception of 2021 due to COVID-19) in the Phoenix area. The event gives alumni from Fargo’s Shanley High School, who spend their winters in the Arizona sun, an opportunity to get-together and renew old friendships while showing their support for their alma mater.

Classes ranging from 1954 to 1972 were represented at the event that brings attending alumni up-to-date information on Shanley happenings, plans for the future, and opportunities to financially support the school.

“We have so many alumni and friends that winter or live year-round in Arizona,” said John Klocke, Shanley’s Advancement Director. “We want to keep them connected and informed about the projects they support. They are helping us do important work for our students and teachers and deserve the regular updates.”

The gathering featured events spaced out over three days, beginning with a morning Mass at All Saints Church in Mesa, Ariz. celebrated by Bishop Folda, followed by a short breakfast reception to let alumni meet with each other and with the Shanley leadership team. One of the more popular events is a dinner sponsored by the Shanley leadership team, where Bishop Folda and JPII Schools President Mike Hagstrom have the opportunity to meet attendees, share Shanley’s future goals, and personally thank attendees for their continued support.

“We try to keep them informed with updates from their alma mater,” said Hagstrom. “With their generous support, we can make Catholic education more affordable through scholarships and other programs. As it happens, there is quite a community down here in Arizona this time of year, so it’s a great opportunity to connect. I’m especially grateful to Bishop Folda for taking the time to come down here and connect with our alums. He loves Catholic schools and Catholic education, and this is one way he shows this support.”

At a luncheon on Feb. 25, I had a chance to talk with a few long-time attendees of the Arizona Alumni and Friends gathering: Shanley graduates Art Schmitz (class of 1960) and John Gross (class of 1961). Both had high praise for their alma mater and for Catholic education in general.

“I come to hear what’s going on at Shanley, and to meet friends I went to school with and graduated with,” said John Gross. “It’s kind of like a mini reunion. Shanley gave me a great Catholic education, got me into college and well trained for life.
It’s important to us to support Catholic education, not only in Fargo but in areas where our grandchildren live, so Shanley is one of those good Catholic organizations we support.”

“I grew up in a very low-income, single-parent family,” said Art Schmitz. “Since I was in grade school I wanted to go to Shanley because one of my sports idols, Roger Maris, went there. When I got to Shanley I played sports and was coached by Sid Cichy and his coaching staff, and they made a great impression on me and my life. They made me work and that paid off big dividends. That’s why I continue to support Shanley, so students today can get that superior Catholic education that I had the opportunity to receive, and I want to see them go on to college, become mature adults, and contribute to society. Shanley does a great job with that.”

For the Shanley leadership team, the gathering is the perfect opportunity to let alums in attendance know just where their support is going, how it’s helping today’s students, and will continue to help those youngsters who will be Shanley Deacons in the years to come.

“Our alums are proud of their school,” said Mike Hagstrom. “They want others to know about the great things Catholic education does for young people, so coming down here gives me an opportunity to thank them for supporting JPII schools and Shanley in particular.”

For more information on Shanley High School and the other Catholic schools around the diocese, go to www.fargodiocese.org/catholicschools.

Father Chad Wilhelm, State Chaplain for the North Dakota Knights of Columbus and Pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, hosted a Holy Hour of prayer for Ukraine at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo on March 12. Knights and the faithful across the United States held similar events to show unity in prayer for the citizens of Ukraine. The event was recorded by the national Knights of Columbus office, one of five sites across North America to be highlighted. (Photo by Kristina Lahr | New Earth)

Brother Michael Joseph Donahue, O.P. was ordained a deacon on March 12 at the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Brother Donahue graduated from Shanley High School in Fargo in 2012. From l to r, Kevin and Karen Donahue, Brother Donahue and his uncle Monsignor Brian Donahue, pastor of St. Philip’s in Hankinson and St. Anthony’s in Fairmount. Brother Donahue professed his solemn vows as a Dominican of the Eastern Providence of St. Joseph in February 2021 and is scheduled to be ordained a priest in May 2023. (Photo by Brother Benedict Marie Hernandez)
Believe it or not, **spring is coming!**

By Kristina Lahr  
Photos by Terrie Mann

**M**aybe it’s a little early to be thinking about spring. Maybe there’s one last blizzard blowing through our North Dakota prairie as you read this. But in mid-March, I had the pleasure of chatting with Terrie Mann, parishioner of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, and our conversation has me itching to get my hands in the dirt.

Terrie Mann received her first taste of gardening as a child with her grandma. When she moved to a 2.5-acre lot south of Grand Forks in 1989 with her husband, Michael, there was just a potato field, or rather, a blank canvas.

When she became Catholic in 2008, she heard about Mary gardens from Real Presence Radio, which opened to her a new way of looking at gardening. Then her sister gave her the first Mary statue for the garden—Our Lady of Grace. The garden was then consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Trinity Gardens emerged.

“From the very beginning I embraced being Catholic,” said Terrie. “As the garden grew so did I, especially my devotion to the Blessed Mother. She always takes you to Jesus. Through the garden, I sense this growing relationship with her and Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father.”

As Terrie’s devotions grew, so did her garden. Beyond the traditional Mary garden, she created parts of her garden to represent other devotions: The Holy Trinity, The Sacred Heart of Jesus with Divine Mercy, The Tree of Life, a Eucharist Medallion depicting the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, The Resurrection, a Eucharist Grape Arbor, The Therese Grace Memorial Garden of Life, and The David Michael Memorial Garden for the Unborn.

