Go and make disciples of all nations

Bishop Folda announces third diocesan synod for the Diocese of Fargo

From Bishop Folda: A synod for the Diocese of Fargo

Construction begins on new Holy Cross Church in West Fargo

Fathers Foertsch and Littlefield ordained as priests on June 4
REDEEMED

Eucharistic Conference

September 23-24, 2022
Delta by Marriott, Fargo

Speakers
Bishop Andrew Cozzens
Msgr. James Shea
Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT
Dr. Mary Healy

Weekend includes
Eucharistic procession & healing service
Mass with Bishop John Folda
Worship by Aly Aleigha Band

Cost
$50 early registration
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For more information
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“MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.” JOHN 6:51
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With great joy I announce to you an important event in the life of our Church in the Diocese of Fargo. On Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022, in the Cathedral of St. Mary and in every parish of our diocese, I called the third synod of the Diocese of Fargo, the first such synod since 1951.

What is a synod, you might ask. The word “synod” comes from the Greek and signifies “walking together,” or taking a common road together. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that a diocesan synod is “an assembly of priests and other members of Christ’s faithful who assist the bishop by offering advice about the needs of the diocese and by proposing legislation for him to enact.” A synod is not a legislature or a parliament where the Church’s teachings will be altered. It is a gathering of the faithful for prayerful discernment and consultation. You might recall that last year Pope Francis called for a Synod of Bishops, and asked every diocese to contribute input. This diocesan synod is distinct from that Synod of Bishops that will meet in Rome next year. Our diocesan synod, attuned to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, will deal more directly with the needs and mission of our own diocesan Church.

I believe we can all see that we are living in an era of change both in our world and in our culture. Some of those changes are positive, and some of them are not. But in the face of those changes, the Church must come to a renewed understanding of her identity as a communion in Christ, the People of God, animated by the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our diocesan Church is one with the universal Church, and we share in the mission that Jesus gave to his apostles, to “go and make disciples of all nations.” Through this diocesan synod, we will gather in communion and charity to reflect upon the times in which we live, with all their opportunities and challenges. We will discern the grace of the Holy Spirit at work in our diocesan family, and we will accept once more the invitation of our Lord to proclaim the Good News of our faith to the world.

Our diocesan synod will involve a period of preparation and consultation with listening sessions to be held early next year throughout our diocese. I plan to be present for each of those sessions. During this time I will ask all of you to prayerfully consider the needs of our diocesan Church and the mission that has been entrusted to us. The final synodal assembly, which is planned for the spring of 2024, will include representation from all our parishes and organizations, our clergy, our consecrated religious, and the lay faithful. It is my hope that through an openness to the grace of the Holy Spirit and the fervent participation of our entire diocesan family, we will live more fully the life and mission that Jesus has given to his Church here in the Diocese of Fargo.

As with any great initiative in the life of the Church, this upcoming synod will be fruitless unless it is prepared for and supported by prayer. By now you may be aware that the Church throughout our nation began a national Eucharistic Revival on June 19, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. This was a special time of prayer and adoration in our diocese and in our parishes. And providentially this period of Eucharistic prayer will coincide with our own synodal preparation here in the Diocese of Fargo. This Revival will be an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to Christ in the Holy Eucharist and to reinvigorate our faith. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, it will help us to look more intently on the face of Jesus and receive him into our lives, not only as individuals, but also as a diocesan family. During this Revival, we will entrust the preparation and work of our diocesan synod in a special way to Jesus Christ, who

The Holy Spirit is the bond of life and love between the Father and the Son, and he comes upon us so we might be one with them. I look forward to praying and journeying with you through our diocesan synod, and I beg the Holy Spirit to pour down his abundant blessing and grace upon this endeavor and on all the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo.

-Bishop John T. Folda
offers himself to his Father and to us in every Mass, and who abides in every tabernacle with burning love for his Church and for every one of his people.

Dear brothers and sisters, we can be certain that the Holy Spirit is moving among us, touching our hearts and the hearts of many others as well. The Spirit sometimes comes quietly as a gentle breeze and sometimes like a powerful wind. The Holy Spirit is the bond of life and love between the Father and the Son, and he comes upon us so we might be one with them. I look forward to praying and journeying with you through our diocesan synod, and I beg the Holy Spirit to pour down his abundant blessing and grace upon this endeavor and on all the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

July - Elderly
We pray for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility.

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

June 23
ND Catholic Conference, Jamestown

June 27–July 7
Holy Land Pilgrimage

July 14 • 3 p.m.
Mass at Red Willow Bible Camp for Trinity Youth Camp, Binford

July 17–19
Priest and Deacon Summerfest, Bismarck

July 23 • 11 a.m.
Mass for Men’s Leadership Summit, Sticklestad Lodge, Fort Ransom

July 31 • 1 p.m.
Rural Life Celebration, Blessum Farm, Rugby

Aug. 1
Putt for a Purpose, Rose Creek, Fargo

Aug. 2–4
Knights of Columbus Convention, Nashville

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)
Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements

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

Rev. Thaines Arulandu Pastor of St. Joachim’s Church, Rolla and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Rock Lake for a second term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Brian M. Bachmeier Pastor of St. Bernard’s Church, Oriska; St. Agatha, Hope; and Sacred Heart, Sanborn for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Joseph P. Barrett Parochial Vicar of St. James Basilica, Jamestown; St. Margaret Mary, Buchanan; and St. Mathias, Windsor in accord with cc. 545-552; And continuing as Chaplain to the North Dakota State Hospital, in accord with cc. 564-572.


Very Rev. Paul C. Duchschere Pastor of St. Catherine’s Church, Valley City for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Riley J. Durkin Parochial Vicar of Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Rev. Robert John Foertsch Parochial Vicar of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church, Fargo, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Very Rev. James S. Goodwin Pastor of St. Maurice Church, Kindred for a second term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Kurtis Gunwall Pastor of St. Alphonsus Church, Langdon; St. Edward, Nekoma; and St. Michael, Wales for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.


Rev. F. Scott Karnik Parochial Vicar of Holy Spirit Church, Fargo, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Very Rev. Wenceslaus H. Katanga Pastor of St. Patrick’s Church, Wishek; St. David, Ashley; and St. Andrew, Zeeland for a third term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Robert J. Keller Pastor of St. Patrick’s Church, Enderlin; Holy Trinity, Fingal; and Our Lady of the Scapular, Sheldon for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.


Rev. Paul B. Kuhn Parochial Vicar of St. John’s Church, Wahpeton, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.


Rev. Joseph Roy Littlefield Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph’s Church, Devils Lake, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Rev. Gary D. Luiten Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church, West Fargo for a second term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.


Very Rev. Brian L. Moen Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Minto and St. Stanislaus, Warsaw for a second term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.


Rev. Mathew V. Pamplaniyil Pastor of St. Mary’s Church, Munich and Assumption, Starkweather for a third term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Michael A. Schommer Pastor of St. Cecilia’s Church, Towner for a third term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Eric F. Seitz Parochial Vicar of Holy Cross Church, West Fargo, in accord with cc. 545-552, effective June 29, 2022, and continuing ad nutum episcopi.

Msgr. Dennis A. Skonseng Pastor of St. Rose Church, Hillsboro and St. William, Argusville for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Rev. Steven J. Wirth Pastor of St. Augustine’s Church, Fessenden; St. Boniface, Esmond; and St. William in Maddock for a term of six years, beginning June 29, 2022.

Deacon Arlie Braunberger has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, recognized as of May 4, 2022.

Deacon Douglas Campbell has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, effective June 29, 2022.

Deacon Francis Davis has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, effective June 29, 2022.

Deacon Tim Marcy has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, effective June 29, 2022.

Deacon Tony McDonald has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, recognized as of May 4, 2022.

Deacon Emery Mears has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, recognized as of May 4, 2022.

Deacon Samuel Pupino has been granted retirement from active ministry as a permanent deacon, effective June 29, 2022.
St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia

By Francisco Ruiz de la Cuesta, originally published in the weekly Alfa y Omega.

Feast day: Jan. 4
1877–1940
Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle

St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia was born in Seville on Feb. 25, 1877. He entered the Minor Seminary of Seville in September 1889 where he wrote: “If I would be born a thousand times; a thousand times I would be a priest.” He was ordained by Blessed Cardinal Spínola, the founder of the newspaper El Correo de Andalucía, where he worked when he was still a seminarian. On Sept. 29, 1901, he celebrated his first Mass at the Church of the Holy Trinity and entrusted himself to the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians.

St. Manuel was sent by the Archbishop of Seville to Palomares del Río, a beautiful and secluded village of Aljarafe, but upon his arrival no one came out to meet him. The church was greatly abandoned, filled with dust and dirt, cobwebs inside the tabernacle, and torn altar cloths. Upon seeing this situation, he knelt before the altar and thought about the many abandoned tabernacles in the world. This prompted him to start the “Unión Eucarística Reparadora (The Eucharistic Reparative Community).”

At the age of 28, he was sent to Huelva where he saw many children in the streets. Later on, he devoted his attention mainly in founding schools and teaching catechesis with the help of his parishioners.

