What the Church needs is a

**Eucharistic Revival**

Restoring faith in the Real Presence

From Bishop Folda: A Eucharistic Revival

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**ON THE COVER:**

Faithful gather for a Corpus Christi procession during the Rural Life Celebration at the Frank and Helen Braun farm near Napoleon on July 12, 2020. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)
A Eucharistic Revival

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever (John 6).” The Eucharist has been at the heart of the Church’s life since the very beginning. On the night before he died, Jesus instituted the Eucharist as the new covenant in his own Body and Blood, and he commanded his apostles to “do this in remembrance of me.” Ever since that night, the Church has celebrated the Eucharist everywhere and at all times, even in the face of great adversity and outright persecution.

With this in mind, I am happy to announce that on June 19, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord (Corpus Christi), the Church in the United States will begin a National Eucharistic Revival. This multiyear event will hopefully be a time of renewal and deepening faith in Christ, who offers himself to us in every Mass and waits for us in every church and tabernacle of our diocese.

During the first year of the Revival, from June 2022 to June 2023, the diocese will offer resources and events for the faithful to grow in their faith and devotion to Christ in the Eucharist. At St. Mary’s Cathedral and in many other parishes on June 19, we will begin the revival with a Corpus Christi Eucharistic procession. Later in the fall, on Sept. 23-24, the Diocese of Fargo will sponsor a “Redeemed” Eucharistic Conference, a weekend gathering for all the faithful to celebrate and deepen our Eucharistic faith. Educational and prayer materials on the Eucharist and the liturgy are also being prepared and will be made available for use by the clergy and the faithful.

In the second year of the Revival, we will give special attention to a renewal of Eucharistic faith and life in our parishes. We will strive to foster our liturgical life and encourage Eucharistic adoration and prayer among the faithful. I will also ask our priests and parishes to offer catechesis on the Eucharist for individuals and groups of all ages. I sincerely hope that all will participate in these initiatives, so we can appreciate even more the amazing gift that Christ gives us in the Eucharist.

And finally, in July of 2024, the Revival will conclude with a National Eucharist Congress in Indianapolis. This national event could potentially draw 80,000 to 100,000 people from every diocese for a great celebration of faith in our Eucharistic Lord. I hope to lead a pilgrimage group from the Diocese of Fargo, and look forward to a great outpouring of prayer and grace around Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

One of the goals of the Eucharistic Revival is a renewal of the Church through an encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the Real Presence of Jesus himself. Under the forms of bread and wine, Jesus offers us his own Body and Blood in the Eucharist as a perpetuation of his sacrifice upon the cross. Jesus gives us the Eucharist so that we might always be able to participate in the sacrifice of his life on the cross and the triumph of his resurrection. He gives us the Eucharist as nourishment for our souls and as a promise of his abiding presence among us.

But recent national surveys indicate that only about one third of Catholics understand and believe in the Eucharist as the real presence of Christ. That’s a startling statistic, and it should cause us great concern. I have to admit that I’m somewhat skeptical of that statistic, at least in our own diocese. I believe that most of our faithful do believe what the Church believes about the Eucharist, even if they might have some difficulty fully articulating that belief. But without a doubt, there is confusion among many Catholics about the true reality of the Eucharist. Many see it as a mere symbol, a representation of Christ, but this is not at all what the Church believes. The Church has always known that the Eucharist is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus, given under the sacramental signs of bread and wine. For this reason, the Eucharist truly is at the heart of our lives as Catholics. Pope St. John Paul II stated more than once that the “Eucharist makes the Church.” In other words, the Church as the mystical Body of Christ draws her life from the Eucharist, which is Christ himself.

“The Church has always known that the Eucharist is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus, given under the sacramental signs of bread and wine. For this reason, the Eucharist truly is at the heart of our lives as Catholics.”

-Bishop John T. Folda
For several decades, the Church has also seen a steady decline in the number of Catholics who attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and during the recent pandemic, that decline accelerated. But if Catholics truly understood what the Eucharist really is, there would be no empty seats in our churches on Sundays or any other day. We would be lined up to have a place at Mass, and we would make it our highest priority. What could be more important than an encounter with Jesus himself?

The Eucharistic Revival promises to be a moment of grace and joy in the life of the Church. For those who have drifted away, or who have a limited understanding of the Eucharist, I pray that the Revival will draw them back and help them to believe that Jesus is truly present among us in the Eucharist. And for those who already have a firm and living Eucharistic faith, I pray that the Revival will be a time of even deeper grace and encounter with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. This Revival is also intended to form us as faithful disciples who are alive in Christ and ready to be sent forth on mission “for the life of the world.” Be on the watch for events and opportunities in your parish and in the Diocese of Fargo, and let us all come once again to Christ in the Eucharist, who is “the living bread that came down from heaven.”

**BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR**

**May 12 • 6 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Joseph, Devils Lake

**May 13 • 6 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Cecilia, Harvey

**May 14 • 10 a.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Therese, Rugby

**May 14 • 7 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Ann, Belcourt

**May 15 • 1 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Mark, Bottineau

**May 21 • 10 a.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Michael, Grand Forks

**May 21 • 7 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, St. Alphonsus, Langdon

**May 22 • 1 p.m.**
Confirmation/First Eucharist, Our Lady of Peace, Mayville

**May 25 • 10 a.m.**
Baccalaureate Mass, Holy Cross, West Fargo

**May 25 • 6 p.m.**
Commencement, Shanley Gym, Fargo

**May 28 • 4 p.m.**
25th Anniversary Mass for Father Joseph Christiansen, St. Stanislaus, Warsaw

**May 30**
Memorial Day, Pastoral Center closed

**June 3 • 7 p.m.**
Ordination Holy Hour and Vespers, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

**June 4 • 10 a.m.**
Ordination of Priests, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

**June 5 • 4:30 p.m.**
60th Anniversary Mass for Father Duaine Cote, Sts. Anne and Joachim Church, Fargo

**June 6 • 4:30 p.m.**
40th Anniversary Mass for Msgr. Dennis Skonseng, St. Catherine, Valley City

**June 7 • 3 p.m.**
Diocesan Finance Council, Pastoral Center, Fargo

**June 12–17**
USCCB Spring Conference, San Diego

**June 19**
Corpus Christi Mass and Procession, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

**June 20**
Catholic United Golf Outing, Rose Creek, Fargo

**June 23**
ND Catholic Conference, Jamestown
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)

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

May - Faith-Filled Young People
We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary’s life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

June - Families
We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives.

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St. Philip Neri was a Christian missionary and founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, a community of Catholic priests and lay brothers. He was born in Florence on July 21, 1515.

From a very young age, Philip was known for being cheerful and obedient. He was affectionately referred to as “good little Phil.” At 18-years-old, Philip went off to live with a wealthy family member to assist in—and possibly inherit—the family business. However, soon after his arrival, Philip experienced a mystical vision, which he eventually spoke of as his Christian conversion. This event was an encounter with the Lord and it dramatically changed his life. He soon lost interest in owning property or participating in business. He felt a call from the Holy Spirit to radically live for and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church. In 1535, Philip began studying theology and philosophy in Rome. Although he was considered a “promising scholar,” after three years of studies, Philip gave up any thought of priestly ordination.

In 1544, on the eve of Pentecost, Philip saw what appeared to be a globe of fire. It is said the fire entered his mouth, causing Philip to feel his heart dilate. Philip was filled with such paroxysms of divine love that caused him to scream out, “Enough, enough, Lord, I can bear no more.” Philip then discovered a swelling over his heart, though it caused him no pain.

At age 34 at the urging of his confessor, Philip was ordained to the diaconate and then to the priesthood in 1551. Philip formed a group of priests called the “Oratorians,” because they would ring a bell to call the faithful in their “oratory.” Eventually, Pope Gregory XIII officially approved the foundation of the Congregation of the Priests of the Oratory in 1575.

Philip was respected and loved throughout Rome. He became a trusted advisor to popes, kings, cardinals, and the poor. His efforts to reach out to the lay people of Rome and not simply associate with the clergy made him one of the great figures in the Counter Reformation of the Catholic Church. Around midnight of May 26, 1595, Philip suffered from a hemorrhage and passed away at 80-years-old. His body lays in the church where the Oratorians still serve. St. Philip Neri was beatified by Pope Paul V on May 11, 1615 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 12, 1622.

Historical information from Catholic Online.

Feast day: May 26
1515–1595
Patron of Rome, humor and joy, and the U.S. Special Forces

Saint of the Month

St. Philip Neri
By Paul Braun

ORDINATIONS
Priesthood

Diocese of Fargo
Holy Hour & Vespers: June 5, 7:00 pm
Priestly Ordinations: June 4, 10:00 am
Both liturgies are at the Cathedral of St. Mary.