“If I go out into the garden and walk it with our Lord, he’s showing me the flowers, he’s showing me this incredible detail and beauty of his creation and I’m with him in it. It touches my heart and changes me. You can find incredible things in God’s creation. In the garden, I’m an artist with him. It’s an incredible experience to be with God. God knows I’m curious and have a sense of adventure. I have a lot of unique plants and miracles in the garden. I never know what Jesus is going to surprise me with next!”
The tradition of planting Mary gardens in particular goes back centuries. When much of the population was illiterate, priests and religious brothers and sisters planted gardens and gave the flowers and herbs religious names and attached meaning to them in order to teach people about the faith, in the same way they used stained glass windows to tell stories of the Bible or the saints. The first recorded Mary garden was by an Irish saint, St. Fiacre, patron saint of gardeners, in the 7th century. From there, gardens spread worldwide, especially after all the apparition sites of Our Lady.

Flowers and plants have long been symbols for various saints and devotions. Many saints including St. Joseph, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Gabriel at the Annunciation, are often depicted with a lily to represent purity and chastity. Palms were used to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem and later came to represent the victory of martyrs. St. Agnes and St. Sebastian are frequently depicted with palms.

Mary is known as the “mystic rose” and many other saints are depicted with roses as well, including St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Rose of Lima, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and St. Juan Diego at the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Of all the flowers, the rose is the most closely connected with the Virgin Mary. The rose is the queen of flowers and Our Lady is the queen of heaven. Roses symbolize love and remembrance as well as the blood of Christ (red), purity (white), happiness (pink), and glory (gold/yellow).

The meanings of some of flowers can vary. Some have more than one meaning, or there can be multiple names for the same flower. Some meanings derive from legends. Here are a few examples:

- Violets represent Mary’s humility.
- Lily-of-the-Valley represents Our Lady’s Tears. These flowers are said to have blossomed from Mary’s tears for her son as she stood at the foot of the cross.
- It’s said that a juniper bush saved the life of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus when they fled Egypt. The juniper bush opened its branches to shelter the Holy Family when Herod’s soldiers drew near them.
- Fuchsia are called Our Lady’s ear-drop. A legend claims that baby Jesus hung these flowers on his mother’s ears as jewels.
- The iris is called the “sword lily” because of the sword-shaped leaves. The leaves represent the words which Simeon spoke to Mary, when she and Joseph were in the temple to present the infant Jesus. Simeon’s said to Mary, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, and you yourself a sword will pierce” (Luke 2:34-35).

There’s no right or wrong way to create a Mary garden or any devotional garden. Half the fun is experimenting with which flowers and plants you like best and deciding what symbols you want to highlight. Another idea for a garden is to consider the mysteries of the rosary—Joyful,
Glorious, Luminous, and Sorrowful—and create a space that represents the life of Christ.

Terrie Mann gives this example for a Joyful Mystery garden.

- **Annunciation of the Lord:** White lilies to represent Mary’s purity.
- **The Visitation:** Columbines. Legend has it that they grew beneath Mary’s feet as she journeyed to visit her cousin, Elizabeth.
- **The Birth of Our Lord:** Ox-eye daisies. Legend has it that the Magi found these before finding the Holy Family when Christ was born.
- **The Presentation at the Temple:** Irises to represent the sword that pierced Mary’s heart.
- **The Finding of Jesus in the Temple:** Impatiens to represent Mary’s joy of finding Jesus.

Visitors to the garden say they feel at peace in Terrie’s garden. The garden is an extension of her desire to live a life centered on God. Terrie’s faith continues to grow as gardens change and she spends time in prayer there. A garden is never finished; it’s a work in progress just as we are in our need for constant conversion.

“It’s like I’m living one step in heaven and one step in the world,” she said.

So how does one start a Mary garden or any kind of devotional garden? Start simple.

“Start with a statue of Mary, have it blessed, and ask her to help you. All you need is a statue or image, a plant—indoor or outdoor—and you have a Mary garden. There are hundreds of plants associated with Mary gardens, and it can be as big as you want or a single flower in a pot. You can create theme gardens by the meanings of the flowers or whatever you enjoy and just have fun. Starting with Mary is extremely smart. She will always lead you to Jesus and his beauty.”

If you are interested in knowing more about devotional gardens, email Terrie Mann at trinitygardens.nd@gmail.com.
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CORRECTION: In the March issue of New Earth on page 19, the last line was missing from the article “Miracles during Anointing of the Sick.” It should read: “When I was done with the prayers, she sat up, said thank you, fell back on her pillow, and passed away.” New Earth regrets the error.

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In our rural parishes, there is often a gap in our children’s catechesis that remains unfilled: there are few young adults who live in the communities who have the time to witness to the faith. Church might seem irrelevant to kids if they don’t believe that growing up involves joyfully growing in one’s relationship with Jesus and the Church.

From this need was born the idea of Young Disciples, in which teams of young adults travel the diocese in rental vans, equipped with curriculum, crafts, and catchy songs. These teams invite the children of each parish to a deepening relationship with Jesus through a sacramental and prayerful life in the Catholic Church.