On Dec. 6, 1915, Pope Benedict XV appointed St. Manuel as auxiliary bishop of Málaga. He celebrated his appointment with a banquet to which he invited, not the authorities, but the poorest children of the place. Three thousand children attended the banquet and accompanied him to the Episcopal Palace. He remained there until the night of May 11, 1931, the proclamation of the Republic, where a revolt expelled him and the Palace was burnt, destroying everything.

On Aug. 5, 1935, he was appointed bishop of Palencia by Pope Pius XI. During a visit to Zaragoza in 1939, he fell seriously ill and had to be transferred to Madrid where he passed away on Jan. 4, 1940. Before he died, he asked to be buried at the foot of the tabernacle. Fulfilling his wish, he was buried at the main altar of the Cathedral of Palencia.

His heroic virtues were recognized on Apr. 6, 1998, and he was beatified by St. Pope John Paul II on Apr. 29, 2001. He was canonized by Pope Francis on Oct. 16, 2016.

Editor’s note: This month we highlight a recently canonized saint associated with Eucharistic revival. He was known for his strong devotion to the Eucharist and became known as the “Bishop of the Tabernacle.” He spread devotion to the Eucharist and encouraged frequent reception of it.

Save the date!

66th Annual Pilgrimage to Carmel of Mary
August 14 at 2 p.m.

CARMEL OF MARY
17765 78th Street SE, Wahpeton, ND 58075
carmelofmary.org carmelofmary@gmail.com

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.
With another wedding season upon us, many churches have had their wedding schedules long booked. Couples have spent months preparing both for their wedding and their lifelong marriage and may now be in the last days before their union. It can be an exciting and a stressful time as their efforts to make the day special come together.

Every parish priest is aware, though, that their wedding logs are much less populated than those of a generation ago. Statistics about Catholic weddings and weddings in general in the United States have plummeted. The rate of people getting married is only about 60% of what it was 30 years ago, and those who do get married often wed years later than then. Couple that with the changing attitudes toward faith in general and the onslaught of wedding photos on a beach or a backyard or a forest or wherever, and many no longer understand the connection between church and marriage at all. In the end, fewer couples approach their parishes for their wedding if they wed at all, shirking their concern for having a valid and sacramental marriage.

In the face of these downward trends, why does the Catholic Church hold to its expectation that couples celebrate their wedding within an actual church? To put it simply, the Church’s vision and the culture’s vision of marriage are not the same. The Church sees marriage as a partnership for the whole of life that flows from a husband and wife’s nature as the potential parents of new people, formed in God’s image. The husband and wife commit everything about themselves to each other to fulfill their purpose in life and create a place for a family to flourish. From their vows onward, they must learn to think no longer in terms of “I” but in terms of “we.”

We have no need for more examples of celebrity and non-celebrity marriages splitting because the one or both spouses felt like “finding themselves” down a new path. The Catholic Church, taught by Jesus Christ, recognizes that marriage is a sacrament. Two baptized people pledge themselves in a lifelong partnership in Christ. In that setting, their relationship can become a picture of Christ’s love for his people, the church (see Eph. 5:32). Christ’s love is full and faithful. He does not take it back or grow bored with it. Nor does he take it back even if we are unfaithful on our end.

Since a wedding, in the eyes of our faith, is a religious event, disciples of Christ are called to celebrate it in a religious way. Ideally, a bride and groom would celebrate their marriage during a Mass, the liturgy where Christ gives his body to his bride. Sometimes a Catholic wedding will not be part of a Mass. This is most common when a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic. Even in that case, though, their relationship will still be unbreakable in the eyes of God except by death, and would be a sacrament if they were both baptized.

To answer the original question, the Church typically requires weddings to take place in an actual church building because that is the most appropriate setting for a man and woman to pledge their faithful love to each other. Other settings might be beautiful in their own way, but they are not beautiful in the way only a church is beautiful. A church is beautiful because it is the bedchamber of God and his bride. Is it theoretically possible to have a priest or deacon witness a valid marriage outside of the walls of the church? Sure it is. But the best place is a church, therefore most bishops, as the father of the diocesan family, require weddings to be celebrated within their parish churches.
Fathers Foertsch and Littlefield ordained as priests

By Paul Braun

Bishop John Folda ordained Father Robert Foertsch and Father Joseph Littlefield to the priesthood on June 4 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. Families of the two new priests were on hand, along with several of their brother priests from the diocese to welcome them both as a “priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 7:17).

In his homily during the solemn ordination Mass, Bishop John Folda reminded those gathered that Jesus himself calls his chosen to the priesthood and religious life.

“The Church teaches us that the entire holy People of God is made a royal priesthood in Jesus Christ,” said Bishop Folda. “But Jesus, the Great High Priest, chose certain of his disciples to exercise a public priestly office in his name. ‘It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.’ The call to priesthood is and always will be a mystery. There are some who know from an early age that they are called to be priests, and then there are others who become aware of this call years later. In either case, ‘It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.’ These words of Jesus to his apostles are spoken just as truly to every priest.”

Father Foertsch will begin his new duties as a priest of the diocese as parochial vicar at Sts. Ann and Joachim Church in Fargo, while Father Littlefield has been assigned as parochial vicar at St. Joseph’s Church in Devils Lake. Shortly before their ordinations, New Earth asked each new priest about their backgrounds, and how they completed their journey to the priesthood.
Father Robert Foertsch

Where are you from? Who are your parents and siblings?
I grew up near Wyndmere on a small town farm. My parents still farm there, I have two brothers and two sisters all residing in North Dakota or Minnesota.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?
My family and friends have been very supportive of my vocation, especially in prayer. They have been patiently cheering for me for a long time now.

When did you first hear the call to the priesthood? When did that call become more real to you?
Perhaps I considered the priesthood as a child, but I quickly ignored it. It wasn’t until I graduated from college and began working that I started to finally ask the question, “What should I do with my life?” At that point I became more involved with the faith and following Jesus.

What was your most memorable experience in seminary?
I will always have fond memories of playing cribbage and eating ice cream with the men of the propaedeutic house in St. Paul.

What are your thoughts/feelings leading up to ordination?
I have a remarkable amount of peace and am excited with what the Lord has planned next.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?
I look forward to sharing the Gospel and preaching about the resurrection of Christ to the good people of Fargo.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation to priesthood/religious life/marriage?
Too often with regards to vocational discernment people get caught up in the question: What am I supposed to do? And then they get lost trying to figure out whether they should do this or that. Instead, focus on discipleship. Am I a disciple of Jesus Christ and how do I grow in that today? Our relationship with the Lord is to be at the center of everything.

Father Joseph Littlefield

Where are you from? Who are your parents and siblings?
I’m from Hatton, ND. My parents are Mike and Peggy Littlefield. My siblings are Amy, Michael, and William Littlefield.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?
I received a lot of positive support for my vocation to the priesthood from all my family and friends from a young age.

When did you first hear the call to the priesthood? When did that call become more real to you?
I first heard my call to the priesthood when I was 14 years old. My call became a lot more real my first semester of seminary at Sacred Heart in Detroit.

What was your most memorable experience in seminary?
One of my most memorable experiences in seminary was wearing one of my infamous trucker hats underneath my alb during my deacon ordination without anyone noticing.

What are your thoughts/feelings leading up to ordination?
I am really excited and relieved to finally be ordained to the holy priesthood of Jesus Christ. I feel like it has been such a long time coming, but it hasn’t quite fully sunken in yet. However, I’m currently experiencing a lot of peace and joy.

What are you most looking forward to as you begin your ministry?
I’m really looking forward to celebrating the Mass with the holy people of God. I’m also very much looking forward to being part of the St. Joseph Catholic Church’s community in Devils Lake.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation to priesthood/religious life/marriage?
My advice to others discerning their vocation is to be really open in trying to follow the Lord’s will for your life. Simply ask him to reveal to you what your vocation is in prayer, and he will eventually make it clear. And once you find out what your vocation is be courageous in following after the Lord.
Construction begins on new Holy Cross Church in West Fargo

By Paul Braun

The 40-year dream of a new church home for parishioners of Holy Cross Church in West Fargo became a reality when ground was broken on a new church building project for the parish.

The Most Reverend John Folda, Bishop of Fargo, West Fargo Mayor Bernie Dardis, and Reverend Phil Ackerman, Pastor of Holy Cross Church, were on hand on May 16 to turn the first shovel-fulls of dirt, signifying the start of the nearly $18 million project.

Holy Cross Church was established in 1983 and shared a building with Lutheran Church of the Cross in West Fargo until 2015. The construction of a new church is the second part of a two-phase plan to build a parish hall and church just off of Veterans Boulevard in West Fargo. Phase 1 was the construction of a parish hall, offices, and rectory, with the parish hall serving as a temporary church until the new church is built. The St. John Paul II school network built Trinity Elementary on the same site, which also opened in 2015.

The new Holy Cross church was designed to reflect the Romanesque-style of architecture made popular during the early centuries of the Catholic Church, with specific modernizations and updates. Romanesque-style churches feature massive quality, thick walls, round arches, sturdy piers, groin vaults, large bell towers, and symmetrical plans.