Robert Foertsch
Joseph Littlefield

NEW EARTH MAY 2022 7
A major landmark case is currently under review at the United States Supreme Court, and the outcome of the court’s decision will determine the fate of the Roe vs. Wade case that legalized abortions in the United States in 1973. No matter the outcome, pro-life organizations in North Dakota will continue, as they have done for years, to offer services to women who choose not to abort their children.

The case under consideration is from the state of Mississippi. Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization challenges a state law that prohibits abortions after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. According to a Nov. 30, 2021 news article from the Catholic News Agency: “The case centers on the question of ‘Whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional,’ or whether states can ban abortion before a fetus can survive outside the womb. The case challenges two landmark abortion cases that Mississippi calls “egregiously wrong:” Roe vs. Wade and Planned Parenthood vs. Casey.” The State of Mississippi argues there is nothing in constitutional text, structure, history, or tradition that supports a right to an abortion.

The court decision on the Dobbs case—as it is most commonly called—will more than likely be announced at the end of the court’s current term in June. If Roe and Casey are overturned, abortion law would be left to each individual state to decide. It’s estimated that 26 states would certainly or likely ban abortion.

“We could see a situation where a state like North Dakota has very restricted abortions or even no abortions and a state like Minnesota allowing easy access to abortion,” said Tim Mosser, director of the Diocese of Fargo Respect Life office. “If that’s the case, there are several places women may continue to go for help after their babies are born, dispelling the pro-abortion myth that the Church and pro-life organizations are only interested in banning abortions and do nothing for women after they give birth.”

Walking With Moms in Need

Walking with Moms in Need is a United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ initiative that started in February 2020 as a year-of-service project. The program has now been extended indefinitely. The program encourages Catholic parishes and communities to “walk in the shoes” of local pregnant and parenting women in need. Walking with Moms in Need supports local pregnancy centers where they exist, and also finds and shares other resources with pregnant and parenting women.

“With the possibility of the abortion landscape changing and giving power back to individual states, the Walking with Moms in Need initiative is even more important now,” said Mosser. “The beauty of Walking with Moms in Need is that it partners with already-existing resources, but adds unique local, community, and parish resources provided by people right in their own area. It is a great example of subsidiarity and grassroots evangelization and service.”

Mosser says there are several parishes in the Fargo Diocese that have built a strong Walking with Moms in Need ministry. One parish in particular has about a half-dozen teams of 6-8 people who are ready to provide support and accompany women and families facing difficult situations with young families or unborn children.

Saint Gianna’s Maternity Home

A visible outreach for pregnant women is located about a 30 minute drive from Grand Forks—the Saint Gianna’s Maternity Home in Warsaw. St. Gianna’s is named after the modern-day Italian saint who, when told delivering her child could result in her death, St. Gianna went ahead with the birth anyway. St. Gianna died during that child’s birth, but the daughter she bore lives on, and is a fierce international pro-life advocate. Saint Gianna’s Maternity Home provides shelter, food, clothing, education, and counseling, while addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of women in crisis pregnancies as an alternative to abortion.
Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services

Catholic Charities North Dakota has a program called PPAS, which stands for Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services. PPAS provides counselors who help mothers make decisions on parenting education and preparation, adoption education and planning, and adoptive families. They provide community resource referrals and services for both the expectant mother and the father of the child.

PPAS also provides help with basic needs and baby supplies. On April 9, PPAS hosted hundreds of “shoppers” at the bi-annual “Bundle Up Your Baby Bump” event at Shanley High School in Fargo. Women and their families in need of baby items were invited to choose from thousands of donated items free of charge. Another event is planned for November.

Women’s Care Centers of North Dakota

Although not affiliated with the Diocese of Fargo, Women’s Care Centers, located in Fargo, Bismarck, and Devils Lake, provide free, confidential counseling, support and education for pregnant women. Free pregnancy testing and ultrasounds help determine viability and dates of delivery. Prenatal medical care and abortions are not provided at the centers.

Among the counseling services provided, expectant mothers are given information on resources on where to go for the help they may need if they decided to keep their child. The centers also give counseling on the facts surrounding abortions, but in a way that helps mothers better understand the dangers surrounding the medical procedure or the RU486 abortion pill. The center’s counselors use that information to help expectant mothers make the right decisions for themselves and their babies.

No matter the outcome of the Dobbs decision in June, these and other services have been and will always be available to women who are trying to make the best choice for themselves and their babies. Information on these services are available by calling the Fargo Diocese Respect Life Office at (701) 356-7910 or at Catholic Charities North Dakota at (701) 235-4457.

Diocesan Knight to lead Knights of Columbus 4th Degree regional province

By Paul Braun | New Earth

Brian Heger, parishioner of Holy Cross Church in West Fargo, has been named the Vice Supreme Master for the DeSmet Province of the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus. The Vice Supreme Master reports directly to the Supreme Master of the 4th Degree and sits on the Supreme Assembly. Heger began his duties September 2021.

The DeSmet Province is made up of 4th Degree Assemblies from the Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming, one of 21 provinces within the Knights of Columbus. It is named after Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet, who brought the Catholic faith to much of the Rocky Mountain region in the United States.

The 4th Degree is the patriotic arm of the Knights of Columbus. Members of this degree have the special honor of holding the title “Sir Knight,” participating in color and honor guards and organizing programs that promote Catholic citizenship. They also become part of a Fourth Degree Assembly in their area. There are more than 3,500 Fourth Degree assemblies around the world.
Nearly 120 answer call at Hankinson men’s retreat

By Luke Waltman | Retreat coordinator of Ecclesia Domestica

Almost 120 men from eight dioceses across three states traveled to the Franciscan Retreat Center in Hankinson on March 18–20 for an Ecclesia Domestica retreat themed, “When Good Men Do Nothing: Answering God’s Call to Defend His Church.”

The retreat called men to stand up as spiritual leaders in their families, churches, workplaces, and communities.

Ecclesia Domestica, Latin for “Church in the Home,” is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit men’s ministry first organized in the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minn. Its mission is to help men recognize the battle for holiness taking place in their hearts and souls. As such, the ministry conducts retreats to encourage men to reclaim their identity as beloved sons of the Father.

Ecclesia’s president, Kevin Olson, started the Hankinson retreat by pleading with men to “stand your post.” He outlined men’s role in marriage as the spiritual head of the family and called for fearlessness in embracing the job. “Our wives want it, and our kids and grandkids desperately need it,” he said.

Attended by nearly 20 priests and deacons, each man had an hour of one-on-one spiritual direction with a cleric. Often this was the first time these men had private time to ask about personal issues, church doctrine, spiritual health, and the like.

During the weekend, priests and deacons provided general talks to the group, including Father Peter Anderl, pastor of churches in Lidgerwood, Geneseo, and Cayuga, and Father Patrick Parks, pastor of churches in Ellendale and Fullerton. Father Parks expanded on the great theme of St. John Paul II: “Be not afraid. Accept Christ’s power into your lives!”

Father Anderl gave the opening keynote talk Friday morning. Using the retreat’s theme about answering God’s call, he called on the men to throw off spiritual slumber and stand up for the church.

Nathan Roy, a first responder from Hancock, Minn. passionately described the wounds that men suffer that restrain them from the spiritual responsibilities they have. Kevin Dockendorf, Ecclesia Board member and a businessman from the St. Cloud area, urged the retreatants to stand up to the fight, effectively using the example of Gideon’s army as proof that God will be with us in the battle.

Presenters underscored the Rosary as an anchor in their personal prayer lives. Each retreatant received a blessed Rosary hand-crafted by retreat emcee and Ecclesia board member Deacon Craig Korver of Little Falls, Minn. who echoed St. Padre Pio’s famous line that his Rosary was his “weapon of choice.”

After each talk, small, informal sessions allowed discussion and feedback where men could relate the messages to events in their everyday lives.

Each day, all attended Mass, prayed a Rosary, sang the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, worshiped Christ in all-night adoration, and recited the morning and evening Divine Office. On Saturday, the feast of St. Joseph, Bishop John Folda and six priests celebrated Mass in a beautiful and transcendent liturgy.

Saturday evening included a powerful praise, worship, and intercessory prayer ministry. As the evening started, Father Anderl consecrated and knighted each man to Mary, our Blessed Mother, to serve in her army. As knights of her Militia Immaculata, each man is part of her work in bringing forth the reign of Christ the King in hearts, homes, and families. While “crushing the head of the serpent underfoot,” the men are following the example of St. Joseph, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Louis de Montfort, and other heroes of our faith.