Young Disciples came together when a rural pastor contacted Stella Jeffrey at the Pastoral Center in Fargo, asking if she could send some people to put on a vacation Bible school. “Let me get back to you,” she said, and began to pray about the request. She saw that there was a need, and so one day in 2001 she went to daily Mass at St. Paul’s Newman Center in Fargo and pitched the idea of getting a group together to put on summer vacation Bible schools. After Mass, three young ladies approached Stella and became the first Young Disciples—Teresa Fewell, Bethany Johnson, and Jessica Schmaltz (now Sister Gianna).

Twenty years later, Stella Jeffrey, Mary Hanbury, and Ashley Njaa have each led the program, and we have had around 175 Young Disciples. Many of our priests ordained in the last 20 years served as Young Disciples as part of their formation.

Our curriculum and training are all “in-house” and updated every year. We have eight camp frameworks, each based on a set of the Mysteries of the Rosary. Each camp features a storyline woven into skits every day. For example, when I served as a Young Disciple in 2011, our skit featured time-traveling puppets. After each skit, many of the kids would try to pin down where I went during the show, guessing correctly that I lent my voice to one of the puppets. Of course I never admitted it.

Being a Young Disciple means serving and sacrificing for others, but of course our disciples will say that they receive more than they give. I learned so much about how to share the faith in a way that would appeal to and be understandable to kids. I learned more about our beautiful diocese and gratefully received food, lodging, and fellowship from my host families. I learned how to work on a team and rely on Jesus and others since I couldn’t succeed on my own.

Our camps have been on hold for the last two summers, but we are ready to begin again this year. We are looking for men and women who love Jesus and the Church who would consider this opportunity to serve in a special way from May 19 through August 2 this year. If you or someone you know just might be interested in helping to pass on the faith we’ve been given, please visit our website at www.fargodiocese.org/yyd, send us a note, or give us a call!

“Jambo to Jesus” has been a favorite Young Disciples song for many years. To all Young Disciples alumni and former campers, I send you a warm “Jambo!”
Soviet prisoner during WWII divulges testimony of faith

“Each day, every day of our lives, God presents to us the people and opportunities upon which he expects us to act. He expects no more of us, but he will accept nothing less of us; and we fail in our promise and commitment if we do not see in the situation of every moment of every day his divine will” (145).

...no evil could touch me, ultimately, as long as God was with me. How simple that sounds as I write it... yet it is no less true for all its terrible simplicity.

–Walter J. Ciszek, S.J.

The book is less about how to live a holy life as a Russian prisoner and more about how to live a holy life in any situation, no matter how difficult, mundane, or frustrating. There is a purpose for every life, every circumstance, and every moment, even when our plans and decisions are stripped away from us. To see how the simple message to trust and have faith in God played out in a more extreme circumstance is inspiring.

Despite all his trials, Ciszek comes to realize that “no evil could touch me, ultimately, as long as God was with me. How simple that sounds as I write it... yet it is no less true for all its terrible simplicity” (120).

Side note: If you look up He Leadeth Me online, you’ll likely find Ciszek’s first book, With God in Russia, beside it. With God is also about Ciszek’s experience during this time but focuses more on the factual, day-by-day elements rather than his spiritual insights. You don’t need to read it first or at all to find He Leadeth Me worthwhile.

“He Leadeth Me” by Walter J. Ciszek, S.J.
Did you know there’s a Polish tradition of blessing Easter baskets on Holy Saturday morning that dates back to the Middle Ages? It’s still practiced today in Poland and in Polish communities in the United States. These baskets are not our typical American baskets we give our children with chocolate bunnies and marshmallow peeps. Instead, they hold food for a special Easter meal.

There was a time when Catholics fasted every day during Lent, and their next big meal available was on Easter. When the Lenten fast ended, people displayed their joy and gratitude by bringing the once forbidden food and drink to church for a blessing on Holy Saturday morning. These baskets were to be decorated with greens such as the first buds on a shrub or some sign of spring in the yard and, of course, decorated eggs. There was also the hope that the blessing of the food would prove a remedy for whatever harmful effects occurred during fasting. The Church has a special blessing for this in the Book of Blessings and in the Roman Ritual book.

Andrzej Noyszewski, a native of Poland now living in Fargo, remembers the tradition of blessing Easter baskets well.

“As a child my sister and I were responsible for finding greens for our basket used on Holy Saturday. We also assisted with adding various items into the basket and helped arrange them. One of us carried the basket to the church and was responsible for placing it on the long table in the middle of the church and later finding it among all the other baskets. During the Easter breakfast, my father cut the blessed eggs into four pieces, placed them on the plate, and sprinkled them with blessed salt and pepper. We then shared those eggs with each other, asking for forgiveness or thanking each other. As a child, it was a special experience to be that close to ‘holy food’ as we called it. It felt so much different to share this food with family members. Even salt had a different taste. When I think about this tradition, this was the first time I started to understand the nature of blessing. Today I’m sure that blessing of the food prepared me to practice reverence toward ‘holy things.’

There can be a variety of food and drink in the baskets, but there are some items in the baskets that became symbols of Christ and his Resurrection. For example, butter was to be in a shape of a lamb or a cross to represent Christ. Decorated hard-boiled eggs represented new life, and bread symbolized Jesus as the Bread of Life. The meat generally was lamb but ham or other special meats could also be a symbol of God’s generosity. To represent the Passion and the blood Christ shed for us, beets were used in a variety of recipes. Also added were common items such as salt or other spices.