The sanctuary, nave, and narthex (gathering space) will be just over 18,000 square feet, with the choir loft/balcony adding an additional 5,700 square feet. New parish offices, meeting rooms, and restrooms will account for another nearly 5,000 square feet, for a total of almost 29,000 square feet. The church and its tower is expected to be a West Fargo landmark, easily visible from Interstate 94 and Veterans Boulevard.

“This is a historic moment for our parish,” said Father Phil Ackerman, pastor of Holy Cross Church. “We have been worshipping in temporary spaces for several years. We are so excited about moving forward as we build our new church! I am so grateful to all our past and present parish members who made this day a reality.”

Principal architects are Zerr Berg Architects of Fargo. Construction Managers for the project will be Mutchler Bartram Architects (MBA) of Fargo. Construction is set to begin the first week of June, with completion sometime in the fall of 2024 or early spring 2025, depending on weather and material availability.
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Riverview Place
Priests vs. priests diocesan basketball showdown honors beloved Monsignor

Submitted by the University of Mary

The University of Mary in Bismarck will host the “Monsignor Jeffrey Wald Memorial Slam Dunk for Our Schools” basketball game on July 18 at 7 p.m. in the McDowell Activity Center (MAC) on the University of Mary campus. The game is part of the annual Priests & Deacons Summerfest.

The event honors the late Monsignor Jeffrey Wald of the Diocese of Fargo, who was pastor of St. James Basilica in Jamestown and of parishes in the surrounding area when he died in October of 2020. A beloved priest to many in both the Bismarck and Fargo dioceses, Catholic education was among the motivating passions of his life and priesthood, as he spent enormous amounts of time and energy improving the Catholic schools of Devils Lake, Fargo, and Jamestown. In honor of his service, the winning diocese will receive all the proceeds from the event, with an additional $5,000 victor’s purse from the University of Mary, to be put toward supporting that diocese’s Catholic schools.

Teams will feature the clergy of the Diocese of Bismarck and those of the Diocese of Fargo. Bismarck will be led by Father Jarad Wolf, pastor of St. Charles Church in Bowman, and soon-to-be chaplain for Marauders Athletics. The Diocese of Fargo will be led by Father Jayson Miller, secretary to the bishop and director of liturgy.

The event comes in the midst of a weekend bringing clergy together for a few days of fraternity, leisure, and formation. The faithful of both dioceses are invited to join them for an evening in that spirit, and in the chance to cheer their pastors on to victory.

The university’s Crow’s Nest Campus Restaurant will be open the evening of the game, and those attending the event are welcome to bring their families for dinner beforehand. Admission to the game is a free-will offering.

The Diocese of Fargo was recently recognized by the International Catholic Stewardship Council for “Excellence in Materials used to Promote Stewardship.” The 2022 God’s Gift Appeal poster and brochure both received the top award. Congratulations to Bishop Folda and the Stewardship/Development team, (l to r): Brenda Hagemeier, Administrative Assistant; Steve Schons, Director of Stewardship and Development; and Susan LeMier, Database and Service Associate. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

Students honor Mary during Mass at St. Catherine’s Church in Valley City on May 6. Traditionally, the youngest student and oldest student at St. Catherine’s school are given the honor of crowing the church’s statue of Our Lady. Second grade students serve as the “Honor Guard” and place flowers at the feet of the statue. (submitted photo)
Monsignor Jeffrey Wald Memorial

Slam Dunk for Our Schools

BISMARCK vs FARGO

Cheer on our clergy as the Diocese of Bismarck and the Diocese of Fargo go head-to-head in a winner-takes-all basketball game.

July 18 at 7 pm
McDowell Activity Center, University of Mary

Open to the public

Free will offering at the door. All proceeds, including a victor’s purse supplied by the University of Mary, go toward Catholic education in the winning team’s diocese.

Hosted and Sponsored by University of Mary | for Life.
For over two years, there have been no trips by volunteers or staff to our Mission in Chimbote, Peru due to the effects of the pandemic. This has never occurred in our decades of serving and transforming the lives of the poor of Chimbote. While the impact, energy, and advocacy of mission visitors was sorely missed, our Peruvian Mission staff was fully tasked on the periphery of the community, providing humanitarian aid of food, water, and medicine to those in greatest need. The support of our donors through the crises made it possible to have the greatest impact on the lives of the very poor than at any time in our history!

At the end of April, we were able to return to Peru and witness the needs and experience the gratitude and determination of the people of these communities. The 3,000 residents outside Cambio Puente on the outskirts of Chimbote, near the prison, have been our greatest focus. One of the greatest needs and costs for members of the community is water, which they buy from trucks. For the single mothers, elderly, and handicapped who have the fewest resources, water is difficult to afford on an income of $80-100 dollars per month.

While we identify long-term solutions to the lack of income that places them in the most extreme poverty, we assist them with daily survival. The water needs and assistance have been significant. We have purchased and distributed over 1,320,000 liters of water during the pandemic—88 tankers of 15,000 liters of potable water at a cost of $20,000. By reducing their expenses for water, more of their meager income can be spent on food and other essentials. However, much like increasing income, a long-term solution is needed. Water is life and a necessity for health, hygiene, growing food, and raising animals.

Consulting and collaborating with community leaders in Cambio Puente and the waterless barrios, solutions have been identified and are being qualified. While we were in Chimbote, we were able to witness the hard work of the community members of the barrios who have all contributed to their dream of piped water to their homes.

Since the city has virtually no tax base or funds for infrastructure, residents raised over $18,000 to install water main piping and a concrete storage tank to get water to the outskirts of the barrios. The remaining project is to install piping, pumps, and another tank at the top of the hill that can feed pipes to over 300 homes. This second phase of the project is only $35,000 to provide four times more water piped into their homes at a savings of 84% from their current cost from trucks. Piping into each home is only $25 dollars! The entire project could be completed in 75 days.

We are hopeful that we can secure the resources to complete this second phase of the project to increase the dignity, improve the health, reduce the expenses, and fulfill the dreams and hopes of an entire community on the periphery. God bless you and thank you for your prayers and support! We look forward to welcoming you again at our Mission to witness the transformations you make possible.
Annual fundraiser takes bike race virtual

The 37th Annual NDSU vs. UND Bike Race & Ride Fundraiser was underway on the weekend of April 29–May 2. What normally is an in-person race that spans 25 miles in Hillsboro, was moved to an all-virtual event held over the whole weekend due to inclement weather. A total of 210 (184 NDSU, 26 UND) students and alumni from both schools took part around the country in the virtual ride to support the two Newman Centers in their efforts to raise money for college campus ministry. For 37 years, the two Newman Centers have been coming together in competition to raise money through this unique fundraiser to support their ministry.

Religious education students from St. Agatha’s Church in Hope and their teachers recently realized that many of the deceased parishioners buried in the cemetery there had no one to place flowers on their headstones for Memorial Day. The students decided to place flowers on every headstone in the St. Agatha portion of the Hope cemetery. To pay for the flowers, students made crafts and had a bake sale, then spent an afternoon placing the flowers. (submitted photo)
Fourth graders from Holy Family–St. Mary’s School had breakfast at Mo’s restaurant in Grand Forks on May 25. The owner of Mo’s is Colin Beaumier, an alumnus of Holy Family School. He is a great chef and has the best pancakes in the world, according to the students in teacher Trish Mohr’s class. Teachers at Holy Family–St. Mary’s traditionally do something special for their classes at the end of each school year. The students were also excited to have Father James Meyer, pastor of Holy Family Church, join them for their breakfast treat. (submitted photo)

Camp Summit
To the Heights

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

For youth entering grades 7-9
July 10-14, 2022
Red Willow Bible Camp - Binford, ND
Cost: $325 - Family discounts available

Before anyone climbs a mountain, climbers need to physically train, study the mountain, ask local guides for input, and gather the right gear. Without these steps, the journey would be arduous and climbers may become discouraged and not even attempt the trek. The same can be said about our spiritual lives. If we don’t train, study, seek mentorship, and equip ourselves, it’s easy to abandon the ascent.

Camp Summit is for those with a desire to deepen their relationship with Jesus and to share it with others. Youth will engage in prayer, worship, fellowship, leadership formation, play, and fun. This experience is designed to encourage and equip the youth for discipleship to their family, friends, and communities.

For more information or to register, contact Brady Borslien at (701) 356-7902 or visit www.fargodiocese.org/campsummit
Bishop John Folda stands with 80 Shanley High School graduates from the class of 2022. The senior class held their Baccalaureate Mass on May 25 at Holy Cross Church in West Fargo before gathering that evening at Shanley High School to receive their diplomas. (submitted photo)
On June 5, the Feast of Pentecost, Bishop Folda announced that the Diocese of Fargo will hold its third synod in Spring 2024. The bishop stated in his message shared at each parish how important it is for us who are members of Christ’s body, the Church, to be the light of the world:

“In this era of change in our world and our culture, the Church must come to a renewed understanding of her identity as a communion in Christ, the People of God animated by the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

Bishop Folda continued in his letter with an invitation to embrace the mission to “go and make disciples of all nations” as the theme for the diocesan synod. As we look forward to the efforts and fruits of the upcoming synod, let’s take a look at what a synod is and a history of synods in the Diocese of Fargo.