Next year, Ecclesia Domestica has been asked back to the Franciscan Retreat Center for two retreats. In February 2023 they will coordinate a three-day women’s retreat, and in March 2023 they will invite men to Hankinson to learn about and celebrate Catholic manhood through the tools provided by the Catholic Church.
CHI Mercy Health in Valley City gets new look

By Paul Braun | New Earth

Catholic Health Initiative (CHI) Mercy Health Center in Valley City unveiled its latest renovation project on March 28. The 25-bed critical care hospital completed a $125,000 remodel of the hospital’s patient care unit that included adding new Smart Beds to 10 rooms, new flooring, new paint in hallways and patient rooms, a new nurse’s station, and refinished doorframe bumper guards.

During the dedication ceremony, Monsignor Dennis Skonseng, pastor of St. Catherine’s Church in Valley City, blessed the new crucifixes that will go into each of the rooms at the hospital, and CHI Chief Financial Officer Jeanette Wojtalewicz of Omaha, Neb. was on hand to give remarks, along with CHI-Mercy Health’s president, Ryan Fowler.

In a statement, CHI says the new remodel will “make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all and live out the values we hold so dear of compassion, inclusion, integrity, excellence, and collaboration.”

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Keep the TV Mass on the air
Have you ever wondered who the nice couple is who sits in front of you at Mass, or the name of that friendly person who smiles so warmly to you at the sign of peace? Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner is an answer to that and much more. It is a direct response to God’s call and our personal responsibility as members of Christ’s Body to build and strengthen our Church community.

Let’s talk about technicalities. Guess Who (as we abbreviate it) is a fun way for parishioners to meet, in groups of six to eight people, in a relaxed, informal atmosphere over dinner and conversation. There is an element of surprise to the evening—as guest, you won’t know whose home you are going to until dinnertime and as host, you won’t know who’s coming. This adds more fun for everyone! Dinners are held a few times a year and are scheduled for two hours. However, if the host allows, dinner can last longer. In our experience, guests don’t want to leave! Hosts are responsible for preparation of the main course and guests are asked to bring a side (such as salad, rolls, beverages, desert etc. which may be purchased or prepared from the store if you aren’t confident of your cooking abilities!). Guess Who is not about cooking; it’s about meeting people from your Church community and finding things in common.

Table discussions include spiritual topics such as struggles of fasting during Lent, preparation for Christmas, blessings received throughout the year, and evangelization in the workplace. It is a place where you can be lighthearted or serious, share funny stories of life, and ask for prayers. It is amazing to listen to the people we know from our parish and to finally learn the names to faces we’ve seen for years. Parishes are a small packet of love and charity that in a direct way resist the evils of the world. As St. John Paul II wrote in Pilgrims of Peace: “A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You... the people must give it this soul.” Building our parish community, we become uniform. We start to understand each other more.

Here is some feedback from guests of Guess Who at St. Mary’s Cathedral in February.

- “It was great to meet new people and hear about their lives. I also felt like the Holy Spirit was at work in the encounters this dinner facilitated. I also enjoyed being able to recognize some people at Masses afterward!”
- “We moved to Fargo a little over a year ago. The parish we came from was very small. We loved the Cathedral, but the size made it feel a bit intimidating and we didn’t really know where to start. For us this was the perfect solution, a casual, small, in-home setting with hosts that had been a part of the Cathedral for some time. It gave us the confidence to become a bigger part of things that are happening in the parish.”
- “I really enjoyed sharing our personal stories of faith and our ‘God moments.’ It reaffirmed my faith.”

As an immigrant to the USA, my parish became a place to meet and build my new family and to get to know my new brothers and sisters in Christ. As an alien to the USA, I was accepted to this Church family without any reservations. Guess Who allows me to extend my family even more.
Bishop John Folda celebrated the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo on April 12 where he consecrated the sacred oils used for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. Each parish then received its annual supply of the oils. During the Mass, the priests also renewed their priestly promises and their fidelity to Jesus Christ. (Photo by Kristina Lahr | New Earth)

Seventy-five years ago, the long-awaited news for the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, came on March 24, 1947. A telephone call from Bishop Ryan announced Rome had granted the request for the sisters to become an independent community. Since the call was received on the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation, the new independent community would be called Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation. Mother Decora Kaliher was named the first prioress. Now, in 2022, Annunciation Monastery’s prioress is Sister Nicole Kunze. The Sisters are still serving needs in the community of Bismarck/Mandan and beyond. (submitted photo)
As local weather approached the negative digits in late December 2021, the wife of one of our tribal leaders was discussing the local homeless population and the need for better winter services. Acting quickly in the face of pending 17 below zero nighttime temperatures, the leaders considered their resources and called St. Ann’s, hoping to buy a few days to set up a proper facility. Father Michael Slovak, pastor of St. Ann’s Church in Belcourt, consulted the parish counsel and they were able to open the parish hall to those in need while the tribal government completed the permanent shelter. The permanent shelter created an opportunity for some visiting missionaries to expand their outreach to the homeless. “We had already begun building relationships with many of the homeless who spend time outside of the local shopping center and often sleep in a nearby wooded area,” explained one of the missionaries, Nikita Glebov. “The new shelter created a space for the missionaries and local homeless community members to gather and build intentional relationships—rather than having chance encounters on the street.”

Shortly before Christmas break, the missionaries arrived at the shelter with a Christmas tree to the delight of its residents! Together they decorated the tree, causing one gentleman to focus on the upcoming holiday. He asked the volunteers, “Will you be here on Christmas?” To which another responded, “No, they have to go see their families!” The residents were sad to learn the missionaries would be unable to visit on Christmas, but with many reassurances of a January reunion and a few tears and hugs, they wished the missionaries safe travels.

Megan Case, one of the homeless ministers, shared this reflection on her experiences there: “It was difficult for us to part from them. We spent about a month visiting before Christmas and had developed relationships. One woman even started to call me her ‘daughter,’ so deep was the sense of connection between us.”

The homeless are often a forgotten segment of the population and so the simple gift of “presence” can be enough to let someone know they are loved. In this ministry, the missionaries are able to spend time with them, listen to their stories, and offer an opportunity to join in private or communal prayer. Each interaction is an opportunity to build relationships and share God’s love with the shelter guests.

And, as Megan said, “By welcoming us into their home and their lives, we receive God’s love from them too.”
Camp Summit
To the Heights

"THE HIGHER WE GO, THE BETTER WE SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF CHRIST."
- BL. PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

NEW EARTH MAY 2022
What the Church needs is a

**Eucharistic Revival**

Restoring faith in the Real Presence

The Bishops of the United States are calling for a three-year grassroots National Eucharistic Revival of devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist beginning on June 19, the feast of Corpus Christi.

By Steven J. Splonskowski  
*Director of Evangelization for the Diocese of Fargo*  

Paul Braun  
*Director of Communications for the Diocese of Fargo*
or those of us who have been Catholic all of our lives, going to Mass each Sunday is just what we do in our worship life. The biggest part of going to Mass is receiving the Eucharist. Many of us do it without even thinking of what we are doing, or more importantly, whom we are receiving.

According to a Pew Research Center poll taken in August of 2019, just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with Church teachings that the Eucharist is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. Six-in-ten U.S. Catholics say the bread and wine are just “symbols” of the body and blood of Jesus. What’s more astonishing is that 43% of U.S. Catholics believe this is what the Church actually teaches about the Eucharist.

In response, the Bishops of the United States are calling for a three-year grassroots National Eucharistic Revival of devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist beginning on June 19, the Feast of Corpus Christi. They believe that God wants to see a movement of Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and sent out in mission “for the life of the world.”

Bishop John Folda is encouraging the faithful across the Diocese of Fargo to participate in the many Eucharistic processions taking place on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi to begin the three-year revival.

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi, also known as the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, is a feast dedicated to the Eucharist and emphasizing the Real Presence. While the feast was established as a devotion to the Eucharist in the 13th century, its foundation is the belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist that appears not only in Scripture but also in letters from early Church Fathers. A glance back to the faith of the Church throughout history offers a glimpse of these foundations of faith. For instance, in around 117 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch, near the end of his life, wrote:

“I take no delight in corruptible food or in the dainties of this life. What I want is God’s bread, which is the flesh of Christ, who came from David’s line; and for drink want his blood: an immortal love feast indeed!”

Later, between 136 and 165 A.D., St. Justin Martyr gives us a description of the Eucharist celebrated by the followers of Jesus:

“For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior...” –St. Justin Martyr
Centuries later, we see continued moments of grace which nourished the faith of the Church in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In Bolsena, Italy in 1263, a Eucharistic miracle took place. In that year a German priest, Peter of Prague, stopped at Bolsena while on a pilgrimage to Rome. He is described as being a pious priest, but one who found it difficult to believe that Christ was actually present in the consecrated host. While celebrating Mass, blood from the consecrated host started to trickle over his hands onto the altar and the corporal (the small square cloth in the middle of the altar upon which the chalice and sacred vessels are set for consecration).