In 12th century England, a monk marked a cross on the top of bread dough and added spices to symbolize the spices the women brought to the tomb. He baked the bread on Good Friday for his brother monks. Since then these “hot cross buns” have become a traditional Good Friday and even Easter Sunday bread. You can find a variety of recipes for this online.
Reflections on discernment weekend

SEMINARIAN LIFE

TAYLOR TERNES

College IV at St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Seward, Neb.

St. Gregory the Great Seminary (SGGS) was gifted with the presence of 40 young men discerning the call to the priesthood March 11–13. The weekend was aimed mainly at giving the men a look into the daily routine of a seminarian who attends SGGS. When I wasn’t busy with logistical things that come with hosting people, it gave me time to reflect on my own discernment and decision to enter the seminary.

I grew up in a devout Catholic family. Mom and Dad always pushed us in our faith and established a relationship with Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother as the first priority in our family’s lives. We would normally pray the rosary on road trips, we would never miss Sunday Mass, and because of our dedication to the music ministry at St. Joseph’s in Devils Lake, we normally had to play for various “special Masses” or the Stations of the Cross during Lent. This, in turn, gave me many opportunities to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother.

As I began high school, the call to the priesthood, which I first heard in the second grade, started to become more real. This came with a certain level of fear. Only a select few of my peers were even willing to take their faith seriously, let alone give their entire life to Christ! There were also personal desires for a beautiful wife, lots of children, a sizeable bank account, a large house, and toys like boats and planes. Having spent a substantial amount of time around good, holy priests at my parish, I knew all of these worldly desires were not a possibility if I answered the priestly call.

One night while I was doing a late-night holy hour with my dad, I was wrestling with this inner turmoil of my will against Jesus’ will for me. Christ prompted me to turn to the Holy Scriptures, to the calling of the first disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. These men, while mending their nets, heard the call from Jesus and without hesitation, got up and followed him. This gave me great comfort that Jesus would never lead me astray, and the disciples’ examples displayed in the fullest sense, a radical trust in Jesus’ will for each and every one of them.

Ever since that night, I’ve been striving to learn how I can more closely follow Christ each day. The first step was to enter seminary, and it was easily one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. Although difficult at times, I feel a deep and profound peace at the seminary and also at peace with the ever-approaching life as a priest. Every single day, the Blessed Mother is leading me closer and closer to Jesus, which is allowing me to conform my own heart after his Sacred Heart.

When I looked at each of the disciners that weekend, I saw every demeanor possible, from a fear of the possibility of a priestly vocation, to a clear and profound peace with it. It was an incredible opportunity for us seminarians to offer words of encouragement, remembering how difficult it was when we all first heard the call.

On the last night, we offered all night adoration for the disciners—my favorite thing on the planet. When the whole world is sleeping, there are no distractions, no noise, and no fear of missing out on what’s going on around you. These hours are when I am most easily able to hear Jesus’ gentle whisper and his beckoning for a more intimate relationship with him. This is when our call can truly be found, whether it’s the call of our vocation or just simply the daily conversion we are all called to each day.

This discernment weekend, although exhausting at times, was truly a blessing, not only for the disciners, but for the seminarians as well. It gave us yet another opportunity to grow closer to Christ’s Sacred Heart, which burns with love for each and every one of us.
Who takes care of the poor? Church or government?

A recent story in the Grand Forks Herald about the Grand Forks County “poor house” and “poor farm” that operated from 1893 to 1973 brought to mind a common myth about how we care for the poor.

The myth is that when it comes to taking care of people in need, the government has taken over what used to be done only by churches. The truth is that churches have never been the sole provider of care for the poor.

As far back as the Old Testament, the prophets told everyone to remember the “anawim,” the poor ones who remained faithful to God during difficult times. But it was the rulers and leaders—the closest we have to today’s “government”—who the prophets most often instructed to care for the poor.

Christ made clear that the “poor” includes not just the economic poor or believers. Some non-Catholics preach that Jesus’ parables, especially the parable of the talents, instructs that government should never involve itself in the care for the poor, but most Catholic scholars, including the Church Fathers, never interpreted the parable in that way. In fact, Jesus did not expressly preach that care for the poor should be done solely by private works or only by the state.

The early Church, however, understood that the Gospel taken as a whole meant that the obligation to care for the least among us applied to everyone. Two Church Fathers of the Fourth Century, St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom, made clear that rulers and government officials had duties to the poor, not just because of our common humanity, but because of their positions of authority.

From the Middle Ages to the rise of the modern state, the church became the primary, if not only, provider of care to the poor, the sick, and the orphaned. But it would be a mistake to think that the church operated these institutions alone. Church and state were so intertwined that these “charitable” institutions were really partnerships between the government and the church. Monasteries, hospitals, orphanages, and schools existed with the blessing, protection, and financial support of lords and kings. Taxes paid to the lords and sovereigns eventually supported the church’s work.

The Protestant Reformation and later Enlightenment-era anti-clerical movements dissolved or confiscated many of the church’s institutions, or severed their relationship with the state. It was during this time, especially in the Anglo-American world, that private benevolent institutions arose. Some were connected with churches, some were not.