What is a diocesan synod?

According to Canon Law, a diocesan synod is a group of priests and other members of the Christian faithful of a diocesan church who assist the bishop for the good of the entire diocesan community.

“It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium,” according to Pope Francis. “What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word ‘synod.’ Journeying together... is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice.”

What is the process and purpose of a diocesan synod?

During the synodal process, after prayer and listening to the faithful, the bishop, consulting with his priests, proposes questions to chosen representatives who are the members of the synod. The members are to freely discuss these questions at the sessions. However, the members of the synod only provide consultation. Only the diocesan bishop has the authority to make policies and laws as a result of the discussions.

In 1999, St. Pope John Paul II spoke these words at the close of the Second Plenary Synod in Warsaw, Poland: “From the first, [the Church] has seen synods as an effective means for the reform and renewal of Christian life.”

The synod is a practice adopted from apostolic times of “joint reflection on important and difficult problems.” The Council of Trent gave the practice of synods a new impetus and they became, according to St. Pope John Paul II, “an important means for deepening the faith and for indicating the way of the Gospel for all generations of the People of God.” These synods were called with a view to give new life to the religious life of the faithful, and to unify Church law.

In his homily during the Warsaw Synod, St. Pope John Paul II extolled the “praiseworthy practice of convoking synods” for a pastoral purpose. He specifically spoke of past synods and their ability to respond to changes in the social landscape: “Through these synods, successive generations sought for themselves new ways of living the Christian life, making a
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In speaking of that particular synod to the participants, the Holy Pontiff had this to offer as an encouragement and thanks:

"Above all you have tried to observe, to identify, to evaluate, and to draw conclusions. You bring all of that today and present it as an offering to God, as the reapers do after the harvest, bringing the sheaves of cut grain, trusting fully that what they have reaped will be useful—like bread that is made from grain, in the hope that future generations will be nourished by it."

**Synods in the Diocese of Fargo**

In 1941, Bishop Aloisius Muench, invoked the first synod of the Diocese of Fargo. In his letter to Pope Pius XII he wrote: "The bishop and the clergy will strategically consult upon the spiritual and temporal needs of the priests and the faithful at the first synod in the Diocese of Fargo on the 29th and 30th of September."

On Sept. 15, 1941 the Holy Father authorized the synod, and Bishop Muench received the following message: "The Holy Father invokes copious divine assistance and guidance on the occasion of the first diocesan synod. His Holiness imparts to the bishop and clergy his special apostolic benediction."

As the Diocese of Fargo newspaper Catholic Action News reported in September 1941: "The focal point in the solemn session [was] the Solemn Pontifical Mass and the decree of the promulgation of the laws of the diocese."

The final documents from the 1941 Synod in the Diocese of Fargo include a variety of directives, a diocesan calendar recommending various special celebrations, and spiritual devotions each month. For example, on the Feast of the Holy Family, a dedication of the family was recommended. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, a prayer of reparation was to be recited. Many topics are covered, but two that stood out as a category of priorities that remain unchanged for these more than 60 years are youth and Catholic education. Here are two examples of texts from the Synodal Documents:

"Youth work is hard work, it requires infinite patience, real vision, and courageous perseverance. If leaders of youth work—priests and lay people—find it a long hard pull, let them reflect that there is much at stake. Much to be won or lost for Christ and His Church."

"True education cannot disregard the sublime end for which man has been created. To train youth merely for what it must be here below is to fail of true education. Good Catholic parents will take their responsibility seriously in this matter, and will begin even in the early years of childhood with the religious education of their children in the home, they will leave nothing undone to make the home a school of religious education...""

Ten years later, in 1951, the Diocese of Fargo held its second synod. In response to the letter Archbishop Muench sent to the Holy Father announcing the second synod, he received the following:

“In more recent times, it has been without a doubt painfully evident to all that the wide diffusion of evils of every kind has entangled the preachers of the Gospel in numberless difficulties to the point where it is obviously necessary for them to devote energetic and zealous labor to the discovery of new techniques more suitable to greatly expanded needs of our day.”

—Pope Pius XII

Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, 1941. (Diocesan archives)
“His holiness learned with great pleasure that the second diocesan synod is to be celebrated. In more recent times, it has been without a doubt painfully evident to all that the wide diffusion of evils of every kind has entangled the preachers of the Gospel in numberless difficulties to the point where it is obviously necessary for them to devote energetic and zealous labor to the discovery of new techniques more suitable to greatly expanded needs of our day.”

Again, the Diocese of Fargo newspaper Catholic Action News reported in September 1951 that at the two-day synod: “Many interesting facts were pointed out at the noon luncheon. Since the past synod in 1941, 32 priests who had been present at that time had died, six had retired and four had left ministry.” During that same 10 years, 41 priests had been ordained for the diocese. Once again, we see that some challenges in the Church remain constant.

The Fargo Diocesan Synod: three phases
The third synod in the Diocese of Fargo will include a preparation phase of listening and consultation, followed by the Synod Assembly, which will take place at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. Following the synod, the diocese will move into an implementation phase, executing Bishop Folda’s pastoral plan.

Synod prayer foundation: Eucharistic revival
Throughout the synod process, the Diocese of Fargo will enter into prayer through the Eucharistic Revival focused on invitation, formation, and living our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Fargo Diocese will host a Eucharistic Conference in Fargo Sept. 23–24. The faithful in the diocese will be invited into a deeper relationship and understanding of the Eucharist through formation and catechetical activities throughout 2023. The Eucharistic Revival will include a diocesan pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in July 2024.

The Synod Process

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<td><strong>2022 - Spring 2023</strong></td>
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<td><em>Listening Events</em></td>
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<td>In this phase we will be gathering feedback through:</td>
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<td>• Parish Self-Reflection</td>
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<td>• Listening sessions open to the public</td>
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<td><strong>Fall 2023 - Spring 2024</strong></td>
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<td><em>Consultations</em></td>
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<td>The Bishop will choose questions that deanery and parish representatives will discuss in preparation for the synod.</td>
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<td><strong>April 2024</strong></td>
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<td><em>The Synod</em></td>
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<td>This phase is a three-day event at which invited delegates discuss and discern the synod topics/questions.</td>
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<td>April 11-13, 2024 at St. Mary’s Cathedral</td>
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Jubilee Year 2025: “Pilgrims of Hope”

**Synod Implementation**
This phase will take the form of a pastoral plan and include an ongoing initiative to support pastors in the implementation of this pastoral plan.
“Youth work is hard work, it requires infinite patience, real vision, and courageous perseverance. If leaders of youth work—priests and lay people—find it a long hard pull, let them reflect that there is much at stake. Much to be won or lost for Christ and His Church.”

—Diocese of Fargo 1941 Synod
The motto was ‘Pax,’ but the word was set in a circle of thorns.” So begins Rumer Godden’s novel *In This House of Brede*, an engaging portrayal of contemplative religious life that is simultaneously a study on discernment and a testimony of the workings of God’s grace in our lives.

I first heard of this novel years ago, but disregarded it without looking further into it. What could be so interesting about a novel about contemplative nuns? Does anyone even go anywhere? Recently, however, I came back to it. Finding it a page-turner, I realized how entirely wrong I first was. Among novels with a Catholic worldview that I have read, I would now rank it right within the top few.

The novel centers on Philippa Talbot, a successful and well-to-do business professional in Britain in the years following World War II. In her own words, her “life was so beautifully arranged.” It is not until her 40s that she senses (before even becoming Catholic) the call of a religious vocation, leaving behind her work, her beautiful things, and a variety of people who, while supportive of her in general, for the most part doubt that she has what it takes to make it as a nun in a cloistered Benedictine community. Never a pushover, she tells one coworker, “Do you think it will be the end of me? I hope it will be the beginning.”

As Philippa becomes accustomed to her new life at the Abbey, we gradually also become acquainted with the other sisters. Their personalities, backgrounds, and temperaments are varied, and Godden creates in them well-developed characters that are complex, engaging, and relatable. Philippa may be the protagonist, but the other characters are no less memorable.

In preparation to write this novel, Godden was serious about doing her homework, living with a Benedictine religious community for three years. Her commitment to research is evident throughout as she portrays the workings of the monastery and the lives and spiritual journeys of the sisters. Vignettes that feature the various sisters and their acceptance or rejection of God’s workings in their lives are, in a sense, an exploration of the precepts of the Rule of St. Benedict.

Early in the novel, the community’s beloved abbess suddenly passes away, and it is revealed that she has kept many secrets, taking on crippling amounts of debt on behalf of the community. The Sisters’ way of life and their future at the abbey their community has inhabited for more than a 100 years is called into question.

The deceased Abbess isn’t the only one with secrets. An older-than-average vocation, Philippa has a past she would like to have left behind when she entered religious life. Haunted by her memories in the increased time for contemplation her new life provides, Philippa must learn to grapple with her buried trauma. She must discern, as we all must if we are to truly live a Christian life, the answers to a variety of questions. What does it mean to live and find peace in God’s will? How are we called to serve God? How do we allow God to reveal this to us? Do we let him use our suffering to help us find peace that rests in him—the peace that is set in a circle of thorns?