The priest immediately attempted to hide the blood, but then he interrupted the Mass and asked to be taken to the neighboring city of Orvieto, where Pope Urban IV was then residing. The Pope listened to the priest’s account and sent emissaries to conduct an investigation. When all the facts had been determined, he ordered the bishop of the diocese to bring the host and the linen cloth with the stains of blood to Orvieto. The Pope met the procession and, amid great pomp, had the relics placed in the cathedral. The linen corporal bearing the spots of blood is still on display in the cathedral of Orvieto. This miracle is among hundreds of recorded Eucharistic Miracles throughout the history of the Church.

Throughout history, processions have been a form of liturgical prayer in the Catholic Church. At the time of the Reformation, Protestants denied the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist through transubstantiation (the change of the whole substance of the bread and wine into the whole substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, Catechism of the Catholic Church 1376). In response, processions by priests and the faithful through the streets of cities and villages became popular as a means of openly demonstrating support and reverence for this reality. The Council of Trent confirmed, in 1551, that the Most Blessed Sacrament “is to be honored with extraordinary festive celebrations (and) solemnly carried from place to place in processions according to the praiseworthy universal rite and custom of the holy Church.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1992, tells us that the Mass and the Eucharistic presence of Christ are intimately connected. Catholics ordinarily receive Holy Communion during the Mass because the Mass is both “the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord’s body and blood.” The Eucharist is a sign, symbol, and expression of communion with God. For this reason, because grave sin ruptures one’s communion with God, the Church has always taught that a person who is conscious of grave sin should not receive the Eucharist without first making a sacramental confession as the normal means of restoring that communion.
The National Eucharistic Revival is an attempt to educate the faithful on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as well as restore devotion through Eucharistic adoration. The stated mission of the revival is: “To renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.”

The theme for the National Eucharistic Revival is: “My flesh for the life of the World.” According to the USCCB, “what Jesus did for the salvation of humanity is made present in the celebration of the Eucharist, including his sacrificial Death and Resurrection. Christ’s sacrifice of himself to the Father was efficacious and salvific because of the supreme love with which he shed his blood, the price of our salvation, and offered himself to the Father on our behalf. His blood, shed for us, is the eternal sign of that love. As a memorial, the Eucharist is not another sacrifice, but the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ by which we are reconciled to the Father.”

As part of the Eucharistic Revival, the Diocese of Fargo will host a Redeemed Eucharistic Conference in Fargo on Sept. 23–24. Among the speakers will be Bishop John Folda; Bishop Andrew Cozzens of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., who is leading the National Eucharistic Revival for the USCCB; Monsignor James Shea, President of the University of Mary in Bismarck; Sister Miriam James Heidland, SOLT, from the John Paul II Healing Center; and Dr. Mary Healy, author and international speaker. The three-year revival effort throughout the United States will culminate in a National Eucharistic Congress, scheduled for July 17-21, 2024 in Indianapolis, Ind.

To learn more about Eucharistic adoration opportunities in your area, or to find out if your church will host a Eucharistic procession, contact your local parish office. Information on the National Eucharistic Revival may be found at www.fargodiocese.org/revival.

“I take no delight in corruptible food or in the dainties of this life. What I want is God’s bread, which is the flesh of Christ, who came from David’s line; and for drink want his blood: an immortal love feast indeed!”

—St. Ignatius of Antioch
A telling human encounter

By Father Michael Hicken
Pastor of churches in Langdon, Nekoma, and Wales

“Green is definitely your color. Not too shabby.” You can’t read that in the Gospel, but you’ll hear it in The Chosen. Jesus addresses these chummy words to a leper after wrapping a disciple’s spare tunic around the healed man. He says it with a hug and the signature warm smile accompanying each of his miracles.

It’s an example of the simple human exchange characteristic of the Jesus many are coming to love in The Chosen series, currently filming its third of a projected seven seasons. The first two seasons have eight episodes each.

Who needs the Bible to come to life? If that’s you, then let The Chosen open a door. There are many ways to see it, some entirely free. The writing, cinematography, music, and acting open afresh the familiar world of the Gospel. The light it shines on the back-stories of Jesus’ first followers reflects in turn upon the One who calls.

For example, the hardships of fishermen Simon and Andrew along with the tensions they endure under Roman rule highlight Jesus’ concern for the economic plight of Simon’s family. The miraculous draught of fish will pay off a significant debt, a situation causing Simon marital strife and driving him to become a scallywag. His predicament is not in any Gospel, but it’s quite plausible.

Mary of Agreda, Anne Catherine Emmerich, Luisa Piccareta and other Catholic mystics have authored “behind the scenes” biographies of Jesus and his entourage. The Chosen is both less pretentious and more attractive. It is inventive, while remaining impressively genuine, keenly so in Jonathan Roumie, the self-proclaimed “born-again” Catholic who plays Jesus.

“We start with being authentic and human. That is the goal,” said Dallas Jenkins, the director. “We are trying to find the beauty and not create the beauty.” He likens it to a sculptor’s approach, as expressed by Michelangelo, “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.” It’s a real challenge to free living, speaking, acting, human beings from an ancient revered text, and The Chosen succeeds.

One feature I enjoy is the cold open, a mini-act before the opening credits. It snags the viewer, sets up the episode, and begins a thread that gets woven into a larger context as the episode unfolds.

For instance, season one, episode five on the wedding feast of Cana begins with a segment about finding the adolescent Jesus in the Temple. To Jesus’ claim about having to be in his Father’s House, Mary responds with an exasperated, “It’s too early for this.” The boy puts a hand on her shoulder with the words, “If not now, when?” The phrase returns in Cana, when Jesus says his time has not yet come, but this time Mary utters, “If not now, when?” The one-liner, a whiff from the past, a jarred memory, signals the deep history and bond of soul between mother and son.

The Chosen is good at striking chords that create harmonies of kinship between the eyes of the heart and the work of the artists. Such surprise moments come as rewards for watching episodes repeatedly, testifying to the layered depths engineered into the viewing experience.

The rich development of Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, Nicodemus, Matthew, and the other ordinary, relatable people Jesus chooses, merges with another strong feature of the Gospel story: what the Messiah is up against. We see up close why the political and religious establishments cannot abide Jesus’ style of revolution.

The hard-scrabble dynamics of this original Christian community make for an instructive study. The disciplesicker like the characters on Everybody Loves Raymond. While tough to watch, it makes apparent that these people have real egos. Viewers get a ringside seat to observe how they manage it and how Jesus gives them space to work through it.

In Season 2, Matthew brings this very thing to Jesus’ attention. He responds, “It’s what’s bound to happen when you start something open to all, truly open to all people.”

The Chosen’s mosaic of stories evangelizes. They’ve found an artful way to straddle the ages and create an encounter where 21st century eyes and ears can find our own experiences mirrored in the feel and action of the Gospel.

“A story is a way to say something that can’t be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is. When anybody asks what a story is about the only proper thing is to tell them to read the story,” said Flannery O’Connor, Catholic and American storyteller.

If you want to know what The Chosen is about, a simple response suffices: “Come and see” (John 1:39).
Spring is finally upon us, and for many people, it’s time to think about planting. The excitement grows as we start to see the grass turn green and the warm weather upon us. Yet, why not start our planting routine by first asking God’s favor and protection rather than waiting until mid-summer when things might not look so good?

It used to be common practice for the Church to celebrate Rogation days in the spring. The word “rogation” comes from the Latin verb rogare which means “to ask.” We beseech God for protection from calamities and for a fruitful harvest. For this, the church has set aside four special days known as Rogation days. The first and major one is April 25, and then there are three minor days before Ascension Thursday. This year those days would be May 23, 24, and 25. The minor days usually occur in the middle of May, which were associated with the saints whose feasts fell on those days. For this reason, they became known as the “ice saints” and you never planted anything before the “ice saints.”

There has been a long tradition of invoking God for his blessing on our endeavors, but most especially for the food that sustains us. We see this in the Old Testament where the Hebrew people had special days and rituals set aside to remind them of God’s protecting hand over their crops, especially in trying times. For the Christians, the ritual seems to have started around 470 AD with St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne in Dauphiny (modern day France) who decided there should be three days of prayers, penance, and public supplications to ask God to protect his diocese from invaders, natural disasters, and crop failures. By the time of Pope St. Gregory the Great (540-604), these three days of rituals were known as Rogation days, and it became a regular custom in spring. By the middle ages, it would have been unthinkable for any Christian to proceed with planting a crop without pleading to God for his protection and blessing.