When people talk about a time when the churches took care of everybody, they are usually thinking about this time. History shows, however, that churches never did take care of all of the poor and sick. Governments operated hospitals, orphanages, maternity homes, sanitariums, poor houses, and institutions for the blind, deaf, mentally ill, and disabled.

The pendulum swings. Sometimes government does more, sometimes the charitable sector does more. Sometimes one does something the other does not. Sometimes they provide the same services.

What does Catholic social doctrine have to say about the proper role of government in caring for the poor? Let us start with some clear principles.

First, government should not monopolize care for the poor. This is a form of collectivist socialism that is incompatible with the Catholic understanding of society and the human person.

Second, government should not prohibit religious groups from serving the public. This is a violation of religious freedom.

Third, the state should enact regulations that protect the vulnerable and ensure basic care. Protection, a form of justice, is one of the primary functions of the state. Government has a role in ensuring that charities and religious groups serving those in need provide safe conditions, real care, and do not waste donor’s contributions.

Fourth, at the same time, government should not be so intrusive that it creates a system that demeans the dignity of the human person, interferes with the family structure, or violates the principle of subsidiarity.

From there, how much and how government should be involved in care for the poor becomes a matter of prudential judgment, varying from place to place and time to time.

St. John Paul II once said something about substance abuse treatment that summarizes a Catholic approach to this question. He said that government does not “do” substance abuse treatment. People do. He added, however, that government has an obligation to help, financially and legally, to the people providing treatment.

We need to constantly search for that right balance. Some things only government can do. Some things only charities and churches can do. Most services, however, are partnerships between the private sector, including religious groups, and the government sector. Our task is to make sure that each is doing the right part and that the true needs of the least among us are never lost.
The ethics of pig to human organ transplants

Early this year, a Maryland man suffering from severe heart failure underwent a new experimental procedure, receiving a pig heart transplant. His medical team had determined he would be a poor candidate for a human heart transplant or for an artificial heart, so he was offered the opportunity to participate in a novel treatment using a genetically modified pig’s heart.

The pig had been specially bred and modified with DNA edits to increase the likelihood of successful transplantation. Three genes of the pig that contribute to the rapid antibody-mediated rejection of pig organs by humans were “knocked out.” Six human genes that would produce “human protective proteins” and improve immune acceptance of the pig heart were also inserted into the pig’s genome. An additional gene knockout was done to prevent the pig’s heart from becoming too large.

The transplantation of animal organs into humans is known as “xenotransplantation” and is a new field that appears poised to expand rapidly in the future. Xenotransplantation can be ethical as long as pilot studies are performed in animals ahead of use in humans, safety issues are carefully addressed, the benefits of the transplantation procedure outweigh the burdens, and risks are reasonably limited.

While we have a duty to treat animals well and should try to avoid causing them undue suffering, it’s also clear that human beings have been given by God a legitimate dominion over members of the animal kingdom. Animal trials have always been key to launching new therapies in humans.

Pig organ transplants into baboons and other non-human primates have been taking place for decades. These transplants have become more beneficial and less risky over time, especially as tailored genetic modifications have been introduced into the pigs. Xenotransplantation offers an important advantage over traditional human-to-human transplants: the opportunity to modify the donor organ, rather than only modifying the recipient through suppressing his or her immune system.

In the early days of implanting pig organs into non-human primates, researchers faced the serious problem of immediate organ destruction due to hyperacute rejection, with the failure time being measured in minutes, rather than hours or days. Hyperacute rejection occurred because the baboon’s immune system recognized a carbohydrate molecule on the surface of the pig organ. By knocking out the troublesome carbohydrate molecule via genetic engineering, and relying on additional immune-suppression techniques, scientists were able to extend significantly the survival times of transplanted pig organs in baboons, in some studies up to nearly three years.

The very complex changes made in the genetically-engineered pigs, when coupled with continued advances in immune-suppression strategies in organ recipients, led to the realization that it might finally be possible to attempt implantation of a genetically-modified pig heart into a human patient.

In the future, additional and more sophisticated genetic engineering of source animals and the use of new immunosuppressive agents in recipients should further improve compatibility and decrease the chances of xenotransplant rejection.

Still, it should be noted that there are other potential concerns besides organ rejection. Animal retroviruses or diseases could potentially be transmitted to humans when they receive an animal organ. Some have argued, however, that by maintaining strict control over how animals are housed, fed and bred for organ procurement, scientists can achieve a greater degree of assurance in terms of minimizing their exposure to pathogens through the highly biosecure laboratory conditions the animals are raised in; meanwhile, for human organ donors, detailed knowledge of individual exposure profiles may not be available.

Surveys and focus groups assessing attitudes to xenotransplantation generally report public support for the use of pig organs. Such surveys also suggest that many Christians, Jews and Muslims would consider xenotransplantation to be acceptable as a life-saving measure. Some people object to the use of animals, but the fact that more than 100 million pigs in the US are slaughtered annually for human food production lessens for most the concerns around using them to alleviate the chronic shortages of life-saving organs. Thousands of people die every year on waiting lists for human organs.

Moreover, if pig organ transplants into humans were to become standardized and widely available, this could also significantly reduce the illegal trade in human organs like kidneys, where the poor and disadvantaged are often victimized.