As Rumer Godden phrases it, “Pax: peace, but what a strange peace, made of unremitting toil and effort, seldom with a seen result... beset with disappointments and usually misunderstood; yet peace all the same, undeviating, filled with joy and gratitude and love. ‘It is my own peace I give unto you.’ Not notice, the world’s peace.”
You are probably familiar with small shrines of flowers or crosses on the side of the road to mark a spot where somebody was involved in a fatal car accident. But what about larger structures—even small chapels—that were erected on the side of the road as a place to simply stop and say a prayer?

The tradition of building these roadside shrines came with the immigrants from Europe. If you have traveled to Europe, you might have seen images of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary along with votive candles or flowers in a seemingly strange place that has no connection to a church or holy place. Well, back before cars, people walked everywhere and at times the journey was not safe, be it bad weather or some other calamity. Therefore, the roadside shrines provided a place to stop and pray and to ask for divine assistance. It was also a constant reminder to give honor and glory to our Lord in everyday activities.

Roadside shrines were generally built on people’s private properties and are unique from one to the next. A shrine might consist of a stone alcove with a holy image or a small chapel with an altar and space for six people. They can be simple or quite elaborate with simple wooden crosses, niches in walls, brick towers, small grottos decorated with mosaics, glass, shells, or colored stones. Some are painted and others left natural. There are even underwater shrines, like “Christ of the Abyss” off the coast of Key Largo, Fla. that divers can swim to.

We do have roadside shrines here in North Dakota. Two brothers who believed the geographic center of North America was on their land built the “Mary Center of America” in 1954, now in ruins and on private property by Orrin, N.D. The twin brothers Wendlin and Joseph had a great devotion to Mary and wanted to dedicate the special spot in her name by building a grotto. A simple google image search will bring up pictures of what it used to look like.

The St. Joseph chapel near Warsaw, N.D. is still a place of devotion where Mass has been offered in recent years. This country gothic chapel was built in 1907 by Polish immigrants and is now on the list of national historical places. It is small enough for just a priest and maybe two altar servers, while everyone else has to sit outside. In the same region, there are also several crucifix shrines. One such cross has a sign that mentions giving glory and praise to our Lord. It then acknowledges the shrine as a memorial to the Polish immigrants who settled in the area and ends with a statement of dedication of their lands and lives to God.

Anyone can erect a roadside shrine to show their love and devotion to Jesus, Mary, or one of the saints. We still have weary travelers today who are looking for a sign of hope or even just a sign that God is here for them, to stop by, to say a prayer, and to physically touch a holy site dedicated to God. We all need holy reminders and what a great way for families to show their own devotion by constructing a roadside shrine on their property.
Prayer is a battle well worth the fight

By Katie Dubas
Music & Liturgy Coordinator at St. James Basilica in Jamestown

“Prayer is a battle.” (*CCC 2725) I know from my own life experience how much of a battle it can be. I have been Catholic all my life and grew up with parents whose faith came alive when I was a young girl. I remember my mom praying with me at bedtime and teaching me to use my own words to talk to Jesus, thank him, and ask him for help. On every road trip, Dad led the Rosary in the car and had each family member take turns leading a decade. My parents were always involved in church activities and that was just the way of life in my family. They were generous with their time, talent, and treasure. I went on all the youth retreats, sang in the youth choir, and graduated from Catholic High School.

As I was growing up, I encountered the personal love of Christ for myself—the same love my parents confidently spoke about—and I knew deep down that it would affect my entire life. I began praying on my own, reading scripture, and journaling. My personal prayer life skyrocketed while I was a missionary with NET (National Evangelization Teams). I was on a team with ten other young adults who loved Jesus and his Church, and we were required to have daily team prayer together plus we held one another accountable to spend time in personal prayer. This supportive environment allowed my faith to take hold and gave me the training and skills to share my faith with others. I went on to a Catholic college to study Theology and Religious Education and was again surrounded by vibrant Catholics striving to live as Christ’s disciples.

However, once I left that nurturing environment, I began to struggle with personal prayer. I got caught up in my job—full-time church work—and spent less and less regular quiet time in prayer. God, who was my dearly beloved Father while growing up, was becoming more and more distant, like a powerful man whom I worked for but never socialized with outside of the office. I admired him and tried to be like him, but I didn’t feel close to him.

Over the years, I’ve had seasons of intimacy with the Lord Jesus. I would go on a retreat and come away refreshed and back into the habit of daily quiet time with our Lord. Over time, I might skip a day or two and then sloth would get the best of me and my love of sleep would frequently win out over time spent alone with Jesus. Prayer is a battle that I often don’t fight. Since living on my own, I’ve thought of my personal prayer life like a rollercoaster ride. The dry seasons of desolation are the slow climb up a steep incline or maybe the boring time waiting in line. It takes perseverance and determination. But the beautiful seasons of consolation in prayer are the exciting and fun upside-down loops and steep drops. There’s nothing better!

So where am I now? I’m still struggling but not giving up! I gathered a group of three other women to join me during Lent in doing the series called “Oremus” by Ascension Press. It was supposed to take eight weeks but ended up taking twice as long due to scheduling conflicts and my lack of motivation. Yet we persevered and gained a better understanding of how to pray, to come into intimate communion with our Lord Jesus through scripture, imaginative prayer, lectio divina, and other prayer methods. The series was a wonderful reminder that my loving Father who made me is constantly inviting me to spend time with him.

Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” This is one of my favorite scriptures because I struggle so much with personal prayer but have experienced the wonderful fruits of a strong prayer life. The words of this Psalm resonate in my heart and bring me peace. If you ever find yourself failing in the battle of prayer, be encouraged that you are not alone. Prayer is a battle, but it’s worth the fight.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2725: “Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The ‘spiritual battle’ of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.”
Bishop’s 16th Annual Charity

Golf Classic

Monday, August 1, 2022
Rose Creek Golf Course
Fargo, North Dakota

11:00 AM - Registration
12:30 PM - Shotgun Start
Followed by Social and Banquet

Register online:
www.fargodiocese.org/puttpurpose
701-356-7928

Sponsored by:
Catholic Development Foundation
5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A, Fargo, ND
Proceeds will benefit seminarian education and youth programs within the Diocese of Fargo.
Much of seminary formation can seem similar to other college programs. From the middle of August to the middle of May, things are not that different from a non-seminary college or university. We spend much of our time sitting in classrooms, writing papers, and studying for tests. Most of the time is given to academic pursuits, what the Church calls “intellectual formation.”

During June and July, things change a little. Summer assignments can be quite varied, but are focused on more practical and hands-on activities than much of what we do during the academic year. Some seminarians might spend their summer in Omaha for a spirituality program. Others might be in St. Paul for a hospital ministry program. Many of us receive parish assignments. For these, we are placed in a parish for the duration of the summer, shadowing the priest and learning what he does. For the two months we’re there, we become a part of the parish family. If the parish has a joyous occasion, we celebrate with them. If they encounter a tragedy, we grieve with them. I completed one of these parish assignments two summers ago, and have been given another one for this summer. These assignments offer much to our formation for the priesthood.

On one level, these assignments show us the nuts and bolts of parish life. We could be tasked with anything from assisting with Vacation Bible School to helping the facilities manager with upkeep of the parish building. All of these show us first hand what it takes to keep a parish functioning and to minister to the people of God.

We come to see things on a deeper level, too. For example, we come to see that there is a purpose for the intellectual formation. We see firsthand how the knowledge we are tested on during the semester works its way into the teaching and preaching ministries of the priest. We see more clearly how the paper writing grind will help us to someday synthesize and communicate the truths of the faith to the flock of the Good Shepherd. We see how the seemingly abstract concepts discussed in the classroom concretize in a person’s real life.

These assignments also allow us to experience the sort of thing that can’t be taught in books. No class can teach you what it’s like to walk into the room of a dying person to administer Anointing of the Sick. No test can prepare you for a phone call from a parishioner informing you a loved one has died. And no paper can help you figure out what to say to the grieving family. Our summer parish assignments expose us to these encounters. The example of the priests we are placed with models for us their way of handling these situations.

Parish assignments might not be school, but they provide opportunities for learning that can only be found through real life experience. They offer us a taste of what a priest actually does in a parish, and a taste of the life that, God willing, we will live some day as priests.
I recently came across a short address Pope Francis made to representatives of the Chemin Neuf Politics Fraternity. I am not very familiar with the religious community Chemin Neuf and know even less about its Politics Fraternity. According to its website, the fraternity “brings together young people from 18 to 35 years old, from different countries and political backgrounds, who share the same passion for the common good and the poor, and have the desire to be active in politics according to the heart of God.”

The Holy Father told the group that politics for the Christian means encounter, reflection, and action.

Encountering others, of course, is the first act of politics. It is not a singular, internal event. This is true in politics as well. At a minimum, the Pope said, political encounter “consists of being open to others and accepting their differences as part of a respectful dialogue.” Unfortunately, in our often bitterly divided and angry country, achieving that minimum is becoming rare.