Today farmers know from experience that even with the best weather report, hybrid crop, irrigation, and pestilence protection, things can still go wrong and crops can fail. Man cannot control his environment perfectly, but God can. Therefore, it seems fitting that we should invoke God for his blessing and protection as we begin this planting season. We can and should do this through the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass. However, there is something special when there is also a prescribed form or ritual attached to our prayers. We know this instinctively in our own families, such as family rituals with birthdays where we sing and eat cake or with Christmas when we decorate trees in our houses. The Church too knows the importance of rituals in our lives.

There is a growing effort to bring back Rogation days. This tradition includes a Rogation Mass and a procession around the church while prayers are said asking for blessing on crops while the people recite the Litany of the Saints. The liturgy for the Rogation days begins with Psalm 43:26: “Arise, O Lord, help us and redeem us for Thy name’s sake.”

You can find a booklet that explains Rogation Days along with prayers and rituals at www.fargodiocese.org/rural-life.
Early in 2021, the University of Mary launched a special project its staff and faculty had been working on behind the scenes for months: a new website housing huge amounts of free content that seeks to awaken the Catholic imaginative vision. The project is called Prime Matters.

Much of the content and inspiration for the site is an outgrowth of the groundbreaking book published by University of Mary Press in 2020, *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission: Pastoral Strategies for an Apostolic Age*. The book has sold tens of thousands of copies and was the fruit of the conversation and efforts of a group of friends and scholars over the course of several years, asking each other questions about how best to evangelize in our current cultural moment.

"Everyone is looking to get famous on the internet,” said Monsignor James Shea, president of the University of Mary. “But with the book and with the foundational content of the website, we decided instead to push back against this idea of 'Catholic celebrity' by making much of the content unattributed. There is an old Christian tradition of signing works simply, 'a monk.' While I and many others at the University of Mary have been working hard on this transformational content, it really is the work of a fellowship of scholars and disciples. Neither the book nor the website are my work, it’s our work.”

The weekly update for Prime Matters, called *The First Draught*, now has more than 11,000 subscribers. The content has indeed been transformative, first of all for the university’s own students. Marianne, who studied Math and Philosophy in her undergraduate years at Mary and just completed her master’s in Catholic Studies, talks about an experience she had in her History of Math class, related to Prime Matters’ approach.

“We were reading together this poem that a mathematician wrote, which is a dangerous thing to do as a mathematician—write poetry! But he was so overcome by the beauty of what he was studying that he had to write it down.

“I went to Mass right after that class, and having had my eyes opened to beauty through it, I myself was overcome by the beauty of Who is pursuing us so fervently as to become man, to become as bread and wine, for us.

“It was an extraordinary moment. My studies had opened up my imagination, in turn deepening my faith.”

It was the kind of experience that inspired a question at the University of Mary: how can Marianne’s experience be deepened even more, and how can it also be packaged—experiences like that of beauty in a math class, for instance—so that it is aPrime Matters raises the bar in Catholic online content.

By Emily Lysne

For more information:

www.fargodiocese.org/redeemed

(701) 356-7900

"My flesh for the life of the world." —John 6:51

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(701) 356-7900
Prime Matters raises the bar in Catholic online content

By Emily Lysne

Writer for Prime Matters

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It was the kind of experience that inspired a question at the University of Mary: how can Marianne's experience be deepened even more, and how can it also be packaged—experiences like that of beauty in a math class, for instance—so that it is available to her long after her graduation, but also available to university faculty from every discipline, online graduate students, the students and teachers of our Catholic high schools, and all Catholics and people of goodwill who are hungry for an experience of God's truth and love?

After months of puzzling and planning and praying, Prime-Matters.com was born.

The site offers articles and multimedia that will enrich readers' vision of faith, learning, friendship, happiness, the Scriptures, and more, growing out of the work of the university's vibrant Catholic Studies program, which looks to integrate experiences of study, prayer, worship, work, and relationships.

Likewise, Prime Matters provides Catholic thought leadership, tapping into the Church's intellectual efforts through the centuries and up to the present day so that individuals can engage life and culture with a clear and energetic faith.

Marianne's experience of Prime Matters, she says, has been life-changing.

"There's so much out there telling us what to do—that what should you do for Lent, how should you approach moral decisions, how should you discern your vocation—but there's not much out there telling us how to see."

In other words, Marianne says there's not much out there answering those fundamental questions: what is the purpose of human life? How ought the faithful to make sense of all of their joys, sufferings, and disappointments? How can they begin to see the world as God does?

Indeed, "changing how you see," Marianne says, "truly brings about a much deeper conversion than simply changing what you do."

Prime Matters exists to give Catholics this deep conversion of mind and heart.

Those interested in diving into the site are invited to sign up for The First Draught at primematters.com/subscribe-first-draught. The First Draught goes out every Thursday afternoon by email, bringing readers something to discuss over an opening pint or during dinner with friends and family: perspectives on the news, spiritual encouragement, and personal enrichment.

They're also welcome to dig into the “Christian Mythic Narrative” podcast, located at primematters.com/narrative, which presents the sweeping and epic narrative of the whole Christian story in 8 to 10 minute segments.

Wherever one might choose to start, the University of Mary is eager to open up this free and vast resource.

Prime Matters is a project of educational outreach of the University of Mary. For more, visit primematters.com.
A shower of roses

By Emma Savageau
Wife, mother of one on the way, and parishioner of Holy Spirit, Fargo

I’m not from here. I grew up in the small town of Newville, Pa., and I never planned to come west. North Dakota was not even on my radar as a place to visit. But in my sophomore year of college, I found myself inspired by a friend to search for somewhere to spend a summer of service. God guided me to the Young Disciples missionary apostolate in the Diocese of Fargo, where I served on a team of four young adults in the summer of 2015.

It was a summer that would completely change my life. Not only did I grow tremendously in my relationship with Christ, in confidence, and in friendships, God also brought me deeper into the mystery of his specific plan for my life, which he did through the intercession of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. I think St. Thérèse is a saint who I will be able to greet as an old friend someday, because her presence in my life has been tangibly relational. Whenever she shows up, it’s been to lead me into loving God more, or following his will better. In this particular instance, her intercession brought me the grace of clarity in making a big decision.

Some of the other missionaries and Young Disciples staff that summer were students at the University of Mary (UMary) in Bismarck. Being from Pennsylvania, I had never heard of UMary until then, but I gathered that it was a good Catholic school and the other missionaries liked it. Several of them suggested during training week that I consider transferring to UMary for the fall semester. That was more than I was willing to consider! Transferring in a few weeks to a school I’d just heard about halfway across the country was definitely too spontaneous.

Also during training week, I heard one of the staff members talking about her novena to St. Thérèse. This was new to me as well. She described how she had prayed the novena for an intention and received a rose in answer. I was intrigued but nothing more at first. However, as a couple weeks passed and my team went on the road to lead our first Young Disciples camps, something wouldn’t stop coming up in prayer: the idea of transferring to UMary. My own doubts and anxieties got in the way, and I ended up stressing over how big of a decision it was. I wasn’t certain that it was what God wanted for me, but I thought it might be.

I remembered the staff member talking about her St. Thérèse novena, and I decided to try it. One of my teammates told me to ask for a specific color of rose, so I would recognize my answer if it came. I settled on the color purple, because it seemed so unlikely that I would see a purple rose by accident! I kept it secret, though, so I could be sure only God knew what I had asked for. As the nine days of the novena went by and I said the prayers each day asking to know God’s will, I felt more and more sure that he wanted me at UMary. But I was still hesitant. I remember praying something along the lines of “God, I want to follow you, but if this is your will you have to make it really obvious!”

On the last day of my novena, it was the end of our Young Disciples camp in Valley City. I was leading the campers to the social hall to get their lunchboxes before their parents picked them up, when I stopped in my tracks. The social hall, which had been bare the day before, was decorated for some event or reception, and every table had an arrangement of flowers that included purple roses. St. Thérèse hadn’t just sent me a rose in answer—she sent me a whole shower of roses! I immediately had so much peace, joy, and the certainty. I knew it was God’s will for me to transfer to the University of Mary for school.

I remain so grateful for the grace of answered prayer that day. It has led me to much more than just a change of school. Every step along the way in the years since has confirmed that I’m right where God wants me. He has poured his love and mercy into my life, led me to my vocation with my husband Chris, and more. And it has all been thanks to the intercession and guidance of a heavenly friend, St. Thérèse.
Called and sent

I professed the vows of poverty, consecrated chastity, and obedience 62 years ago. I continue to give thanks to God for my vocation. It has been a pure gift because I have had so many experiences, trials, and opportunities for growth in holiness. It is my passion to lead others to God and many times throughout my religious life, with God’s grace acting through me with the sick, dying, or heavily burdened, I’ve been able to lead others to God. I’ve been blessed to be a blessing to others.