Even though remarkable advancements have been made in “neutering” pig organs so they no longer provoke a powerful immune response in humans, and striking progress has been made in extending survival times for xenografts, there are sure to be many more twists and turns along the road of getting our immune systems to cooperate fully with implanted animal organs.

Recent forays into xenotransplantation offer a significant first step on the long journey from yesterday’s “scientifically unimaginable,” to today’s “barely achievable,” to tomorrow’s basic “standard of care.”
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If you are 70 1/2 or older, the IRA rollover is a great way for you to make an IRA rollover gift to support the causes you care about. IRA charitable rollover gifts can make a huge difference. There are a few details that I want to share with you about the bill and the IRA rollover:

• The IRA rollover allows donors 70½ or older to transfer up to $100,000 directly from their IRA to charity each year.
• An IRA rollover gift is a tax-exempt distribution. Qualifying individuals can make charitable gifts using pre-tax IRA assets rather than taking a distribution, paying income taxes, and using after-tax assets to make a charitable gift.
• An IRA rollover gift can be used to meet all or part of an IRA required minimum distribution.
• A permanent IRA rollover will give qualifying individuals certainty, allowing them to better manage their income, taxes, and charitable giving.

In December of 2015, The PATH Act was signed into law and made a tax savings provision in our tax code permanent. I have personally seen many folks in our diocese take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover. It’s a convenient and simple way to make a charitable gift to a parish, cemetery, Catholic school, or diocesan program or ministry and bypass income tax. For those who have an IRA and make charitable gifts, I encourage you to review your own financial situation, discuss with your tax advisor or accountant, and see if making charitable gifts from your IRA is right for you.

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75 years ago — 1947

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50 years ago — 1972

The Shanley High School 75 voice girls' Choir makes Chicago, Illinois, the final destination for their spring concert tour. While in Chicago they will stay at the historic Palmer House Hotel. Activities include sightseeing, museum visits, attending cultural events and a musical. The purpose of such trips is to give the students traveling experience and an opportunity to sing for different audiences and to look over different college campuses.

20 years ago — 2002

Our Lady of Peace in Mayville church has a new home. Bishop Samuel J. Aquila dedicated the newly built church and altar in April. The fledging congregation's very first Mass was held in the summer of 1898. Services were often held in homes, the old Opera House and Show Hall until the Old Stone Church was built. Planning for a larger building began in 1990. The new church on 8th Street SE is finally a one-level, easily accessible structure. The new altar, pulpit and credence table were made by Sherman Thykeson, Portland. William and Thomas Vasek made four wood crosses from Goose River Oak.

LIFE’S MILESTONES

Allen and Leigh Gunkel, parishioners of St. Agatha’s Church in Hope, celebrated their 50th anniversary on March 10. They were married in St. Agatha’s Church. They are blessed with 4 children and 5 grandchildren.

Henry and Jane (Daley) Green, parishioners of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, celebrated their 50th anniversary on March 18. They were married at St. Mary’s Church in Park River. They are blessed with 3 daughters.

Gene and Rose Funseth, parishioners of St. Stephen’s Church Larimore, will celebrate their 50th anniversary April 8. They were married at Sts. Peter and Paul’s Church in Strasburg and have 3 daughters and 4 grandchildren.

Allen and Ann (Schneider) Kingzett, parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Munich, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 8. They made their home on the family farm, near Sarles, and have 4 children and 9 grandchildren.

Ken and Bonnie Kroetsch, parishioners of St. Anthony’s Church in Fargo, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 8. They were married at St. Stanislaus Church in Perham, Minn. They have 3 daughters and 2 grandsons.

John and Lorraine Wesołowski, parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church in West Fargo, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on April 25. They are blessed with 4 children, 11 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren and 1 foster grandchild.

Dennis Kitsch, parishioner of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, celebrated his 95th birthday on March 8.

Doris Heiser, parishioner of St. Raphael’s Church in Verona, celebrated her 90th birthday on March 10. Doris is blessed with 9 children, 18 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Elaine Majerus, parishioner of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo, will celebrate her 95th birthday on April 8. Elaine and her late husband Ralph were blessed with 5 children, 16 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren.

Faye Cooch, parishioner of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo, will celebrate her 100th birthday April 15. Faye and her late husband, Bob, were founding members of Holy Spirit Church in Fargo. Faye lives in her own townhouse, plays bridge, and loves to bake.

Faye Cooch, parishioner of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo, will celebrate her 100th birthday April 15. Faye and her late husband, Bob, were founding members of Holy Spirit Church in Fargo. Faye lives in her own townhouse, plays bridge, and loves to bake.

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 May issue is Apr. 19.
HAPPENINGS

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

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

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EVENTS

Parish events
Fingal: Holy Trinity Church will host a ham dinner April 10 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Au-gratin potatoes, ham slices, cole slaw, dinner rolls, glazed baby carrots, and dessert. Adults $11, children $5. (701) 840-1388.

Attend a women’s retreat in Grand Forks
Take some time away to enrich your spiritual life and gain tools for better relationships. A mini retreat titled “Called for Freedom... Called for Love” will be held April 23, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Anne’s Living Center in Grand Forks. The day includes talks, Sacraments, adoration, and fellowship with other women. Presenter Kathy Neumann has led many retreats for women. Free will offering. For more information or to register, email gfacwomen@gmail.com or call Sister Christina at (701) 746-9401.