For the Christian, however, encounter means something more than respectful interaction with others. The Pope’s words on this call for Christians is worth quoting in whole. He said:

“Because the Gospel demands that we love our enemies (cf. Matt. 5:44), we cannot rest content with superficial and formal dialogue, along the lines of the often hostile negotiations between political parties. Instead, we are called to see political encounters as fraternal encounters, especially with people who disagree with us. That means regarding our dialogue partner as a true brother or sister, a beloved son or daughter of God. The art of encounter, then, begins with changing the way we look at others, with showing them unconditional acceptance and respect. Without such a change of heart, politics often risks turning into a violent confrontation, where people try to impose their own ideas and pursue particular interests over the common good, contrary to the principle that unity prevails over conflict.”

We should reflect on those words. For Christians, politics should not be viewed as a battle with an enemy. Nor is it an exercise of raw power.

Did you notice that Pope Francis called the act of political encounter an art rather than a skill? Skill is an ability you are born with or learn. Art is creatively applying those skills to something. The Holy Father appears to be saying that true politics is an act of art directed toward the common good rather than a technique, even if that technique leads to what we call political success.

The second aspect of politics, the pope said, is reflection. By this, he did not mean merely thinking about the issue. For the Christian, he said, reflection means viewing the issue according to how it impacts the general good. Politics is not about winning or advancing your own or a particular party or group’s interest. It should be about the common good. The Pope said, “Our own compass for advancing this common project is the Gospel, which brings to the world a profoundly positive vision of humanity as loved by God.”

The third aspect of politics is action. This is classic Pope Francis. He told the group not to sit around and discuss politics, but to go and put words into action. Echoing Evangelii Gaudium, the pope said that realities are more important than ideas. Words and ideas alone can become detached from reality and become ineffectual or dangerous. The “real world” is where the human person—the subject of politics—lives. Encounter occurs there, not in intellectual discussion for sake of intellectual discussion.

It is tempting to think that the danger of ideology without real action occurs only in academia’s ivory towers. It does exist there. Everyone, however, is capable of creating their own towers or bubbles through social media, our choice of news sources, and even our choice of friends. When we create an echo chamber reverberating our own ideas about politics without encountering those with whom we disagree, we fall into the trap of ideology without action.

Political action, of course, involves voting, discussion, lobbying, and advocacy. It can sometimes take the form of rallies and protests. When talking about politics to this group, however, Pope Francis identified prayer as part of putting politics into action. Here again, his words are worth quoting entirely. He said:

“Encounter, reflection, action: this is a political program in the Christian sense. I believe that you are already doing this, especially in your Sunday evening meetings. From joining in prayer to the Father from whom all things proceed, from imitating Jesus Christ, and from listening attentively to the Holy Spirit, your concern for the common good gains a powerful interior incentive. For in this way, politics can be practiced as ‘the highest form of charity,’ as it was defined by Pope Pius XI.”
As a Little Sister, I don’t usually follow pop culture trends but something in the music world recently caught my attention.

Last weekend the Eurovision Song Contest, the world’s largest music competition, crowned Ukraine over forty other countries with a unique song combining rap, hip-hop, and traditional folk music.

It was wonderful to see everyone gather around the Ukrainian musicians as they celebrated a rare moment of joy. But what really struck me was the subject of their winning song. *Stefania* is a tribute to the lead singer’s aging mother: “The field blooms but she is turning gray… She rocked me; gave me a rhythm. You can’t take willpower from me as I got it from her. She knew more than King Solomon….”

*Stefania* was not the only Eurovision song to honor family ties. Portugal’s entry, performed in subtle harmonies by an all-female group, expressed the composer’s pain at the loss of her grandfather, together with her joy in having known and loved him.

**MARO**, a Portuguese artist who attended music school in Boston, reflected on the meaning of her song, *Saudade*, “It’s about loss but it’s also celebration. It’s crazy how impactful our grandparents can be and it’s a reference to so many values, including unconditional love.”

Yes, it’s amazing how impactful our elders can be and how unconditionally they love us!

These two songs brought joy to my heart as they reminded me of Pope Francis’ oft-repeated call for young people to remember and honor their elders.

Throughout the pandemic, the media has emphasized dark stories of the suffering and isolation of seniors. Now on a daily basis we see images of elderly Ukrainians who find themselves alone amidst the ravages of war.

We need a bit of “Good News” involving the elderly! Witnessing the love of these young Ukrainian and Portuguese musicians for their elders filled me with admiration and hope. On July 24, the church will celebrate the second annual World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.

Wouldn’t it be fantastic if young people across America used their talents to create music and works of art in honor of their elders on this special day? They may not receive a prestigious trophy or international acclaim but God will reward them with the joy of those who know how much more blessed it is to give than to receive!

The theme of this year’s World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is “In Old Age They Will Still Bear Fruit.”

In his message for the occasion, Pope Francis made the following observation, “Old age is not a time of life easily understood even by those of us who are already experiencing it … The more developed societies expend large sums on this stage of life without really helping people to understand and appreciate it; they offer healthcare plans to the elderly but not plans for living this age to the full. This makes it hard to look to the future and discern what direction to take. On the one hand, we are tempted to ward off old age by hiding our wrinkles and pretending to be forever young, while on the other, we imagine that the only thing we can do is bide our time, thinking glumly that we cannot ‘still bring forth fruit.’”

The pope continued, “The fast pace of the world—with which we struggle to keep up—seems to leave us no alternative but to implicitly accept the idea that we are useless.”

Please do not allow your parents, grandparents, or other elders in your life to accept this false idea, no matter how limited or disabled they may feel. No human being is ever useless or without value. No one is ever completely incapable of entering into relationship with others and making a difference in the world!

And so, as July 24 approaches, let’s be creative in finding ways to honor the elders in our lives. Let’s show them we are grateful for their unconditional love and all they have given us. Let’s help our elders to appreciate the many ways in which they still bear fruit!

Pope Francis told seniors that they have the responsibility of teaching the rest of us to regard others with the same loving gaze with which they regard their own grandchildren and that having grown in humanity by caring for others, they are teachers of a way of life that is peaceful and attentive to those in greatest need.

Let’s show them that we have learned these lessons well as we accompany them with reverence and loving attention!

*For resources for World Day for Grandparents and Elderly, visit www.fargodiocese.org/grandparents-day. You can download Pope Francis’ complete reflection.*
In December of 2019, the SECURE Act was signed into law and became effective on Jan. 1, 2020. SECURE is an acronym for “Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement.” Some would argue this new Act is the most impactful retirement legislation in over a decade. I would like to revisit this Act as it relates to charitable giving, because there are some great benefits to be realized. There are two big takeaways:

1. **The SECURE ACT increases the age for required minimum distributions from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA’s) from 70 1/2 to 72 years of age.** For many folks, this isn’t that big of a change. For those that use the IRA Charitable Rollover option (and there are many that do), the age of eligibility remains 70 1/2 years old and zero-tax charitable distributions remain available for up to $100,000 annually.

   Making an IRA Rollover gift is very easy. First, contact your IRA administrator. Because of the popularity of the “rollover,” most administrators provide forms and a procedure to help make a rollover gift. Second, no income taxes on the amount transferred to charity. Third, inform the charity that the gift is coming, what it is for, and where it is coming from. Sometimes IRA Charitable Rollovers arrive at the charity with no name included so the charity cannot apply the gift until it hears from the donor who is looking for an acknowledgment.

2. **The SECURE ACT provides that beneficiaries of retirement accounts (not including spouse), must withdraw an inherited IRA within 10 years.** The SECURE Act eliminates stretch IRA plans. As a result, the taxable distributions to most IRA beneficiaries will be larger, and the taxes they pay will be higher.

   If you were planning to utilize a “stretch IRA plan,” the SECURE ACT has dramatically changed the tax law rules, substantially increasing the income taxes paid by your children on inherited IRAs. Of the many types of trusts out there, the Testamentary Charitable Remainder Unitrust is an excellent plan to replace old stretch IRA plans.

   What is a Testamentary Charitable Remainder Trust? It’s simply a trust that is tax-exempt designed to make income payments to your heirs over their lifetimes or for a term of 20 years. At the end of the trust, the remaining principal is distributed to support a charity like your church, for example. The trust is sometimes called a “give it twice” trust because it enables you to give the gift of income to your heirs and leave a potentially comparable gift to support your charity.

   Some other considerations:
   - The heirs whom you want to be the income beneficiaries must be specifically named in the trust and alive when the trust is created.
   - If a named heir is under 30 years of age, a calculation needs to be run to determine if the trust will qualify to make lifetime payments. If not, you can use a term of 20 years, which is twice the period allowed under the SECURE Act.
   - The tax law requires a minimum payout rate of 5%.
   - The trust must be named as a beneficiary of your IRA. If you name your estate as the beneficiary, the IRA will be taxed, thus negating your planning.
   - Exceptions to the SECURE act 10-year rule include a surviving spouse and children under the age of 18.

   This information is not intended as tax, legal, or financial advice. Consult your personal financial advisor or tax attorney for your information specific to your situation.