This invitation through my encounter with Jesus is my constant call to a life of prayer and service to God’s people. In and through my consecration, I belong to the Lord for mission, to teach, heal, and serve where God sends me. I never go alone. No matter at times how difficult my vowed life of ministry, prayer, and relationships have been, I constantly hear God say, “I have called you by name: you are mine.” (Isa. 43:1).

Today, the Church and the world need many committed men and women as priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, and dedicated lay people, to be God’s voice and a healing presence in our world. Let us together pray for one another to be disciples of Jesus and to accept the invitation to say yes!

SISTER’S PERSPECTIVE

SR. ANNE GERMAINE PICARD, SMP
Sister of Mary of the Presentation

We each have our story of being called and sent by God to live out our baptismal call to holiness. I have been called to live my baptismal call as a vowed Religious, a Sister of Mary of the Presentation (SMP).

In the scripture from the prophet Isaiah 43:1, I hear God calling me to this life. “I have called you by name: you are mine.” One point of the “Constitution” which guides our life as SMP says, “Called to live the gospel in a radical sense, I give to God a free and personal response in love [and that] I choose Jesus Christ as the center of my life.” This scripture and point in our Constitution remind me daily how to live my consecrated life.

My call to Religious life began in the fertile soils of growing up in a faith-filled family and attending Catholic School with the SMP at Notre Dame Academy in Willow City. We were a farm family facing many hard times, working hard to survive, yet this did not stop my parents from living their faith and placing their trust in God. We had a shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary in our living room where we knelt for family prayer and Rosary devotions. My father was in the parish choir and soon we girls joined. The boys served Mass, and we all attended Sunday Mass and Stations of the Cross during Lent. We showed great respect to our parish priest and the local sisters.

My vocation was nurtured as a child when preparing for confirmation we studied the lives of the saints. The saint that struck me was St. Joan of Arc. In prayer I remember telling God I wanted to be like her, not to lead an army, but to lead people to God.

Catholic school was the fertile soil that helped the seed grow. One day, after attending a youth retreat at our school, I was sitting quietly in the back of the chapel. I was telling God my desires to marry, have a family, live on a ranch, and then under my breath I would say, “but God if you want me to be a sister, I will.” I really didn’t want God to hear the last part of my prayer!

Later on, one of the sisters stopped me in the hallway and gave me an invitation to become one of them, a Sister of Mary of the Presentation. At that moment, a new door opened in my life, and I said yes! A profound peace broke open inside of me. I knew this was the will of God.
I remember telling the Lord that serving as a deacon at Mass is the one thing that I will be doing every day, and even though I’ve seen it done a thousand times, it’s one thing to watch something be done, but it’s totally different to do something yourself. It was this simple thing that was making me nervous and causing me a good amount of anxiety.

In response, the Lord consoled me with experiences I gained over my years of seminary formation. Through these memories, he showed me and told me, “Joseph, when you joined seminary, you didn’t know how to pray, but I taught you and you learned. When you were in seminary in Detroit, you didn’t know how to minister to the poor, but I taught you and you learned. When you were in seminary in St. Paul, you didn’t know how to do hospital ministry, but I taught you and you learned. And now you don’t know how to be a deacon, but I will teach you and you will learn.”

In other words, the Lord showed me that learning how to be a deacon would take some time. I would make some mistakes, and that would be okay. He also showed me that he was going to love me and provide generously for me through it all, just like he had always done before.

Over this last year of seminary, the Lord has kept his word. The Lord has taught me, and I have learned how to be a priest. I know that I’ve studied and learned a lot of philosophy and theology. I know that I have grown as a man of God. In theory, I know how to be a priest, but on the practical level, I don’t. I have a lot to learn about how to be a good and effective priest in ministry, but I have extreme confidence that throughout the rest of my life as a priest, the Lord will teach me, and I will learn.
Making abortion unthinkable

Did you know that the state of North Dakota officially opposes abortion and that this position is constitutional? North Dakota Century Code section 14-02.3-01(1) states: “Between normal childbirth and abortion, it is the policy of the state of North Dakota that normal childbirth is to be given preference, encouragement, and support by law and by state action, it being in the best interests of the well-being and common good of North Dakota citizens.”

This policy is binding on all state agencies. No state agency could, for example, invite Planned Parenthood to give a presentation that favored abortion. In fact, no state agency could take any activity that takes a neutral position on abortion. This policy also applies to public schools.

But is favoring life over abortion—when and if the issue comes up—enough? Certainly, we have laws that restrict and prohibit abortion and some of those might become fully enforceable after the Supreme Court’s decision this summer in the Dobbs case. But prohibitions themselves will not eliminate abortion entirely, especially since women can travel to other states that will allow abortion, such as Minnesota.

North Dakota will have to step up and work to help pregnant women so they do not feel the need to have an abortion. Doing this will require action by our state government agencies.

The knee-jerk reaction of many calls to eliminate abortion is expanding access to contraception. Putting aside the moral problems with contraception, expanding contraception is not a solution to abortion for several reasons.

First of all, it does not work. With the exception of one limited study, research has shown that expanding contraceptive services does not reduce abortion rates or numbers. In fact, it most often increases them.

Second, contraception is already widely available and inexpensive. Some people will counter that it is not easy for teenagers to get contraceptives, but the data does not support the claims of need. Teenage pregnancies and abortions in North Dakota have dropped dramatically to record low numbers. Either teens are getting and using contraceptives, or they are avoiding sexual activity. Whatever the reason, they clearly do not need the state to provide them with contraceptives.

Third, contraceptive programs are a non-starter with the North Dakota legislature. The legislature has not funded contraception with state dollars and has not indicated that it intends to change that position. Let’s move on from political talking points to looking at real solutions.

Real solutions involve addressing the reasons why a pregnant woman feels that abortion is the answer to her situation. As anyone who has helped a woman in this situation knows, the reasons can be complicated and multi-faceted.

We know, however, that the life situations that lead a woman to consider abortion are the same situations that lead a woman to have other needs that need addressing such as poverty, lack of childcare, an abusive relationship, single-parenting, lack of education, substance abuse, mental illness, an unstable housing situation, unemployment, and underemployment. These are factors that government agencies, often working with the private sector, are supposed to address. In fact, most of them fall within the purview of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. The two departments are currently being merged.

The Department of Human Services has an Alternatives to Abortion program. The program provides some reimbursement to pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, and maternity homes that help women who are pregnant or think they are pregnant. The program, however, does not help women after they give birth, and it has at times been cash-strapped. At a minimum, the state must expand the program to include helping mothers who have given birth and their newborns. Also, the program currently depends solely on federal funds. If the Biden Administration changes certain rules, the program could be in jeopardy. The state should add its own money to the program.

About 830 North Dakota residents get abortions in the state each year. About another 50 go to Minnesota. Most of these women are white, in their 20s, unmarried, and already have children. If we are serious about caring for these women and their children, born and unborn, it will take more than expanding the Alternatives to Abortion program. I propose that the new state Department of Health and Human Services, along with other state agencies, make eliminating abortion and the perceived need for abortion part of its mission from top to bottom.

When that happens, and churches, charities, families, and businesses commit themselves to create a “network of life,” North Dakota could become a state where no woman will ever consider having an abortion.
Holy Week 2022: A wartime meditation

In both the Roman and Byzantine liturgical calendars, Lent 2022 has coincided with a brutal war in Ukraine. That war was launched by Russia’s Vladimir Putin for an ignoble, imperial cause. It has been conducted by the Russian military in a manner that recalls the barbarism of the Romans who crucified 6,000 slaves along the Appian Way after the Spartacus revolt. It’s an old story. Tyrants cannot tolerate the truth about their tyranny; they terrorize in order to break the spirit of those who seek freedom.

In the third week of the war, Latin-rite Catholics read a passage from St. Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 140 that would surely ring true in the hearts of our eastern Christian brethren in Ukraine, both Greek Catholic and Orthodox:

“Lord, I have cried to you, hear me.” This is a prayer we can all say. This is not my prayer, but that of the whole Christ. Rather, it is said in the name of his body. When Christ was on earth he prayed in his human nature and prayed to the Father in the name of his body; and when he prayed, drops of blood fell from his whole body. So it is written in the Gospel: “Jesus prayed with earnest prayer, and sweated blood.” What is this blood streaming from his whole body but the martyrdom of the whole Church?