Join Holy Cross Church for Divine Mercy Sunday
Holy Cross Church in West Fargo will host a Divine Mercy service on April 24 at 2 p.m. The afternoon will include the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Confession, and Benediction. Reception in the hallway to follow. All are invited.

Harold Zola, parishioner of St. Stanislaus Church in Warsaw, will celebrate his 90th birthday on May 14. He and his late wife, Marcellene, were blessed with 5 children and 11 grandchildren. Harold is enjoying his retirement in Grand Forks participating in many assisted care activities.
Idaho passes bill to ban abortion after six weeks of pregnancy

By Catholic News Service

The Idaho Legislature passed a measure March 14 to ban abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, similar to the Texas abortion law.

The measure, which now goes to Republican Gov. Brad Little, passed in a 51-14 House vote with no Democratic support. The state Senate had approved the legislation in early March that would allow family members to sue the medical provider who performed the abortion.

The measure expands the state’s Fetal Heartbeat Preborn Child Protection Act, which the Idaho Legislature passed last year.

“This bill makes sure that the people of Idaho can stand up for our values and do everything in our power to prevent the wanton destruction of innocent human life,” Republican Rep. Steven Harris, the bill’s sponsor, said in a statement after the vote, The Associated Press reported.

Also on March 14, the Florida Senate passed the Reducing Fetal and Infant Mortality bill, which bans abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy except in cases of severe fetal anomaly or to save the mother’s life or prevent a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment.

The bill, which the House passed in early March and which the state’s Catholic bishops praised, is slated to go to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for his signature.

In a March 15 statement about both measures, Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said: “We praise Florida Right to Life and Right to Life of Idaho for their hard work in seeing these laws passed.”

“These bills will go far in protecting unborn children and their mothers from the horrors of abortion,” she added.

Christian Welp, director of diocesan projects for the Diocese of Boise and a legislative liaison for the diocese, said before the legislative session began that he was excited about the new session for the chance to make some additions to the Fetal Heartbeat Bill passed in the previous session.

In a Dec. 17 article for the Idaho Catholic Register, Boise’s diocesan newspaper, Welp said the plan in Idaho was “to make adjustments to our law to correspond to the Texas law.”

Although the Idaho bill is similar to the Texas abortion law, there are some differences.

The Texas law allows citizens to sue anyone who helps a woman obtain an abortion after a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually around six weeks and provides $10,000 plus legal fees for successful lawsuits. In the Idaho bill, family members of the woman obtaining an abortion can sue the abortion provider and obtain $20,000, plus legal fees.

The Texas abortion law does not allow exceptions for rape or incest while the Idaho bill provides such exceptions but stipulates that the women seeking the abortion need to have filed a police report and show it to the provider before they can obtain an abortion.

Under both the Texas and Idaho laws, women who have an abortion will not be prosecuted.
Pope Francis gives his blessing after leading the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican March 13. (CNS photo | Paul Haring)

Pope Francis on Ukraine: “Stop this massacre”

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

“Before the barbarity of the killing of children, of innocents and unarmed civilians, there are no strategic reasons that hold up,” the pope said. The only thing to do is “to stop the unacceptable armed aggression before it reduces the cities to cemeteries.”

“With pain in my heart, I unite my voice to that of ordinary people who implore an end to the war,” he said. “In the name of God, listen to the cry of those who are suffering and stop the bombings and attacks.”

Negotiations to end the war must begin seriously, he said, and the humanitarian corridors agreed upon to evacuate civilians and to bring basic necessities to people in besieged towns must be respected and secure.

With the U.N. Refugee Agency reporting March 13 that almost 2.7 million refugees had fled Ukraine since Feb. 24, Pope Francis thanked all the individuals and agencies in the neighboring countries who have welcomed them, and he encouraged continued generosity. He also asked Catholic parishes and religious orders around the world “to increase moments of prayers for peace.”

“God is the God only of peace, he is not the God of war,” he said. “Those who support violence profane his name.”

Pope Francis led the people in the square, including several carrying Ukrainian flags, in a moment of silent prayer that God would “convert hearts to a firm desire for peace.”

After the Angelus, the Vatican used the pope’s English-language Twitter account to send, in 10 tweets, his entire appeal in Russian and Ukrainian.

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U.N. official: Ukraine exodus is fastest-growing refugee crisis since WWII

By Rhina Guidos | Catholic News Service

A top United Nations official said in March that the world hasn’t seen a refugee crisis such as the one developing in Eastern Europe, caused by Russia’s attack on Ukraine, since the last World War.

As of March 8, at least 2 million had fled Ukraine in the days following Russia’s Feb. 24 invasion of the East European nation, said Filippo Grandi, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Grandi called it the “fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.”

The Center for Migration Studies in New York said on its website that after World War II, which lasted from 1939 until 1945, it was clear “there were over a million ‘displaced persons,’ as they were called, in Germany and Austria.” But the center said that “figures for North Africa and Asia were unavailable and figures for Europe were incomplete.”

Most Ukrainian refugees fleeing from Russia’s February attacks have gone into neighboring countries, such as Poland, where Catholic organizations have been among the humanitarian groups helping.

The crisis is expected to worsen as President Vladimir Putin continues to escalate attacks on the country of more than 44 million. It’s unclear how many of those will head for the U.S. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced March 3 that it would grant Temporary Protective Status, or TPS, to Ukrainians already in the U.S. for 18 months so they can remain in the country.