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**Giving back to our donors**

“One of the best decisions we have ever made for our family was choosing JPII Schools. We wanted smaller class sizes where teachers and staff are truly invested in our kids. Our kids are both thriving in this environment not only academically but also socially and spiritually.”

-Dustin & Amber Ertelt

For information or a tour
Call 701-893-3271
jp2schools.org
Robert and Jane Hager, parishioners of St. Anthony’s Church in Selz, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on June 24. They were married at St. Cecilia’s Church in Harvey. They are greatly blessed with 3 children and 8 grandchildren.

Arden and Donna Feser, parishioners of Holy Spirit Church in Fargo, celebrated their 60th anniversary on May 12. They were married at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo. They will have a celebration with their 2 sons in Minneapolis.

Keary and Sandie Brager, parishioners of Holy Spirit Church in Fargo, celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 23. They were married at St. Joseph’s Church in Moorhead, Minn. They have been blessed with 2 daughters and 2 sons.

Reynold and Janice (Neva) Buchholz, registered parishioners of St. Francis Xavier Church in Anamoose, will celebrate their 65th anniversary on June 29. They were married at St. John’s Church in Kensal. They are blessed with 5 children, 15 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren.

Gerry and Mary Joyce, parishioners of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks, celebrated their 70th anniversary on June 2. They have 6 children (2 deceased), 16 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

Earl and Kathy (Volk) Obermiller, parishioners of Holy Spirit Church in Fargo, will celebrate their 65th anniversary on June 29. They were married at St. Joseph Church in Devils Lake. They are blessed with 5 children, 9 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

Ted and Lucille Passa, parishioners of St. Edward’s Church in Drayton, will celebrate their 75th anniversary on July 1. They were married at St. Stephen Church in Steven, Minn. They are blessed with 7 sons and 1 daughter, 18 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

Lloyd and Jean Schreiner of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on July 2. They were married at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Reynolds. They are blessed with 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter, and another great-grandchild on the way.

Rodney and Lorraine (Schanilec) Riskey, parishioners of St. Stanislaus Church in Warsaw, celebrated their 50th anniversary on May 13. They were married at St. Luke’s Church in Veseleyville. They are blessed with 2 children and 8 grandchildren.

Lloyd and Jean Schreiner of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate their 60th anniversary on July 2. They were married at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Reynolds. They are blessed with 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter, and another great-grandchild on the way.

Patrick and Carol Callahan celebrated their 50th anniversary at St. Timothy’s Church in Manvel on June 2. They had a surprise celebration at St. Timothy’s Church, hosted by their 6 children and 18 grandchildren. They were married at Oslo, Minn.

Norma Grant, parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo, will celebrate her 95th birthday on June 26. Norma has 7 children, 19 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.

Nathan and Lori Beck, parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Munich, celebrated their 40th anniversary on June 11. They are blessed with 4 children and 15 grandchildren.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Life’s Milestones includes anniversaries for marriages, ordinations, and religious vows for 25, 40, 50, 60, 65, and 70+ years and birthdays for 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100+ years for those in the Diocese of Fargo. Submissions will only be accepted for milestones occurring during the month of publication, one month prior, or one month following. Send a photo with text to news@fargodiocese.org or to Diocese of Fargo, New Earth, 5201 Bishops Blvd S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 with a stamped return envelope and phone number. Deadline for the July/August issue is July 12.

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
Father Paul Koehler, and two members of the building committee, Jim McCann and Walter Huard, turned the first shovel of ground for the new parish house at Thompson, N. Dak. The work journal begins, “June 6 – basement dug (about 3 hours) – then rain for one week.” The account continues and one month after work started, we read, “Roof boards going on July 8; finished shingling on July 11.” Proof of the rapid headway made on the Thompson rectory from workers and parishioners’ volunteer hours. The whole project from beginning to end, particularly in view of the free labor, reminds one of the typical “house raising” common to the West in former days.

50 years ago — 1972
On Sunday, June 16, the Congregation of St. Anthony’s Church in Selz, N.D. commemorated the burning of a fifty-six thousand dollar mortgage. Father paid tribute to the generosity and faith of the Catholic community for this outstanding achievement.

20 years ago — 2002
June 9 was a grand day for the rededication of St. John the Evangelist Church in Wahpeton. Father Dale Lagodinski and more than 700 parishioners were there as Bishop Samuel J. Aquila blessed the altar and walls of the renovated church. Patrick Albrecht from Hanover, Germany was a special guest that day. He is the great grand-nephew of Father Albrecht, pastor of St. John Church when it was first constructed in 1896. The project theme was on point: Remember…Renew…and Rejoice. Ground breaking for the monumental task took place on Easter Sunday, 2001 and on Easter Monday the big machinery arrived to disassemble the church walls.
Father “Bill” Sherman passes away May 4

The Rev. William “Bill” Sherman, 94, priest of the Diocese of Fargo; former pastor of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, and prominent religious leader, passed away May 4 at Valley Senior Living in Grand Forks.

William Charles Sherman was born on July 8, 1927, in Detroit, Mich., the son of William A. and Ellen K. (Lynch) Sherman. He attended grade school in Salem, Ore. and high school in Bryson, N.C., graduating from St. Francis High School in Hankinson. William enlisted in the United States Army on July 26, 1946, at Fort Snelling, Minn. He served as a Supply Clerk with the 1st Cavalry Division during the occupation of the Philippines and Japan. He was honorably discharged from military service on Dec. 9, 1947, at Fort Lawton, Wash.

He graduated from St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn. with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Philosophy. It was while attending St. John’s, that he began discerning his vocation to the priesthood. He attended St. John’s Seminary in Collegeville and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree. William was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest for the Diocese of Fargo on June 11, 1955, and served as a priest for 66 years. Father Sherman offered his first Mass at St. Boniface Church in Lidgerwood. In 1965, he earned a Master’s degree in Sociology from the University of North Dakota.

Father Sherman served as a Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo and St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center at the University of North Dakota. He served as Pastor of St. Raphael’s Church in Verona, St. Paul’s Newman Center at North Dakota State University, St. Henry’s Church in Alice, Our Lady of the Scapular’s Church in Sheldon, St. Patrick’s Church in Enderlin, National Chaplain to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Pastor of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, from 1976 until his retirement in 2003. While Director of St. Paul’s Newman Center, Father Sherman taught Sociology of Religion and Sociology of the Great Plains at North Dakota State University.

Best known as pastor of St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, Father Sherman authored several books. One of note is, *Scattered Steeples*, a historical perspective of the Diocese of Fargo. Twenty years after the publication went out of print, he along with Father Leo Stelton, edited a new edition entitled *Scattered Steeples Expanded*. This work is a “panoramic view” of the church from sod-house Masses to the grand liturgies of the “cathedral-like city churches.”

Father Sherman was named a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at North Dakota State University. In 2003, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate degree from the University of Mary. On May 17, 2014, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate degree from the University of North Dakota. This honor is given to celebrate someone who has spent many years in a specific field. Father Sherman was nominated by the Department of Sociology.

Father Sherman was held in high regard and will be deeply missed by his brother priests, former parishioners and students, friends, and the people of Grand Forks. A special thanks to Myrna Dyrdal for the kind care given to Father Sherman in his later years.

He is survived by his brother, Father Edward Sherman, Grand Forks, and relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Sister Ann Sherman, O.S.F.

Mass of Christian Burial was held May 10 at St. Michael’s Church, Grand Forks. Burial was held May 11 at Calvary Cemetery in Lidgerwood.
EVENTS

Trinity Youth Camp
At Trinity Youth Camp, we will learn how to hear God's voice through the sacraments. Together, we’ll encounter God’s grace through his healing, sacrifice, and calling. Trinity Youth Camp is for youth entering grades 3-8 fall of 2022. Dates include July 13–17 at Pelican Lake, Bottineau; July 20–24 at Camp of the Cross, Garrison; and July 26–31 at Pelican Lake, Bottineau. Register at trinityyouthcampnd.com.

Brent Hermans performance at Nativity, Fargo
Come and enjoy Nativity’s Sweet Serenade featuring pianist Brent Hermans and guest stars at the Nativity Church cafeteria in Fargo. Concerts are Wednesday at 7 p.m. and include dessert and fellowship. Dates are July 13 (Fifty Nifty States of Music), Aug. 17 (Street-Wise Songs), and Sept. 7 (The Return of the Jedi Piano – songs written for movies).

Mother-Daughter Days
The Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen invite you to their 2022 Mother-Daughter Days at St. Francis Convent in Hankinson 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.

Women’s Retreat at Maryvale
You are invited to a weekend retreat at Maryvale in Valley City to let Jesus teach you. This retreat will connect us with the people in the Gospels who met, came to know, and followed in Jesus’ footsteps. The retreat begins July 22 at 7 p.m. and concludes July 24 by 12:30 p.m. Presenter is Sister Anne Germaine Picard. Meals and private room with a single bed, bedding, pillow, chairs, a bible, and a desk provided. Bring leisurely clothing, facemask, and toiletry items. Register by July 12 at (701) 845-2684 or maryvalesmp@gmail.com. Suggested donation is $95.