Blood has been streaming from Christ’s body, the Church in Ukraine. It has poured from the bodies of men, women, and children. Ukrainian patriots have fallen in defense of their homeland; Russian soldiers have fallen for reasons they could not comprehend, because their superiors lied to them about their mission. The bloody wounds that have been inflicted on the Body of Christ in this war call to mind the Lord’s scourging; the mindless cruelties inflicted on civilians remind us of his crowning with thorns by sadists. With Christ, the Ukrainian people, who ask only to be themselves, have walked the bloody path to Calvary, where those who inflict their suffering mock their claims to be who they are.

Ukraine’s wounds, especially in the city of Mariupol’, brings to mind a reflection by another Doctor of the Church, St. Bernard of Clairvaux. The city’s name honors the Blessed Virgin Mary as depicted in the Hodegetria icon. The wanton destruction of a Marian-named city by Russian forces—including the kidnap- ping of residents and their deportation to Russia—has been a poignant reminder of why St. Bernard taught the Church that Our Lady is a martyr:

The martyrdom of the Virgin is set forth both in the prophecy of Simeon and in the actual story of our Lord’s passion. The holy old man said of the infant Jesus, “He has been established as a sign which will be contradicted.” He went on to say to Mary, “And your own heart will be pierced by a sword.”

Truly, O blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart. For only by passing through your heart could the sword enter the flesh of your Son. Indeed, after your Jesus—who belongs to everyone, but is especially yours—gave up his life, the cruel spear, which was not withheld from his lifeless body, tore open his side. Clearly it did not touch his soul and could not harm him, but it did pierce your heart... Thus the violence of sorrow has cut through your heart, and we rightly call you more than martyr, since the effect of compassion in you has gone beyond the endurance of physical suffering.

Healing the physical, spiritual, and emotional wounds of this war will take a long time. Those wounds include the falsifications of the Christian history of the eastern Slavs that underwrite the Russian attempt to destroy a sovereign nation: one that posed no security threat to Moscow, but did, by its existence, challenge the false story that Russian leaders—political and, alas, religious—have been telling their people for too long. A lengthy healing process notwithstanding, Ukraine has experienced more than the Passion this Lent.

From the beginning, Major-Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and other true men of God have proclaimed the saving truth that Easter follows Calvary. Thus we can carry our crosses, however bloody, in the sure knowledge that Christ’s victory is ours if we remain faithful to his cause. As Major-Archbishop Shevchuk, named on a Russian assassination list, put it with simple eloquence, in the “baptismal waters of the Dnipro River” those faithful became “the body of the Risen Christ, over which death has no power.”
Given back to our donors

When you give money or stock for a charitable gift annuity with the Catholic Development Foundation (CDF), we give you back annual payments for the rest of your life. Too good to be true? Seems like it, but true nonetheless. Many of our friends are taking advantage of this opportunity.

Here’s how it works. Mr. and Mrs. Smiley give $5,000 to the CDF (for a specific church, ministry, or program they choose) for a charitable gift annuity. The annuity contract obligates CDF to pay them a set amount every year, either monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. The amount they receive is determined by their ages. And, in many cases, part of the payment is tax-free.

Since the Smileys are both 75 years old when they establish the annuity, their annuity rate is 5.5 percent. This means they will receive a fixed amount every year of $275. These payments will continue to the survivor for life even after one of them passes away.

Why does CDF provide gift annuities? To help our donors who want to make larger gifts, but can’t afford to reduce their cash flow. Also, it helps our donors who are planning to provide a bequest make the gift now so they can take advantage of the income tax charitable deduction. For older donors, a CDF annuity may actually provide a larger payout from the asset than they might otherwise receive.

A deferred payment charitable gift annuity works well for younger donors who want to give to CDF and, at the same time, supplement their retirement programs. For example, the donor would designate a gift, say $5,000, for a gift annuity which would be “programmed” to begin payments at retirement age. The longer the deferral period, the higher the annual payment. Even though the donor will not receive payments from the annuity for several years, an income tax charitable deduction is available for the year in which the gift is made.

By careful management, CDF is not only able to make its scheduled annuity payments, but to have enough left over to help us carry forward to further our Catholic mission. In other words, these annuities benefit the donors and the church, program, or ministry they are supporting through CDF.

Our gift annuity program is loaded with benefits, and we want you to know about these. For more information or a free illustration, contact Steve Schons at (701) 356-7926 or steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.
LIFE’S MILESTONES

Ron and Carol Bommersbach, parishioners of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on June 17. They were married at Holy Family Church in Grand Forks. They are blessed with 2 children and 2 grandsons.

Don and Therese Linnertz, parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on May 12. They were married at St. Francis Xavier in Oklee, Minn. They are greatly blessed with 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

Marguerite Freund, parishioner of Sacred Heart Church in Cando, will celebrate her 90th birthday May 19. She and her husband, Wayne, still work the family ranch north of Cando. They’ve been married for 65 years and have 9 children, 19 grandchildren (1 deceased), and 2 great-grandchildren.

Ron and Carol Bommersbach, parishioners of St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on June 17. They were married at Holy Family Church in Grand Forks. They are blessed with 2 children and 2 grandsons.

Frances Weigel, parishioner of St. Andrew’s Church in Zeeland, will celebrate her 90th birthday on May 18. Frances and her husband Frank have been blessed with 10 children, 22 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren.

Don and Therese Linnertz, parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on May 12. They were married at St. Francis Xavier in Oklee, Minn. They are greatly blessed with 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

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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 June issue is June 2.

“Go forward bravely. Fear nothing. Trust in God; all will be well.”

St. Joan of Arc
Feast day May 30

Connect with the Diocese of Fargo

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.

Quotable
Father Cote to celebrate 60th ordination anniversary

By Deacon Ben Seitz | Deacon at Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

Did you hear the pope caught bird flu? He got it from a cardinal.”

That is just one of the seemingly infinite supply of jokes that Father Duaine Cote has shared during his 60-years of service as a priest in the Fargo Diocese.

Father Cote will celebrate his 60th anniversary of ordination on June 5 at Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo. Bishop John Folda will preside at the Mass at 4:30 p.m. followed by a reception and dinner in the social hall. To attend the reception, RSVP at: www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D4EAABAF29A7FC1-frduaine or call Sue at (701) 212-8661.

Father Cote was born on Dec. 21, 1935, and raised on a farm near Willow City. He is the son of Alcid and Louise Cote and the youngest of five children. He lived on the farm, which he dearly loved, until 1952, when his parents retired and moved to Vermillion, S.D., where they lived for three years.

He entered Crosier Seminary in Onamia, Minn. in 1953, as a high school senior. Upon graduation, he entered the St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. and on June 9, 1962 was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fargo by Bishop Leo Dworschak. Father Cote’s first assignment as a parochial vicar was at St. Philip Neri Church in Napoleon.

The following is a list of his priestly assignments:

1965-1969  Parochial Vicar – St Michael’s in Grand Forks
1969-1971  Pastor – Sacred Heart Church in Orrin and St. Anselm’s Church in Fulda
1971-1981  Vocation Director & Spiritual Director at Cardinal Muench Seminary
1981-1983  Pastor – Holy Spirit in Fargo
1984-1989  Pastor – Our Lady of Peace in Mayville and St. Agnes Church in Hunter
1989-1993  Pastor – St. Mark’s in Bottineau and St. Andrew’s in Westhope
1993-2009  Pastor – Transfiguration in Edgeley and Holy Spirit in Nortonville

Father Cote was also the Spiritual Advisor for the Fargo Diocese Cursillo Movement from 2001–2013. Father Cote is semi-retired in residence at Sts. Anne and Joachim Rectory in Fargo and has assisted frequently with weekday Masses and hearing confessions until 2019, when he moved to Riverview Retirement Community in Fargo. Today, he continues his ministry providing spiritual direction and still enjoys fishing, photography, playing Pinochle and Whist, visiting friends, traveling, and raising plants.

EVENTS

Mothers and daughters invited to Mother-Daughter Days

The Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen invite you to their 2022 Mother-Daughter Days at St. Francis Convent in Hankinson. There will be two sessions offered this summer: June 19–21 and July 21–23. Come spend time listening to Jesus, getting to know the Franciscan Sisters, praying with the Sisters, and meeting others pursuing a closer relationship with Jesus. To register, call or text Sister Jean Louise at (701) 208-1245. Participation is limited.

Beginning Experience weekend in Hankinson coming in June

Beginning Experience (BE) is a program for adults grieving the loss of a love relationship through death, divorce, or separation. Weekend leaders, who have also suffered the loss of a loved one, lead participants through a program of presentations, personal reflection, and small group sharing. The next BE weekend is June 24–26 at St. Francis Retreat Center in Hankinson. If you or someone you know could benefit from this ministry, contact Bonnie at (701) 318-0949, Marlene at (218) 998-4300, or Msgr. Pilon at (701) 361-2051. You may also call the BE line at (701) 277-8784 and leave a message or visit www.beginningexperience-easterndnd.org.