TPS grants a work permit and reprieve from deportation to certain people whose countries have experienced natural disasters, armed conflicts, or exceptional situations so they can remain temporarily in the United States.

On its website, DHS said it had granted the designation for Ukrainians based on the ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Ukrainian nationals, “and those of no nationality who last habitually resided in Ukraine, from returning to Ukraine safely.”

“These conditions result from the full-scale Russian military invasion into Ukraine, which marks the largest conventional military action in Europe since World War II,” DHS said March 3.

“This invasion has caused a humanitarian crisis,” the agency said, “with significant numbers of individuals fleeing and damage to civilian infrastructure that has left many without electricity or water or access to food, basic supplies, shelter, and emergency medical services.”

By some estimates, about 75,000 Ukrainians in this country may be eligible for the protections, which apply to those who “continuously resided in the United States since March 1,” DHS said, adding that “individuals who attempt to travel to the United States after March 1, will not be eligible for TPS.”

Even before the conflict began, the Reuters news agency reported that U.S. Customs and Border Protection began seeing an increasing number of Ukrainians at the southern border with Mexico asking the U.S. for asylum from October 2021 into January. During that same period, Russians also began seeking asylum, with both groups citing political repression.

“The United States is committed to doing anything we can, first of all, to support the countries that are bearing the immediate burden of taking in Ukrainians,” said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken March 6, speaking to CNN. “And then, as appropriate, if people seek refugee status in the United States, of course we will look at that and I’m sure act on that.”
More than once here, I’ve written that “the conscience cannot help but speak out.” It’s something I’ve discovered powerfully as a sidewalk advocate with a heart for those seeking abortion, and their children, whose lives hang in the balance weekly here in Fargo.

Now, I have another example of how our consciences bear down and cannot be suppressed. Eventually, the truth comes out. It cannot be contained.

It happened as a result of one of my “Living Faith” columns I write for The Forum newspaper, about a couple who proudly announced their vasectomy on social media, declaring they were “expecting a child…NEVER!” I felt this very public admission deserved to be held in the light because of the “culture of death” it announced.

One of my fellow columnists responded publicly, taking issue with what he called my judging attitude, despite my having noted in my essay that we are not to judge hearts; a statement I hold firm.

I’ve been misunderstood many times before, however, and accept the daggers that come from being a public communicator of Christ’s Church. What came next, though, left me and my fellow pro-life friends stunned.

In his column, “Conservatives block solutions to unwanted pregnancies,” Tony Bender stated that he had “experienced the loss of a child,” who was “aborted when we learned his condition ‘was not compatible with life.’”

“I’ve run the ugly gauntlet of protesters with no empathy for those between a rood and a hard place,” he continued, noting that “George Tiller the Baby Killer” was “the only man in America who would take our case…”

The conscience speaks.

Most everyone in the pro-life movement knows of Dr. George Tiller, the late-term abortionist who, in May 2009, was killed by a gunman who approached him in church. Despite the fact that only a few misguided folks would uphold the gunman’s action as a needed act, this unfortunate incident continues to be used to justify abortion, and against those who uphold life at all stages.

George Tiller was famous—or infamous perhaps—both before and after his death, which should not have happened this way. God alone should decide when the life he gives ought to end. But more to the point, a local man has now, through a post about vasectomy, admitted to something troubling before all.

In the end, Mr. Bender has provided an important opportunity for us to pray for him. We can do so more fervently now, better understanding what motivates his words. By his own admission, on Ash Wednesday (an abortion day here in Fargo), he gave us a chance to peer into his soul and beg the Lord’s mercy on his behalf. We can, and ought to, pray for his conversion, and the healing of his and his wife’s broken hearts.

As beautiful an opportunity as this is, in this season, it is also hard news to carry. One of our own little ones died at the hands of a man renowned for helping people end the lives of our smallest citizens in the latest stages of pregnancy. This is not cause for rejoicing, but deep grief. In that grief, we must not only pray for the Benders, but for George Tiller and the man who killed him as well.

If nothing else, this mess reminds us that taking the life of another human being—of an innocent person—is the highest offense, and will require the most mercy from God. Does God have it in him? Yes, he does, and our prayers here matter. Of course, we need those prayers ourselves, for we, too, are sinners.

Just a week after Mr. Bender’s column, at the sidewalk in front of our state’s only abortion facility on a Wednesday, a prisoner arrived, in prison garb, flanked by two security guards. From all indications, she was there to procure an abortion. Though I was not present at the time, several friends were eyewitnesses.

Their report raised questions in my mind. Can prisoners be let out to seek an abortion? And if so, who is paying for the abortion? I dare to guess it is us, friends, the taxpayers. This scenario leaves me unsettled, and wondering what our response should be. If you have any thoughts, please let me know.

Meantime, let us remember what Mother Teresa once said: “Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love but to use violence to get what they want.” May we never cease in praying that unmerited deaths of all kinds, whether in war or abortion—for the link is undeniable—will cease, and soon.

NEW EARTH APRIL 2022
Do you know where we are?

The answer will be revealed in the May *New Earth*.

Last month’s photo is from St. John Nepomucene Church in Pisek.

**Where in the diocese are we?**