Is your marriage going down the right road... or is it a little off track?

RETRouvaille
A LIFELINE FOR MARRIED COUPLES
Weekend for couples October 7-9, 2022
Does the distance between you seem wide? Are you already separated? Looking for a better way? Retrouvaille can help and offers hope for a better relationship. Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you learn the tools of healthy communication, build intimacy and heal, just as they have done in their own marriages. Retrouvaille is Christian-based, and Catholic in origin, and welcomes couples of all faiths as well as non-religious couples. Retrouvaille can help get your relationship back on track.

For more information, Call (701) 356-7903 or visit HelpOurMarriage.com
Join Bishop John Folda as we invoke God’s blessing upon our rural communities

5th annual RURAL LIFE celebration

Sunday, July 31, 2022

Arlen and Charlotte Blessum Farm
3363 62nd Street NE
Rugby, ND 58368

12:30 p.m. Welcome
12:45 p.m. Blessing of land, machinery, animals
1:00 p.m. Mass
2:00 p.m. Meal and entertainment

• Event is free and open to all
• Bring a container of soil or seed from your field or garden to be blessed
• Mass will be held indoors
• For more information, visit fargodiocese.org/rural-life
Elderly must share life’s wisdom with the young, pope says

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

Seeing all the violence and injustice in the world, people easily grow disillusioned and wonder about the meaning of life, but Christians must fight the temptation of weariness with faith and a passion for justice, Pope Francis said.

Progress in science and technology and knowledge in general continues to advance, but “the wisdom of life is something else entirely, and it seems to be stalled,” the pope said May 25 at his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

Continuing his series of talks about old age, the pope looked at the Bible’s Book of Ecclesiastes and its refrain, “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.”

Especially as they get older, the pope said, people naturally ask if their lives have made any difference and if anyone is capable of showing the difference between the just and the unjust.

The Christian response cannot be resignation or giving in to weariness, which early Christian monks identified as the vice of “sloth,” he said.

The author of Ecclesiastes, he said, reflects on how easy it is to grow disillusioned with life and to give up the struggle to make the world a better place, but the author also insists the best remedy is to “fear God and keep his commandments.”

“Elders rich in wisdom and humor do so much good to the young,” the pope insisted. “They save them from the temptation of a grim worldly knowledge devoid of the wisdom of life. And also, these elders bring young people back to Jesus’ promise, ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.’”

The pope, 85, said he and every other older person has “a very great mission in the world,” which is to “sow hunger and thirst for righteousness in the young.”

“It is no accident that ours is the season of fake news, collective superstitions and pseudo-scientific truths,” the pope said. The only antidote is the wisdom that comes from devotion to God and to doing God’s will.
The Vatican announced on June 2 that Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Robert Barron to lead the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota.

Barron, who runs the popular Catholic media apostolate “Word on Fire,” has served as an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 2015. He will succeed Bishop John Quinn, who submitted his resignation to the pope after reaching the retirement age of 75 in 2020. Barron will be installed as bishop on July 29.

“Friends, I am overjoyed and humbled to learn that Pope Francis has appointed me the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester,” Barron wrote in a statement after his appointment was announced.

“The bishop of a diocese is, first and foremost, a spiritual father to the priests and people who have been entrusted to his care. My prayer this morning is that the Lord will give me the grace always to be a good father.”

One of the most well-known bishops in the United States, Barron has over 500,000 subscribers on his YouTube channel where he teaches about the faith through talks, interviews, and prayer.

At the last U.S. bishops’ meeting in November, Barron was voted to lead the U.S. bishop’s Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

Barron, 62, was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1986. Six years later, he began teaching at the archdiocese’s Mundelein Seminary, where he served as the rector from 2012 to 2015.

He holds a Doctorate of Sacred Theology degree from the Institut Catholique de Paris and a Master’s degree in Philosophy from the Catholic University of America.

While teaching at Mundelein, he created the “Catholicism” documentary series, which aired on public television in 2011. In 2015, Pope Francis appointed Barron as an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, where Barron continued his work with the “Word on Fire” apostolate.

In recent weeks, “Word on Fire” has faced claims that the Catholic organization mishandled charges of sexual impropriety by a “Word on Fire” staffer. Several staff members, including Catholic speakers Jackie and Bobby Angel, announced their departure from “Word on Fire” amid the controversy in May. Barron has said that the work of “Word on Fire” will continue as he moves to Minnesota.

“I look forward immensely to getting to know the good people, priests, and pastoral ministers of the diocese. I will have to brush off my Chicago winter coat, which has remained unused for the past six years in Santa Barbara!” he said.

Barron expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work closely over the past seven years with Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, who he called “one of the great churchmen on the scene today.”

“Watching him govern the largest Archdiocese in the country was a master-class in ecclesial leadership,” he added.

The Catholic Diocese of Winona-Rochester filed for bankruptcy in 2018 while facing more than 100 claims of clerical sex abuse. Quinn said in 2018 that a total of 17 priests in the diocese had been accused of abuse.

Quinn served as the bishop of Winona since 2008 and continued to lead the diocese after the Vatican’s Congregation of Bishops announced that it would become the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in 2018.

The diocese covers more than 12,000 square miles of southern Minnesota and includes 107 Catholic parishes and over 130,000 Catholics.

“I am filled with joy that Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Robert Barron as the 9th Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester,” Quinn said in a statement on June 2. “His commitment to evangelization and missionary discipleship will bear great fruit in the coming years.”
Is the end of abortion in North Dakota nearing?

SIDEWALK STORIES

ROXANE B. SALONEN
Mother of five, writer for The Forum and CatholicMom.com, speaker and radio host for Real Presence Radio

S
ome readers may have heard that, on May 11, I was punched on the side of my head while praying at our state’s only abortion facility, and suffered a mild concussion.

For those who knew, thanks for the prayers. Despite discomfort for a few days, I have healed. The emotional effects were much harsher than any physical pain, for I felt the punch symbolically; it epitomizes the violence of abortion that has deeply hurt so many.

Police are continuing their investigation to locate the perpetrator, who fled before identifying information could be obtained. The incident was caught on video by the Red River Women’s Clinic. Though the facility initially refused to release it, it’s now in police hands.

I harbor no ill will for the young lady who did this. She was in distress, I knew, having heard her mention to an escort about a domestic abuse situation. Just minutes before she lunged toward me, I’d tried offering her information I hoped would lead her to help and safety.

But it seemed like she just wanted to hit something, and I just happened to be an easy target. Though I believe it would be good for her to face her actions—both to signal to others that it’s not okay to assault people, and for her own ultimate good—above all, I want to know she’s okay, and for her to know she’s loved by a good God.

But to the main point now. Two Wednesdays after that incident, after skipping a week of sidewalk prayer for another commitment, I was readying to return when I got a text from a fellow advocate: “There are maybe two workers inside, no rainbow (escort) vests, no abortions today, six former escorts eating at JL Beers.”

I had just come out of Mass and was shocked. What could be going on? “Are they plotting their move to Minnesota?” I texted back. “Most likely,” he responded.

Of course, we can only assume why abortions were seemingly shut down that day. Maybe they’d switched to another day. Or perhaps they were discussing the possible overturning of Roe v. Wade, and how that would effectively eliminate abortion in our state, causing their regular business to be illegal.

My friend asked if I’d still be willing to show up to keep company with our friend Nick, who had committed to remaining there with his sign encouraging life through the afternoon.

So, I showed up to the sidewalk anyway that day, and instead of an emotional hour or two of trying to let women know of life-giving help, we just talked—to one another, and some of the people walking past. One young man, a now-unvested escort, booed us and told us—twice—he was a former member of the Knights of Columbus.

It was the next character, however, that drew us in. He was an older man, and seemed to have had a few alcoholic drinks in his system. He paused before the Kopelman building, where abortions are performed, and said, pointing, “I used to live there,” noting that, years ago, the building had housed a different business, and upstairs, some apartments.

He was clearly unhappy with its current use. “I don’t like it,” he said. “I once had a breakup over (an abortion).” As he continued, tears formed in his eyes. “I wanted the baby. She didn’t. I wanted to be a dad.”

The truth always bursts forth on the sidewalk—the truth of the devastation of abortion.

It was years ago, he’d indicated, but he was clearly not over the death of his child. It was his only chance, he said, now forever gone. He’d been robbed of fatherhood. With the wound now exposed, he began weeping.

“But you are a father,” I assured him, adding that, through a relationship with Christ, he would see his child someday.

Minutes after the man shuffled off with his broken heart, Nick turned to me, “Well now you know why you showed up today. I think you were meant to be here and see that.”

It’s all so sad—though that’s such an inadequate word. But we are hopeful; hopeful about North Dakota being among the collection of projected abortion-free states in our nation soon.

When that day comes, we will celebrate, but we will not toss our signs and brochures. Instead, we will simply follow the facility to its likely new home across the river in Minnesota, picking up our cause there, and doing whatever we can to breach that glaring gap between life and death.

Will North Dakota soon be abortion-free? If so, that jarring punch suddenly seems a small price to pay.
Do you know where we are?

The answer will be revealed in the July/August New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is from Sacred Heart Church in Rolette.