NEW EARTH MAY 2022
A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

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

75 years ago — 1947
The magnitude of Catholic charity is manifest in once more by the splendid response shown by the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo in answer to the appeal of our pastors in behalf of the Bishop’s Relief Campaign for Victims of War. Over $40,000 has been collected for this worthy cause. Participating in this program, in response to the appeal made over the radio by our Holy Father on behalf of the starving children of Europe and Asia, were students of Catholic grade schools, academies, nursing schools, and Newman Clubs.

50 years ago — 1972
Bishop Driscoll visited His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, on the occasion of his two-week European tour through Germany, France, Spain, and Ireland. During his travels, he visited the Shrine of the Blessed Mother in Lourdes, France where he participated in the Mass for the 2,000 American soldier pilgrims who were present as part of the annual pilgrimage of the United Armed Forces of Europe. There were about 35,000 soldier pilgrims from all over Europe visiting the shrine. Bishop Driscoll also administered the sacrament of confirmation to about 1,000 American children of parents in service of our country at the invitation of Major General Roy Terry, Chief of Chaplains of the Air Force.

20 years ago — 2002
A 500-pound bronze figure of Sts. Anne and Joachim was blessed in a ceremony on May 17 that marked the two-year anniversary of the groundbreaking for phase I of the south Fargo church building project. The patron saints figure was positioned on the brick and concrete base that had been completed only days before. A crane then carefully hoisted a 350-pound bronze angel 18 feet into the air, gingerly bringing it to rest atop the attached arch. The statues, created by Dale C. Lamphere of Sturgis, S.D., took two years to complete and were donated in memory of the Joseph and Pauline Hogan family. Those gathered enjoyed root beer floats afterwards to celebrate the completion of another milestone in the building project.
Light of risen Christ dispels darkness of fear, pope tells young people

By Junno Arocho Esteves | Catholic News Service

Young people should not allow the darkness of fear to overwhelm them and instead allow the light of Easter to illuminate their lives and give them courage, Pope Francis said.

Fears “must be brought to light. And when fears, which are in darkness, come into the light, the truth bursts out. Do not be discouraged: If you are afraid, put it to the light and it will do you good!” the pope told thousands of young men and women gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

The April 18 event, titled “Seguimi” (“Follow Me”), was organized by the Italian bishops’ conference and brought young teens from all of Italy for a prayer vigil in Rome. While initial projections expected 57,000 people at the event, the Vatican said an estimated 100,000 young people were present.

It was the first large-scale gathering of its kind in St. Peter’s Square since the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered all public events in the country in 2020.

After riding around and greeting the crowd on his popemobile, Pope Francis welcomed them and said the “square has long been waiting to be filled with your presence, your faces, and your enthusiasm.”

“Today, all of you are together, coming from Italy, in the embrace of this square and in the joy of the Easter that we have just celebrated,” he said.

However, the pope said that although Jesus’ resurrection “conquered the darkness of death,” there are still dense clouds “that darken our time.”

“In addition to the pandemic, Europe is experiencing a terrible war, while injustices and violence continue in many regions of the earth that destroy humankind and the planet,” he said.

“Often it is your peers who pay the highest price: Not only is their existence compromised and made insecure, but their dreams for the future are trampled on. Many brothers and sisters are still waiting for the light of Easter.”

Reflecting on a Gospel reading from St. John, in which the risen Christ appears to his disciples while they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee, the pope said young people, like the disciples, can experience moments in life that “put us to the test” and “make us feel naked, helpless and alone.”

In times of uncertainty, he continued, young people must not keep to themselves, because “fears must be said, fears must be expressed in order to be able to drive them away.”

“Darkness puts us in crisis; but the problem lies in how we manage this crisis,” the pope explained. “If I keep it only for myself, for my heart, and I don’t talk about it with anyone, it doesn’t work. In times of crisis, you have to talk, talk with the friend who can help, with your dad, your mom, your grandfather, your grandmother, with a person who can help. Crises must be illuminated to overcome them.”

“Life is beautiful, life is meant to be lived and given to others; life is meant to be shared with others, not to close in on itself.” — Pope Francis

He also encouraged the young men and women present to not be afraid of life and all that it entails but instead to be afraid “of the death of the soul, of the death of the future, of the closure of the heart.”

“Life is beautiful, life is meant to be lived and given to others; life is meant to be shared with others, not to close in on itself,” he said.

Like children who call on their mother when in need, Pope Francis said Christians can call upon Mary who, in her adolescence, “accepted her extraordinary vocation to be the mother of Jesus.”

“May Our Lady—the mother who was almost your age when she received the angel’s announcement and became pregnant with him—teach you to say: ‘Here I am!’” the pope said.
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Led by The Most Rev. John T. Folda, Bishop of Fargo

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Jamestown  SMP Health - Ave Maria
Rolla  SMP Health - St. Kateri
Valley City  SMP Health - St. Raphael
Local physician referred family to get abortion

Recently, on a day of sleet and swirling, snapping wind, my friend Lila and I circled the circumference of the corner where abortions happen each Wednesday in Fargo. It was a rather still portion of day with little traffic in and out of the Kopelman building. But we knew that, internally at least, many hearts were far from restful.

In time, we spotted a vehicle around the corner from the facility, parked at a distance, with two people inside. The woman in the driver’s seat kept glancing in the direction of the Red River Women’s Clinic as if expecting someone to emerge any moment.

Knowing these quiet moments are often the best opportunities for conversations, we headed toward the vehicle, readying our hearts for the much-needed Holy Spirit’s guidance.

Approaching the SUV, we waved at the couple, and, with smiles, motioned for them to lower their window, which they did. Lila spoke first: “We are out here today hoping to help people. Is there anything we can do for you?” From there, their story began to unfold.

Their daughter was inside the facility, they admitted, despite their general stance against abortion. In this case, they didn’t feel they had a choice. Not only is she diabetic, they explained, but her baby was discovered to be missing a vital organ—the heart—and her doctor felt abortion was the only reasonable option. Continuing the pregnancy could create complications and endanger her life.

We asked if the doctor was local. Yes, they said, confirming that it was a Sanford physician, and holding up the referral paper with its instructions. Again, they affirmed that they did not want to do this, but their hearts were conflicted, because they didn’t want their daughter—whom they’d adopted as a preemie—to be put at further risk.

I am of the firm mindset that abortion need never be an option; that there’s always some way around these complicated cases. And they are complicated but not insurmountable. I couldn’t accept that the planned death of their grandchild was the only option. It saddened me to think they’d been led to that dark place.

A few stories flashed through my mind, including that of a friend who knew her baby would not be viable, yet how she and her husband went through with that pregnancy anyway. They even had professional photos taken of her with her pregnant belly, their three other daughters surrounding them. Later, the couple shared how precious were the moments when they got to hold their littlest daughter, even though her life outside the womb lasted only half an hour.

I also recalled my miscarriage in May 1999, and how after learning our baby had died in utero, I declined the on-call doctor’s insistence I have a D&C to extract our third child. In that moment of grief, I had the strong thought of wanting to allow my body to expel our baby on its own. I miscarried that evening. Hard as it was, I was grateful to be able to deal with my feelings in the privacy of our home, without medical intervention.

I realize some situations would have merited the medical procedure, but allowing the child to pass naturally reduced my grieving, and gave me some peace about having lost that dear one so unexpectedly.

My experience showed me that, having decided to let things progress naturally, my loss was less severe. The difference here, of course, is that this young lady’s baby had not yet died. But she would live with knowing she had helped him or her die. That is no small thing.

I did tell the couple this personal story, but they were resolved, and we ended up walking away with prayer our only offering.

Though realizing our efforts for saving that child were futile, we always hope that something we share plants a seed that might bring life elsewhere. The situation has continued to trouble me, however, especially in knowing that, while our local abortion facility brings in outside abortionists to do these procedures, some local physicians are still facilitating abortion through referral.

It would be great if more medical professionals knew about resources such as The National Catholic Center for Bioethics, which helps with such moral, medical dilemmas. The Catholic Medical Association at www.cathmed.org could also advise.

This day on the sidewalk brought more questions than answers and reminded me that it takes a whole community to help solve the problem of abortion. Let’s keep shining the light in whatever corners we find ourselves.

NEW EARTH  MAY 2022
Do you know where we are?

The answer will be revealed in the June New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is of St. Francis Xavier Church in Anamoose.